



On the move

More birds seen wintering across country, including rare species

GOING GREEN, PAGES 8-9

Cancer registry increases patients' survival chances

CHINA, PAGE 10



Innovative promotion

Nation's first licensed pearl-selling livestreamers find success online

BUSINESS FOCUS, PAGE 7

# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023



Protesters from Chinese and other communities as well as peace activists gather on Wednesday in front of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, to oppose a meeting between Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen and US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

## Tsai Ing-wen meeting with House speaker protested

By LIA ZHU in Simi Valley, California  
liazhu@chinadailyusa.com

A meeting between Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen and US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy sparked outrage among Chinese and other communities as well as peace activists, who protested in front of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on Wednesday.

joint communiques, seriously infringed upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and sent seriously wrong signals to the separatist forces for 'Taiwan independence,' a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday.

Protesters waved Chinese national flags and held signs saying, "We want peace, no new Cold War on China", "US hands off Taiwan", and "China is not America's enemy" near the entrance of the library where Tsai met with McCarthy on Wednesday.

"This meeting does not have to happen. This meeting was deliberately done in an attempt to escalate the tensions between the US and China. If these politicians were really interested in the safety and the security of the Chinese people in both Taiwan and the mainland, then they would not have done this meeting," Chakib Mouzaoui, an organizer of Pivot to Peace, told China Daily during the protest.

## Enhancing Sino-EU ties can ensure Eurasian prosperity

China and the European Union are embracing a warmer relationship. Following visits by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, European Council President Charles Michel and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen are also visiting China.

the two sides to uphold a correct understanding of each other, deepen open cooperation and jointly respond to challenges.

WORLD WATCH  
By Fu Cong

have expressed their wishes to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with China. This has been more than encouraging to me, and I am full of confidence for the future of China-Europe relations.

## Prospects grow for global use of renminbi

Experts: Further internationalization of China's currency critical for world financial stability

By ZHOU LANXU  
zhoulanxv@chinadaily.com.cn

The rising global use of the Chinese renminbi will accelerate the world's shift toward a multipolar international currency system, a process critical for global financial stability as the drawbacks of the dollar-centered system can no longer be ignored, experts said.

The prospects for renminbi internationalization are growing mainly due to China increasing local currency settlements in bilateral trade, especially with countries exporting commodities and resources, they said.

The progress of renminbi internationalization has been in the spotlight as a rising number of major emerging economies expanded the renminbi's use in trade, financing and reserve management.

After China and Brazil reportedly reached a deal to trade in their own currencies, the Brazilian central bank said on Friday that the renminbi had surpassed the euro to account for the second-biggest share of Brazil's international exchange reserves.

The use of the renminbi is also growing among oil exporters. Data compiled by Bloomberg showed that the renminbi has replaced the US dollar as the most traded currency in Russia, while the Export-Import Bank of China achieved the first renminbi loan cooperation with the Saudi National Bank, in March.

Shao Yu, chief economist at Orient Securities, said the renminbi has gained more international use as many economies are looking for alternatives to the dollar-centered monetary system, following the weaponization of the dollar in sanctions and years of quantitative easing that could erode the greenback's purchasing power.

"The trend is set to continue," said Shao, who is also an expert member of the monetary policy committee of the People's Bank of China, the nation's central bank. "Resource exporting countries seem to be willing to use local currencies when trading with China."

The rising use of the renminbi will contribute to global financial stability as a more diversified international

monetary system helps dilute the risks brought by fluctuations in the dollar's value, the ongoing US financial turmoil and mounting US government debt, Shao said.

Calvin Fu, chairman of the China Innovation Finance Institute, said he expects the renminbi's use to expand particularly in countries that have close trade partnerships with China, such as oil producers in the Middle East and Central Asia, mineral and agricultural exporters in South America and Southeast Asian countries that are active in trade.

The use of the renminbi creates a win-win situation for China and its trade and investment partners by reducing the losses caused by exchange rate fluctuations, said Fu, who formerly worked as a financial regulatory official in the Middle East.

Factors supporting the growing role of renminbi as an alternative to the dollar are China's role as a manufacturing powerhouse and the stability of the renminbi's value, experts said.

The PBOC regards maintaining currency value and financial stability as the most important policy task, Yi Gang, governor of the central bank, said on Tuesday at the 2023 Annual Conference of China Society for Finance and Banking/China Monetary and Financial Forum.

The central bank's balance sheet expanded by about 3 percent annually in the past five years, which is relatively modest and supportive of price stability, Yi said.

Nevertheless, experts noted that there remains a big gap between the renminbi's global profile and developed economies' currencies. The renminbi's share of global foreign exchange reserves stood at 2.69 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, ranking fifth among all currencies yet much less than the dollar's 58.36 percent, data from the International Monetary Fund showed on Friday.

Zhong Zhengsheng, chief economist at Ping An Securities, said recent developments show that the renminbi has seen expanded use in some regions, but this does not make it a real major international currency.

Boosting the global role of the renminbi requires more efforts to strengthen domestic economic fundamentals and deepen financial market reform and opening-up, which would boost the attractiveness of renminbi-denominated assets, he said.

## Canada standoff



A protester reacts in front of Vancouver Police as city staff removed makeshift structures and tents belonging to people living in an encampment along East Hastings Street in the Downtown Eastside, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on Wednesday.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER / REUTERS



INSIDE  
Balance  
of power  
Global Views,  
page 13

## MEDICAL GUIDES MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR PATIENTS

Help provided with admissions, obtaining medication, test results

By ZHANG XIAOMIN  
in Dalian, Liaoning  
zhangxiaomin@chinadaily.com.cn



Almost every day, Li Taining visits the main hospitals in Dalian, Liaoning province, to accompany patients to see doctors, or to collect medicines for them.

have turned into escorts for hospital visits. We provide useful advice and help patients handle matters such as admissions, test results and medicines," Li said. "As we know the hospitals and treatment processes well, we can help patients save time."

erly population and the increasing need for better medical treatment. Data from Qiehacha, a company that tracks business registrations, shows that as of March 25, the nation is home to 827 enterprises whose names and products contain the word *peizhen*, which translates as "hospital escorts". Among these enterprises, 369 were set up within a year, including 133 that launched in the past three months.

Demand for hospital escorts is rising in tandem with China's elderly population and the increasing need for better medical treatment.

www.chinadailyglobal.com  
Member of ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK  
China Daily Global ©2023 All Rights Reserved  
Newsstand prices: US \$1, Canada C\$1, UK 1.8, EU 1.8, Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling, Asia Pacific: Thailand 120, Philippines 120 php, Myanmar 2000 kyat, Japan 210 yen, Dubai 10 dirham, Pakistan 300 rupee

## PAGE TWO

## Guides: New occupation attracts recruits

From page 1

Li, who used to work as an insurance salesman, saw the work of hospital escorts while watching a television show in March last year.

"I felt I could do this work, as I am familiar with the medical system and have a good understanding of patients," he said.

Initially, Li helped patients obtain medicine, as many of them could not visit a hospital due to COVID-19 prevention and control measures.

"During the busiest period two months before Chinese New Year, I received about 10 requests for medicine each day, and accompanied patients requiring emergency treatment, or those who were severely ill, to the hospital," Li said.

He became a full-time hospital escort this year, and recently registered his own company.

"Attitudes toward consumption are changing. More people are willing to pay for such medical services, and the fees are not high," Li said.

On average, he charges 199 yuan (\$29) for each request he receives for help, and 299 yuan for a full day's work. He earns about 10,000 yuan per month, and receives tips from some 30 percent of his customers.

