Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

**'On the right track'**

Nation's new energy vehicle makers see orders rise domestically, globally

BUSINESS FOCUS, PAGE 11

**Yuyuan Garden's lantern show to light up festival**

LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 15

**Warming up for big event**

Djokovic reaches Adelaide quarterfinals, steps up preparations for Australian Open

SPORTS, PAGE 7


# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日報 FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2023

A visitor plays games at the booth of TCL, China's consumer electronics producer, at CES on Thursday while his friend looks on. CES officially kicked off on Thursday in Las Vegas. CHANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

## CES: Chinese firms spreading their wings

By **CHANG JUN** in Las Vegas
*junechang@chinadailyusa.com*

Chinese enterprises, no matter whether they're big names, unicorn startups or small firms, share a common goal at this year's CES — to go overseas seeking more growth opportunities in the post-pandemic era.

To fulfill that goal, they are bringing their best products to Las Vegas, hoping to increase global exposure and optimize overseas market share with their international business partners.

**Inside**

See more, **page 6**

At the Las Vegas Convention Center, China's major consumer electronics producer TCL installed its 1,600-square-meter booth adjacent to those of competitors such as Sony, LG, Samsung and Panasonic.

On the CES floor display are TCL's ultra-large-screen Mini LED QLED TV lineup, sound bars, smartphones, and augmented reality demonstrations, among others.

Mark Zhang, general manager of NABG, TCL Industries, said that only by competing against the strongest players worldwide and surviving in the most competitive market can a company grow.

According to industry observer Omdia, global sales of TCL smart screens reached 10.15 million sets in the first half of 2022. The market share of TCL smart screens in sales volume in the global LCD TV market ranked second, first among Chinese brands and third in the US.

TCL's sales of premium QLED smart screens and Mini LED smart screens are leading the global market.

North America, the United States in particular, has been the most important and biggest market for TCL, said Zhang. "We are user-centric and committed to only providing customers their best experiences with purchase, usage and client service," he explained.

"We remain in close cooperation and collaboration with American high-tech giants such as Google, Roku and Dolby," Zhang said. "On the global stages, we continue to work with leading players in the fields of Mini LED, QLED TVs, AR/VR, 5G, AI and cloud computing."

As a Chinese manufacturing company that went global earlier than its counterparts, TCL has transformed from internationalization to globalization after more than two decades.

"We are the witness and one of the beneficiaries of this process," he said.

EcoFlow, a Shenzhen-based tech unicorn that makes and sells power station and battery-storage devices for home use, echoed Zhang's view.

"The majority of our annual revenue, roughly $1 billion in total, has been generated from sales in our overseas market," said Amy Ma, who works for international outreach at EcoFlow. "We have to prioritize the needs and wants of our clients."

At CES Unveiled, a small media-preview session Tuesday, Ma said the Blade, a robotic lawn-sweeping mover that won the CES 2023 Innovation Award, drew an influx of ardent visitors, many of them Europeans and Americans.

People are worrying about high power costs and the aftermath caused by extreme weather, said Brain Essenmacher, head of business development at EcoFlow.

"We try to address challenges around energy insecurity and meet clients' demands for reliable, affordable and sustainable energy," he added.

Their solution to household energy-generation and storage requires interconnections and collaboration of many parties — manufacturers in China's Guangdong province, international logistics, warehouses in Europe and North America, online and offline sales.

"Our business is brisk at this moment," said Ma. "However, we are looking for more opportunities. That is why we came to CES."

For Tony Wang, founder of Shenzhen-based Leiyin Audio, his travel from China to Las Vegas is to signify his sincerity and enhance existing cooperation with his US partners.

Wang, a graduate majoring in electrical engineering, started his business in Guangdong province in 2006. It gradually morphed into a provider of high-end headphones, earphones, headphone amplifiers, digital amplifiers and decoder-DAC for a composition of international niche-market users.

"I cannot walk so far without extending my business abroad," said Wang, emphasizing the importance for an enterprise to search for global opportunities, or *chuhai*.

"It has been three years since I last sat and talked face to face to them (partners) in America," said Wang. "Fortunately, our mutual trust is proven to be vigorous."

Wang said that flying from China two weeks ago to Las Vegas was a trip beyond exhausting, "but it is worth it" and he looked forward to signing several business contracts at CES.

Sam Zhu, founder of Shenzhen-based Kejinming Electronics (KJM), however, wanted to bring a little more than his Chinese counterparts did to CES.

Since the establishment of KJM in 2010, Zhu and his team have been dreaming of breaking the tech monopoly of major players in manufacturing electronic products, including projectors, digital photo frames, DVD/projector combos, and tablets.

"To outperform competitors, we need to be really good," he said.

Before 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the US, it was an annual routine for KJM to book a CES booth and fly a team into Las Vegas.

"We tour, study, observe, talk and learn from international players in this industry," he recalled. "Now, we have in our hands a few technology specialties that others are craving."

As a result, this time Zhu is at CES to wait for potential partners that need to pay for "his or her hefty tuition", he joked.

## Experts: China maps out path to global progress

Xi's proposals offer world a new way forward in overcoming major international challenges

By **WANG MINGJIE** in London
*wangmingjie@mail.chinadailyuk.com*

Experts across the world say the global initiatives proposed by President Xi Jinping are very "timely" and "critical" for global development and economic growth, given that geopolitical tensions are rising and the international economic structure is changing.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, regional conflicts, major-country rivalries and food and energy crises are emerging simultaneously. While the global economy is struggling to recover, developing countries face daunting challenges in achieving the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

During the Boao Forum for Asia in April last year, Xi proposed the Global Security Initiative, with indivisible security as the important principle in order to foster a new type of security that replaces confrontation, alliance and a zero-sum approach with dialogue.

Also, at the general debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021, Xi proposed the Global Development Initiative, which is aimed at building a global community of development. Since then, the GDI has received support from more than 100 countries and many international organizations including the UN. More than 60 countries have joined the Group of Friends of the GDI.

Lawrence Loh, director of the Center for Governance and Sustainability at National University of Singapore, said: "The global initiatives proposed by President Xi are most timely and critical for world progress. It is precisely because the international economic architecture has changed and geopolitical tensions are rising that such initiatives are needed to set the world back on the path of shared recovery in the post-pandemic era."

Loh said that the GDI is a compelling economic initiative focusing on the development imperative, and countries are attracted to it as there are clear benefits such as infrastructural, technological and market advancements. "Most important of all, the commitments are clear, including the rounds of funding offered by the lead country of China," he added.

Christopher Bovis, a professor of international business law at the University of Hull in the United Kingdom, said that these initiatives "offer credible proposals to global governance".

He said that the initiatives also provide "credible evidence" of China's proposals to reform global governance in an environment that increasingly points to "the inadequacy of international instruments for security and trade cooperation".

2022 year in Review

Chris Rudd, deputy vice-chancellor and head of the Singapore campus of Australia's James Cook University, said: "Any attempts by serious global players to bring about international dialogue and better targeted development aid are to be welcomed at a time when international tensions are rising and entire regions are potentially facing collateral damage due to climate change and conflict-related supply chain disruptions."

Rudd said Xi's global initiatives not only provide a platform for more sustainable growth, but will also help to strengthen international security by improving controls over money laundering.

While individual citizens in the global south might not be likely to recognize the policy "brands" proposed by China, such as the GDI and the Belt and Road Initiative, Rudd said they certainly respond to life-changing infrastructure projects in fields such as healthcare, transportation and telecommunications.

"In many regions, and especially in African countries, China is regarded as the preferred international development partner due to its rapid delivery, its historically benign attitude to debt restructuring and the well-established principle of mutuality in partnership building," he said.

*See **Path**, page 3*

## Solidifying of intl exchanges continues

WORLD WATCH
By Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

"May the world enjoy peace and people of all countries live in happiness," President Xi Jinping said in his 2023 New Year Address.

The Chinese leader has again extended his heart to people all over the world who are facing common challenges as well as "changes unseen in a century", assuring renewed Chinese strength and contributions ahead.

The Chinese strength comes from the country's social and economic resilience despite difficulties. In the course of 2022, China encountered various natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, droughts and wildfires, and outbreaks of COVID-19. Yet the economy of China — whose GDP exceeded 120 trillion yuan ($17.5 trillion) in 2022 — enjoys strong resilience, tremendous potential and great vitality, with robust recovery expected in 2023.

As China enters a new phase of optimized COVID response amid tough challenges, it persists in putting the people first while following a science-based and targeted approach to protecting the life and health of vulnerable groups to the greatest extent possible. Thanks to its people sticking together in the face of adversity and its millennia-old traditional Chinese medicine, the country is emerging stronger to beat the virus and sustain its economic fundamentals for this year's goals and long-term growth.

Chinese strength also comes from the collective will and pursuit of the Chinese Dream for national rejuvenation under the inclusive governance of the Communist Party of China Central Committee with Xi at its core. The Chinese people are turning their country into a land that performs miracles through hard work to turn grand goals into reality.

*See **Address**, page 3*

INSIDE

**On the trail of the elusive snow leopard**

Life, p14

## *MULTINATIONALS EYE EVOLVING CHINESE MARKET*

Nation attracts companies with huge opportunities and opening-up measures

By **ZHONG NAN**
*zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn*

in-depth

Yann Bozec, a French citizen and president for the Asia-Pacific region at Tapestry Group, a luxury goods company based in the United States, has two new year wishes.

He wants to add 100 stores across China by 2025 and deploy more resources to spur sales through digital channels and duty-free business at Hainan Free Trade Port in Hainan province.

Bozec, who has lived in Shanghai for 15 years and manages sales for more than 360 stores owned by the group's brands such as Coach and Kate Spade, said that as most Chinese customers are digitally connected, his company needs to adapt to changing trends in the country.

"In addition to pushing business digitally, we plan to continue expanding our distribution, particularly in third- and fourth-tier cities, while looking for more opportunities in major city markets," said Bozec, who is also president and CEO of luxury design business Coach China.

A long-term thriving market for numerous multinationals' global strategies, China has evolved from a large consumption market and low-cost manufacturing country to an important regional export base, an innovation center and a key part of the global supply chain.

This transformation has been fueled by decades of growth, trade globalization and Chinese consumers' growing purchasing power.

*See **Companies**, page 2*

A member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK © 2023 China Daily Global All Rights Reserved

www.chinadailyglobal.com

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

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# PAGE TWO

Visitors to a Shanghai trade fair are attracted by a cooker produced by Bosch. The German multinational engineering and technology group is building new plants in China. JIA TIANYONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

*From page 1*

## Companies: Localized business strategies adopted

**Left:** Arkema, a French manufacturer of specialty materials, displays its products at a technology fair in Shanghai. **Right:** German logistics and shipping provider DHL promotes its services at a trade fair in Shanghai. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Wei Jianguo, vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said that despite facing external uncertainties and disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, China will remain attractive to multinationals this year, as its massive market and opening-up measures will boost business confidence despite globally subdued investment sentiment.

"One of the key tasks for multinationals is to be clear about the positioning of the Chinese market in their global business map. For many of them, such as France's L'Oreal Group and Germany's BMW Group, China has become their second home market or even their largest global market," Wei said.

Sang Baichuan, dean of the Institute of International Economy at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said many global companies have discovered that Chinese consumers and the business environment are constantly changing due to factors such as an industrial upgrading boom, changed business modes, and demand for personalized products.

As a result, these companies have adopted localized business strategies and appointed more Chinese executives as heads of their branches in China, Sang said.

In tandem with recognized brand awareness, sales channels and economy of scale, multinationals had a first-mover advantage after they entered China several decades ago. Although facing fierce competition from domestic rivals, they will remain competitive in this huge market as long as they adjust quickly, Sang added.

Zhang Xiaoyu, president for China at Arkema, a French manufacturer of specialty materials, said, "With China further optimizing its COVID-19 control policies and vowing to make greater efforts to maintain steady foreign investment growth, we remain confident and ready to contribute to the development of local industry."

Early last month, Bostik, a subsidiary of Arkema, announced a plan to increase its investment by 400 million yuan ($58 million) in new businesses and to develop new products in Shanghai.

### Opening wider

Given the resilience and potential of the Chinese economy, last month's tone-setting Central Economic Work Conference vowed to make greater efforts to attract and use foreign capital, widen market access, promote further opening-up of modern service industries, and grant foreign-funded enterprises national treatment.

The meeting pledged that China would actively seek to join high-standard economic and trade agreements such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement.

Zhao Ping, deputy head of the Academy of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said, "To reach these goals, China will further adhere to standard economic and trade rules, create a more market-oriented and law-based business environment, and open even wider to global companies this year."

Actual use of foreign direct investment in China grew by 9.9 percent year-on-year to 1.16 trillion yuan from January to November last year, Ministry of Commerce statistics show.

This growth was bolstered by new opening-up policy measures, fast-growing sectors such as healthcare, high-end manufacturing and modern services, multilateral trade initiatives and high-standard business platforms, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the annual China International Import Expo.

Meanwhile, investment in China from the Republic of Korea and Germany rose by 122.1 percent and 52.6 percent year-on-year respectively, while such investment from the United Kingdom grew by 33.1 percent.

Jens Hildebrandt, executive director of the German Chamber of Commerce in North China, said the Chinese market is of paramount importance to many German companies.

"German businesses will keep investing in China. They expect growth in many industries, especially in the fields of decarbonization, e-mobility and connected driving," he said.

In Beijing, Wang Wen, executive dean of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, said global businesses operating in China, particularly manufacturers, will continue to set up digitally enabled plants, establish innovation centers and seek more market share in their respective industries, including automotives, consumer goods, green development and high-end manufacturing.

2022 year in Review

Bosch, a German multinational engineering and technology group, is heading in that direction. In the second quarter of this year, the company will complete phase two of its united automotive electronic systems plant in Taicang, Jiangsu province.

Chen Yudong, Bosch's president for China, said: "China is playing an ever-greater role in the world. For example, the automotive industry is leading the transformation toward electrified and connected mobility."

US conglomerate 3M Co, which operates in the fields of industry, healthcare and consumer goods, is eager to compete with its established global rivals in China. In the first quarter of this year, the company will set up a $2.5 million thermal runaway barrier, or TRB, production line at its Hefei plant in Anhui province to supply more products for new energy vehicle producers in China.

The US company said TRB material is used in batteries for electric vehicles, or EVs, and effectively enhances battery thermal management performance and reduces the risk of batteries overheating.

Tony Shen, global segment leader for ePowertrain at 3M Automotive and Aerospace Solutions, a 3M subsidiary, said mass production in China will enable 3M to respond more quickly to growing demand in the local EV market.

Empowered by China's industrial and supply chains, foreign manufacturers using either high-tech or low-tech are keen to expand their market presence in the country, in view of the long-term prospects. They see strong demand emerging in China and the Asia-Pacific region.

Gao Lingyun, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics in Beijing, said such companies include Siemens from Germany and Panasonic Holdings Corp from Japan, as well as low-tech businesses from the home appliances, garments and toy production sectors.

Although production costs are rising for foreign companies in China, Gao said the nation has established an efficient and well-established manufacturing ecosystem to ensure high productivity. This system includes a well-developed logistics infrastructure such as ports and roads as well as an educated and well-trained labor force.

### Export value rises

In addition to operating local businesses, foreign-funded companies in China saw their export value grow by 2.4 percent year-on-year to 6.87 trillion yuan from January to November last year, according to the General Administration of Customs.

After its sales revenue in China rose by 20 percent on an annual basis in 2021, Wilo Group, a German provider of pumps and pumping systems, plans to open a new plant in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, in the first half of this year. The company's products will be sold in the Chinese and Asia-Pacific markets.

Lyman Tu, Wilo's vice-president for China and Southeast Asia, said China will likely become the group's largest market this year.

According to a business report released last year by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, a Ministry of Commerce think tank, China is able to reduce some of the manufacturing costs for domestic and global manufacturers, ranging from innovation and logistics to market development and obtaining raw materials.

On Dec 21, Danish shipping and logistics services provider A.P. Moller-Maersk said it would invest $174 million to build its first green and smart flagship logistics center in Shanghai. The facility is expected to be operational next year.

Last week, German express service provider DHL Express put its latest China gateway into operation in Wuxi, Jiangsu province.

Tian Haitian, general manager of the Jiangsu cluster for DHL Express, said the new gateway, located in the cargo terminal at Sunan Shuofang International Airport, will be a crucial part of the company's regional network in the Yangtze River Delta region and will facilitate global trade in China.

In addition to multinationals from developed countries, companies from developing and resource-rich nations are treating China as a priority market for their global expansion programs by adding investment and partnering with domestic companies to develop markets in two-way or multiple directions.

These companies include Indonesian ride-hailing and e-commerce enterprise PT GoTo Gojek Tokopedia, agricultural and retail business Charoen Pokphand Group Co, which is based in Thailand, and Ajlan & Bros Holding Group, or ABHG, a conglomerate based in Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Alajlan, deputy chairman of ABHG, said the company is looking forward to strengthening cooperation with Chinese partners this year in 5G, artificial intelligence, big data, biotechnology, financial technology and automation.

Lin Meng, director of the Modern Supply Chain Research Institute, which is part of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that compared with other global markets, China boasts leading industries such as artificial intelligence, e-commerce and digital payment.

Such industries help foreign companies expand in China's advanced industrial cluster and increasingly efficient innovation hub. To enhance their earning strength, the companies have developed their business modes and engagement in China, Lin said.

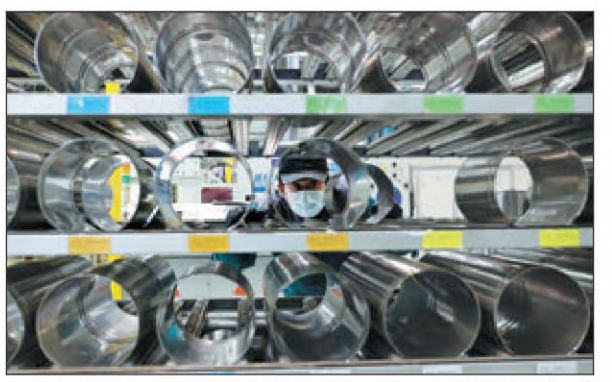
Moreover, she said that with Chinese consumers' growing disposable income and willingness to spend, there is strong demand for international brands. For example, China is a lucrative and key market for luxury companies.

In addition to markets for high-end consumer and industrial goods, the mid-market has become highly competitive in China, with multinationals entering this field with more capital and sales staff members.

Dong Yan, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics, said this situation has forced domestic businesses to take different approaches to compete with overseas competitors.

For example, domestic companies, particularly those in the soft drinks and beauty sectors, have constantly drawn insights from consumer feedback to improve products and accelerate new product launches to discover best-selling items. By going digital, they have gradually gained a foothold in markets dominated by companies such as Starbucks, Coca-Cola and Unilever, Dong said.

This trend has inspired foreign companies to learn how a new brand or specific product creates good growth value in a mature market, she added.



**Left:** US conglomerate 3M Co is adding more production lines in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Center:** A worker attends to products at a Wilo Group factory in Beijing. The German provider of pumps and pumping systems plans to open a new plant in Changzhou, Jiangsu province. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY **Right:** Customers visit a Coach store at an expo in Haikou, Hainan province. YUAN CHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# TOP NEWS

## Prize catch

Sellers prepare tuna for buyers on Thursday at this year's first tuna auction at the Toyosu Fish Market in Tokyo. RICHARD A. BROOKS / AFP

# More monetary support expected to fuel growth

People's Bank to take multiple measures to reduce financing costs 'facing market players'

By **ZHOU LANXU**
*zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn*

Ramped-up monetary support is expected to strengthen China's economic rebound from COVID-19 this year and also cement market confidence in the Chinese currency, according to experts and international investment bankers.

Their views are backed by the latest commitment by the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, to step up support for demand and supply to improve economic performance.

"A reasonably more accommodative monetary condition will be a necessity for China's economic recovery," said Kang Yong, chief economist at KPMG China. There is enough policy space for China to cut interest rates and the reserve requirement ratio — the proportion of money that lenders must hold as reserves — in the first quarter, he added.

Multipronged policy support will help shore up market confidence as COVID-19 disruptions wane, with economic activity likely to see a substantial rebound after Spring Festival later this month, Kang said.

The central bank said in a statement on Wednesday that multiple measures will be taken to "reduce the financing costs facing market players" and "keep liquidity reasonably ample", as part of its efforts to stabilize economic growth, employment and price levels.

The PBOC will ramp up financial support for domestic demand and supply, boost consumption and support the construction of key infrastructure and major projects, said the statement, which was issued after a meeting that set its work agenda for 2023.

Wang Tao, head of Asia economics at UBS Investment Bank, said she expects China's monetary policy to maintain liquidity at an ample level, adding that there is the possibility of a small RRR cut following one in December. An RRR cut helps expand bank lending to the real economy and stimulate economic growth.

Experts said keeping growth stable should remain the top priority of monetary policy, despite the concerns of some that further accommodative moves could widen interest rate differentials between the United States and China and weaken the renminbi.

"In our view, China's growth outlook appears more important to the renminbi than factors such as interest rate differentials and the current account balance," Shan Hui, Goldman Sachs' chief China economist, said in a research report.

The investment bank recently revised its 2023 growth forecast for China from 4.5 percent to 5.2 percent, after the optimization of the country's COVID response policy in December and against a lower comparison base in 2022.

With China's economic prospects improving, the renminbi has rallied since November. On Thursday, the central parity rate of the renminbi against the US dollar stood at 6.8926, up 205 basis points from Wednesday, marking its strongest level in about four months, market tracker Wind Info said.

KPMG's Kang said the renminbi might see slight appreciation against the US dollar this year amid faster domestic economic growth and slower US monetary tightening. He added that China's economic growth for 2023 may accelerate to about 5.2 percent from the estimated 2.8 percent for last year.

# Address: Chinese wisdom helps tackle global challenges

*From page 1*

China is contributing to human civilizations through strenuous efforts on its own path to modernization. This is exemplified by its success in such areas as boosting green energy and industries facing difficulties, hosting the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and completing its own space station while inviting foreign participation.

Another achievement of Chinese wisdom in meeting global challenges is the Belt and Road Initiative, which prioritizes extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits.

According to Xi, the Chinese Dream — a dream about peace, development, cooperation and win-win outcomes — is closely linked with the beautiful dreams of people in countries around the world. The BRI's integration with domestic priorities has become more systematic and more prone to jointly building a community with a shared future.

Data shows that in 2020, China's outbound foreign direct investment was $154 billion, making the nation the world's No 1 overseas investor, compared with more than $80 million in 2012.

**As China prepares to mark the 10th anniversary of the BRI, people in the world's developing economies are expecting more strategic and livelihood projects, in areas including farming, infrastructure and transportation, to pave the way for a better life.**

Analysts estimate that the largest BRI program so far is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a collection of projects paving the way for Pakistan's growth. The projects bring jobs and other opportunities even to other countries in the region, including war-torn, poverty-stricken Afghanistan.

"We value friends and partners," Xi reaffirmed in his New Year address.

Indeed, Xi has worked hard to keep the country closely linked with the world. He met with more than 30 world leaders in recent months, keeping tight schedules at meetings of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Group of 20 and APEC, as well as the first summits of China and Arab countries and China and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The China-GCC summit in December continued the long history of friendly exchanges between the two sides. In recent decades, amid regional and international uncertainties as well as common challenges, the two sides have come to each other's aid and navigated through the difficulties together.

China has a vast and growing consumer market and a complete industrial system, while the GCC, with rich energy resources, is embracing diversified economic development. As both belong to the family of Eastern civilizations, their peoples enjoy close bonds of traditional friendship and solidarity in times of adversity.

In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Xi and leaders of Arab states explored ways to build together a joint community with a shared future that highlights win-win cooperation, common security and sustainable development.

As China prepares to mark the 10th anniversary of the BRI, people in the world's developing economies are expecting more strategic and livelihood projects, in areas including farming, infrastructure and transportation, to pave the way for a better life.

Moreover, as Xi said in his address, "We stand firm on the right side of history and on the side of human civilization and progress." It is certain that China will continue to be a contributor to global progress, an engine of sustainable growth and a guardian of world peace.

Over time, the proposed elements of China's modernization and vision for better global governance will present the world with not only a moderately prosperous, democratic and strong country, but also further impetus to drive economic development, advances in science and technology, more robust creativity and a more beautiful environment.

*The author is secretary-general of the Pakistan China Friendship Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

# Path: Ideas 'simple, well-detailed and supported'

*From page 1*

Stephen Perry, chairman of The 48 Group Club — an independent business network committed to promoting trade and cultural links between the UK and China — said that with the changes happening globally, "we needed a new way for the world to relate and work together and President Xi's ideas are the only ones on the table. They are simple, well-detailed and supported."

Perry welcomed Xi's call to reform the global economic governance system, adding that only when it adapts to new dynamics in the international economic architecture can the global governance system sustain global growth.

"For too long, the world has been beset by the 'North-South' divide between developed and developing countries, and this is severely compounded by the 'East-West' divide in ideologies and values, said Loh, from National University of Singapore.

"A good model of fair and equitable governance undergirding the global economy is overdue. ... It must unify the countries and yet respect the differences between these countries — this is the only path for global progress to be made."

# Experts slam curbs on travelers from China

By **CHINA DAILY**

Health experts and international organizations have criticized the requirement by some countries for travelers from China to have a negative COVID-19 test as a condition for entry, saying it will not help prevent the spread of the virus.

The United States, Canada, India, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia are among the countries that have announced tougher measures on travelers from China where the BF.7 strain — a shortened name for the BA.5.2.1.7 Omicron variant — is prevalent.

Kerry Bowman, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto's Temerty Faculty of Medicine, said that Canada's requirement for travelers from China to have proof of a negative COVID test was a political move not based on science.

"This isn't the early days of the pandemic," he said, according to The Canadian Press, the national news agency. "So, I do think it's largely political."

Isaac Bogoch, an associate professor at the same faculty, told The Canadian Press that focused and targeted travel measures don't do much to prevent the spread of COVID. Canada was unable to prevent variants of the Alpha, Delta and the Omicron strains from entering the country, Bogoch said.

"Requiring a negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test from Chinese travelers, from a science and medical standpoint, will not have much impact for Canada," he added.

Australia's chief medical officer, Professor Paul Kelly, said in a Dec 31 letter to the country's health minister, Mark Butler, that, "I do not believe that there is sufficient public health rationale to impose any restriction or additional requirements on travelers from China."

He said "there is no specific threat from a variant with increased pathogenicity and immune escape", adding Australia has very high levels of vaccination, especially among members of the population most at risk from the virus.

"The BF.7 Omicron subvariant that appears to be a key driver to the outbreak in China has been present in Australia for some time and has been superseded by other circulating subvariants," Kelly said.

Fiona Russell, an infectious diseases epidemiologist from the University of Melbourne, said predeparture testing of travelers from one country alone would have a "very minimal impact" on preventing importation of new variants.

Russell said in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that people in China could be deterred from taking a supervised test to travel overseas because of fears of "discriminatory policies".

French epidemiologist Dominique Costagliola said that given that France is currently reducing its capacity to sequence the virus, testing arrivals from China seems little more than a "communication" exercise. "It is not very useful, apart from giving the impression that we are doing something," she told Agence France-Presse.

International Air Transport Association Director General Willie Walsh criticized countries for introducing COVID-19 testing and other measures for travelers from China, "even though the virus is already circulating widely within their borders".

"It is extremely disappointing to see this knee-jerk reinstatement of measures that have proved ineffective over the last three years," Walsh said in a statement.

Airports Council International Europe released a statement expressing "regret regarding the actions of a number of states within the EU and globally for unilaterally imposing health-related travel requirements including systematic pre-departure or on-arrival testing of travelers from China".

China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning called on Wednesday for science-based and proportionate COVID-19 response measures.

> "They should not be used for political manipulation, there should not be discriminatory measures against certain countries, and measures should not affect normal travel and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation."
>
> **Mao Ning,** China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman

"They should not be used for political manipulation, there should not be discriminatory measures against certain countries, and measures should not affect normal travel and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation," she said.

New Zealand's minister for COVID-19 response, Ayesha Verrall, announced on Wednesday that her country will not require travelers from China to be tested for the virus, saying there was minimal health risk to the public.

"We know that BF.7 is the prevalent variant in China and that it hasn't caused significant outbreaks in other countries that, like New Zealand, have already been exposed to the BA.5 variant. So public health measures are not required to protect New Zealanders," she said in a Radio New Zealand interview.

Verrall said scientists from the country's Institute of Environmental Science and Research would begin a program to test wastewater from international flights to detect the virus in the coming weeks.

Rather than looking at China, many virus experts have turned their attention to the US and the rapidly spreading XBB.1.5 Omicron subvariant.

It has jumped from less than 10 percent of new infections in mid-December to about 40 percent at the end of the month, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 tracker.

Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at the UK's University of East Anglia, told AFP that the main future concern for the UK is the XBB.1.5 variant, which has probably already entered the country from the US and is now spreading.

## Much-needed supplies

Displaced Yemenis receive humanitarian aid on Wednesday at a camp in the Hays district of war-torn Hodeida, Yemen. KHALED ZIAD / AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# CHINA

## Protective care

A medical worker checks the blood pressure of an elderly woman at her home in Chaoyang district, Beijing, on Wednesday to make sure it's safe for her to get vaccinated. Community medical centers in Chaoyang have been taking telephone bookings for free door-to-door vaccinations for the elderly. LEI BINBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Experts come to defense of national epidemic strategy

### For three years, government has acted on science in virus prevention, control

By LI LEI
*lilei@chinadaily.com.cn*

China's decisions to cut many long-standing COVID-19 restrictions in November and downgrade the management of the virus from Jan 8 were consistent with its previous actions in refining COVID-19 response measures to handle emerging challenges, according to experts.

On Nov 11, the State Council's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism, the country's COVID-19 control task force, published 20 measures on optimizing epidemic control.

The regulatory changes — including abandoning the circuit breaker mechanism for inbound flights and further shortening the time that international arrivals had to spend at isolation hotels — kick-started a cascade of changes. Before the end of the year, China had stopped tracing COVID-19 cases and allowed patients to isolate at home.

Testing requirements were cut for everyday scenarios, such as taking the subway, dining at restaurants and traveling out of town. Fitness clubs, karaoke bars and other entertainment venues were allowed to resume business. From Jan 8, inbound travelers will no longer have to undergo quarantine or take a nucleic acid test upon arrival.

Some Western media outlets have called the reforms an "abrupt and dramatic" turnabout.

However, the accusations "ignored the fact that China has changed its response strategy based on a comprehensive assessment of the mutation of the virus, the COVID situation and ongoing response efforts", Xinhua News Agency said in a commentary on Dec 30.

During the fight against COVID-19, China has effectively coordinated its COVID response with economic and social development, and refined the response policy in light of the evolving situation, it said.

At multiple news conferences and on other occasions, China's top health officials and experts have maintained that its COVID response had been modified constantly ever since the outset of the pandemic.

At a meeting with health officials on Nov 11, Vice-Premier Sun Chunlan described the rollout of the 20 measures as one of many "small but non-stop steps" taken over the years to optimize COVID control. The phrase has since been employed by many health officials to explain the dynamics of how China's COVID strategy evolved.

Multiple changes to COVID control rules in a short period – as were the case in the recent adjustments – were not uncommon. Since Feb 2020, China has rolled out a total of nine editions of epidemic control plans to guide frontline workers. However, the first six of them were published in tandem in slightly more than a month between Feb 1 and March 7 in 2020, when understanding of the virus was still murky and few clinical data were available. The updates slowed as control expertise accumulated. The seventh edition was not published until September, 2020.

The eighth and the ninth editions came in May, 2021, and June of last year, respectively.

A Beijing News report analyzing the evolution of the country's control strategies said changes to the last few editions of the plan were more reflective of the experience and lessons the control task force learned on the ground. For example, the eighth edition ramped up scrutiny over freight after more domestic outbreaks were traced back to workers in cold-chain logistics. The ninth, however, placed more emphasis on minimizing the duration, cost and scale of lockdowns and made control more precise, as the ever-elusive Omicron subvariants triggered more frequent and lengthier restrictions.

The continuous refining of the control methodologies has helped the country "effectively respond to five global COVID waves and avoid widespread infections with the original strain and the Delta variant, which are relatively more pathogenic than the other variants", Xinhua said.

China has worked over the past three years to bolster the inoculation rate, including among vulnerable groups such as older adults. Official data showed that around 239.4 million, or 90.6 percent, of people aged 60 and older had received at least one shot by Nov 28. About 228.1 million, or 86.4 percent had received two shots and about 181.5 million had received a booster shot. To reduce the impact of having fewer restrictions on the elderly, China is working to raise the group's inoculation rate further. Measures including "express channels" for the elderly have been adopted in different places.

Xinhua said instead of "squandering the time" as some Western media reported, China in the past three years has developed effective COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment expertise and medicines, and kept improving its capacities in terms of medical treatment, pathogen detection and epidemiological investigation.

In sync with the current situation, China is shoring up the output of medicine, masks, vaccines and other medical supplies. It has also accelerated efforts to expand the capacity of fever clinics and intensive care units at medical institutions.

In a recent interview, Liang Wannian, head of the COVID-19 response expert panel of the National Health Commission, voiced his disagreement over defining the new adjustment as "laissez-faire". He said Chinese people are facing up to the epidemic together with the government.

# Oral COVID-19 therapeutics available for most at risk

By XU XIAOMIN and YU YILEI
in Shanghai

Two major oral antiviral pills, Pfizer's Paxlovid and the domestically-developed Azvudine, are now available for COVID-19 treatment at community clinics in several districts in Shanghai and Beijing.

The medications can be acquired with a prescription by elderly or vulnerable COVID-19 patients who are in the early stages of their infections, according to health authorities.

In Minhang district, all its 14 community-level medical institutions can prescribe Paxlovid for patients. The price is 1,890 yuan ($275) and is partially covered by medical insurance.

In Huangpu district, Paxlovid has been used for treatment for several days among community clinics but doctors have cautioned there is a strict criterion for usage, according to an article published on the district's official WeChat account.

"The drug is suitable for vulnerable seniors with underlying diseases or who are unvaccinated and have the potential to become seriously ill. We suggest for them to use it as early as possible, ideally within five days from first showing symptoms," said Chen Zhuo, a doctor with Laoximen medical center in Huangpu district. "We will look at data such as liver function indices and blood oxygen saturation to help patients decide whether they need to use the medicine."

As stated on Pfizer's website, the possible side effects of Paxlovid are allergic reactions and liver problems. Other side effects include an altered sense of taste, diarrhea and high blood pressure.

In Beijing, Paxlovid can be prescribed with similar criteria in several community clinics in districts including Chaoyang, Haidian and Dongcheng.

A doctor surname Cui who works at the Jimenli community medical center in Haidian district told China Daily the drugs are available to senior patients over 65 with underlying diseases and unvaccinated seniors over 80. She said it takes patients around half an hour to complete the evaluation and prescription procedure before getting the medicine.

Azvudine, a drug for treating adult COVID-19 patients with moderate symptoms, is currently available at 115 hospitals in Shanghai, as well as at 113 community clinics, Shanghai Observer reported. The price is 270 yuan per bottle and is covered by medical insurance.

The National Medical Products Administration said on Dec 30 that it had granted conditional market approval for the import of Merck's Molnupiravir. With this latest approval, a total of three COVID-19 therapeutic drugs, including Paxlovid and Azvudine, are all available in China.

*Wang Songsong contributed to this story.*

*Contact the writers at xuxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn*

# Regulator cracks down on medical price gouging

By YANG ZEKUN
*yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn*

Market supervision and law enforcement have been enhanced to ensure the stable pricing and quality of epidemic-related drugs and materials, according to the State Administration for Market Regulation.

With the relaxation of COVID-19 prevention and control policies in December, demand for drugs and other materials related to the epidemic has skyrocketed.

To ensure that prices remain stable and that only quality products are available on the market, and to deter illegal activities aimed at exploiting the increased demand, a series of measures have been put in place to keep such actions in check, according to a recently released SAMR work plan.

The plan calls for the deployment of market regulatory authorities at all levels to engage in a special operation, which will last until the end of June, to ensure the stable price and quality of epidemic drugs and medical supplies.

The operation is a comprehensive effort to mobilize the market regulatory system to tackle illegal activities in the field of drugs and medical supplies related to the epidemic, Luo Wen, head of the SAMR, said at a meeting on Wednesday in Beijing.

He asked the authorities to respond quickly to the changing situation, enforce the law accurately, conduct practical supervision and impose strict punishment on violators.

The document asked market regulatory bodies to comprehensively strengthen supervision and law enforcement, and resolutely crack down on price gouging, fake advertising and on the infringement of intellectual property.

The authorities should also enhance oversight on the online transactions of drugs and medical supplies and the production and distribution of medicines and devices, and take multiple measures such as using monitoring and early warning systems to form a deterrence to illegal activities, it said.

Reporting and tip-offs must be handled promptly and law enforcement must maintain the market order and improve the business environment, the document said.

In an example case released by the SAMR, in Dec 2022, the market regulatory bureau of Jixi in Northeast China's Heilongjiang province conducted an inspection on a pharmacy and found that the retail price of a type of anti-epidemic drug rose from 14.5 yuan ($2.1) per box to 35 yuan without any evidence of an increase in costs. It was suspected as an illegal act of price gouging.

After further investigation, the bureau fined the pharmacy 50,000 yuan and ordered it to immediately correct the illegal behavior.

On Jan 2, the Ministry of Public Security ordered a strict crackdown on the production and sale of counterfeit epidemic drugs, as well as relevant medical devices, such as antigen testing kits, oximeters and oxygenerators.

Police forces nationwide should keep a close eye on the production, wholesale and retail of COVID-19-related medical supplies and relevant trading on online platforms, and promptly file cases of violations for investigation.

Task forces will be organized to solve serial, transregional and organized crime cases to resolutely destroy related criminal networks, the ministry said.

A medical worker checks oxygen bags at Xietu subdistrict community medical center in Shanghai, on Wednesday. Shanghai has expanded the capabilities of its community medical centers so they can treat more COVID-19 patients amid the surge in cases in the city. FANG ZHE / XINHUA

# Community treatment reducing hospital burden

By CHINA DAILY

Shanghai has further increased the capacity of its community medical centers, aiming for the early detection and treatment of COVID-19 patients with the potential for severe symptoms to relieve the pressure on major hospitals, according to the Shanghai Health Commission on Tuesday.

From Dec 29, the city began expanding the overall capacity of community medical centers.

Before that, Shanghai had already opened 2,600 fever clinics in communities to tackle surging COVID-19 infections.

As of Jan 2, a total of 238 fever wards, 665 fever beds, 1,711 places for oxygen therapy, 2,562 places for infusion treatment and 243 cardio monitors were added to community medical centers.

"Communities are key to COVID-19 treatment, with local medical centers and doctors taking on the brunt of the burden to protect lives and ease the pressure on hospitals at this time," Zhang Wenhong, head of the infectious disease department at Shanghai Huashan Hospital Affiliated to Fudan University, said during an inspection tour of a community medical center in Baoshan district on Monday.

"Most patients won't develop severe symptoms if they receive timely and proper treatment at community medical centers, and that hugely relieves pressure on major hospitals."

The Jiuting community medical center in Songjiang district has set up a special zone to treat COVID-19 patients, which is equipped with medical equipment including four cardiac monitors and 14 pulse oximeters.