Seniors who are 60 or older account for 30 percent of his clients, young mothers of sick children 20 percent, while single young people working and living alone in Dalian account for another 20 percent.

With Li running errands for them, young mothers can focus on their children without worrying about having to find their way around a large hospital.

"Many of the requests I receive for help are from patients I have dealt with before," he said, adding that some who have chronic diseases need him to bring them medicine regularly.

Li enjoys sharing his work on social media outlets such as the video-sharing platform Douyin, which helps him attract more clients.

He is now working with four part-time hospital escorts.

After a year of frequent hospital visits with patients, Li said that in addition to being optimistic about his business, he is now paying more attention to his health.

"Going to the hospital can be worrying, so good if we look after our own health and that of our family members," he said.

**Deep understanding**

Zhao Ming, 36, has a deep understanding of the anxiety that comes with accompanying a family member to the hospital.

During the past two years, he has traveled to Beijing from Hengshui, Hebei province, several times for his mother to have medical treatment after she injured her leg in a car accident.

"Someone who is familiar with the hospital and treatment process can be of great assistance to people like us who live outside the capital," Zhao said.

The first time he and his mother went to a well-known hospital, they got out of a taxi at the wrong gate and had to walk 20 minutes in strong winds before reaching the right entry point.

"I planned the hospital visit carefully, but several unexpected situations occurred," Zhao said.

After his mother saw the doctor, she needed a CT scan, an X-ray and blood tests. The pair had to line up for each examination, and any delay could result in the examinations being deferred.

For his mother's CT scan, Zhao was given a number at 8:30 am that was fourth-to-last on that day's waiting list.

"If I had gone there after the other two examinations, we would have had to return for the CT scan the next day," he said.

He saw one man break down after arriving in the wrong area of the hospital, which resulted in a doctor's appointment being canceled.

When Zhao spoke to a friend in his hometown about the trouble of going to Beijing for medical treatment, the friend advised him to hire a hospital escort.

The friend, who is an administrative worker at a local hospital, also said he wanted to escort patients in Beijing to earn more.

**New career**

Song Xianming, who comes from Dalian, traveled to Beijing in December to start work as a hospital escort.

The 42-year-old used to run an off-campus school in Dalian to provide students with additional academic instruction, but due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, he decided to change his job, setting his sights on the elderly.

Song first encountered a hospital escort at the end of last year, when he accompanied a colleague to see doctors in Beijing.

"With its rich medical resources, Beijing is a destination for patients nationwide who have complex medical conditions. Some large hospitals in the city treat 10,000 outpatients a day," Song said.

"Even local residents may not be familiar with a particular hospital in the capital, while those from other cities can be

even more confused and helpless."

Sensing the prospects for hospital escorts, Song registered a company and rented an office in Beijing's Dongcheng district.

He feels the most fundamental part of such a service is running errands. The more-professional aspect involves providing useful information and helping patients avoid unnecessary costs.

Song and his colleagues started work in the neighborhood near their office. Their first client was a woman in her 70s whose only child works overseas.

After signing a contract to clarify both sides' rights and obligations, Song helped the woman secure a doctor's appointment, before accompanying her to the hospital.

At the request of the woman's son, and with the doctor's permission, Song and the son were in contact on WeChat throughout the process.

"She and her son were so satisfied with our work that the mother recommend our services to her neighbors," Song said.

His company now has six employees who handle about five requests for help from patients a day. It charges 320 yuan for each request that takes less than four hours to handle, and 550 yuan for those that take more than four hours.

The team also offers remote medical consultation services for patients living in other cities.

Patients do not need to travel to Beijing,

as they can email copies of their medical history, test results and medicare card to Song, who sees the doctor, obtains the medication, and mails it to the patients.

"This is really convenient, fast and much cheaper than traveling to Beijing," Song said.

**Regulations needed**

As a new profession, hospital escorts are not listed in the latest version of the Occupational Classification Code of the People's Republic of China published by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security last year.

The occupation has yet to have an agreed set of standards for safety and sustainable development.

Song said, "There is a lot at stake, including what to do if a client withholds some information, or if accidents happen to patients."

To avoid such risks and improve their services, Song and his colleagues always wear a small video camera to record the entire process while they accompany patients to the hospital.

Some hospital escorts require a family member to accompany patients who are 80 or older and pregnant women in labor.

After seeing the success of the hospital escort business on social media outlets such as Douyin and the Xiaohongshu lifestyle platform, more people are ready to try their hand at the occupation.

Short videos broadcast on such plat-

forms portray a market in full swing and tell how hospital escorts can earn tens of thousands of yuan a month.

However, the escorts seldom have the requisite knowledge or experience of medicine and healthcare.

Bai Yujing, a National People's Congress deputy and staff member at Liaoyuan Water Group Co in Jilin province, has appealed for the new profession to be standardized.

"This type of one-on-one medical guidance, which helps residents with medical treatment and also increases employment, still has some pitfalls," she said.

Before this year's two sessions, China's main annual political events, Bai visited hospitals and residential communities to learn about the situation and seek suggestions.

"The government departments involved should issue management measures for professional medical guidance as soon as possible, clarifying duties, services and fees," she said.

Bai also urged the authorities to regulate the entry threshold for hospital escorts and help avoid conflict between the escorts and patients.

**Voluntary efforts**

In January, National Bureau of Statistics data showed people who are 65 or older accounted for nearly 15 percent of the population on the Chinese mainland.

Meanwhile, the National Working Commission on Aging said that in 2020, more than 42 million people who were 60 or older were finding it difficult to perform everyday tasks.

Jia Nan, director of Aiyuanhui, a private nonprofit professional social work service organization in Dalian, said, "Intelligent medical services requiring the use of smart devices can be difficult for some elderly people to use."

On March 4, Jia and her colleagues performed voluntary work at First Affiliated Hospital of Dalian Medical University, helping outpatients familiarize themselves with the treatment process and use self-service machines, among other tasks.

"I saw the need for medical guidance, and we'll take this a step further," Jia said.

In residential communities that have hired social workers, Jia plans to provide hospital escorts for free to those living in extreme poverty on subsistence allowances.

Many hospitals provide volunteer services for patients.

In August, the volunteer team at Second Affiliated Hospital of Dalian Medical University joined the Dalian Xiaoshan Da'ai Public Service Center and Dalian Xinghai Anti-Cancer Association in setting up voluntary service desks to provide one-on-one guidance and assistance for the elderly.

The volunteers escort patients to hospital departments and help them use self-service machines, wheelchairs and other services.