The center has 84 beds, which are currently more than 90 percent occupied, according to Zhu Bei, the center's deputy director.

The center has an agreement with Jiuting Hospital to speed up the transfer of severe cases, Zhu said.

After its extension, the Anting community medical center in Jiading district is now capable of giving intravenous fluids to 50 people at a time.

The center's working hours have been extended to 9 pm, and the number of patients requiring IV drips it receives per day is around 35, with 90 percent being redirected from hospitals, according to the staff at the center.

According to the city government, it is enhancing the training of community medical workers and providing them with remote guidance.

*Zheng Zheng contributed to this story.*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



WORLD US

# House fails to elect speaker after three days

By AI HEPING in New York
*aiheping@chinadailyusa.com*

The US House of Representatives on Thursday failed to elect a speaker after 11 ballots in three days, leaving California Republican Kevin McCarthy unable to appease conservative holdouts by making more concessions for the gavel.

The House voted to adjourn until noon Friday as McCarthy and some of his detractors appeared to be coalescing around a deal.

The deadlock to elect a speaker surpassed the mark set in 1923, when it took nine ballots over three days, the last time a speaker wasn't elected on the first ballot. The 11 votes marked the most since 1860, when a leader was selected after 44 ballots. The record was set in 1856, when it took 133 rounds.

While most Republicans continued to back McCarthy, 20 continued to oppose him. His GOP opponents nominated two other Republicans — Representative Kevin Hern of Oklahoma, and former president Donald Trump — to draw votes from McCarthy. Trump received one vote.

Florida Representative Matt Gaetz nominated Trump. He voted for Trump on two earlier ballots, but it was the first time the ex-president had been nominated formally.

"I nominate President Trump because we must make our country great again, and he can start by making the House of Representatives great again," Gaetz said.

The 57-year-old McCarthy had 200 votes on Thursday. He needs 218 to win the speakership.

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries had the unanimous support — 212 votes — of his caucus.

Representative Kevin McCarthy (right) talks with Republican Representative Andy Ogles during the eighth round of voting in the House chamber as the House meets for the third day to elect a speaker and convene the 118th Congress in Washington on Thursday. ALEX BRANDON / AP

McCarthy's determination for the speakership has prompted him to agree to conditions that he has ruled out in the past.

He proposed more key concessions to get votes, including agreeing to propose a change that would allow just one member to call for a vote to push out a sitting speaker, according to The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and CNN.

That was down from the threshold of five that McCarthy had previously agreed to, according to two people familiar with the matter, the Journal reported.

There also was an agreement to place more members of the House Freedom Caucus, which has many McCarthy detractors among its ranks, on powerful committees, according to the two people, the Journal said. The offer also included a promise to bring up for a vote a controversial border plan and a term-limit requirement, the people said.

The question was how many concessions he will have to make to win the support of the holdouts without weakening the speakership if he gets it or making the House ungovernable.

McCarthy and his allies huddled with defectors on Thursday evening in a room in the Capitol to try to finalize a deal.

CNN reported that GOP Representative Ralph Norman, one of the holdouts against McCarthy, said a deal that is in the works includes certain changes the conservatives fighting McCarthy want. Norman said most of the deal revolves around rule changes like a 72-hour rule to review bills, term limits and open amendments.

During the nominating of candidates for speaker, Colorado Republican Lauren Boebert continued her attack on McCarthy when she again nominated Oklahoma's Kevin Hern as speaker.

She said: "You see that Kevin McCarthy does not have the votes. You are understanding that he is not going to get there," and that "we need to get to a point where we start evaluating what life after Kevin McCarthy looks like."

The Republicans have such a slim majority that it has essentially empowered a small bloc of members to upend the chamber. And that drew a warning from former House speaker Newt Gingrich, who said that the anti-McCarthy Republicans were "playing with fire".

"This is the greatest danger we've had as a party since 1964," Gingrich said in an interview, referring to the Republican National Convention that saw moderates facing off against conservative insurgents.

The Republican base, he said, is "watching chaos in the House and they're watching the potential for a never-Trump and an always-Trump collision that could be devastatingly divisive".

Gingrich, a longtime Trump ally, warned that the leadership fight could have lasting ramifications, leading the base to wonder why they donated money to Senate and House candidates "to get this mess".

"I think the guys in the House are doing substantial damage to the Republican Party and don't even realize it," he said.

Former New Jersey governor Chris Christie, a potential 2024 Republican presidential contender, said: "This is what happens when you're a party out of power that doesn't have a clear national leader."

Republican New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu said in a statement: "Should we really be surprised that a bunch of morons in Congress are holding things up? Of course not."

*Agencies contributed to this story.*

# Report: US schools closing due to lower enrollment, funding

By AI HEPING in New York

US school districts across the country reportedly are closing buildings because schools have lost more than a million students since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a lack of students or money to keep them open.

Public school enrollment fell by more than 1.4 million students to 49.4 million between fall 2019 and fall 2020 — or 3 percent — according to data from the US Education Department, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday.

School officials say the decline in public school enrollment also is being caused by declining birthrates, an increase in home schooling, and more competition from private and charter schools, according to the Journal.

An analysis by the newspaper found that enrollment has fallen in roughly 85 of the nation's largest 100 public school districts for which data was available, with New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Fort Worth, Texas, all experiencing enrollment drops of around 10 percent.

A decline in students causes school districts to lose funding because most public schools get their money on a per-pupil basis, and a closing of a school can cause more families to leave, which can prompt greater enrollment declines and funding.

The Journal cited 16 school closings in Jefferson County, Colorado, in November; five closings in St. Paul, Minnesota, last summer; and seven closings in Oakland, California, last February because of declining enrollment and funding problems.

Districts in cities including Denver and Indianapolis have developed plans to shut down underused schools, the Journal reported, and superintendents say more closures are inevitable unless enrollment drops are reversed.

"We are subsidizing and adding funds to those schools as much as we possibly can, but it's just not sustainable," St. Paul Public Schools Superintendent Joe Gothard told the Journal.

"Nobody wants to close a school," Tracy Dorland, superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools, told the Journal, but her school board approved her plan to shut down underused campuses.

COVID-19 struck as enrollment was already dropping in many cities as a result of decreases in numbers of school-age children and the rise of other educational options such as private schools and remote lessons.

Charter school enrollment rose more than 7 percent from the 2019-20 school year to the 2020-21 school year, and then fell slightly in the 2021-22 school year to about 3.7 million students, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Workers load packages into Amazon Rivian electric trucks at an Amazon facility in Poway, California, on Nov 16. SANDY HUFFAKER / REUTERS

# Amazon axing 18,000 jobs amid uncertainty

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

US online retailer Amazon, which grew massively in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, is slashing more than 18,000 jobs.

The company, which benefited from virus-induced changes in shopping habits that saw remote purchases and home deliveries thrive, has told workers it must now cut costs.

"We don't take these decisions lightly or underestimate how much they might affect the lives of those who are impacted," Andy Jassy, the company's president and chief executive officer, said in a memo to Amazon's 1.5 million employees.

Jassy said the company had "hired rapidly over several years" and the "uncertain economy" means it must now scale back.

The job cuts are Amazon's largest-ever round of layoffs and will impact employees in all parts of the world, but Jassy said most will come from the Amazon Fresh brand, which specializes in groceries, and the Amazon Go brand, which includes a chain of physical retail stores. Cuts will also be made in the company's human resources department.

"Companies that last a long time go through different phases. They're not in heavy people expansion mode every year," Jassy added in the widely leaked memo.

The BBC reported that Amazon has suffered recently not only from a dip in online sales attributed to the easing of pandemic restrictions and the return of many people to the high street, but also from a fall in advertising revenue triggered by companies slashing budgets in the face of rising inflation.

Amazon said workers being let go will learn of their fate by Jan 18.

News of the job cuts followed recent reports of a hiring freeze, and claims that the company had suspended construction for some of its distribution hubs and warehouses.

Wider trend

Reuters reported that the Amazon layoffs look to be part of a wider trend of job losses throughout the technology industry that it said is likely to get worse in the coming months.

The trend has seen Facebook's parent company Meta announce plans in November to cut 13 percent of its global workforce of 87,000. And Twitter has also made large job cuts recently, with around half of its workforce having been cut since October.

Sky News reported that the job cuts at Amazon signal the enterprise's loss of faith in the idea of venturing into physical stores and suggested it will likely focus on its core e-commerce business in the future.

The Press Association said it understands most of the job cuts will be made in Europe, where a cost of living crisis and high rate of inflation have led many people to cut back significantly on spending.

Ironically, Amazon had recently doubled the basic pay rate it offers workers, in a bid to compete more aggressively for employees.

# Severe storms pummel California

By LIU YINMENG in Los Angeles
*teresaliu@chinadailyusa.com*

A series of thunderstorms that have barreled through California since the New Year's weekend have killed at least two people, knocked out power for tens of thousands of people and threatened much of the state with flash flooding.

"We anticipate that this may be one of the most challenging and impactful series of storms to touch down in California in the last five years," Nancy Ward, the new director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, told The Associated Press.

According to the National Weather Service, the hazardous winds, snow and rain forecast on the West Coast is expected to continue through at least Jan 13-19.

A 2-year-old boy was killed Wednesday evening when a tree crashed through the roof of his family's mobile home in Occidental, "pinning or landing" on top of him, according to NBC News, which quoted a spokesperson from the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office.

The boy's father and mother were home at the time, but they did not report any injuries.

A 19-year-old woman in Fairfield was killed on Wednesday morning while traveling through a partially flooded road. She lost control of her vehicle when it hydroplaned and crashed into a utility pole.

"Unfortunately, speed unsafe for conditions was likely the primary reason for the collision, with water on the road being a contributing factor," the Fairfield Police Department said in a statement.

The severe thunderstorms prompted California Governor Gavin Newsom to proclaim a state of emergency Wednesday.

"California is mobilizing to keep people safe from the impacts of the incoming storm. This state of emergency will allow the state to respond quickly as the storm develops and support local officials in their ongoing response," Newsom said.

Janisse Quiñones, senior vice-president of electric operations at PG&E, told reporters Thursday that the state has received about 15 inches of rain since the storms hit, which created "a very critical situation" for the company's response efforts.

"We are expecting a storm on Saturday and another storm system Monday, which creates window of opening for restoration, (which is) very limited for our crews," she said.

On Thursday, at least 100,000 California residents were without power, according to poweroutage.us.

The powerful storms hitting California are triggered in part by the so-called atmospheric rivers, or long, flowing regions of the atmosphere that transport water vapor through the sky. When atmospheric rivers make landfall, they often release this water vapor in the form of rain or snow.

The US Drought Monitor said Thursday that the heavy rain caused portions of California and Nevada to be removed from the "exceptional drought" status, which is the most-intense drought level.

"The wettest 10-day period for Downtown San Francisco since 1871! Downtown San Francisco received 10.33" Dec 26-Jan 4 (yesterday). All time 10-day record was 14.37" in Jan 1862," the National Weather Service Bay Area tweeted Thursday.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# CES SPECIAL

# Chinese companies lead in LiDAR tech

## Light detection and ranging technology is key in push to fully autonomous driving

By **LIA ZHU** in Las Vegas
*liazhu@chinadailyusa.com*

WeRide, an autonomous driving technology company, partners with Hesai, a LiDAR company, to showcase a Level 3 autonomous driving vehicle with WeRide's new sensor suite SS5.1 at the CES 2023. LIA ZHU / CHINA DAILY

Fully autonomous consumer cars may not be far off as more cars capable of high driving automation are on the road with the advance of a key technology called LiDAR.

The technology will make driving safer and smarter, and it will realize mass production in near future, according to a few Chinese LiDAR companies at CES on Thursday.

LiDAR, which stands for light detection and ranging, is a sensor technology that detects objects and maps their distances so it can create a map of the environment around it.

Honda and BMW and some other automotive companies have announced the imminent availability of Level 3 option.

Among the different levels of autonomy, Level 3 means conditional automated driving with the human driver ready to take over once summoned.

Level 4 means high driving automation, and Level 5 is fully automated driving.

LiDAR makes that possible, and Chinese LiDAR technologies dominate the global market.

Hesai, a major LiDAR company, debuted its latest fully solid-state LiDAR product FT120 at CES. To accommodate the challenges that autonomous vehicles face within their perception system, Hesai has developed the full solid-state FT120 for near-range blind-spot coverage.

Designed as a blind-spot detection sensor for Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), the FT120 helps vehicles accurately identify small objects while turning, passing and parking, and improves overall driving safety in tough scenarios.

The FT120 has a 100 degree by 75-degree ultrawide field of view (FOV). Its maximum detection range is 100 meters. Data rate per second is 192,000 points (in single return mode) and overall resolution is 160 (H) x 120 (V), according to the company.

Compared with cameras, LiDAR provides better perception capabilities and therefore more safety to drivers, said Su Yu, marketing director of Hesai.

"For instance, cameras are affected by light and do not work well at night, but LiDAR does depend on light," she told China Daily.

Together with its long-range hybrid solid-state LiDAR AT128, Hesai said the two sensors form a complete automotive grade LiDAR perception solution.

Hesai witnessed quick growth in 2022, with 100,000 lifetime LiDAR units delivered in December. It has established partnerships in the US, with companies such as Nvidia, Zoox, and Nuro.

As for 2023, Hesai's new Maxwell intelligent manufacturing center will begin operation in Shanghai this summer. It will enhance mass production and delivery capabilities to over a million units per year by 2025, said Su.

"We have received pre-orders of FT120 with 1 million units from top automotive OEMs and will begin deliveries in the second half of 2023," Su told China Daily at CES.

Hesai and WeRide, an autonomous-driving technology company, partnered to showcase a Level 3 autonomous driving vehicle with WeRide's new sensor suite SS 5.1 at this year's CES.

The SS 5.1 is designed for Level 2 and Level 3 autonomous driving applications. Based on multiple sensor sets, SS 5.1 provides a 360-degree field of view with a front detection range of up to 200 meters. This sensor suite also can be adapted to L4 autonomous driving.

WeRide has formed a strategic partnership with Bosch, the top Tier 1 vendor for automotive OEMs, to co-develop advanced Level 2 and Level 3 autonomous driving products, which are set to launch this year.

> "Our next step is to localize our business in the US and transform the mode to 'Designed in China and Made in the US.'"
>
> **Zhao Peipei**, president of RoboSense

As ADAS and autonomous-driving technology advance, the sensor requirements and system architecture need to evolve to address the needs of the industry, the companies said.

RoboSense, a Shenzhen-based LiDAR company, presented the new E1 solid-state LiDAR for short range and M Series for long range.

E1 will be mass produced in the second half of 2023. It will support partners to further improve their smart vehicles' all-scenario perception capability, according to the company.

In the US market, RoboSense has supplied LiDAR products to Lucid Motors and is committed to building up more partnerships, Zhao Peipei, president of RoboSense, told China Daily.

"So far, we have set up offices in Detroit and San Jose. Our next step is to localize our business in the US and transform the mode to "Designed in China and Made in the US,"" said Zhao.

Su said her company is also committed to the US market. "In terms of ADAS, the US is the second-largest market next to China," she said. "We are currently in talks with several US clients. Hopefully we'll have good news this year."

**CHINA DAILY USA**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vol. 38 — No.1001

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# SPORTS

BASKETBALL

## Antetokounmpo lifts Bucks over Raptors

### Greek superstar hits season's second triple-double, including 30 points, 10 assists and 21 rebounds

TORONTO — Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points, 10 assists and a season-high 21 rebounds for his second triple-double of the season and Grayson Allen hit a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 11.6 seconds to go in overtime as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Toronto Raptors 104-101 on Wednesday night.

Antetokounmpo, who scored a career-high 55 points on Tuesday night against Washington, came in having posted at least 40 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in each of his past three games. The two-time MVP shot 7 for 18 against Toronto, making 1 of 3 from 3-point range and 15 of 21 at the free throw line.

"On a back-to-back, he used a lot of energy both last night and tonight," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "They (Toronto) are very physical. For him to find a way to get us over the top was huge."

Milwaukee improved to 4-0 in the second game of a back-to-back.

"Obviously your body is tired," Antetokounmpo said. "It's more mental than physical, just being about to go out there and get the job done on a back-to-back always feels good."

The Bucks led 90-69 with 3:50 left in the fourth quarter, but Toronto cut it to 97-94 with 25 seconds to go before Milwaukee's 26th turnover gave the Raptors the ball back, allowing Gary Trent Jr. to hit a tying 3 with 0.8 seconds left. Antetokounmpo couldn't convert an alley-oop at the buzzer.

"That was an experience, but a loss is a loss," Toronto's Fred VanVleet said of the back-and-forth game.

Antetokounmpo assisted on Allen's clinching jump shot from the corner late in OT.

"It felt like it was a dart to Grayson," Budenholzer said. "It hit him right in the shooting pocket. Big-time play, big-time pass."

Allen praised Antetokounmpo for his precision pass.

"He was driving and falling down with three people on him," Allen said. "It was a pretty amazing pass to make that accurately. It made it an easy shot for me."

VanVleet missed a 3 at the other end and Antetokounmpo grabbed his 21st rebound.

Allen scored 16 points, Bobby Portis Jr. had 14 points and 12 rebounds and Pat Connaughton scored 15 points for the Bucks. Milwaukee won for the third time in four games since losing a season-high four straight.

VanVleet had 28 points and 12 assists, Trent scored 22 points and Scottie Barnes had 17 but the struggling Raptors lost for the sixth time in seven home games. Toronto has lost 10 of 13 overall.

"I think everybody's well aware we're going through a really difficult patch, maybe the most difficult patch we've been through," coach Nick Nurse said.

Toronto missed its first 15 shots before VanVleet made a driving layup with 4:36 left in the first quarter. Earlier, a few fans booed after VanVleet missed a 3, Toronto's 13th consecutive miss to open the game.

The Raptors shot 2 for 23 in the first and Milwaukee went 5 for 24 as the teams combined for more turnovers (10) than made baskets. The Bucks led 13-12 after one. According to ESPN, it was the lowest-scoring quarter in the NBA this season.

**Tip-ins**

Bucks: Antetokounmpo had 18 rebounds in a Dec 11 loss at Houston. ... Brook Lopez had 19 rebounds. ... Jrue Holiday (non-COVID illness) and Joe Ingles (left knee) were out after playing Tuesday at Washington. George Hill (non-COVID illness) sat for the fourth straight game. ... Khris Middleton (right knee) missed his 10th straight game. ... Antetokounmpo had five turnovers in the first half. He finished with 12 of Milwaukee's 28.

Raptors: All of Barnes' points came in the fourth quarter and overtime. ... Took a season-high 116 field goal attempts. ... Scored seven bench points for the second consecutive game, both losses.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

TENNIS

## Djokovic recovers from shaky start to reach quarters

Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates his victory against France's Quentin Halys during their men's singles match at the Adelaide International in Adelaide, Australia, on Thursday. AFP

ADELAIDE, Australia — Novak Djokovic overcame a shaky start to beat Frenchman Quentin Halys on Thursday and reach the Adelaide quarterfinals, stepping up his preparations for the Australian Open.

The top seed from Serbia won 7-6 (3), 7-6 (5) and will face Canada's Denis Shapovalov in the last eight of the Adelaide International.

Djokovic returned to the scene of his 2007 title run on Tuesday with a comfortable straight-sets win over France's Constant Lestienne.

He backed that up against Lestienne's doubles partner Halys but was slow to get going, slumping 2-5 in the first set before clinching victory.

"It was a great performance from my opponent today," said the 35-year-old Djokovic, who is warming up for a tilt at a 10th Australian Open title after missing last year's Grand Slam when he was deported over his vaccination status.

"He played like a top-10 player today.

"As far as my game goes, I feel good on the court," Djokovic added.

"I didn't have such a great start and he was serving really well. Tough to break so two tiebreaks were probably the most realistic score."

With the crowd firmly behind the former world No 1 on a packed center court, Djokovic — who won Wimbledon among five titles last year — lost his opening service game against the 64th-ranked Frenchman. He earned two break points in game three but was unable to convert, biding his time until the seventh game, when he broke to love then raced through the tiebreak.

Nothing separated them in the second set, which again went to a tiebreak, after Halys saved two match points at 5-4, with Djokovic finally prevailing when Halys netted a backhand.

Djokovic's reward is a clash with world No 18 Shapovalov, who sailed into the last eight with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin.

Djokovic has won all seven previous encounters with the Canadian.

Shapovalov is still riding the wave of leading Canada to the Davis Cup title and said he was determined to maintain his good form.

"Definitely trying to implement that on the individual side. Obviously so far it's been a great start. Hopefully I can capitalize on a good start to the week and definitely excited for what's to come," he said.

Also in the last 16, American Sebastian Korda beat Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut 6-4, 6-4. Adelaide defending champion Thanasi Kokkinakis meets Jannik Sinner later Thursday.

In the women's draw, Czech teen Linda Noskova defeated American Claire Liu 6-2, 6-2 to power into the last eight where she will play Victoria Azarenka, who beat Chinese player Zheng Qinwen 6-2, 7-5.

But former French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko crashed out to Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu 6-3, 6-0, who will face Russian world No 9 and fourth seed Veronika Kudermetova next.

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# SPORTS

SKIING

## Shiffrin closes in on Vonn's record

### Slalom victory is American's 81st on World Cup circuit

ZAGREB, Croatia — Mikaela Shiffrin felt "really excited" Wednesday after winning the first women's World Cup race of 2023.

And it wasn't because she had just moved within one victory of Lindsey Vonn's record.

"I skied better than I probably ever have," Shiffrin said.

The defending overall champion dealt best with difficult course conditions to dominate a floodlit slalom and raise her career tally to 81 World Cup wins. She could match the best mark Thursday at another slalom on the same course.

American standout Vonn set the women's record of 82 before retiring in 2019. The overall best mark is 86, from Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark.

"I'm happy, I'm incredibly happy. I mean, I had so much fun skiing today and it was really my best skiing both runs today," said Shiffrin, who beat runner-up Petra Vlhova by 0.76 seconds, with the rest of the field finishing more than 1.20 off the pace.

The former overall champion of Slovakia had won the race on the outskirts of the Croatian capital the past three seasons. Vlhova's rise to the top has motivated Shiffrin.

"I feel like I would not be here tonight with skiing like that, if it wasn't for Petra pushing the limits in the last three years. She's been so strong and it has encouraged me to keep working harder and harder and harder," Shiffrin said.

"Nothing less than the best is going to work. I was taking all the risk I needed and made it on the finish and that's just an amazing feeling when it's good enough."

Mikaela Shiffrin of the US celebrates her victory during the podium ceremony for the women slalom race at the 2022/23 FIS Alpine Ski World Cup in Zagreb on Wednesday. Shiffrin moved to within one of Lindsey Vonn's women's record of 82 World Cup wins. AFP

Shiffrin certainly has been more than just good enough in recent weeks.

The four-time overall champion stretched her winning streak to five races, which included three different events: super-G, giant slalom, and slalom.

Only two female racers have won more races in succession: Swiss skier Vreni Schneider won eight in 1988-89 and Germany's Katja Seizinger won six in 1997.

Earlier, Shiffrin won back-to-back slaloms in Finland to start the 2022-23 season.

On Wednesday, Shiffrin stood up to the challenge to defend her first-run lead as the last starter on the deteriorating Crveni Spust course.

While no racers remained without mistakes, Shiffrin never got in real trouble in her final run. She even won time on Vlhova at every split and celebrated with both arms up after crossing the finish, followed by two fist pumps.

"That was the most exciting thing of the day, that I felt so good skiing when it's a bit softer. The victory is incredible, but I'm more happy with how I feel, it's just calm," Shiffrin said.

The American said she used new skis which she and her equipment supplier Atomic developed over the past two years. The new set-up is meant to give her a better control on softer courses that have been injected with water and salt — like the one in Zagreb.

> "Nothing less than the best is going to work. I was taking all the risk I needed and made it on the finish and that's just an amazing feeling when it's good enough."
>
> **Mikaela Shiffrin,** after winning the first women's World Cup race of 2023

Shiffrin drew an unfavorable start number and began the opening run last among the top-seven ranked racers.

But she did best to keep the line between the gates, despite being bounced around by ruts and waves in the rather soft snow surface after days with temperatures of 10 to 15 degrees Celsius.

Shiffrin led Anna Swenn Larsson by 0.23 seconds. The Swede won her first World Cup slalom in November and dropped to third after the final run, swapping places with Vlhova.

"These kinds of conditions have been challenging for me, in the last two years especially. But tonight, it was just a really perfect combination of the equipment with my skiing," Shiffrin said.

"I'm just thankful when it goes well. In the last five races it went really well. So, now I am just on a groove and keep riding the wave until the wave is over."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

SOCCER

## Napoli suffers first domestic defeat as Serie A resumes

ROME — Napoli probably wishes Serie A never stopped. That its rhythm wasn't broken. That its rivals weren't given time to catch up to its high-paced play.

The southern club was handed its first domestic defeat of the season on Wednesday as the Italian league resumed after a 7-and-a-half week break for the World Cup and end-of-the-year holidays.

Edin Dzeko scored near the hour mark, goalkeeper Andre Onana made a big save in the 90th and Inter Milan beat Napoli 1-0 at the San Siro to reopen the race for the Serie A title.

"It's a big achievement beating Napoli," Inter coach Simone Inzaghi said. "It should give us a huge amount of motivation."

The only other time Napoli lost this season was against Liverpool in the Champions League on Nov 1 — a result that still enabled the Partenopei to win their group.

All of Napoli's closest challengers won.

Defending champion AC Milan pulled to within five points by beating Salernitana 2-1, Juventus moved within seven points by beating Cremonese 1-0 for its seventh straight win, and 2021 champion Inter is now eight points back in fourth.

It's not a good sign for Napoli with two more key matches coming up this month against Juventus and Roma.

With Napoli forwards Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Victor Osimhen unable to make an impact, Inter went ahead when Dzeko headed in a perfect cross from Federico Dimarco.

Onana then stopped a missile of a shot from Giacomo Raspadori to preserve the advantage.

Whereas it was the dribbling wizard Kvaratskhelia who put on a show nearly every week before the break, this time it was Inter midfielder Nicolo Barella, whose creative back-heel flick sent Romelu Lukaku in on goal only for the Belgium striker to narrowly miss his shot just over the bar.

"We weren't able to move the ball around with the same quality as usual," Napoli coach Luciano Spalletti said. "Several players weren't up to form."

Inter Milan's Edin Dzeko celebrates after scoring against Napoli during a Serie A match in Milan, Italy, on Wednesday. AP

Simone Inzaghi's side sits fourth and are back in the discussion for the Scudetto after its third straight league win, one which puts some pressure on a Napoli team who threatened to run away with the league before the World Cup.

"I am 36 but I want to keep playing at the highest level and the only way to achieve that is with hard work," Dzeko told DAZN.

"I'll keep going as long as I can make the difference."

### Ochoa's debut

Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa made a Serie A debut to remember for Salernitana.

Even if it wasn't enough to prevent defending champion Milan from winning.

Milan midfielder Sandro Tonali scored one goal and set up another for Rafael Leao over a five-minute stretch early on, while Federico Bonazzoli pulled one back late for Salernitana.

Otherwise, it was almost all about the 37-year-old Ochoa, who denied Milan on chance after chance to follow up a strong performance for Mexico at his fifth World Cup.

Ochoa set the tone at the start when he stuck his left boot out to stop a shot from Leao in a 1-on-1 situation and also later made a quick-reflex save on Milan forward Olivier Giroud, who was back in action 17 days after playing for France in the World Cup final.

Ochoa could only do so much, though, when Tonali's through ball set Leao in on goal again and the Portugal international dribbled wide around the goalkeeper before depositing the ball into an empty net from a sharp angle.

Ochoa did stop Tonali five minutes later but the Milan player then got another opportunity when the defense failed to clear and hit the target with a powerful shot.

In all, Ochoa made nine saves, while Milan counterpart Ciprian Tatarusanu made none.

"Ochoa showed what people say about him: that he's a player with personality, so a big acquisition," Salernitana coach Davide Nicola said.

### Juventus streak

Arkadiusz Milik scored with a free kick in stoppage time and scandal-ridden Juventus won 1-0 at Cremonese for its seventh consecutive clean sheet.

But it was far from easy for the Bianconeri as Cremonese hit the woodwork twice and Juventus had trouble getting past goalkeeper Marco Carnesecchi, who was superb.

Juventus was rocked by scandal during the break when the club's board of directors resigned en masse and the Turin prosecutor's office requested indictments amid allegations of false accounting.

AGENCIES

Son Heung-min celebrates scoring Tottenham Hotspur's fourth goal during a 4-0 Premier League win against Crystal Palace in London on Wednesday. REUTERS

## Kane bouncing back from World Cup woe

LONDON — Harry Kane lifted the gloom at Tottenham on Wednesday, scoring twice in a convincing 4-0 win against Crystal Palace as Nottingham Forest hauled itself out of the relegation zone.

Forest beat bottom side Southampton 1-0 while troubled Wolves drew 1-1 at Aston Villa and struggling West Ham drew Leeds 2-2.

Antonio Conte's inconsistent Tottenham, who finished fourth last season, had taken just one point from two matches after the Premier League resumed following the World Cup.

The disaffected Italian manager, used to success at Inter Milan, Chelsea and Juventus, warned this week he would only stick around if he was 100 percent convinced by the club's project.

Conte was looking for a reaction after Sunday's 2-0 defeat at home against Aston Villa and he eventually got it despite an insipid first-half performance from his team.

"The character of this team always shows," he told Sky Sports. "Maybe only in the last game against Aston Villa we didn't have a strong reaction. Otherwise every game we show strong character.

"It is really important. We got three points. We continue to stay very close for the good positions. After you don't win and the confidence is down, it was important to win."

Spurs were second best in the first half at Selhurst Park, lacking zip in attack and had goalkeeper Hugo Lloris to thank for keeping the score at 0-0 but it was a different story after the break.

England captain Kane scored twice in five minutes in his 300th Premier League appearance to move just two goals behind Jimmy Greaves' all-time record of 266 goals for Spurs.

Tottenham broke the deadlock in the 48th minute when Ivan Perisic crossed to Kane from the left and he neatly nodded past Vicente Guaita at the near post.

Kane doubled Spurs' lead when the ball fell to Bryan Gil on the right and he flicked a pass to the England forward, who sent a low strike unerringly into the bottom left corner.

Matt Doherty made it 3-0 midway through the second half and Son Heung-min completed the scoring four minutes later, lifting Spurs to 33 points -- just two behind fourth-placed Manchester United.

### Forest wins

Nottingham Forest climbed out of the Premier League relegation zone courtesy of a precious 1-0 victory, which heaped more misery on basement club Southampton.

Taiwo Awoniyi's fifth goal of the season earned his team a first top-flight away success of the season to strengthen their survival hopes.

Steve Cooper's resurgent side has now taken 11 points from the past 21 available, having only managed six from the previous 33, and fully merited a significant triumph on the south coast.

"It's better to be out of the bottom three than in it for sure but it's one step at a time," Cooper told the BBC. "I really challenged the players to get the first away win and challenged myself and the staff. We're all in it together."

He added: "The objective is not just to stay out but move up the table, but that's easier said than done and we will do everything we can to get results."

AFP

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON TWITTER · CHINA DAILY

RIGHT TRACK

## Monetary policy, markets seen stable this year despite Fed Reserve actions

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai
*shijing@chinadaily.com.cn*

Although China will not be completely immune to the global market's higher volatility this year due to recent US Federal Reserve tightening, China's monetary policy and its capital market will be relatively stable compared to other markets given the country's firmer economic recovery outlook, said experts.

Officials from the Fed expect higher interest rates to remain in place until the country's inflation is on a sustained downward path to 2 percent, according to minutes released on Wednesday from the Fed's December meeting.

The minutes noted that no Federal Open Market Committee members expect rate cuts in 2023.

The Fed's anti-inflationary stance derives from the lack of wiggle room left for it to adjust its monetary policies, especially during the first six months of this year, said Ethan Wang, head of investment strategy for wealth management at Standard Chartered China.

Using Standard Chartered's calculations, the interest rate in the United States is likely to touch 5.25 percent according to the bank's highest estimation, and is likely to drop to 4.5 percent by the end of this year.

While interest rates will remain high in the US, any hike levels will likely be lower. In this sense, the US dollar will weaken, which will be translated into capital inflows into emerging markets, said Wang.

Fed tightening and the likelihood of contracted consumption may lead to economic recession in the US. Therefore, Standard Chartered holds an underweight rating on US stocks. But it holds an overweight rating on Asian equities excluding Japan, mainly as A-share company profitability will improve amid China's economic recovery, explained Wang.

Xu Mingqi, a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, said that the Chinese financial market this year — one growing in global importance — will show higher volatility due to some economies' solvency difficulties after rounds of interest rate hikes.

But China will continue to adopt a stable and relatively relaxed monetary policy this year, with more room for further adjustment compared with 2022, said Lian Ping, chief economist at Zhixin Investment.

China's economic recovery is likely with its GDP growth expected to reach 5 percent, Lian said. Inflation will be less steep in 2023, which provides room for further monetary easing in China. The anticipated slowdown in US monetary tightening will also point to the possibility of further relaxation in China, including lowering the reserve requirement ratio when necessary.

Shao Yu, chief economist at Orient Securities, said that a relaxed policy environment in China and further tightening elsewhere may be the theme affecting the capital market in 2023. The Chinese stock market will embrace opportunities against such a backdrop.

China's economic recovery, which will be bolstered by further optimized COVID-19 control measures and stimulus packages, will provide an ideal investment environment for Chinese shares. The investment value of Chinese equities is especially noticeable in light of relaxed liquidity and companies' improved profitability, Shao said.

Experts' confidence in Chinese assets is proven by the A-share market's bullish performance on Thursday. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index gained 1.01 percent to close at 3155.22 while the Shenzhen Component Index jumped 2.13 percent to close at 11332.01. The technology-focused ChiNext in Shenzhen soared 2.76 percent.

Likewise, US-listed Chinese companies rallied on Wednesday, with the Nasdaq Golden Dragon China Index — a tracker of Chinese companies trading on US exchanges — closing 8.57 percent higher.

A food deliveryman works on a street in Shanghai. SUN ZHONGQIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## China targets OS breakthroughs

By **MA SI**
*masi@chinadaily.com.cn*

China will endeavor to achieve breakthroughs in developing operating systems that are considered key to digital transformation, and build a robust ecosystem for their application across a wide range of industries, officials and experts said.

Vice-Minister of Industry and Information Technology Wang Jiangping said persistence is needed to develop such crucial technologies. So, more efforts will be made to enhance the supply of indigenous operating systems.

An operating system or OS is the foundational software that powers a digital device. Google's Android, Apple's iOS and Huawei's HarmonyOS are among the leading OSs that power smartphones or smart devices, while Microsoft's Windows is considered the market leader in personal computer OSs.

Promising that the ministry will strengthen top-level design, Wang called for a bigger push to jointly build a more active open source community, explore typical application scenarios and best practices of key software, and promote open cooperation.

The field of OSs is a key area that Chinese companies are working on to reduce their reliance on foreign companies amid the US government's restrictions.

Huawei Technologies Co is continuing its development of the OpenEuler OS as part of its broader push to solve China's lack of homegrown OSs for fundamental digital technologies.

The OpenEuler is designed for enterprise customers and can be used in devices such as servers, cloud computing and edge computing. Last year, Huawei donated the Euler OS to the OpenAtom Foundation, a major open source foundation in China, to make Euler an open-source OS.

Wang Tao, a member of Huawei's executive board, said the OpenEuler open source community now has 600 enterprise members. More than 3 million sets of equipment have been equipped with the OpenEuler OS so far.

More importantly, the overseas version of the OpenEuler OS has seen more than 1 million downloads from 1,682 cities in 130 countries and regions, according to Huawei.

"Huawei will focus on technology investment, improve the innovation and competitiveness of basic software, support the construction of digital infrastructure and the prosperity of application software ecology," Wang said.

Ni Guangnan, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said the OpenEuler OS supports a variety of processor architecture. Relying on the OpenEuler open source community, it can promote the development of computing technology and industry through collaborative innovation with world peers.

The OpenEuler OS is chiefly used in industries like finance, transportation and telecom.

China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for the Development of Software and Information Technology Service Industry emphasized that by 2025, the country will significantly improve its supply capacity of key software such as basic software and industrial software, and will build two to three influential open-source communities globally.

## Services improve in Dec, lifting recovery hopes

### Index up to 48 from 46.7 in Nov while business confidence at 17-month high

By **OUYANG SHIJIA**
*ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn*

Activity in China's services sector improved marginally in December with business confidence hitting a 17-month high on expectations of a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, a private survey showed on Thursday.

The Caixin China General Services Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 48 in December, up from a six-month low of 46.7 in November, media group Caixin said.

For the fourth consecutive month, however, the index stayed below the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction. The December reading indicated a further fall in services activity across China as the pandemic continued to disrupt operations and dampen demand, Caixin said in a report.

However, service providers voiced strong business confidence for this year. Their optimism shot up the highest level since July 2021, with most surveyed service providers expressing confidence in a pickup in business activity this year. And companies that foresee higher output expected that the pandemic will likely ease and that operations and demand will recover in the future.

"COVID-19 outbreaks weighed on services activity across China," said Wang Zhe, senior economist at Caixin Insight Group.

According to Wang, both supply and demand shrank in the sector due to COVID outbreaks, with the sub-indexes for both business activity and total new orders remaining in the contraction territory for the fourth straight month in December.

Nonetheless, Wang said some service companies reported that their business improved in December over the previous month.

"Optimism improved significantly. Service providers expressed strong confidence in an economic recovery following the easing of COVID containment measures," Wang said.

Owing to the marginal improvement in the services sector, Caixin's composite PMI, which includes both manufacturing and services activity, improved to 48.3 in December from 47 in the previous month, the report said.

Even though data from the National Bureau of Statistics offer the latest official snapshot of the multiple pressures facing the economy, they indicated improved market confidence and expectations.

While December's official manufacturing index fell to 47 in December from 48 in November, most businesses surveyed still voiced confidence in a rebound in the market as COVID eases gradually.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said there are positives in some indicators following the optimization of COVID containment measures last month.

"The first wave of massive COVID infections appears to have peaked in some large cities and regions, with visible recoveries in mobility," he said.

A recent Nomura report said domestic tourism trips and revenues were up 0.4 percent and 4 percent year-on-year during the three-day New Year's holiday, respectively, improving from contractions of 18.2 percent and 26.2 percent during the National Day holiday in early October.

Owing to the optimized COVID control measures as well as the recovery in both domestic and inbound travel, Melody Chan, an equity analyst at Jefferies Hong Kong Ltd, also expressed strengthened confidence in the development of the hotel industry this year.

"We are positive on the outlook of the hotel sector," Chan said in a new report. "Hotel names are expected to ride on the recovery trend as well as the increasing hotel chain penetration rate."

While the economy is expected to recover gradually this year, experts also called for stepped-up efforts to stabilize GDP growth and deal with headwinds and pressures from a gloomy global outlook and weakening demand both at home and abroad.

Wang from Caixin Insight Group said he expects COVID infections to rise in China in the short term, which could disrupt production and life order. "How to effectively coordinate COVID controls with economic and social development has once again become the top priority."

Wang said policymakers have made it clear that priority must be given to the recovery and expansion of domestic consumption, calling for more efforts to stabilize the job market and effectively increase the disposable income of residents.