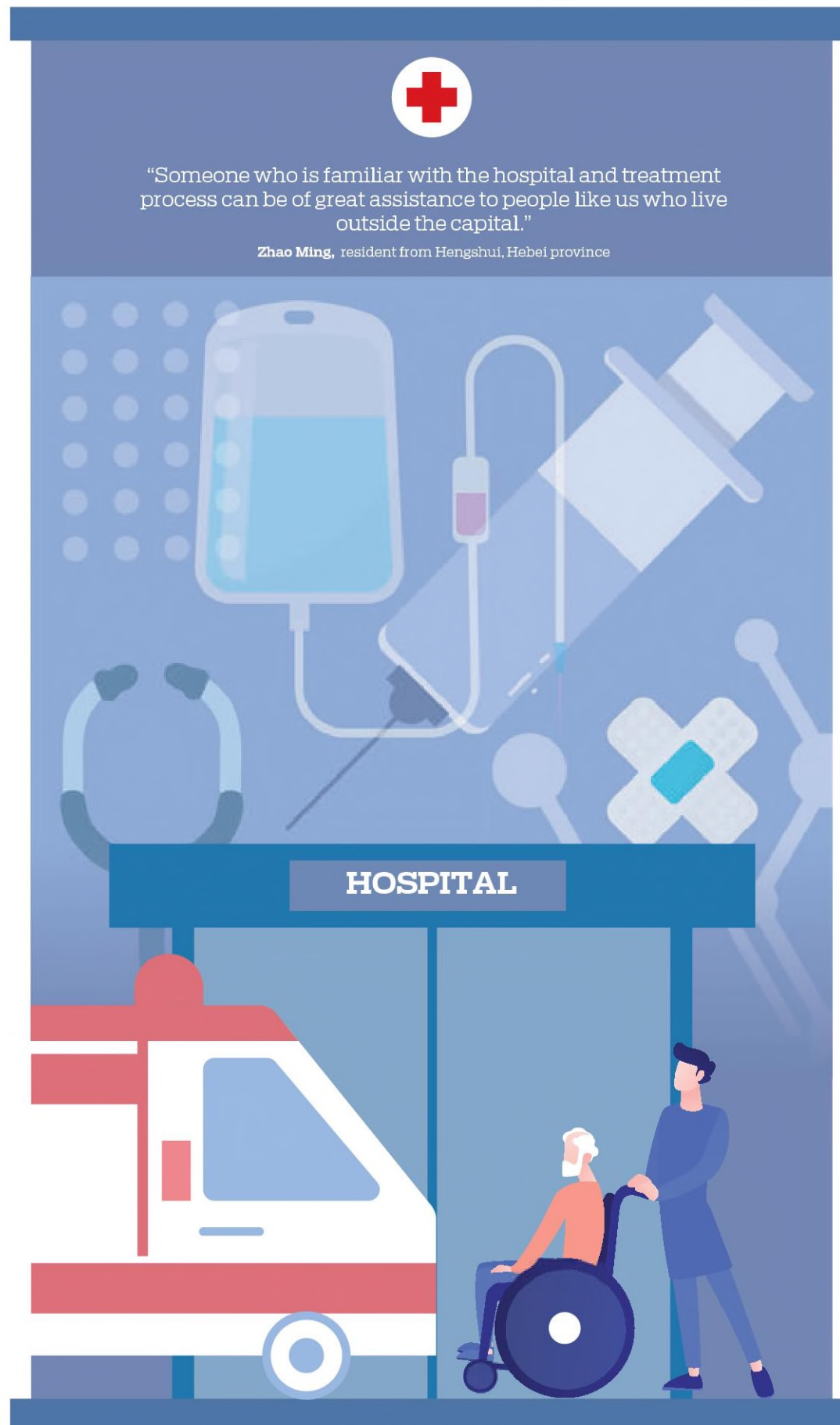
Yang Sicheng, secretary of the hospital's youth league committee, said, "The volunteers have offered nearly 5,000 hours of service, benefiting more than 60,000 patients, including over 1,000 seniors with special needs."

When volunteers from the Xinghai Anti-Cancer Association provide counseling, guidance and other services at the tumor clinic, they also offer patients emotional support.

Ji Mingluo, head of the association, said, "Many patients not only need medical treatment, but also emotional comfort."

"As we volunteers are recovering from cancer surgery ourselves, we have more in common with the patients, so we can conduct psychological counseling for them when they face pressure and experience pain."

Liu Mingtai in Changchun contributed to this story.



ART BY LU PING / CHINA DAILY

## TOP NEWS

# Fatal stabbing of executive in SF shocks tech

Bob Lee, 43, of MobileCoin previously worked with Elon Musk, Jack Dorsey

By CHANG JUN in San Francisco  
junchang@chinadailyusa.com

A high-profile tech executive was the victim of a fatal stabbing in San Francisco that has shocked many in Silicon Valley.

Bob Lee, 43, was the chief product officer at San Francisco-based cryptocurrency startup MobileCoin. He also founded Cash App and was the chief technology officer of Square, which later changed its name to Block.

Lee was "apparently stabbed to death" in the city's downtown Rincon Hill neighborhood, San Francisco police said. Officers responded to the scene at about 2:35 am Tuesday after receiving a report of a stabbing. They rushed Lee to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries, police said.

According to a tweet by Jake Shields, a former champion mixed martial arts fighter and a friend of the victim, Lee was walking "in the 'good' part of the city and appeared to have been targeted in a random mugging/attack".

The father of two young daughters, Lee had recently moved from the Bay Area to Miami, Florida. He was on a business trip to San Francisco. The SFPD has not made any arrests in the case yet.

Lee's death was confirmed by his father.

"I just lost my best friend, my son Bob Lee when he lost his life on the street in San Francisco early Tuesday Morning," Rick Lee wrote on Facebook.

Lee's death has sparked another round of criticism of San Francisco's judicial system by tech heavyweights.

Elon Musk, founder of Tesla, SpaceX and owner of Twitter, voiced his frustration about "violent crimes" in San Francisco.

"Many people I know have been severely assaulted," Musk tweeted. "Even if attackers are caught, they are often released immediately."

"Is the city taking stronger action to incarcerate repeat violent offenders?" Musk directly asked San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins on Twitter. Jenkins took office after frustrated voters overwhelmingly recalled her progressive predecessor Chesa Boudin last June.

"I want to extend my sincerest condolences to Mr. Lee's family members & loved ones for his loss. We do not tolerate these horrific acts of violence in San Francisco," Jenkins wrote on Twitter.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed called Lee's death a "horrible tragedy" in a statement.

"My sympathies go out to his family and friends," Breed said. "The police are actively investigating what happened and will share details as soon as they can."

MobileCoin founder Joshua Goldbard said in a statement:



Bob Lee

"Bob was a dynamo, a force of nature. Bob was the genuine article. He was made for the world that is being born right now, he was a child of dreams, and whatever he imagined, no matter how crazy, he made real."

Goldbard also wrote on Twitter: "I will never forget Bob. There will never be anyone quite like him. As a lifelong Bay Area resident I have more questions than answers tonight. I don't know how to fix what's wrong, but I know something isn't working in our grey city."

Jack Dorsey, co-founder and former CEO of Twitter who now runs Block, posted online Wednesday in response to a news story about Lee.

"It's real. Getting calls," he wrote. "Heartbreaking. Bob was instrumental to Square and Cash App."

A 2022 report compiled by the NeighborhoodScout website said San Francisco has one of the highest crime rates in America. The chance of becoming a victim of either violent or property crime in San Francisco is 1 in 18, or 6 percent, the report revealed.

Asian Americans have constituted the majority of crime victims in the city, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which started in the US in early 2020.

In January 2022, the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) confirmed that reported hate crimes against Asian Americans in 2021 were up "an astonishing 567 percent from the previous year", as many of the often elderly Asian victims were shoved, slammed, kicked, pushed or verbally abused.

"I deplore the literally dead city of San Francisco," said Chris Lu, a software engineer whose office is on Market Street downtown.

"I don't feel safe every day when I commute by public transit, walk on the street, or even try to get into the office building because there are always groups of homeless people gathered at the front door, some apparently lunatic and confrontational," Lu said.

After winning election in November, Jenkins said, "I pledge that improving and promoting public safety will be my and our office's top priority."

The crime rate in San Francisco, however, remains elevated. According to the latest SFPD data, the number of violent crimes is up by 6 percent this year, which is the equivalent of 75 more violent crimes.

As of April 2, San Francisco had 12 homicides in 2023, compared with 10 over the same period in 2022.