## Energy providers given coal-purchasing support

By **ZHONG NAN**
*zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn*

China's latest move to ensure energy supplies will enable State-owned power plants to have sufficient funds to purchase coal this year, and help put planned coal and electricity projects into operation during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, said analysts on Thursday.

The remarks emerged after the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council announced that it has promoted State-owned capital operating companies and power generation groups to issue 200 billion yuan ($29.1 billion) in special bonds for capital injection to fortify energy supply.

These funds will be allocated to power plants in a timely manner so as to meet their coal needs this year, the country's top State assets regulator said in a statement on Wednesday.

Centrally administered State-owned enterprises have generated 5 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity since 2022, accounting for 63.1 percent of the country's total.

SASAC currently is able to monitor the operations of 195 coal mines, 572 coal- powered plants, 727 hydropower plants and 96 gas-powered plants owned by central SOEs across China.

Under serious situations such as global energy crises, market turmoil and soaring electricity prices in Europe, central SOEs have been relying on financial and technological innovations to ensure stable operations of China's supply and industrial chains, as well as overall energy consumption demand, said Ding Rijia, a professor specializing in energy at China University of Mining and Technology in Beijing.

Since the end of September 2021, State Grid Corp of China and China Southern Power Grid, two central SOEs, have organized cross-regional and cross-provincial power support more than 3,000 times and transmitted nearly 50 billion kWh of electricity to places in need, said the SASAC statement.

Ensuring sufficient coal, natural gas and oil supplies will be priorities for the government and central SOEs this year as imports of energy-related resources face various pressures, such as high commodity prices and global gas shortage, said Lin Meng, a researcher of supply chain management at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing.

A thermal power station is under construction in Xiangyang, Hubei province. ZHENG XINTAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

To resolve energy shortages, central SOEs — including China Petrochemical Corp and China National Offshore Oil Corp — have all accelerated the construction pace of offshore gas fields and raised imported oil and gas volume, said SASAC.

Natural gas output of central SOEs surged 7.1 percent on an annual basis to 189.99 billion cubic meters in 2022, while their total stocks reached 17.72 billion cubic meters, jumping 17.2 percent year-on-year.

Daqing Oilfield, China's largest onshore oilfield, recently announced that its oil and gas production at home and abroad exceeded 40 million metric tons of oil equivalent in 2022, while it made new breakthroughs in resource exploration in Sichuan province and the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

The figure includes 30 million tons of crude oil and more than 5.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas, according to Daqing Oilfield.

## Briefly

### StanChart strikes first T-bond futures deal

Standard Chartered Bank (China) Ltd announced on Wednesday that with permission from relevant regulatory authorities, the lender has completed its first treasury bond futures transaction through accounts opened at a futures company. It thus became the first foreign bank to participate in the trading of treasury bond futures in China. The opening-up of China's treasury bond futures market will further improve the benchmark interest rate curve of treasury bonds, enable domestic and foreign investors to better participate in the domestic bond market, and promote the continuous opening of China's bond market and the internationalization of the renminbi, said Standard Chartered China.

### Shenzhen hits record container throughput

In 2022, Shenzhen port in South China's Guangdong province handled more than 30 million 20-foot equivalent units of containers, up 4.39 percent year-on-year, a record high, said the local transportation bureau. Last year, the port took multiple measures to improve its transfer and rail-sea intermodal transportation efficiency and to expand coverage of the combined port system and inland port system in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

### Railway cargo delivery up 4.7% last year

China's railway cargo delivery volume reached 3.9 billion metric tons in 2022, up 4.7 percent year-on-year, according to the national railway operator. Railway cargo services raked in 478.6 billion yuan ($69.23 billion) last year, rising 9.8 percent over 2021, data from the China State Railway Group Co Ltd showed. China saw some 4,100 km of new railway lines put into operation in 2022, and more than half of them were high-speed railways. This year, the national railway operator expects passenger trips to climb more than 67 percent from that of 2022, and estimates that overall transportation revenue will generally rebound to the level before the COVID-19 pandemic.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# BUSINESS

## State firms' role bigger in driving recovery

By ZHUANG QIANGE
*zhuangqiange@chinadaily.com.cn*

Passengers wait to board a high-speed train on the Beijing-Tangshan intercity railway in Beijing on Dec 30. ZHANG CHENLIN / XINHUA

Thanks to the optimization of domestic COVID-19 prevention and control measures and the accelerated efforts of some State builders, many key infrastructure projects nationwide started operating on schedule or in advance, which experts said is expected to help further boost the nation's economic recovery by playing a bigger role in driving up not only investment but also employment and consumption.

In southwestern China's Chongqing, the east ring railroad construction has been completed recently, linking Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport with high-speed railway services.

With a total length of 158.6 kilometers, the Chongqing east ring railroad connects eight stations and has a designed speed of 160 kilometers per hour, said China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp Ltd (CR24), a State-owned enterprise that participated in the project.

"The railroad is a major local project which aims to link major transportation hubs in the mountainous city and shortens transportation time for residents. We spared no efforts to this end," said Feng Wenbo, project manager with CR24, a unit of the centrally administered State-owned enterprise China Railway Construction Corp.

Feng said apart from experts with the project team, during the construction process, the team recruited local employees for special equipment operations and safety watching, and offered related occupational training, which is "quite a key move in making the whole construction process go smoothly".

"We really benefited by having them on the team, especially on such a project which involves many relocation works. Meanwhile, employees are also learning and earning during the construction process," Feng said.

The Chongqing project is part of CR24's enhanced efforts in this sector. A 150-km intercity high-speed railway line linking Beijing and Tangshan in North China's Hebei province began service recently.

With a designed speed of 350 km/h, the new railway line, partially constructed by CR24, has slashed travel time between the two cities to around one hour.

This intercity railway has not only facilitated travel for residents in areas close to Beijing but has also improved the development prospects of the city cluster, said He Jin, an engineer with the China Railway Design Corp.

Launched as a rapid transit corridor from Beijing to Tangshan, the Beijing-Tangshan intercity railway line is of great significance in driving economic development efforts in regions located along the route and for promoting the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

CR24's efforts are also evident in regions in East China. In Anhui province, a renovation project of Suzhou Station — a railway hub along the Beijing-Shanghai railway — has been completed and resumed operations. The project aims to improve the traffic and livelihoods of Suzhou and further boost the city's investment environment.

Connecting 33 stations in Jiangxi and Fujian provinces, the Xingguo-Quanzhou Railway started operating. The railway serves as a crucial link for inland Jiangxi province, especially in terms of trade and tourism.

Similar projects across the nation are not only driving economic growth but also enhancing the welfare of residents, experts said.

As noted by the Central Economic Work Conference that "the country will focus on boosting domestic demand next year (2023) by prioritizing the recovery and expansion of consumption", infrastructure efforts by SOEs are conducive to helping recover confidence in consumption, said Ren Zeping, an online influencer and former chief economist of property giant Evergrande.

## Small modular reactors to power green push

By ZHENG XIN
*zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn*

The world's first commercial onshore small modular reactor project is expected to play a major role in facilitating the country's low-carbon energy transition while helping ensure domestic energy security, said industry experts.

Small modular reactors, which are defined as advanced reactors producing electricity of up to 300 megawatts per module, can meet the demand for flexible power generation for a wider range of users and applications, including island power generation and industrial park heating. It further offers the possibility of combining nuclear with alternative energy sources, including renewables, and sharing broad application prospects, said Luo Zuoxian, head of intelligence and research at the Sinopec Economics and Development Research Institute.

As China has been leading in small modular reactor projects, chances are high that the technology can further benefit countries and regions participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as nations in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Luo said.

Linglong One, the world's first commercial onshore small modular reactor demonstration project, began installation of its nuclear island at Changjiang nuclear power plant in South China's Hainan province on Nov 30, according to its developer China National Nuclear Corp.

A nuclear island is the heart of a nuclear power plant. Other major facilities, including the power station's pressure vessel and steam generator, will be installed in the future, said the company.

Based on China's independent research and intellectual property rights, the construction of the multi-functional small modular and pressurized water nuclear reactor is also the world's first reactor of this type to be approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency on the basis that it is built to serve the region's diverse power needs, it said.

Commencing construction in July 2021, the Linglong One project is characterized as being highly secure with a short construction period and flexible deployment among other advantages. It is expected to take about 58 months to complete construction.

The reactor could be used as a distributed energy source, in addition to meeting other needs such as seawater desalination, regional heating and industrial heating. Each unit at Linglong One has a power capacity of 125,000 kilowatts, capable of generating 1 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually after going into operation, said CNNC.

Global interest in small and medium-sized or modular reactors has been increasing due to their ability to meet the need for flexible power generation for a wider range of users and applications and replace aging fossil fuel-fired power plants, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

With an enhanced safety performance and better upfront capital cost affordability, they offer options for remote regions with less developed infrastructures and the possibility to combine nuclear and alternate energy sources, including renewables, it said.

Based on a report released by the agency on the projections of the potential growth of nuclear power over the coming decades, many countries are revising their national energy policies, leading to decisions to extend the operational lives of existing reactors, plans for construction of advanced reactors and the development and deployment of small modular reactors.

There are about 50 small modular reactor designs and concepts globally, with most of them in developmental stages and some being near-term deployable. There are currently four small modular reactors in advanced stages of construction in Argentina, China and Russia, it said.

According to Luo, the project is an example of China's strengthened investment in energy projects, as China is mounting efforts to guarantee energy supplies while actively pushing for the transition toward low-carbon and green energy sources.

"Nuclear energy, as non-fossil energy, has become a major non-fossil fuel option against the backdrop of a global energy shortage and it will also play a crucial role in ensuring the stability and consistency of a new power system dominated by new energy in the country," he said.

"It is believed China will continue to support nuclear energy as an integral part of its energy supply."

# Nation heats up domestic iron ore biz

### Plans in place to enhance production, utilization to mitigate import reliance

By LIU ZHIHUA
*liuzhihua@chinadaily.com.cn*

China is expected to ramp up domestic iron ore sources while enhancing the utilization of scrap steel and housing more overseas mining assets to safeguard the supply of iron ore, a key raw material for steelmaking, experts said.

Domestic output of iron ore and scrap steel supplies will grow, mitigating the nation's reliance on iron ore imports, they added.

The Central Economic Work Conference held late last year called for efforts to speed up the building of a modern industrial system. The country will strengthen domestic exploration and production of key energy and mineral resources, accelerate the planning and construction of a new energy system, and improve its capability to secure nationally strategic material reserves and supply.

As a major steel producer, China has relied heavily on iron ore imports. Since 2015, around 80 percent of the iron ore China consumed annually was imported, said Fan Tiejun, president of the China Metallurgical Industry Planning and Research Institute in Beijing.

In the first 11 months of last year, the country's iron ore imports dipped 2.1 percent year-on-year to around 1.02 billion metric tons, he said.

China ranks fourth in iron reserves, though, the reserves are scattered and hard to access while output is mostly low grade, which requires more work and costs to refine compared with imports.

"China is at the forefront of steel production and is progressing to become a steel powerhouse for the world. Yet without secured resource supplies, that progress will not be steady," said Luo Tiejun, deputy head of the China Iron and Steel Association.

The association will work closely with relevant government authorities to explore domestic and overseas sources of iron ore while scaling up scrap steel recycling and utilization under the "cornerstone plan", Luo said at a recent forum on raw materials of the steel industry held by the institute.

Launched by the CISA early last year, the plan aims to raise the annual output of domestic iron mines to 370 million tons by 2025, representing an increase of 100 million tons over the 2020 level.

It also aims to increase China's share of overseas iron ore production from 120 million tons in 2020 to 220 million tons by 2025, and source 220 million tons per year from scrap recycling by 2025, which will be 70 million tons higher than the 2020 level.

Fan said as Chinese steel enterprises are stepping up utilization of short-process steelmaking technologies like the electric furnace, the country's demand for iron ore will decline slightly.

He estimates that China's iron ore import reliance will remain below 80 percent throughout 2025. He also said scrap steel recycling and utilization will gather momentum within five to 10 years, to increasingly replace the consumption of iron ore.

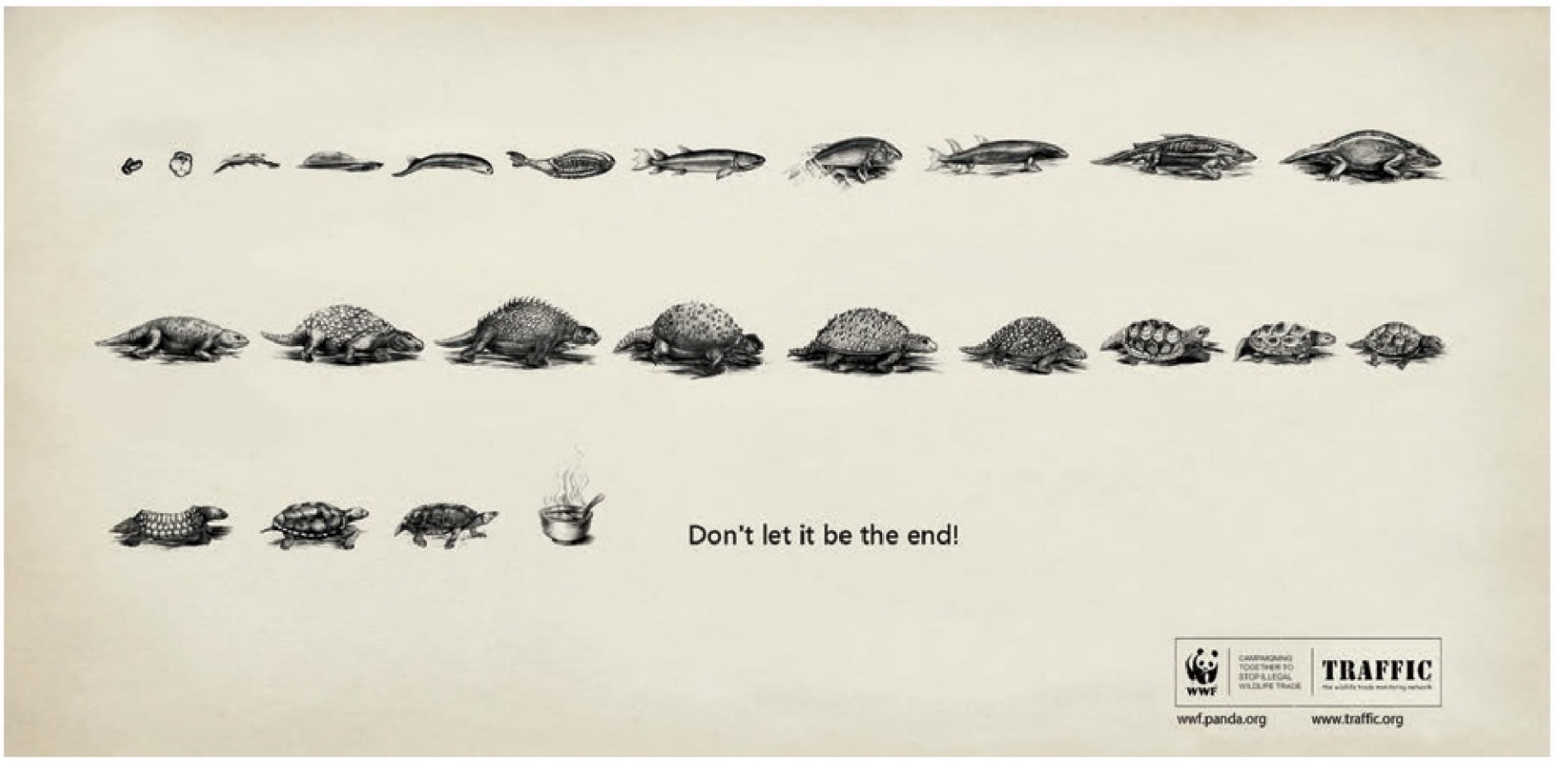
Meanwhile, as the country further tightens environmental protection and pursues green development, steel enterprises tend to build large blast furnaces, which will result in increasing consumption of domestically produced low-grade iron ore, he added.

The annual domestic iron ore output was 1.51 billion tons in 2014. It fell to 760 million tons in 2018 and then gradually increased to 981 million tons in 2021. In recent years, the annual domestic output of iron ore concentrates was around 270 million tons, meeting only 15 percent of the crude steel production demand, the CISA said.

Xia Nong, an official from the National Development and Reform Commission, said at the forum that it is a key task for China to speed up the construction of domestic iron mine projects, as the incompetence of domestic iron mines has become a major issue hindering both the development of the Chinese steel industry and the safety of national industrial and supply chains.

Xia also said that thanks to the improvement in mining technology, infrastructure and supporting systems, iron ore reserves that once were not feasible for exploration have become ready for production, creating more space for speeding up the development of domestic mines.

Luo, with the CISA, said that because of the implementation of the cornerstone plan, the approval for domestic iron mine projects is picking up and the construction of some key projects has accelerated.




Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM





# Chinese NEVs expected to zoom in 2023

## Manufacturers see order rise in private buyers both domestically and globally

By **LI FUSHENG** and **ZHENG YIRAN**

China's new energy vehicle market, already the largest in the world, is expected to grow further in 2023 as vehicle makers are vying to launch new models and private car buyers are becoming the major consumer group.

Sales of electric cars and plug-in hybrids, both classified as NEVs in China, reached 6.07 million units in the first 11 months of 2022, according to statistics from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The CAAM estimated the figure would have reached 6.7 million units for the whole year, up from 3.5 million units in 2021 and accounting for 25 percent of China's estimated vehicle sales for the year.

China's national NEV plan, which was released in November 2020, is expected to hit the 25 percent target in 2025.

"We are three years ahead of our goal," said Wu Zhixin, vice-president of the China Automotive Technology and Research Center, at an industry forum in late December. He expected NEV sales to grow further to 9 million units in 2023.

He said the prospects are the result of a combination of factors, including the "unexpectedly high" growth rate in 2022, favorable policies for NEV drivers as they are exempt from the weekly ban days for gasoline cars and a wider choice of available models.

Statistics from China EV 100, a major NEV think tank, showed that in the first half of 2022, carmakers in China launched 33 passenger NEV models, accounting for 60 percent of all passenger vehicles launched in the same period.

There were around 300 NEV models available in the market by the end of the first half, roughly one-third of all available models in the segment. Of NEV buyers in the first half, 78 percent were private buyers.

Guan Mingyu, a McKinsey partner, said: "Triggered by Chinese car buyers' affection for smart EVs, the Chinese vehicle market is experiencing a series of changes far bigger and wider than expected.

"The surge of electric vehicle sales in China is powered by buyers' actual demand instead of government policies."

China rolled out subsidies for NEV buyers in 2009. As NEVs are becoming a serious choice for car buyers, authorities had cut the subsidies in the past few years and decided to stop them altogether by the end of 2022.

William Li, chairman and CEO of China's leading electric car startup Nio, said some car buyers placed orders in 2022 to be eligible for the subsidies, so the first few months of 2023 are not likely to see a sales surge.

But Li said he is confident about the full-year prospects for the sector. Li expects his company to outsell Toyota's premium Lexus brand in China in the new year.

Lexus is one of the most popular premium car brands in China, coming after German giants BMW, Mercedes and Audi.

"I am confident that we can beat Lexus in sales in 2023, although we will definitely be behind BMW, Mercedes and Audi," said Li.

Lexus sold 168,644 units in the first 11 months of 2022, down 16.45 percent year-on-year. Qin Lihong, Nio's president, estimates that Lexus' sales in China may reach around 200,000 units this year.

That would mean Nio, which sold over 120,000 vehicles in 2022, will see its sales at least double in 2023 if it is to outsell Lexus.