## Banking crisis demonstration



Demonstrators opposed to the power of Switzerland's financial sector raise a boat in Zurich on Tuesday during a protest outside Credit Suisse Group AG's headquarters, where stockholders were meeting. Credit Suisse is being taken over by larger domestic rival UBS Group. FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP

## Ties: EU a permanent strategic partner

From page 1

China will always regard the EU as a comprehensive strategic partner and take dialogue and cooperation as the overarching trend in bilateral ties. Although China-EU relations have encountered some headwinds in recent years, history has proved that as long as the two sides stick to the positioning of bilateral relations as a partnership, maintain high-level exchanges, strengthen strategic communication and properly manage and control their differences, this relationship can always be kept on the right track and continue to see sound, concrete and long-term growth.

China-EU cooperation enjoys broad prospects. After years of development, China and the EU have developed a strong economic interdependence, with mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation now the ballast for bilateral relations. The two sides, as key development partners to each other, are highly complementary in their markets, capital and technology, and share great potential for cooperation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, green transition, environmental protection, new energy and artificial intelligence.

In recent years, trade between China and the EU has overcome challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and maintained steady growth. Two-way trade exceeds 2 billion euros (\$2.18 billion) on a daily basis, and China and the EU are now each other's second-largest trading partner. After the China-EU geographical indications agreement was signed in 2020, the two sides have achieved mutual recognition and protection of 244 products, with the publishing of a second batch of 350 mutually recognized products also completed. This is a vivid example of the win-win and pragmatic cooperation between the two sides.

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was successfully held in October, conveying a key message that China's domestic and foreign policies will maintain continuity and stability for a long time. The first sessions of the 14th National People's Congress and the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's

**The global implications for China-EU relations will be even more prominent with the international landscape becoming more turbulent and global challenges even greater.**

Political Consultative Conference held last month also sent positive signals that China will deepen reform, promote high-level opening-up and strengthen international cooperation.

New opportunities for higher-quality, higher-level cooperation are emerging. Some people from the European business community recently told me that they are optimistic about China's growth potential and are willing to further explore opportunities from China-EU cooperation. I always believe that cooperation is the overarching trend for bilateral relations. For both China and the EU, properly handling differences and continuing to deepen cooperation will help promote their respective development, ensure stable and unimpeded global industry chains and unimpeded supply chains, promote the post-pandemic recovery of the world economy, and benefit the two peoples and the world.

It is also in the interests of the world that China and the EU work together. The two sides are both staunch defenders of multilateralism and committed to maintaining the international system with the United Nations at its core, and they advocate a joint response to global challenges. The global implications for China-EU relations will be even more prominent with the international landscape becoming more turbulent and global challenges even greater.

China and the EU have carried out fruitful cooperation in many fields such as climate change, biodiversity, the Iranian nuclear issue and arms control. At a critical juncture when the world is faced with intertwined turmoil, and mankind is once again standing at a historical crossroads, China is willing to strengthen

international coordination and cooperation with the EU and work together to play a leading role in upholding multilateralism, strengthening global governance and responding to global challenges to jointly promote world peace and development.

Europe is suffering from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The Chinese side has repeatedly stressed that the Ukraine issue has a complicated historical background, and the top priority at the moment is to secure a cease-fire and stop the loss of lives as soon as possible. China has always adhered to an objective and fair position and worked proactively to advocate peace talks. It will continue to maintain communication with all parties in accordance with the 12 points elaborated in China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, work hard to promote peace and talks, and play a responsible and constructive role in easing the situation and resolving the crisis. At the same time, China will continue to firmly support the strategic autonomy of Europe and advocate the formation of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism through negotiations, so as to truly achieve long-term peace and stability on the European continent.

There is a proverb in Europe that goes: One person's hard work is a process of addition, and teamwork is a process of multiplication. China and Europe are partners instead of rivals, and present each other opportunities rather than threats. China-EU relations are related to the stability of the global structure and the prosperity of Eurasia. It is worthy of efforts from both sides to maintain and grow this relationship.

I sincerely hope that the leaders of China and the EU will reach more important consensus during their meetings, which will energize the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership and bring more warmth to the turbulent international landscape.

*The author is head of the Chinese mission to the European Union. 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.*

## WTO urged to investigate chip export restrictions

By MA SI  
masi@chinadaily.com.cn

China has called on the World Trade Organization to step up supervision of United States-led export restrictions on crucial semiconductor technologies, which it says violate the body's fairness and transparency principles.

The move demonstrates China's upholding of multilateralism and underlines its determination to safeguard the stability of global semiconductor supply chains, experts said.

Chinese representatives said at a regular WTO meeting this week that Japan, the Netherlands and the US should report their agreement on chip export restrictions to the body for scrutiny, if the agreement, which has been widely reported, exists, China Media Group reported on Wednesday.

The joint move by the three nations to curb chip exports to China violates the fairness and transparency principles of the

WTO, China Media Group quoted Chinese representatives as saying.

The Ministry of Commerce said on Tuesday that Beijing is seriously concerned about Japan's planned export restrictions on chip manufacturing equipment and called upon Japan to correct its wrong doings.

The comments came after Japan said last week it would restrict exports of 23 types of semiconductor manufacturing equipment, aligning its trade controls on technology with the US' push to curb China's ability to make advanced chips.

"The measures proposed by Japan are essentially harmful acts against China under the coercion of a certain country, which will not only damage the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, but also cause Japanese companies to suffer, and damage the stability of the global supply chain," the Ministry of Commerce said on its official website.

"If Japan insists on obstructing bilateral semiconductor cooperation, China will take decisive measures to resolutely safeguard its legitimate rights and interests," it added.

**\$11.8 billion**

Value of Japan's chipmaking equipment exported to the Chinese mainland in 2021

China is the world's largest semiconductor market and the largest export destination of Japanese semiconductor manufacturing equipment.

Data from the International Trade Centre of the United Nations showed that nearly 40 percent of Japan's chipmaking equipment exports went to the Chinese mainland in 2021, totaling about \$11.8 billion. The numbers for US and Dutch exports to the mainland were \$6.8 billion and \$2.5 billion, respectively, over the same period.

More than 10 Japanese companies, including Tokyo Electron and Nikon, are expected to be directly affected by the planned export restrictions, Japanese media organization Nikkei reported.

Pan Helin, co-director of the Digital Economy and Financial Innovation Research Center at Zhejiang University's International Business School, said the WTO has a dispute consultation mechanism. If Japan pushes ahead with the planned chip restrictions, China can resort to the WTO framework to apply for punitive measures.

In December, China filed a request for a dispute consultation at the WTO against the US' chip export control measures.

Bai Ming, deputy director of International Market Research at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said Washington has repeatedly abused its political power to impose a series of well-calculated restrictions on exports of advanced semiconductor technology to China.

Its attempts to coerce other countries to adopt similar chip restrictions on China will harm thousands of chipmaking companies around the world and increase political pressure and uncertainty, Bai said.

## 'Dinosaurs' raise awareness



People in dinosaur costumes walk on Tuesday at Chesil Beach along the Jurassic Coast in Portland, southern England, to promote the Dorset Children's Foundation, a charity dedicated to improving the lives of children with disabilities. FINNBARR WEBSTER / GETTY IMAGES

## WORLD

## Briefly

**RUSSIA**  
**Cafe attack suspect charged with terrorism**

Russian investigators on Tuesday charged Darya Trepova, a 26-year-old resident of St. Petersburg, with terrorist offenses over the killing of military blogger Vladlen Tatarsky in a bomb blast. Russian authorities described the bombing as an act of terrorism and blamed Ukrainian intelligence agencies for orchestrating it. Tatarsky, whose real name was Maxim Fomin, died on Sunday in a cafe where he was due to talk. The Investigative Committee said it had charged Trepova with committing "a terrorist act by an organized group that caused intentional death". The charges carry a maximum jail term of 20 years. Russia's Health Ministry said 42 others had been injured in the blast, and 24 were still in hospital as of late Tuesday.

**NEW ZEALAND**  
**Ex-PM Ardern to fight online extremism**

Jacinda Ardern, who stepped down as New Zealand's prime minister in January, will begin an unpaid role this month combating online extremism. Prime Minister Chris Hipkins announced on Tuesday that he had appointed Ardern as Special Envoy for the Christchurch Call. Ardern has declined to receive any remuneration as special envoy, and will commence her role on April 17, Hipkins said. Ardern delivered her final speech to parliament before bowing out on Wednesday. Ardern launched the Christchurch Call with French President Emmanuel Macron in 2019, two months after a white supremacist gunman killed 51 people at two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch.

**UNITED STATES**  
**Virgin Orbit files for bankruptcy**

Virgin Orbit, founded by billionaire Richard Branson, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Tuesday after the satellite launching business struggled to secure long-term funding following a failed launch in January. The filing comes less than two years after Virgin Orbit went public at a valuation of roughly \$3 billion. But the January mishap left the company scrambling for new funding and forced it to halt operations. The company, which was spun off from space tourism firm Virgin Galactic in 2017, sends satellites into orbit using rockets launched from a modified Boeing 747 plane.

**UNITED KINGDOM**  
**Environment workers to strike for 4 days**

Thousands of workers employed by the British government's Environment Agency in England are set to strike for four days this month over a pay dispute, a union representing them said on Wednesday. In a statement, Unison, the public service union, said it was taking industrial action as ministers did not make any attempt to invite the unions for pay talks despite months of strikes. Teachers in England rejected the government's latest pay offer on Monday and the National Education Union has scheduled one-day strikes for April 27 and May 2.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

**Train collision**

A derailed night train is seen in Voorschoten, the Netherlands, on Tuesday. At least one person died and 30 were injured when a high-speed passenger train slammed into heavy construction equipment and derailed near The Hague, Dutch emergency services said. REMKO DE WAAL VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Poll: French optimistic on relations with China**

Majority of people recognize Beijing's strong development in several fields

By XING YI in London  
xingyi@chinadaily.com.cn

A majority of French think China will become the strongest country in the world by 2050 and the relations between China and France will be characterized as both partners and competitors, a survey of French public opinion finds.

The survey "China and the World in the Eyes of French" was conducted by researchers from the Institute of National Communication Strategy at Huazhong University of Science and Technology and published ahead of the three-day state visit of France's President Emmanuel Macron to China starting from Wednesday.

It collected 1,087 valid online questionnaires from French participants to examine the basic features of the French public's "perception of the world" from four aspects — perceptions of major international powers, China, Europe, and Asia.

In today's multipolar world, the United States is still in the leading position in several aspects of development. While 74.6 percent of the participants of the survey see the US as the No. 1 power in the world, about 40 percent of the respondents predict China to be the strongest country in the world in 2050, followed by the US, France, and Japan.

More than 30 percent of respondents believe that China's technology will be better than that of the US, and more than two-fifths of respondents believe that China's econom-

ic development is expected to surpass that of the US. In addition, more than one-fifth of respondents believe that China's political, military, and cultural development will surpass that of the US.

"French respondents generally recognized China's strong development in the political, economic, scientific and technological, military and cultural fields," the study said. "With the upcoming 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, ... the French public's perception of the relationship will help us to navigate the future direction of Sino-French relations."

**Cultural symbols**

About 20 percent of the respondents think China and France are partners, 18 percent think the two countries are in competition, and 35 percent people think both cooperation and competition exist. More than 50 percent of the respondents regard China as an economic giant and 39.8 percent think China is a major military power.

In terms of Chinese culture, the Great Wall, the giant panda, the Chinese Spring Festival, Chinese food, and Chinese tea are among the top five cultural symbols that French participants associate with China, and about 6.8 percent of the surveyees have been to China.

Lu Shaye, Chinese ambassador to France, noted in a recent interview with Nouvelles d'Europe newspa-

per that China and France are both countries with long civilizations, representing the East and West, and people-to-people direct communication will promote mutual understanding.

"Next year will be the China-France year of culture and tourism and Paris will be holding the Olympics, related departments in both countries are making plans for a series of cultural and sports events to create a good environment for the further development of bilateral relations," he said.

Nearly 80 percent of the survey's participants expressed their willingness to travel to China for tourism while around 14.3 percent and 10.7 percent wanted to come to China for business and education.

As more Chinese companies are going global, Chinese brands and products also contribute to China's image in French eyes. In recent years, China's internet and e-commerce companies are becoming more and more influential around the world and the survey finds that the top Chinese brands recognized by the French are Huawei, TikTok, Lenovo, Xiaomi, and Shein.

The quality of diligence shown by the Chinese, probably through the more than 400,000 ethnic Chinese living and working in France, has left a deep impression on the French — 56.6 percent of respondents agreeing with the description "Chinese people are very dedicated to work".

Other characteristics of the Chinese in French eyes are a strong sense of patriotism, the fear of losing face, as well as their friendliness and honesty.

**In safe hands**

Migrants are seen after the arrival of the Ocean Viking ship operated by the European maritime and humanitarian organization SOS Mediterranee, carrying 92 migrants, in Salerno Port, Italy, on Tuesday. PHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

AGENCIES—XINHUA

**Expert applauds new modernization route**

By XU WEIWEI in Boao, Hainan  
xuwenxu@chinadailyapac.com

China now contributes more to global growth than any other country, said Martin Jacques, a senior fellow at the United Kingdom's Cambridge University, adding it has taken the baton from the United States and become a powerhouse in the global economy.

"If you subtract China or take China out of the growth of the (global) economy, the growth picture would be very different. Everywhere, every country would be poorer if China hadn't made this extraordinary contribution," he said at the annual Boao Forum for Asia, in Boao, in China's southern island province of Hainan, last week.

More importantly, he said that China has offered a new model of modernization rather than the "universal" Western model. He also expressed views similar to those of some other experts that Chinese modernization has the common features of modernization while incorporating some elements suited to China's conditions.

In the 19th century, at a time when there were only a few industrialized countries, the growth of the US economy made a big contribution to the development of the world economy, including that of Europe.

Without the contribution of the US in different ways, for instance, technological developments and the use of cars would not have become so widespread, he said.

Jacques said China is now making an extraordinary contribution to global growth, but in different ways from that of the US. He said it is important to remember that in the 19th century, only a small part of the world was industrialized or modernized.

Even by the middle of the 20th century, the picture was not very different. But the picture has changed dramatically now, he said.

"I should say that the Western view was that there was only one

way of modernization, or one way to modernity — that was Western modernity," Jacques said.

He recalled that the characteristics of China's modernization after the reform and opening-up were inevitably a combination of borrowing from the experience of other countries that were further down the road to modernization, such as Western countries, Japan, and South Korea.

He described the phase of China's development as a hybrid model, which was essentially borrowing from others' experience and applying it with enormous creativity.

China has now arrived, in key areas, more or less at the same technological level as one of the most advanced countries in the world. He said the question is what the next stage of modernization will be like.

On this point, Jacques believes that the perspective now for China is to embark on a modernization path that has got much stronger and carries specific Chinese characteristics.

"You always have to learn; however advanced, you must learn. ... But in the next stage, I think, Chinese modernization (will be) a very potentially creative phase of offering the world a new kind of modernity," said Jacques.