Nio is likely to win, as NEV buyers tend to choose local Chinese marques. Bill Peng, a McKinsey partner, said brands are not as important to electric car buyers as they are to people purchasing gasoline cars.

Statistics from the China Passenger Car Association show that 12 out of China's top 15 NEV makers in the first 11 months of 2022 were Chinese. The three exceptions were Tesla and Volkswagen's two Chinese joint ventures.

Warren Buffet-backed Chinese maker BYD stopped production and sales of conventional gasoline cars in early 2022, becoming the first traditional carmaker to focus on NEVs.

Its sales in the first half of 2022 hit 640,000 units, exceeding its full-year sales in 2021 and overtaking the United States-based Tesla as the top NEV seller in the world.

Its rising popularity can be seen as a milestone of China's NEV development, demonstrating the strong manufacturing capability of its NEV makers, as well as the power that the industry has accumulated over the past years, industry experts said.

BYD saw its monthly sales hit records several times last year. Its sales throughout 2022 totaled 1,868,543 units, up 152.5 percent year-on-year.

The king of volume in the NEV market is aiming to make inroads into the luxury segment. Late last year, BYD gave a teaser on the new brand Yangwang. The first model, a tough off-roader, was unveiled on Thursday.

Wang Chuanfu, chairman and president of BYD, said the company had unveiled disruptive "black technology", which has been first used in Yangwang models.

Zhang Xiaorong, head of the research institute of Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based manufacturing company Deep Innovation, said: "Within years of development, leading Chinese NEV companies have managed core technologies in batteries, electric motors, electric controllers and chips, and formed unique competitiveness in the industry."

BloombergNEF estimated that in 2025 the world's NEV sales will surge to 21 million units and China will be one of the major markets that will lead the growth.

Matthias Kimmel, BNEF's head of energy economics, said: "The electricity industry is undergoing a transformation. With inflation pressure, renewable energy still has its competitiveness, and its competitive edge over fossil fuel will continue to expand. We are on the right track."

McKinsey estimates that global sales of EVs from 2021 to 2030 will reach 220 million units and about half will be sold in China.

Chinese NEV carmakers are also wowing overseas customers with models that "exceed their wildest imaginations", which may see them raise their positions on the global stage, said McKinsey in a report released in December.

For instance, Nio, in Europe, is selling electric vehicle models that can have their empty batteries swapped for new ones in minutes. The carmaker said it will be available in 25 countries by 2025.

In October, BYD inked a deal with Germany-based car rental company Sixt to supply 100,000 EVs by 2028.

One month later, Chinese EV startup Aiways won a five-year order to supply up to 150,000 EVs to Thai e-mobility service provider Phoenix EV. The deal marks the largest EV order from Chinese carmakers worldwide.

Narong Sritalayon, a sales executive of Great Wall Motors Thailand, said the carmaker is planning to launch four NEV models in the country in 2023.

There are five NEV models from the Chinese carmaker in the Thai market, with their combined sales reaching 13,000 units.

Fu Bingfeng, executive vice-president of the CAAM, said China's electric cars, which are doing a good job in terms of design, quality and novel features, are competitive in the global market.

Statistics from the CAAM showed that 593,000 NEVs were shipped out of China to overseas markets in the first 11 months of 2022, up 100 percent year-on-year. The CAAM said NEVs are becoming a driving force of Chinese vehicle exports and they are going to rise further in 2023.

*Contact the writers at lifusheng@chinadaily.com.cn*

Workers assemble BYD vehicles at a factory in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, in April. YUAN JINGZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

> "The electricity industry is undergoing a transformation. With inflation pressure, renewable energy still has its competitiveness, and its competitive edge over fossil fuel will continue to expand. We are on the right track."
>
> **Matthias Kimmel,** head of energy economics at BloombergNEF

Consumers check out Chinese electric vehicle startup Aiways' U5 model at a shopping center in Shanghai in October 2020. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# CATL revs up intl presence with overseas plants

By **CHENG YU**
*chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn*

Going global will be a key phrase for Chinese battery maker Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd in 2023, as the world's largest maker of electric vehicle batteries has accelerated its overseas expansion over the past year, according to company executives and industry experts.

Despite the unstable global supply chain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CATL announced in late December that it had achieved mass production of lithium-ion battery cells as scheduled at its factory in the German state of Thuringia.

"We are now making every effort to ramp up the factory's production capacity, which will also be our top priority for next year (2023)," said Matthias Zentgraf, CATL's president for Europe.

The new plant, CATL's first factory outside China, has a total investment of 1.8 billion euros ($1.91 billion), which is much higher than the average 300 million yuan ($43.6 million) to 400 million yuan investment in the company's domestic factories. Notably, the new plant is only about a three-hour drive from Tesla's Gigafactory Berlin-Brandenburg.

Germany's BMW Group also announced back in 2019 the purchase of batteries from CATL worth 7.3 billion euros.

"Recent moves show CATL's ambitious plan and accelerated steps for its capacity expansion in overseas markets to get closer with major car manufacturers to reduce costs in logistics amid COVID-19 pandemic uncertainties," said Wang Jing, a research supervisor for high-end manufacturing at Shanghai Chaos Investment Group Co Ltd.

"With an anticipated boom in NEV sales globally in the coming years, mainstream battery manufacturers will no doubt rev up steps in going global," she said.

Bloomberg reported last month that CATL and Ford Motor Co are considering building a battery manufacturing plant in Michigan, the United States, with a multibillion-dollar investment.

In August, the battery giant invested 7.34 billion euros in building a 100 gigawatt-hour battery plant in Debrecen, Hungary. Covering an area of 221 hectares in the Southern Industrial Park of Debrecen, the project will supply both cells and modules to European automakers.

"There is no doubt that our plant in Debrecen will enable us to further sharpen our competitive edge, better respond to our European customers and accelerate the transition to e-mobility in Europe," said Robin Zeng Yuqun, founder and chairman of CATL.

In addition to Europe, the Ningde, Fujian province-based company is contemplating an investment of as much as $5 billion in a new plant in Mexico and is considering at least two locations in Mexico for a manufacturing facility to potentially supply to Tesla and Ford Motor.

In June, it also confirmed to China Daily that it had supplied electric vehicle batteries to South Korea's Kia Corp, which marked the first entry of a non-South Korean battery maker into the market.

Market consultancy SNE Research said CATL's market share in the global EV battery market reached 34.8 percent in the first half of last year, extending its lead with a 6.2 percentage point increase from a year ago.

According to minutes of an internal meeting provided to China Daily, Zeng told over 50 investors — including Hillhouse Capital Group, Sequoia Capital, Tencent Holdings and Temasek Holdings — that the company is also exploring the feasibility of localizing in the US.

Zeng said the company has had plenty of interaction with US clients, including both traditional automakers and electric vehicle manufacturers, and has explored with them the feasibility of supplies and cooperation, depending on product quality and costs that are to be reflected by worker training, efficiency and labor unions.

With over 10 production bases by the end of 2020, CATL plans to boost the expansion of overseas bases as well as system construction, including the training of overseas employees, he said.

"CATL's performance beat market expectations. With fewer COVID-19 disruptions expected in the future and sales of new energy vehicles entering peak season, the company's sales are expected to maintain continuous growth," said an analyst team led by Yin Zhongshu from Everbright Securities.

Lin Boqiang, dean of the China Energy Strategy Research Institute of Xiamen University, said: "At present, China has its advantages and competitive edges globally in terms of lithium-ion batteries. With the country's carbon neutrality efforts, China will surely stand at the forefront of the global power battery competition."

Visitors learn about new energy vehicles' battery-changing process at the booth of Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd during an expo in Xiamen, Fujian province, in September. LIN SHANCHUAN / XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# COMMENT

Yang Weidong

## Only concerted efforts can end virus rumors

A rumor about the possible emergence of a new sub-variants of Omicron leading to a new wave of infections caused Montmorillonite powder to be sold out across China. The person who reportedly started the rumor and suggested the use of Montmorillonite powder to guard against infection and treat COVID-19 cases, however, said that he had no medical background and hadn't expected his speculation to go viral online.

That such rumors will elicit such a response is natural because the easing of the prevention and control measures and the sharp increase in infections have left many Chinese people worried about the consequences of another wave of novel coronavirus infections. Given the difficulty in accessing medical care, most people have to get the necessary information on the sub-variants of Omicron and arrange for treatment on their own. Thus the internet is full of information on how to improve immunity, what medicines to buy and how to treat the ill.

Taking advantage of this fact, some people and marketing entities have been spreading disinformation in the name of providing "inside information" to sell their products and make profits. Even if a piece of information is not a rumor, there is no guarantee that it's not a campaign to hype up the profile of some social media platform account holder. Such disinformation may not only mislead the public but also cause chaos in the market and society as a whole. So, strict measures should be taken to deal with rumormongers and disseminators of fake news because of the wide-ranging impacts of their actions on the physical and mental health of the people.

First, timely detection of false information is necessary to prevent people from spreading more disinformation and rumors. There is also a need to strengthen the supervision of the internet and establish an effective monitoring mechanism using advanced technology to quickly identify false information and rumors and pinpoint the source of such information as soon as possible. And for the illegal act of fabricating and spreading rumors which disrupt public order, the suspects should be investigated according to the law.

The Public Security Administration Punishment Law stipulates that those who spread rumors and disrupt public order should be subject to administrative detention. They could also be fined. The Criminal Law, on its part, stipulates that anyone fabricating false stories and disseminating them through information or social media platforms, or a person knowingly disseminating false information that seriously disrupts the social order should be investigated for criminal responsibility in accordance with the law.

Hence, in accordance with the relevant laws, the authorities should create a clean social network environment by establishing an effective detection and punishment mechanism.

Second, relevant government and professional departments should timely release authoritative and useful information to shrink the space for false information to breed. Practice shows that the more comprehensive, symmetrical and targeted the information on pandemic prevention and COVID-19 treatment is, the more the public will understand the threats the virus and its variants and sub-variants pose, and how to safeguard against and get treated for COVID-19.

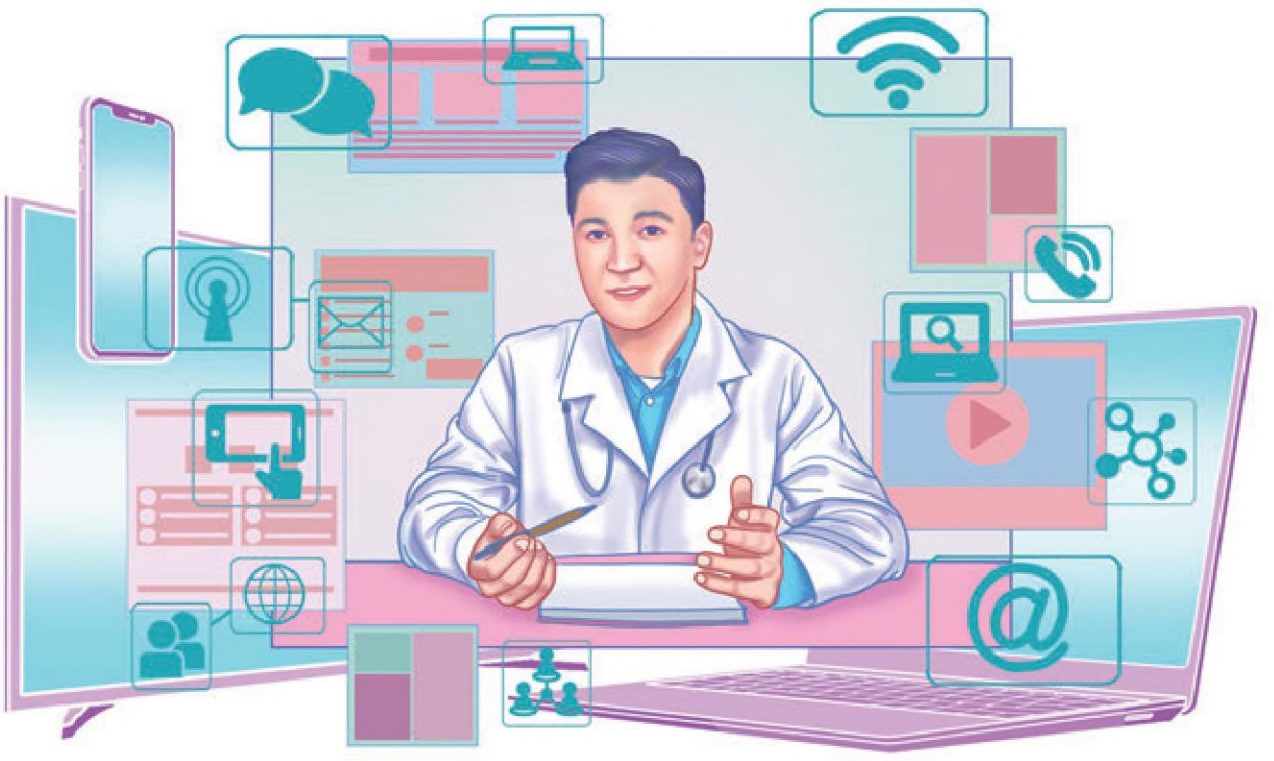
Relevant government departments, centers for disease control and prevention, hospitals and other departments should understand why people worry, and release relevant information in a timely, accurate and comprehensive manner based on social needs. In particular, they should provide targeted, authoritative and detailed response plans, and warn people against falling prey to false information. It is also necessary to establish public consultation channels to provide smooth, fast, high-quality and convenient consultation services for the people.

Third, the authorities should also take measures to improve people's knowledge of science and teach/train them to take informed decisions during emergencies, so as to reduce the effects of false information. For all kinds of information, especially those online, if the public blindly believes them, false information and rumors will flourish.

To judge whether a piece of information on social media is true or false, it is necessary to check the source of the information and the official response to it, and check its veracity using different means.

For a piece of information whose authenticity cannot be determined, one should forward it to a friend or another user with a note of caution to prevent a possible rumor from going viral. And if a user finds a piece of information to be false or a rumor, he or she should never forward it to another person and warn family and friends to not believe in it while reporting the matter to platforms or the authorities to block its spread.

*The author is a professor at the School of Law-based Government, China University of Political Science and Law. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Renato Baumann

## China-Brazil ties set to open new chapter

With the swearing-in of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva for the third time as the president of Brazil on Sunday, it is expected that the country's relationship with China will improve. President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to Lula da Silva on his inauguration as Brazil's president.

In fact, overall bilateral ties should be more smooth while economic relations between the two sides have grown.

China has been the main destination for Brazilian exports since 2009 and an important source of imports, while Chinese investment in Brazil plays an important role, even if at a lower level than before, in boosting the country's economy. Yet there have been a number of episodes related to sensitive issues such as politicization of the origin of the novel coronavirus and the ill-treatment of Chinese telecommunications companies, leading to undiplomatic remarks by some officials.

However, that does not mean the China-Brazil High-Level Commission for Consultation Cooperation (COSBAN) has not been effective in strengthening bilateral relations and eliminating potential conflicts. In fact, the COSBAN's strategic plan sets the road map for bilateral initiatives up to 2031.

Now that Lula has been sworn in as Brazil's president, the new government is expected to adopt a different approach to foreign policy, including relations with China, as it is likely to be based on Lula's earlier policy of open dialogue on bilateral and global issues based on equality.

Domestic as well as global situations have changed quite significantly since Lula first became Brazil's president. But it is likely that the voices supporting bilateral economic development remain high, because it is in the interest of both countries. The other issue of common interest is fighting climate change.

China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) lays emphasis on pursuing "higher-quality development" instead of quantitative growth, as well as increasing imports of goods and services. The fact that in the report he delivered to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping said China was committed to ensuring "the security of food, energy and resources as well as key industrial and supply chains", which means the emergence of a new consumption pattern that would create business opportunities for middle-income economies such as Brazil.

At the same time, the commitment to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will prompt Brazil to make its production method and domestic consumption patterns more sustainable and eco-friendly. And both China and Brazil know that huge investments are required to develop new, low-carbon technologies in order to achieve the Paris Agreement targets.

**Improving China-Brazil relations has become even more important in view of the protectionist measures likely to be adopted by the main players in international trade, disguised as environment-based barriers.**

To be sure, Brazil seems well positioned to reduce carbon emissions and capitalize on the opportunities ahead. Indeed, as a big, competitive exporter of food products and clean energy, it can provide a good deal of the required green goods and services.

On the other hand, China has adopted a proactive policy on financing "green activities" in developing economies as a way of contributing to the 2030 Agenda. This is one of the potential new areas that can foster bilateral ties, with the aid of Chinese investment in industries and services and initiatives to reverse deforestation in some places.

The possible areas where Chinese enterprises can invest in Brazil include low-carbon agriculture, biotechnology, renewable energy, smart cities and the digital economy.

It is widely believed the Brazilian economy has comparative advantages because of its rich reserves of natural resources and hence it should play a more active role in sustainable global development and international relations.

Improving China-Brazil relations has become even more important in view of the protectionist measures likely to be adopted by the main players in international trade, disguised as environment-based barriers. This, in itself, might create new opportunities for bilateral trade.

Another area in which Chinese investors can invest is Brazil's health sector, including the medical equipment manufacturing industries. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it all the more important for Chinese investors to invest in Brazil's health sector, because it will make healthcare, medicines and medical equipment more easily accessible to the Brazilian people and hospitals.

That economic relations between Brazil and China will improve is quite clear and predictable. But Brazil will adhere to its traditional diplomatic policy of maintaining a good relationship with all partner countries.

*The author is an economist at Institute of Applied Economic Research (IAER). The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Chen Weihua

*The author is chief of China Daily EU Bureau based in Brussels.*
*chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn*

## Sino-US ties vital for them and world

The appointment of China's ambassador to the United States Qin Gang as the new foreign minister is a clear signal that managing well the most consequential bilateral relationship of the 21st century is crucial for the world's two largest economies and the rest of the world.

The appointment of Qin as the foreign minister also shows China's resolve to put Sino-US ties onto the right track — the track that it was on since former US president Richard Nixon made the ice-breaking visit to China in 1972 to the Barack Obama administration, in which many current senior Joe Biden administration officials, including Biden himself, served.

Speaking at a recent talk at Stanford University with former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd, former US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice recalled her days in the George W. Bush administration, saying that the prospect for a manageable US-China relationship looked considerably better.

She also said the US had an "integrationist narrative about China", citing the "responsible stakeholder" speech by her deputy Robert Zoellick in 2005.

Rice praised China for doing a reasonably good job after being invited to chair the Six-Party Talks to discuss the Korean Peninsula denuclearization issue during her tenure. She also talked about the critical time when US Navy EP-3 spy plane collided with a Chinese fighter jet off the coast of China's Hainan province on April 1, 2001, saying that "the overall context of the relationship" was "that we'll get through this".

As for Rudd, he praised then President George W. Bush for reining in then Taiwan leader Chen Shuibian, who wanted to push his "Taiwan independence" agenda forward.

As one senior US State Department official had then told me, that if Taiwan declared independence, the US would be the first to say it does not recognize its independence, in order to defuse the tension.

**As a matter of fact, there were many ups and downs in Sino-US relations during the eight-year Obama administration, from the South China Sea issue to cybersecurity, but the two sides believed their differences should not prevent them from deepening cooperation in certain fields.**

I strongly disagree with Rudd for saying there is a need to arm Taiwan into a "porcupine". As a China specialist, Rudd should know that China has been constantly stressing that it will exercise patience and ask the Taiwan ruling party not to go down the path of independence while trying to peacefully resolve the Taiwan question.

That's precisely the advice Rudd should give the Taiwan leaders, because no "porcupine strategy" will provide Taiwan with security. That is why the continued US provocations including increasing arms sales to Taiwan and the change of its decades-old practice on the sensitive issue are so dangerous.

Rice's question should make the Biden administration think why it cannot manage the Sino-US relationship as well as the administrations from Nixon to Obama.