China's role in the development of Asia is fundamental, and really how Asia will perform in the coming year or five years depends hugely on how well the Chinese economy does, he added, because China is such a huge exporter and importer, and also increasingly a provider of capital.



Online  
Watch the video by scanning the code.

**Optimism expressed for Canada-China business**

By RENALI in Toronto  
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Canadian business owners stand to benefit from a relationship with China because the two nations are "closely intertwined economically," said Beijing's ambassador to Ottawa.

"China will continue to be a desirable destination for investors from around the world, in particular for Canadian business owners, because China and Canada are closely intertwined economically, and we both benefit," said Ambassador Cong Peiwu.

Cong spoke at a recent discussion hosted by the Canada China Business Council (CCBC).

"We share the vision of benefiting the people with a high degree of economic complementarity and a similar commitment to an open global economy," he said.

Canadian firms can reasonably expect a growth story in China this year upon gauging the Chinese government's new policy, according to the CCBC talk.

Cong shared his observations on the recently concluded 2023 two sessions in Beijing, the annual plenary meetings of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Consultative Conference. Delegates from across the country met to discuss and approve national priorities.

"If we were to use one single word to give an accurate account of China's economic outlook, I think the word we are looking for is 'brighter,' as Premier Li Qiang, our new premier mentioned, that we are fully confident that the Chinese economy will break through winds and waves and sail toward a brighter future," Cong told the audience from the Chinese and Canadian business communities.

China will prioritize high-quality development in the next five years. At the two sessions, China set its projected GDP target at around 5 percent for this year, which is far higher than other major economies.

Some international institutions also recently upwardly revised their

forecast on China's economic growth in 2023. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development put the number at 5.3 percent.

Opening-up has been a basic state policy of China for the past 45 years; keeping the door open has been increasingly crucial amid the wave of globalization, according to Cong.

"Looking forward, China will resolutely further expand opening-up in alignment with high-standard international trade routes, providing a better business environment and better services to all," Cong said.

In 2022, China's foreign investment totaled more than \$189 billion, which is a record high and almost \$50 billion higher than three years ago. China remained the world's second-largest consumer market and the largest online-retail market.

"This demonstrates that China remains a popular destination for global investment," said Cong. "We took proactive and effective moves to utilize foreign investment. The regulations for implementing the Foreign Investment Law ... further improve the business environment for foreign investors."

China recently encouraged foreign investment with an emphasis on high tech, modern services, energy conservation and environmental protection, which are areas of expertise for Canadian companies.

"We share the vision of benefiting the people (with) a high degree of economic complementarity and a similar commitment to an open global economy," Cong said.

Many well-known Canadian brands have flourished in China, such as lululemon, Canada Goose and Tim Hortons. In December, China and Canada hosted COP 15 and passing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

"Despite all the efforts, we still need to reach the full potential of China-Canada economic ties. As always, we sincerely welcome Canadian businesses to come and invest in China, and we will try our best to make the process as smooth as possible," Cong added.

**Iran names ambassador to UAE after 8-year hiatus**

TEHERAN — Iran appointed its envoy to the United Arab Emirates after eight years of having no ambassador in the country, the official news agency IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The move comes after Iran welcomed an Emirati ambassador last September ending a six-year absence, Agence France-Presse reported.

The diplomat is identified as Reza Ameri, who was serving as the director-general of the Iranian expatriates office at the Foreign Ministry before his appointment.

"After some eight years, the foreign ministry has named Reza Ameri as the Islamic Republic of Iran's new ambassador to the United

Arab Emirates," IRNA reported late on Tuesday.

Ameri had also served as Iran's ambassador to Algeria, Sudan and Eritrea.

In 2016, the UAE downgraded its relations with Iran after Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Iran. In September 2022, the UAE reinstated its ambassador to Iran.

Riyadh restored diplomatic relations with Teheran last month in a fence-mending deal brokered by Beijing.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has accepted an invitation to Riyadh from Saudi Arabia's King Salman, First Vice-President Mohammad Mokher confirmed on Monday.

Iran and the UAE have long had close economic ties which continued during the diplomatic chill.

In another development, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan confirmed the Gulf state's commitment to relations with Israel in a call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that discussed strengthening ties, UAE state media said on Tuesday.

A separate statement from Netanyahu's office said the two leaders agreed to "continue the dialogue between them in a personal meeting in the near future."

The phone call follows a series of moves and comments by Netanyahu's right-wing governing coalition

that have raised Arab ire and drawn condemnation from the UAE, including over Israeli settlement policy in the occupied West Bank.

The UAE president said his country would work with Israel, Arab nations and international partners "to avoid regional escalation," UAE state news agency WAM reported.

Sheikh Mohammed described the UAE's ties with Israel, forged in 2020 under a US-brokered pact known as the Abraham Accords, as a strategic choice for peace and development, saying the UAE sought increased collaboration across multiple sectors.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

## WORLDUS

## US House bill aims to contain China's growth

African experts call reclassification of 'developing' status an aggressive move

By EDITH MUTETHYA in Nairobi, Kenya and NKOSANA DLAMINI in Harare, Zimbabwe

The unanimous passage of a bill by the United States House of Representatives to revoke China's status as a developing country is an extension of the US diplomatic aggression against China to contain the country's development, which will also impede China's assistance to poorer countries, African experts said.

The so-called PRC Is Not a Developing Country Act, if enacted, will impose unrealistic obligations on China and may upset China's

development agenda with its domino effects felt in Africa, they said.

Although it is the second-largest economy in the world, China is still listed as a developing country in all major international organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

XN Iraki, an associate professor at the University of Nairobi's Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, said China is still a developing country because its per capita income is still much lower compared with developed countries.

Iraki added that China's 65 percent

urbanization rate is low compared with the United Kingdom's 85 percent.

He said if China's status is revoked, China could be forced to take up more responsibilities as a more developed country.

Adhere Cavince, an international relations scholar on China-Africa relations, said China is still considered a developing country across many metrics.

He said in terms of gross domestic product per capita, China is only around a fifth of the United States and ranks way below many of the Global North economies.

"China is still struggling with a number of development challenges. ... It means that more work still needs to be done by Chinese people

and the government to consolidate durable development gains," he said.

Adhere said reclassifying China as a developed country may come at a huge cost for its partners, especially from the Global South.

"In its understanding of the challenges of itself being the largest developing country, China has stood with other emerging economies in terms of development," he said, adding that China's assistance cannot be rivaled by any of the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

"Through avenues like the Belt and Road Initiative, China has positively impacted Africa's productive sectors," he said.

"Any attempts to reclassify China as a developed country may impose

unrealistic obligations on China, which will impede Beijing's development assistance to poor countries."

Nobert Njoroge, vice-chairperson of the Kenya-China Alumni Association, said China's status as a developing country has been discussed due to its rapid economic growth and increasing influence in the world economy.

"Despite its impressive economic growth, China still lags in literacy level distribution, life expectancy and overall human development index compared with developed countries."

Goodson Nguni, a political commentator in Zimbabwe, said: "The US wants to control and dominate China, a rising power."

Zimbabwean researcher Nomathemba Mhlanga said the move seeks

to cut China's development trajectory by adding a premium to its development cost through the assumption of international responsibilities beyond its ability.

"The law is meant to put spanners on China's development agenda and its growing investment initiatives into Africa," Mhlanga said.

Gift Mugano, an economist in Harare, also questioned why the US gives itself the right to impose labels on other sovereign countries.

Mugano said the US wields some influence in the World Bank, WTO and IMF, and could also decree a heavy tariff regime on Chinese products and companies.

Contact the writers at [edithmutethya@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:edithmutethya@chinadaily.com.cn).