As a matter of fact, there were many ups and downs in Sino-US relations during the eight-year Obama administration, from the South China Sea issue to cybersecurity, but the two sides believed their differences should not prevent them from deepening cooperation in certain fields.

That is why China and the US could play an instrumental role in reaching the Paris Agreement, preventing nuclear proliferation, fighting the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, holding dozens of high-level talks each year and launching the 10-year visa program. That is also why the US encouraged the study of the Chinese language in the US, invited Chinese investors to the US, and welcomed the Chinese navy to take part in the Rimpac naval exercises.

However, the Donald Trump administration was devoid of such spirit, and it is nowhere to be found in the Biden administration.

In a tweet on Sunday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he had spoken over the phone with new Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang. "We discussed U.S.-PRC relationship and maintaining open lines of communication," he said. Yet China and the US need to be much more ambitious than just maintaining open lines of communication between the two sides.

Washington's reckless containment policy against Beijing, including its recent bid to cut global semiconductor exports to the Chinese mainland and using the Taiwan island as a tool to provoke the mainland, has raised concerns around the world about a possible clash between the world's two largest economies, a clash that will spell disaster for the whole world.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# GLOBAL VIEWS

GSD GLOBAL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

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

XIONG WANTING

## A helping hand

### Developed economies should pitch in to stop debt crises in developing economies

SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Since 2020, more and more developing countries have fallen into debt difficulties. Among middle-income countries, Argentina, Lebanon and Sri Lanka have one after the other experienced debt crises. Among low-income countries, more than 60 percent of countries have been diagnosed by the International Monetary Fund as high-risk or already in debt distress.

In 2021, the total external debt of low-income countries reached $250 billion, accounting for 50 percent of their gross national income and equaling 2.3 times their exports. There are growing concerns that more countries will fall into a debt crisis.

Amid the global headwinds, no country can make itself an exception. A systemic and effective debt resolution mechanism is not only urgent for developing countries but also essential for developed countries as well. Prosperity and stability cannot be realized in a world where the poor are becoming poorer while the rich get richer.

From the perspective of building a community with a shared future for mankind, a powerful economy should take on its responsibility by providing more public goods for global economic stability and prosperity rather than taking a beggar-thy-neighbor stand. Developed economies that take the lead in recovery should help the rest of the world recover and make sincere attempts to alleviate the negative spillover effects of their monetary policy adjustments.

Why should developed economies contribute to alleviating the debt burdens of developing countries?

First of all, history shows that the negative spillover effects of monetary policy adjustment in developed economies are usually an important external factor triggering debt crises.

From the perspective of interest rates, both the United States and the Europe Union have tightened their monetary policies to fight high inflation, which results in higher interest rates and tougher financing conditions in the international financial market. This will significantly add to the debt servicing burden and financing costs of developing countries, and make it much more difficult for countries to roll over their debts.

From the perspective of exchange rate and cross-border capital flows, the rise of US dollar index and interest rate will make non-US dollar assets less appealing, generate pressure of capital outflows, currency devaluation and asset price adjustment on other countries, and result in higher risk of liquidity crisis in developing countries.

From the perspective of external demand, the shift in the US' and Europe's monetary policies will also exert downward pressure on the global economy, and the economic momentum of developing countries will also be affected by the decline in external demand.

Second, the financial institutions of developed economies are the main private creditors of many emerging and developing countries.

Since 2021, creditors from the private sector have accounted for 61 percent of the total sovereign external debt of low- and middle-income countries. Compared with official creditors, funds from private creditors are mostly non-concessional with higher interest rates and shorter maturities, which takes up a large proportion of the intolerably large debt servicing burden for many developing countries.

Take Zambia, which recently fell into debt crisis, as an example. BlackRock, a US-headquartered financial institution, holds about 7 percent of Zambian government bonds (worth about 220 million US dollars). However, the institution enjoys a high interest return of more than 8 percent even after Zambia applied for debt service suspension support and started restructuring negotiations with other official creditors under the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and the Common Framework (CF) for Debt Treatment after the DSSI.

Finally, developed economies have the ability and advantage to lead other creditors to participate in debt governance cooperation. Although the DSSI and CF under the G20 call for all creditors' participation, the reality is disappointing: neither private creditors nor multilateral official creditors, have joined these debt resolution initiatives. As these non-participating creditors hold more than 2/3 of the total external debts of countries eligible for the DSSI, it is no wonder that debt negotiations cannot go smoothly due to the imbalanced benefits/costs allocations among creditors.

Developed economies have great advantages in breaking such dilemma and bringing more creditors to the negotiation table. On the one hand, governments of developed countries such as the US can do a lot in enhancing the legal environment for sovereign debt negotiations and organizing private creditors, as most international sovereign bonds are issued under the US or UK law system and most bondholders are financial firms in the jurisdiction of developed countries such as the US. On the other hand, developed economies such as the US and the EU are also major shareholders of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, which can provide support for their participation in debt relief.

How can developed economies contribute to alleviating developing countries' debt dilemma?

First, developed economies should try their best to avert a systemic financial crisis or global economic recession caused by overly fast or excessive contraction of monetary policy, and strengthen macro policy coordination with other countries.

Due to their highly developed financial system, there may be systemic risks within the developed economies, especially in the non-bank financial sector and the marginal economies in the monetary union system that lack supervision.

Therefore, developed economies should adjust their macro policies more cautiously and minimize the negative spillover effects. Through the G20 and other platforms, developed economies should strengthen macro policy coordination with other economies and markets, enhance the predictability of their policy adjustments, and reduce the "secondary damages" caused by over reflection of policies or market panic.

Second, developed economies can help resolve the coordination difficulty in debt disposal negotiations with their financial and legal advantages.

There is coordination difficulty because the private creditors are overly decentralized. Governments of developed economies such as the US can create a good environment for their private sectors to participate in debt negotiations by taking the lead in promoting the establishment of creditor committees representing their financial institutions, assisting in coordination with credit rating agencies, and even providing credit guarantees.

Multilateral institutions may have the concern that their participation in debt reduction will damage their credit ratings and they will lose their preferential financing capacity. Developed economies, as the major shareholders of these institutions, can provide them with support for capital increase and share expansion, so as to achieve a win-win result, driving multilateral institutions to join debt reduction while maintaining their credit ratings.

Third, developed economies should provide risk-hedging mechanisms for the negative spillover effects of their monetary policy adjustments.

They can provide more public goods to alleviate the debt plight of developing countries by increasing capital for international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, promoting the redistribution of the Special Drawing Rights from the surplus countries to the deficient countries, and participating in debt negotiations under the G20 Common Framework.

Developed economies can also increase the amount of bilateral currency swaps with central banks of other countries, and fulfill their historical commitments of spending more than 0.7 percent of their gross national income on foreign aid and providing developing countries with $100 billion in climate change financing.

*The author is an assistant researcher of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the International Strategic Think Tank. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

WANG YIMING

## Synergy needed

### Countries need assistance to fight climate change and bridge the digital gap and greater coordination on food and energy policies in the post-pandemic era

JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

The current challenges facing emerging markets and developing countries should be viewed in the context of the global economic landscape. Today, the world economy is experiencing great downward pressure. The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have driven up energy and food prices, disrupted the global supply chains, and provoked rampant inflation, and major economies are tightening their monetary policies. Emerging markets and developing economies face serious challenges, and some of them are deeply mired in economic woes.

To be specific, there are five types of challenges facing emerging markets and developing countries.

First, a gloomy growth prospect. Compared with developed economies, emerging markets and developing countries have limited room for policy maneuvers and weaker capacities to mobilize resources, making them more vulnerable to external shocks. They also need more time to recover to pre-pandemic levels. That means in the post-COVID era, the gaps between some emerging markets and developed economies will widen further.

At the same time, the disparities among emerging markets are also growing. Some economies in Southeast Asia and South Asia are recovering at a faster pace, and energy-producing countries in the Middle East are also less affected by the global economic turmoil, while economies with more fragile fundamentals and low-income nations are encountering graver difficulties.

Second, the inflation problem persists. Soaring food and energy prices, which take a heavier toll on countries that are more reliant on imports, are still sending shockwaves around the world. In many East Asian countries, where inflation was relatively mild, commodity prices have risen substantially in recent months. It is the most vulnerable groups that bear the brunt of the inflation woes.

Third, rising debt risks. As major economies tighten their monetary policies, which have pushed up interest rates, the costs of debt are rising. Some emerging markets have already fallen into a debt trap. Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Argentina have applied for aid loans from the International Monetary Fund. More economies are expected to be dragged into debt crises.

Fourth, the growing pressure from currency depreciation and capital outflows. Since March, the US Federal Reserve has raised interest rates by a total of 375 basis points after six consecutive hikes. Currencies of emerging markets have depreciated against the US dollar to varying degrees, and capital has been flowing out of these countries.

According to statistics released by the Institute of International Finance, the total amount of foreign exchange reserves in emerging economies has dropped. Some countries have been forced to raise interest rates to stabilize their foreign exchange market, and curb capital outflows, which have increased their costs of debt, thus prolonging their path to recovery.

Fifth, the South-North gap may grow wider. For the first time in nearly three decades, the Human Development Index has dropped for two years in a row, and the number of people living in poverty globally has increased dramatically. Emerging economies and developing countries are facing more severe challenges in food and energy security, climate response, as well as employment and education, making it difficult to implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Nevertheless, there is still a silver lining for emerging economies.

First, some emerging economies, such as India and Vietnam, exhibit sound economic fundamentals and have stronger resilience against external shocks. Meanwhile, energy and resources-exporting countries are suffering less from the global economic turbulence.

Second, as the Federal Reserve's interest rate hikes are expected to slow down in 2023, the financial environment of emerging economies will improve. According to statistics released by the Institute of International Finance, the capital that flowed into emerging markets reached $37.4 billion in November, the largest since June 2021, suggesting that the pressure of capital outflows from emerging markets is easing, and more money will flow into these countries as they recover.

Last, China's accelerated recovery will inject new impetus into the global economy. As China eases its COVID-19 controls, the country's economy is projected to witness a robust rebound in 2023, and the expansion of consumption will generate positive spillover effects on the world economy.

To cope with the difficulties faced by emerging markets and developing countries, global cooperation needs to be strengthened.

First, international financial organizations should provide emergency liquidity support for countries hit by financial problems and help them tide over short-term difficulties. Assistance should be given to countries mired in financial troubles through debt restructuring under the G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatment to avoid sovereign debt crises.

Second, coordination on food and energy policies should be enhanced. Maintaining the normal order of the international food trade is critical to securing the global food supply. Energy prices are also a matter of concern. Will the price cap on Russia's oil and gas deal another blow to the global energy market? If that happens, enhanced global coordination will be required to cushion the impacts.

Third, multilateral development banks should play a bigger role and offer more resources. Multilateral development banks should provide more assistance to emerging economies and developing countries in fields such as climate response, digital capacity building, and new industrialization to help them fight climate change, bridge the digital gap, and boost industrial production capacity.

*The author is vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



# LIFE

Snow leopards in their natural habitat in Qinghai province. They are the apex predator and dominating species of its high and cold environment, playing an irreplaceable role in maintaining the ecosystem. PHOTOS BY BAO YONGQING AND YAO MUYANG / XINHUA

# On the trail of the elusive snow leopard

Rarely seen creature is being observed and studied in its natural habitat of the Qilian Mountains in Qinghai province, **Xu Haoyu** reports.

XU HAOYU / CHINA DAILY

> It seems that the public perception is that the snow leopard is a fierce beast, but on the contrary, the snow leopards that I saw always move with grace and show a confident and comfortable posture, giving me the deep feeling that they are the real masters of their natural ecosystem."
>
> **Wang Dajun,** wildlife researcher

The predator known as "king of the snowy mountains" is being watched and studied. This is taking place far from the lofty peaks of its habitat. It is being conducted in Tianjun county, Qinghai province's Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan autonomous prefecture, more than 400 kilometers away from the Laohugou Ecological Management and Protection Station, Menyuan Hui autonomous county of Qinghai.

Wang Dajun, PhD, a wildlife research and protection expert from Peking University's School of Life Sciences, is fascinated by the "big cat", the snow leopard, which resides in the Qinghai area of the Qilian Mountain National Park.

The snow leopard is the apex predator and dominating species of its high and cold environment, playing an irreplaceable role in maintaining the ecosystem. Mainly found on bare rock at altitudes of between 2,000 and 5,000 meters, it is a secretive species with a low population density.

"Monitoring snow leopards is like a 'game', a process of communication and mutual understanding between people and the natural world," says Wang.

Monitoring the species in the Qinghai area of the Qilian Mountains began in the middle of the 1980s, with sporadic snow leopard surveys based on interviews conducted on parts of the Shule Nanshan Mountain from 1996 to 1998. But few systematic and comprehensive field surveys and monitoring programs have been carried out in other areas.

After 19 years, the Qilian Mountain National Park pilot construction program was officially started in 2017, and comprehensive and systematic snow leopard monitoring and assessment is underway.

In five consecutive years of snow-leopard monitoring, an area of 4,172 square kilometers in the Qinghai area of the Qilian Mountain National Park has been discovered as potentially the main habitat of the creatures, with 95 reproduction and breeding points found and 105 snow leopards identified.

In November 2021, the Qinghai administration bureau of Qilian Mountain National Park and Wang's team from Peking University formed a working group to carry out satellite tracking of snow leopards in Suli township, Tianjun county.

The process lasted 45 days, with 11 capture points set up and three snow leopards successfully caught.

Before putting on the tracking collars of the three snow leopards, Wang saw one of them huddled in its cage and thought that it was too small and not yet an adult, thus wearing a collar might affect its predation and growth, so he made the decision to set it free.

However, as it leapt out of the cage and fully stretched its body, Wang realized that it was already an adult.

The other two have experienced complete periodic satellite tracking and observation. So far, the two snow leopards have sent back a total of 1,660 items of positioning data from their tracking collars, with an activity area of 13.8 sq km and 42 sq km, respectively.

Ten days after releasing them, one of them was found in the wild, nursing two cubs, and the carcass of a Himalayan blue sheep *Pseudois nayaur* was found nearby. This crucially indicated that it was hunting normally with the collar.

Wang claims that obtaining accurate information on the snow-leopard population, its distribution, the individual life history of the cats, as well as their reproduction and survival habits, significantly promotes biodiversity conservation, as well as the construction and management of the national park.

By tracking snow leopards, Wang's team found that the density of the snow leopard population in the southern foothills of the Qilian Mountains, which are in the transition zone between the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Hexi Corridor, was much higher than expected.

The findings of the research are also refreshing Wang's perception of snow leopards. Wang, who has had many chance encounters with snow leopards during his yearlong observation, proudly proclaims that there has never been a precedent of snow leopards actively attacking humans. He recalls that once he made tense, but generally friendly, contact with a snow leopard that he encountered at a rather close distance.

"When I got close to the snow leopard, it would stretch its paws out, show its teeth to me and it let out a low growl. I stopped moving closer and just stood still staring at it. After a while, it suddenly laid down and started washing its face with its outstretched paws as if to relieve its anxiety," Wang says excitedly.

"It seems that the public perception is that the snow leopard is a fierce beast, but on the contrary, the snow leopards that I saw always move with grace and show a confident and comfortable posture, giving me the deep feeling that they are the real masters of their natural ecosystem."

"Gentle" is the word Wang uses to describe the snow leopard. It is not a large-sized carnivore; in fact, they only grow as tall as around 61 centimeters at shoulder height and are not as tough as the smaller "Chinese desert cat", *Felis bieti*, (Chinese mountain cat), he adds.

According to Wang, the team once spotted a snow leopard in the mountains, with its exposed tail revealing its location from a distance. It was only after they zoomed in with their camera that they realized the snow leopard was also watching them, with its eyes looking in their direction through a gap in the rocks.

"I often feel that, rather than us observing the snow leopard, it is the snow leopard that is observing us, and it is much easier for it to do so," Wang says. "Often, by tracking its positioning data, I know it remains very close to me. Even though I can't see it with my eyes, I know that it sees me. I want it to observe me more, as it could be very meaningful for our research.

"There are still many mysteries to be explored with the reclusive snow leopard, and our research and understanding of the animal have only just begun," Wang says.

Wang claims that the research work has been helped by the growing awareness of the need for animal conservation among members of the local government and nearby residents. Additionally, he has heard from other experts, who are also working on animal conservation, that they have reached the same conclusion: The number of snow leopards is showing a significant increase.

He says that local people are becoming more aware that the area they live in is in need of protection. The government has introduced strong legislation pertaining to animal protection, and many conservation groups have sprung up among the people themselves.

"The religious beliefs of the local people make them revere living creatures, and on the Tibetan plateau, a place where resources are relatively scarce, people and animals both know how to cherish the gift of nature wisely and, at the same time, respect the equal relationship between people and nature," says Wang.

*Contact the writer at xuhaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn*

# Arabian art festival adds hint of the exotic to Jingdezhen

By **YANG FEIYUE**
*yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn*

**Left:** Arabic guests watch a local intangible cultural heritage performance during the fifth Arabic Arts Festival held in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, last month. **Right:** A local artist paints on porcelain vases during the festival. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

There was a distinct touch of Arabia in Jingdezhen city, East China's Jiangxi province, in mid-December. At a local festival celebrating Arab arts, an Arab youth was waving exotic products at tourists who looked at them with curiosity. Both sides exchanged their views and opinions with the aid of phone translation.

It was part of the fifth Arabic Arts Festival held last month. The event saw in-depth cultural exchanges between artists from China and Arab countries, and showcased the unique charm of Jingdezhen, also known as China's porcelain capital.

Maimona A.M. Khalid, minister of the Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan in China, said at the event that, although she had just arrived in China, the country was not strange to her.

"Sudan and China have a long history of interaction, the Silk Road binds us together and we have many stories to share with you," Khalid says.

"This is my first time in Jingdezhen, and I have heard that there is a famous ceramic university here that is committed to ceramic design and production. We hope to have more cooperation with this university and do exchange programs such as sending international students to each other," she says, adding that she believes this will be an important contribution to deepening friendship and exchanges between the two countries. "In the future, I also hope to have the opportunity to visit Jingdezhen again and invite my family and friends to travel with me."

The festival is considered an implementation of the results from the first China-Arab States Summit that was held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, earlier last month.

Liu Feng, Party secretary of Jingdezhen, says that, although the city and Arab countries are thousands of kilometers away from each other, the friendship is connected.

Jingdezhen will strive to become an important carrier of cultural exchanges and show the charm of Chinese culture in the countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, Liu says.

Hu Pinghua, director of the foreign affairs office of Jingdezhen, says that in recent years, a number of artists from Arab countries have settled in Jingdezhen to learn, exchange and create art. Hu says that she looks forward to welcoming more Arab tourists to China, to Jiangxi and to Jingdezhen, to unveil a new chapter of China-Arab cultural exchange.

The festival covered a series of cultural exchange activities, such as performances, a cultural industry forum and an exhibition featuring works by Arab and Chinese artists.

A total of 80 paintings, 20 sculptures and 20 porcelain works by Arab artists, as well as 30 porcelain works created by Chinese artists for the festival, were on display during the exhibition.

Over the past decade or so, more than 170 artists from 22 Arab countries have been invited to places across China to draw artistic inspiration for their work. They produced a total of 549 paintings, sculptures and porcelain works, which have been collected by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

At the China-Arab culture industry forum that was staged during the festival, nearly 30 representatives from China and nine Arab countries exchanged views on future bilateral cooperation in cultural industries.

At the same time, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism unveiled the 2022 China-Arab cultural industry Jingdezhen initiative.

The cultural sector cooperation between China and the Arab countries has a good foundation and broad prospects, according to the initiative.

In the new era and situation, China is willing to work with Arab countries to further consolidate practical cooperation in traditional fields, continue to enrich and expand new areas of cultural industry, continuously promote the exchange and mutual appreciation of civilizations, and make every effort to build a China-Arab community with a shared future. It adds that the goal is to jointly create a bright future for China-Arab relations.

Since 2006, the Arabic Arts Festival has been held every four years in China. Last month's event was co-hosted by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Jiangxi provincial people's government, alongside the secretariat of the Arab League.

After years of development, the Arabic Arts Festival has become an important cultural and artistic exchange platform for promoting the spirit of the Silk Road and deepening China-Arab friendship and cooperation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



LIFESHANGHAI

# France recognizes conductor with prestigious honor

Xu Zhong given major award by culture ministry in Paris, **Zhang Kun** reports.

Maestro Xu Zhong, president of the Shanghai Opera House, received the prestigious Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters honor from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication on Dec 15.

According to Joan Valadou, the French consul general in Shanghai, Xu won the award "for his outstanding musical attainments, as well as significant contributions to Sino-French cultural exchanges and global cultural communication".

Established in 1957, the Order of Arts and Letters is one of the highest honors the French government can bestow onto people.

While many Chinese who have excelled in the field of art or literature have been awarded the "Chevalier", only a few have been awarded the Officer.

The 52-year-old pianist-turned-conductor is the first Asian musician to serve as the artistic director and chief conductor of the Teatro Massimo Bellini in Italy, and the first Chinese musician appointed as music director and chief conductor of the Israel Haifa Symphony Orchestra.

In his career, Xu has worn many hats, including the principal director of the Fondazione Arena di Verona in Italy, the president of the Shanghai Opera House, the first international chair of opera representing Asia at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and the external expert observer of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in the United Kingdom.

Xu is currently busy with the rehearsal of *Tosca*, a coproduction by the National Center for the Performing Arts, the Shanghai Opera House and the Shaanxi Opera House.

He has composed an original opera titled *Homeland*, and recently conducted its concert version at the Nine Trees Future Art Center in suburban Shanghai's Fengxian district.

He was also the music director and composer of the dance drama production *White Snake*, which premiered at the Shanghai Grand Theater in November.

The dance theater production featured a star-studded cast of award-winning dancers led by Tan Yuanyuan, the principal ballerina with the San Francisco Ballet.

Xuan Jing, with Wenhui Daily, comments on Xu's composition, saying that "he brought Chinese instruments such as *pipa* (the bamboo flute) and *guzheng* (Chinese zither) into the classical orchestra to create a rich and colorful set of music. You could find compositions of waltz, tango and flamenco, as well as modern electronic music effects."

**Above:** Conductor Xu Zhong takes the applause after an Orchestra de Paris concert at La Philharmonie de Paris, that performed works of Ravel and Rachmaninov in 2019. He is expected to collaborate with the orchestra at the same venue in March.
**Right:** Xu conducting an opera production in Shanghai.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "As a Chinese musician, I am very lucky to have won applause from all over the world."
>
> **Xu Zhong,** conductor

The East-West fusion of music and international aesthetics "display diversity to the extreme" and provide plenty of creative space for the choreographer, he adds.

Xu is now planning to take this dance drama to France.

"As a Chinese musician, I am very lucky to have won applause from all over the world," says the musician. "I hope to draw 'cultural bridges' with my baton, so that more good music and operas from China will be showcased on international stages to be heard, seen and liked by people across the world," he says.

A global ambassador for classical music, especially for opera, Xu was named president of the Shanghai Opera House in 2016. He has since taken the company to many international performance arenas, including the London Coliseum, the Musikfestspiele Saar in Saarbrucken, Germany, the Saaremaa Opera Festival in Estonia, and the Dubai Opera.

He has also greatly expanded the company repertoire and helped improve the standard of opera performances.

A new grand opera theater is under construction in Pudong district, and the Shanghai Opera House will be the leading group providing quality opera performances there.

"You can't raise the bar for opera performance overnight. It has to be achieved through continual efforts in producing quality works and nurturing of new talent," Xu says.

The Shanghai Opera House was used to work primarily on Italian opera productions. Meanwhile, a few productions in German or French, the other two leading languages of classical opera, were performed at the opera house.

This changed significantly when Xu took over as its president as he made sure that vocal and diction classes were given at the company on a weekly basis.

These classes were uninterrupted even during the pandemic as the company resorted to holding them via internet conference.

In 2018, the company premiered a German production, Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* at the Theater Erfurt in Germany.

That same year, the coproduction of Lehar's *The Land of Smiles* by the Shanghai Opera House and the Mupa Budapest was presented in Hungary to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Hungary.

In 2019, Xu conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for the opening concert of the China Night series at the Barbican Center in London. In the summer, he conducted opera *Rabe's Diary* in Berlin and in Vienna, Austria.

In addition to these classic pieces, the Shanghai Opera House has been actively exploring new possibilities with original Chinese opera, performing many Chinese operas including *Thunderstorm*, *The Wager* and dance drama *Early Spring in February* to critical acclaim.

Next year, the Shanghai Opera House will collaborate with the National Opera of Bavaria to debut Wagner's *Lohengrin* in Shanghai.

According to Xu, the international opera community has witnessed a rapid growth in China's audience for opera art, and has firm confidence for the Chinese market. This year, as China further lifted restrictions on cross-border travel, a new chapter for international communication will begin, he notes.

A native of Shanghai, Xu was born to a family of respected medical professionals. He started to play the piano at 3 years old and was, at 16, admitted to the Paris Conservatory in France.

During his time in France, he won first prize at the 34th Maria Canals International Piano Competition in Barcelona, and was awarded the top prize in piano by the conservatory upon graduation.

It was also at the Paris conservatory that he developed an interest in conducting.

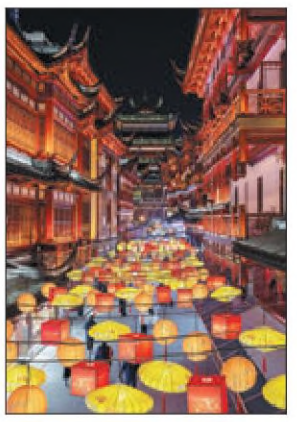
Xu has since performed on the stage of the La Philharmonie de Paris, and conducted French masterpieces with the Orchestre de Paris.

In 2010, he was awarded the "Chevalier" of the Order of Arts and Letters, receiving the honor from the former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who praised him as "the best interpreter of French music in China".

*Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn*

FROM THE FRONTLINE | SHANGHAI

# Yuyuan Garden's lantern show to light up festival



By **XU XIAOMIN** in Shanghai
*xuxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn*

One of the most anticipated entertainment events of the year, the annual Yuyuan Garden Lantern Show was unveiled last month and will last for 52 days, longer than previous editions, to allow more people to enjoy the colorful scenes.

The lantern festival, which was included in the list of national intangible cultural heritage in 2008, is a staple in Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations. It is a tradition in Chinese culture to admire lanterns with family members and catch cultural performances during the Chinese New Year, which will fall on Jan 22.

In Shanghai, the most iconic venue to do this is Yuyuan Garden, a major scenic spot in downtown Huangpu district which has been holding lantern shows for 28 years.

The latest edition of the show is inspired by *Shanhaijing*, or *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, a major source of Chinese mythology that dates back more than 2,000 years. The work to design these lanterns started as early as in April, according to the organizers.

"Yuyuan Garden has always been striving to promote traditional Chinese culture and explore creative expressions," says Sang Yi, an official with Yuyuan Tourist Mart, the organizer of the lantern festival.

The annual Yuyuan Garden Lantern Show, unveiled last month in Shanghai, will last for 52 days. It is a tradition in Chinese culture to admire lanterns with family members during Spring Festival, which will start on Jan 22. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"This year's event takes inspiration from a concept in *Shanhaijing*, which revolves around creating a happy life for all people in the country. Through the use of modern technologies, as well as various interactive activities, we hope to present visitors with a beautiful 'fairyland' featuring eastern aesthetics."

During the show, a large collection of lanterns depicting animals, dragon, flowers and rare plants mentioned in ancient tales are showcased at the Jiuquqiao area, or "zigzag bridge", in Yuyuan Garden.

> "This year's event takes inspiration from a concept in *Shanhaijing*, which revolves around creating a happy life for all people in the country."
>
> **Sang Yi,** an officer with Yuyuan Tourist Mart

Another major cluster of lanterns is positioned within the Center Plaza and themed on the Year of the Rabbit. Here, visitors can find a huge white rabbit "flying" to the moon palace as it turns its head to look at Kun, an enormous fish that could change into a roc, another magical bird of prey mentioned in *Shanhaijing*.

"This artwork also reflects the history of Chinese people's dream of space exploration," says Sang.

Meanwhile, the Center Plaza and Gold Plaza are filled with a multitude of auspicious animal lanterns.

Sang suggests that people visit Yuyuan Garden at around 5 pm when the daily ceremony for the lighting up of the lanterns is held, a brand-new program this year. Storytelling performances and ancient rituals take place during the ceremony.

Visitors can also look forward to a host of activities, including a lantern parade, a puzzle contest and a handicraft exhibition, to participate in. Intangible cultural heritage classes will also be held during the Spring Festival period.

At these events, artisans from around Shanghai will teach people how to write Spring Festival couplets, sew scented sachets and make lanterns.

Admission to the lantern show is free except for the following periods: Jan 22-28, and Feb 1-5.

Tickets can be purchased online or at the booths around Yuyuan Garden. Prices range from 30 ($4.3) to 80 yuan.

**Online**
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM



LIFE

# Saturday night laughs

Popular weekend TV show spotlights a diverse range of comedians and performance styles, providing a lighthearted diversion for Chinese viewers, **Li Yingxue** reports.

From musicals, sketches and cross-talk, to mime and drama, there's a TV show that's bringing all kinds of comedy together, giving audiences even greater reason to smile.

Aired on Saturday nights on China Central Television, the variety show, *Xijude Xiju* (gathering of comedy), is delivering a diverse collection of comedic performances, inspired by everyday moments and ordinary people.

Premiering on Nov 19, the show gathers 16 groups of comedians who deliver their meticulously prepared performances and are ranked by the 150 members of the live audience.

After the second episode was released, the hashtag of "What kind of people are most likely to be cheated" was trending on social networking platform Weibo, attracting over 52 million clicks, following the cross-talk performance by Zheng Jian and Li Ding on the topic of scams.

During the skit, the two performers acted out how common scams work, including bogus transactions through the internet and the fraudulent impersonation of officials.

Celebrity guests, including actress Cai Ming, actor Feng Lei, martial arts star Zhao Wenzhuo and Hong Kong pop star Alam Tam, among others, have been invited onto the show to comment on the performance of the comedians.

Feng was impressed by mime artist Zhang Shuangjian's love-themed performance, in which Zhang used delicate physical expressions and funny actions to enable the audience to feel the sweetness, romance and sadness, as well as a sense of helplessness, in the love story.

"He performs one person's whole life, which is heartwarming and touching. From a technical aspect, the difficulty of his performance is also very high, yet he manages to deliver," Feng commented following the conclusion of Zhang's act, adding: "I want to try that kind of performance, but it's too difficult for me."

According to Feng, acting in films and on television allows the actor to deliver a performance with the help of editing and postproduction work, such as sound and visual effects. However, for stage presentations, the performers have to act from the beginning to the end, in one go, without any opportunity to correct a mistake or start over.

Feng believes that a good comedian, such as Zhang, should have an open mind, be a creative thinker and also be good at observing life and extracting interesting materials from what they see.

"Comedy is a state of mind, and there is no age boundary," Feng says, adding that as long as someone has passion for comedy and can bring humor to others, they can be a comedian.

"Besides encouraging laughter, good comedy can make people think, and such performances won't be forgotten quickly," he adds.

He says he has learned a lot from the young comedians and also the other guests of the show, as they have helped to open up to the idea of comedy creation and imagination. "Acting is a career through which you live and learn. Watching these excellent content creators is quite helpful for my own artistic growth," he says.

"I really like the show, because on one hand, I get to participate in it and on the other, I can feel the joy of an audience member," Feng says.

The scenes that take place in the "green room" are also a highlight of the show. It shows the comedians chatting casually with one another while waiting to go on the stage, and their discussion about each other's performances.

**Clockwise from top:** A sketch in the show that reflects people's addiction to the internet through a science-fiction story; another performance themed on family affection tells a story of sheep; Zheng Jian (right) and Li Ding perform a cross-talk skit illustrating how common scams work. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

> "Comedy is an art form that the audiences will always need, no matter in which era, as it can help us forget about life's pressures and worries."
>
> **Chang Yuan,** actor

Comedian and actor Chang Yuan is the presenter of the show, and also acts as a confidant and adviser to the performers and he spends a lot of time with them backstage.

"Unlike when I was a contestant in sketch competitions, I get to concentrate on observing and learning from the comedians," Chang says.

He offers his guidance to the comedians when discussing their performances, and at the same time, he gets inspiration for his own comedy from them. "We are excited to gather together to discuss creation," he says.

Speaking of the current situation for comedians in China, Chang thinks they are happy that there are always stages and opportunities for them to express their ideas.

"Comedy is an art form that the audiences will always need, no matter in which era, as it can help us forget about life's pressures and worries," Chang says.

He thinks comedians need to have a craftsman's spirit to create good work. "As the audience's aesthetics has improved, we, the artists, should also constantly improve our own aesthetics to keep pace with the times," he says.

Chang thinks the show is bringing more fresh blood to the domestic comedy field and he looks forward to collaborating with some of the comedians he has met in the show.

Zhao Yue, general director of the show, has been directing language shows since 2014, as well as handling language programs for the Spring Festival gala since 2016. Describing them as "a lovely bunch of people", she has noticed that the comedians are good at observing life and have passion, with their humorous and hardworking nature.

"It is fun to gather the comedians and share with the audience the funny scenes that arise as a result," Zhao Yue says, explaining the primary goal of the show and the origin of its name, "gathering of comedy".

She thinks the number of comedians that the audience know is quite limited, and she wants to create a platform for comedians to present themselves. "Some of the performers are quite good, but they don't have the chance to stand in the spotlight. I hope the show can work as a way to enable audiences to discover their comedy," Zhao Yue says.

From sketch actors who have been working in supporting roles for over a decade, to performers who have acted in niche fields, such as mime, kung fu and musicals, Zhao Yue invites diverse comedians to the show, all of whom she thinks deserve greater attention.

"We need to find more comedians with potential and bring them to a larger stage," she says.

According to Zhao Yue, inviting Cai as a guest on the show came about because she can provide professional suggestions to the comedians in terms of technique, and she is also willing to help young comedians.

"Feng Lei is a successful character actor, and he has his own insight on performing, which is also useful for the comedians," Zhao Yue says.

As people can access more content through multiple media platforms, the need for more jokes gets higher and the tempo of comedy is also accelerating, she says.

With the comedians trying various forms of comedy on the show, Zhao Yue says she hopes it will resonate with the audience, insofar as they feel the comedians are performing stories about the people around them in an artistic way.

"We hope the show can be immersive and a party for both the performers and the audience," she says.

*Contact the writer at liyingxue@chinadaily.com.cn*

# Applying modern methods to keep the past alive

TAIYUAN — Fixing a leaky roof is possibly an easy job for many people, but not for 51-year-old Hao Yongming who lives in Pingyao, one of the best-preserved ancient walled cities in China and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

To repair the leaks in the roof of his centuries-old house, Hao had to complete a series of formalities. He first submitted an application to the neighborhood committee, met a team of experts from the local natural resources bureau, obtained a maintenance plan and a pass that allows building materials to enter Pingyao, and finally, he was able to hire a certified construction team for architectural repair.

"The procedures are cumbersome, but they are there to preserve the original style and structure of the houses in Pingyao," says Hao. "Our future depends on preserving history."

The Chinese government has initiated a string of measures for the protection of Pingyao, located in North China's Shanxi province, in recent decades, especially after it was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1997.

Thanks to the effective conservation of historical sites and intangible cultural heritage, as well as the improvement of the living environment, the walled city, with a history of over 2,800 years, is regaining its shine.

## History built by merchants

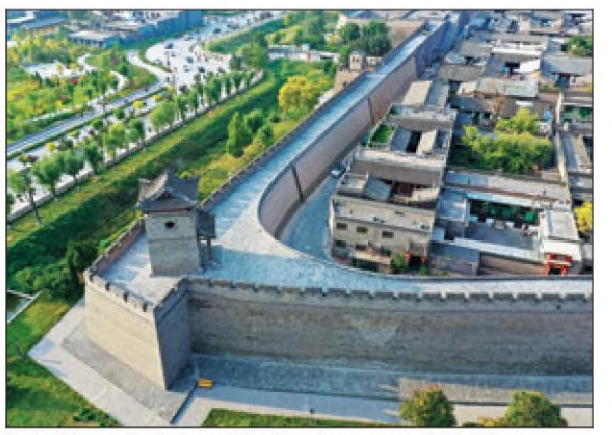
Pingyao boasts a well-preserved urban landscape from the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911). The ancient city, covering an area of 225 hectares, is home to more than 300 cultural relics and nearly 4,000 traditional buildings.

For a period of time, Pingyao saw the development of tourism at a meteoric pace. Business opportunities brought about by tourism resulted in the transformation of traditional dwellings along the town's main road into hostels, souvenir shops, eateries and bars.

However, many complain that the ancient city is losing its serenity and distinctive character owing to these rapid changes.

To address the problem, the local government has restricted, and even prohibited, projects deemed to be against the traditional characteristics of the town, and has encouraged the development of traditional Chinese culture.

It has demolished 57 illegally built courtyards and set up a database and a skills training workshop to strengthen the protection of its 137 intangible cultural heritage projects.



Part of the ancient city wall that has been renovated in Pingyao, Shanxi province. XINHUA

A popular traditional art in Pingyao is *shagexiren*, which blends crafts such as wood engraving, sculpture, painting, opera, calligraphy and lacquering. An intangible cultural heritage, it was once on the verge of extinction.

Timely preservation efforts of the government have helped safeguard *shagexiren* and the art form has been promoted through restoration, reproduction and video-recording, says Huo Wenzhong, director of Pingyao county's intangible cultural heritage protection center.

The ancient city rose to prominence in the 19th century as China's financial center. Banks flourished as Shanxi merchants expanded their businesses across the country. It also promoted the creative transformation and development of traditional culture.

*Another Glance at Pingyao*, an interactive play showcasing the business and cultural legacies left by Shanxi merchants, is deemed one of the must-see attractions in the ancient city. With over 6,000 performances to date, it has raked in more than 700 million yuan ($101.5 million) in revenues.

"The immersive show takes audiences back to the past, boosting the popularity of Shanxi's merchant culture," says Liu Wenlin, deputy director of Pingyao's culture and tourism bureau.

## People-centered upgrades

The ancient city is not only a heritage site but also a home to around 10,000 people. To improve local residents' living conditions, the government has built parks, a parking lot and modern public restrooms, phased out coal-fired boilers and carried out garbage sorting since 2012.

One of the largest infrastructure projects, with an investment of 1.39 billion yuan, is being carried out in Pingyao. It involves road reconstruction and upgrading of the electrical grid, communications network and drainage pipes.

"It will prevent subsurface water leakage from damaging the ancient buildings and convert more households from coal-based to electric heating, thus fundamentally improving the living environment of the ancient city," says Wang Longfei, deputy chief of the infrastructure project.

Since 2012, Pingyao county has provided subsidies of over 15 million yuan for the restoration of privately owned vernacular buildings, and the initiative has helped revamp nearly 1,000 residences in 105 courtyards.

Hao has lived in Pingyao since his birth. In the past, he really hated winter, as he had to keep shoveling coal into the furnace to keep warm and brave the freezing temperatures to go to a pit latrine outside his house.

Today Hao's home is equipped with an energy-efficient heater, which is subsidized by the government, and an indoor toilet. "Living in the ancient city is now as good as living in a modern urban apartment," he says.

XINHUA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/01/2023 11:54:11 AM