## Some 15 million to lose coverage by Medicaid in US

By MAY ZHOU in Houston  
[mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com](mailto:mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com)

Approximately 15 million people in the United States will lose Medicaid health coverage after the expiration of a pandemic-era rule, according to the federal government's estimate.

The COVID-19 public health emergency and Medicaid's continuous enrollment provision ended on March 31.

Before the pandemic, people would lose their Medicaid coverage if they started making too much money to qualify for the program, or if they moved out of state or gained healthcare coverage through jobs.

When the pandemic hit, the government suspended procedures that would exclude people from Medicaid, a healthcare insurance program for low-income people that started in 1965. As a result, Medicaid enrollment grew by 5 million between 2020 and 2022.

With the program having expired, some states will restart eligibility checks on every person currently on Medicaid and remove people who are disqualified.

Using survey data and 2021 enrollment information, the Office of Health Policy at the Department of Health and Human Services, or HHS, projected that 17.4 percent

of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program, enrollees will be removed from the federal program.

The analysis said that about 9.5 percent of Medicaid enrollees, or 8.2 million individuals, will lose Medicaid due to loss of eligibility. An additional 7.9 percent — 6 to 6.8 million individuals — will lose Medicaid coverage despite being eligible due to how Medicaid is being administrated.

Of the 15 million individuals, children and young adults will be affected disproportionately, with 5.3 million children and 4.7 million adults ages 18-34 predicted to lose coverage.

Nearly one-third or 4.6 million individuals who are expected to lose coverage are Latino, and some 2.2 million are black, the analysis found.

Even a small gap in coverage can be "devastating," said Jennifer Tolbert, the associate director for the program on Medicaid and the uninsured at KFF, a nonprofit research organization formerly known as the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Some may not be able to get access to their monthly medications, she said, while others may not get access to treatment for their chronic physical or mental health conditions.

Agencies contributed to this story.

## Tornado strikes Missouri



Keith Lincoln stands outside his damaged home in Glen Allen, Missouri, on Wednesday. A large tornado tore through southeastern Missouri before dawn on Wednesday, killing several people and causing widespread destruction. JIM SALTER / AP

## Protest: Taiwan leader's 'transit' in US opposed

From page 1

Mouzaoui said that many Americans do not understand that the foundation of peaceful relations between the US and China is respect for the one-China principle and allowing Taiwan and the mainland to resolve their differences without meddling by US politicians.

"The American people do not benefit at all from this meeting, which is only intended to threaten that diplomatic foundation and stoke hostilities when there should be none. When these politicians show no such concern, we will take action and tell them no," he said.

"Our politicians and our corporate media are not giving the American public the full story and the full history of diplomatic relations between the US and China, and if the American people actually learned about this history, especially about the Shanghai Communiqué and the fact that there's an official US position to respect the one-China policy, then people would have a much different attitude about this meeting," he said.

The real intention of Tsai's "transit" is to conduct "Taiwan independence" activities, said Fred Zou, deputy secretary-general of the Alliance for China's Peaceful Reunification, USA. "The protests in Los Angeles have united the overseas Chinese on the West Coast, from Seattle to San Diego, together to show our desire for peace and resolute opposition to war," he told China Daily.

"Both the US and China have responsibilities for the world's peace. We hope Tsai stops making trouble for the relations between the two countries," said Zou.

Julie Tang, a retired judge and co-founder of Pivot to Peace, said, "We condemn the reckless and irresponsible acts of Speaker McCarthy. Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen is taking 23 million people in Taiwan down the road to destruction. And Speaker McCarthy could care less as long as he thinks China could be contained."

"They are provoking war in Asia. If war breaks out, we have no false hopes that our leaders will be looking out for us, or defending us against anti-Asian hate," Tang said.

"What kind of democracy are we living in?"

Wei Yu, organizer for CODE-PINK's "China is Not Our Enemy" campaign, said she participated in Wednesday's protest because the meeting violated the one-China policy, which has ensured peaceful relations between the US and China for decades.

"Our policymakers are again recklessly escalating tensions with China," she said. "We are holding Speaker McCarthy accountable for his warmongering because the people are the tuning fork for peace."

William Jones, the Washington bureau chief of Executive Intelligence Review, criticized some Republican politicians for looking to score political points while ignoring the interests of the American people.

The Republicans are always trying to "push the envelope" on the Taiwan question with little "push-back" from the Biden administration, Jones told China Daily.

"(Some Taiwan officials) have thus always provided grist to the mill to those who would like to

prevent China's development as a major power, and unfortunately the people of Taiwan — and their prosperity — are held hostage to the whims of envious politicians in Washington," he said.

"Unable to secure 'moderate prosperity' for people at home, they have taken umbrage at the fact that 'Communist' China has brought over 800 million people out of poverty. As the 'trickle-down' economics of the US policy elites dries up, the growing prosperity of Chinese people stands as an indictment of the failure of their policy," said Jones.

"And this they will not tolerate. Therefore, provocations on Taiwan become the order of the day. The 'adults' in the room should correct this blunder, but, at the moment, they are nowhere to be found."

"The US cannot, and hopefully, will not, question the one-China policy, but skirting around the issue without actually questioning it can become a dangerous game," he said.

Yifan Xu in Washington contributed to this story.

## 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

471 Yonge Street, 10th Floor

Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8

Tel: 416-461-5706

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. 656

## Harvard admits record number of Asian Americans

By MINLU ZHANG in New York  
[minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com](mailto:minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com)

Harvard University has admitted a record number of Asian American students to its Class of 2027 as it faces allegations of bias against Asian students in its admissions process.

Of 56,937 individuals who applied, the Ivy League university accepted 1,942 students, its second-lowest acceptance rate ever.

Among the admitted applicants, 29.9 percent are Asian American, a 2.1 percent increase from last year's 27.8 percent, according to a

breakdown of the incoming class released by Harvard last week. That is the largest-ever acceptance rate for Asian Americans.

Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid William Fitzsimmons said that the rise in the number of Asian American students wasn't unexpected. "It's been part of a long-term trend," he told The Harvard Crimson. "The percentages have been going up steadily. It's not a surprise."

White students were the largest racial group admitted at 40.8 percent. Women account for 53.6

percent of all those accepted.

For the second year in a row, admission rates of black and Hispanic students decreased, representing 15.3 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively. Native Hawaiian and Native American admissions were also down from last year, at 0.5 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

Julie Park, an associate professor at the University of Maryland who studies racial equity in higher education, told NBC News that one potential explanation for this could be that more Asian American students who are children of Harvard

graduates, known as legacy admissions, may have been accepted.

Another reason could be the overall increase in the number of Asian American young adults and high school graduates in the United States, she said.

"Race-conscious admissions can be very dynamic and institution-specific," she said. "Under race-conscious admissions, Harvard has a very sizable Asian-American class. It's just a natural byproduct that you're just going to numerically have at Harvard, unless they step away from legacy admissions,

which I actually think they should."

The latest Harvard admission numbers were released as the US Supreme Court is hearing arguments that alleges the Ivy League school's admission policies discriminate against Asian and white students.

Harvard University was sued in 2014 by Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), a group opposed to affirmative action, which alleged that the college's race-conscious admissions use racial quotas to deny admission to high-scoring Asian Americans.

After two lower courts ruled in

favor of the university, SFFA took the case to the Supreme Court, which heard the suits against Harvard and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on the same day in October 2022.

The plaintiff, SFFA, argues that Harvard's admissions officers, by endorsing the "model minority" stereotype, unfairly evaluate Asian applicants with higher standards and discriminate against them in the subjective areas of the application process.

The Supreme Court is expected to decide in June, which could establish a precedent for affirmative action policies in higher education institutions throughout the US.

## BUSINESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION; FOLLOW US ON TWITTER · CHINA DAILY

## Adisseo ups output for nation's changing palate

By ZHONG NAN

Adisseo Group, a France-based animal nutrition provider and a subsidiary of State-owned Sinochem Holdings Corp Ltd, will put a protein factory into operation in Chongqing and build a specialty factory in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, this year, said a top executive.

The plant in Chongqing is expected to produce 20,000 metric tons of protein on an annual basis this year. The products will be used in fish farming, allowing farmers to replace fishmeal and soy with a high-quality ingredient that requires no arable land and no plant matter.

The group said that initially, the plant's production will be available for use in China, the world's largest aquaculture market by consumption volume.



“China is a crucial market for us, and we see it as the largest market in the world for our products.”

Jean-Marc Dublanc, CEO of Adisseo, a France-based animal nutrition provider

“China is a crucial market for us, and we see it as the largest market in the world for our products. This is why we opened last year a new phase of our Nanjing manufacturing base that can produce additional 180,000 tons annually of an important liquid component in animal feed, an essential amino acid called methionine,” said Jean-Marc Dublanc, CEO of Adisseo.

Dublanc said the company's goal for this year is not only to supply sufficient animal feed in China, but also to export it to the rest of the world, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, from the group's manufacturing base in Nanjing.

Together with the first phase, Adisseo's Nanjing manufacturing base is currently able to produce 350,000 tons of liquid methionine a year for both Chinese and global markets. About half of its production will be exported this year,

including to markets involved in the Belt and Road Initiative such as Thailand, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.

The company has identified rising demand for its products in several places across China, including Guangdong and Shandong provinces, and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

To further enhance its product range and support development, Dublanc said Adisseo is building a new specialty formulation plant in Nanjing capable of producing 37,000 tons of feed additives annually, enabling the customization of products to meet specific Chinese industry requirements while remaining cost-effective.

“This will be our next step to expand our presence in China,” said the French executive, adding that the company's ultimate goal in this development area is to improve the quality, sustainability and security of the food and animal protein supply in China.

He said that the Chinese economy has shown its resilience and sound long-term fundamentals amid multiple challenges. Since China's economic growth notably improved in the first quarter, it will further enrich the spending power of the country's middle-income earners and stimulate meat consumption.

Adisseo was acquired by China National BlueStar (Group) Co Ltd, a subsidiary of Sinochem Holdings, in 2006. It is a core subsidiary and the only company focusing on animal nutrition in Sinochem Holdings' life sciences segment.

With more than 2,650 employees and regions through its global distribution network. Its sales revenue amounted to over 2.04 billion euros (\$2.22 billion) in 2022.

Ding Lixin, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing, said eating habits in China are changing with the country's economic growth.

Food consumption is rising and the types of foods purchased are diversifying. Palates are becoming more sophisticated, and there is greater demand for convenience. That has dramatically transformed the animal feed industry in China, he said.



A visitor walks past the booth of Adisseo Group during an expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Briefly

## Interprovincial railway speeds up metro line

East China's Anhui and Jiangsu provinces are speeding up construction of a 65.2-kilometer metro line to better link their populations amid integration of the Yangtze River Delta region. The Nanjing-Maanshan Intercity Railway will help slash travel time between Nanjing, Jiangsu's provincial capital, and Maanshan in Anhui, to 30 minutes upon completion in 2025. Also known as the S2 Line of Nanjing Metro with 20 stations and partially built by China Railway No 4 Engineering Group Co Ltd, construction began in December 2020. On Sunday, a 200-meter continuous beam was fully linked on the line in Maanshan using an innovative method to speed up work.

## Insurance assets grow to over \$4 trillion

Total assets of China's insurance sector amounted to 27.91 trillion yuan (\$4.06 trillion) at the end of February, official data showed. The figure increased steadily from 27.15 trillion yuan at the end of last year, said the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission. Net assets of the sector stood at 2.82 trillion yuan, up from 2.7 trillion yuan at the end of 2022. In February, Chinese insurers raked in 1.4 trillion yuan in combined insurance premiums, compared with 1.3 trillion yuan in the same period of 2022. Their expenditures on compensation and payments reached 331.42 billion yuan in February, up from 305.82 billion yuan seen a year ago.

XINHUA · CHINA DAILY

## HIGHER GROUND



The stand of French firm GTT during an expo in Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## China, France ready to deepen commercial ties

Trade, investment and tech will grow, boosting bilateral links, global recovery

By ZHONG NAN  
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China and France, considered two major manufacturing powerhouses of the world, are expected to deepen their commercial relations in trade, investment and beyond to stimulate both the business vitality of the two sides and global economic recovery, said analysts and business leaders.

Encouraged by the tangible growth achieved under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's opening-up measures and the “France 2030” investment plan, the two countries will likely scale up trade and investment in fields like the digital economy, trade in services, new energy and high-end manufacturing, they said.

Unveiled by the French government in 2021, the “France 2030” investment plan aims to support the transformation of automotive, aerospace, digital, green, biotechnology, culture and healthcare industries. They are all considered fields where excellence has been pursued, achieved and needs to be sustained, according to Business France, a French government agency that promotes the country's exports and seeks to attract foreign investment.

Despite headwinds such as waning global demand and rising global trade protectionism in recent years, interdependence between China and France remains stable in bilateral trade across industries, said Cui Hongjian, director of European Studies at the Beijing-based China Institute of International Studies.

“With China undergoing a new round of industrial upgrading as well as green and low-carbon transformation, it will continue to export consumer goods and make use of France's environmental protection solutions and high-tech products, including electronic products, passenger aircraft, medical equipment and industrial parts,” said Cui.

As both the Chinese and French economies have been disrupted by challenges ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to geo-economic fragmentation, their bilateral trade value dropped 4.4 percent year-on-year to \$81.23 billion in 2022, data from China's General Administration of Customs showed.

In addition to passenger vehicles and aircraft, water treatment, chemical and pharmaceutical products, France's exports to China also include fashion, energy infrastructure and agricultural products. China exports mainly construction machinery, manufacturing equipment, steel, electronics, textiles, garments and household appliances to the European country.

Zhao Ping, vice-dean of the academy of Beijing-based China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said China's ongoing consumption and industrial upgrade have attracted more French investment in many areas like high-end manufacturing and green development in recent years.

Echoing that sentiment, Yin Zheng, executive vice-president of Schneider Electric's China and East Asia operations, said that under the high-quality development goal, Chi-

nese industries are accelerating their transformation toward digitalization and decarbonization. This, he said, provides more opportunities and growth spaces for French and European companies like Schneider Electric.

Operating in China for 36 years, the French multinational has grown from a joint venture factory to one with 29 factories and distribution centers in China today, with a more than 90 percent local purchase rate. China has become its second-largest market around the world.

Yin said Schneider Electric has established two research and development centers and one innovation lab for different business segments across China over the past four months.

“We are much more confident that 2023 will be a great year for growth, partnership and expansion, and China will continue to develop its economy in a positive way,” said Christophe Laurus, president of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China (CCI France China).

“Backed by China's optimized COVID-19 response and economic growth, we will see an improvement of business confidence and investment plans from many French companies this year,” he said.

A survey conducted by CCI France China between Jan 31 and Feb 17 saw 305 companies participating. The chamber's members said they are more willing now than before to expand their activities in China over the next three years.

The survey findings showed that up to 47 percent of respondents are planning to increase their investment in China, which is a significant increase from the 23 percent reported in the chamber's previous survey in September 2022.

## CATL: Hungary EV battery plant still a ‘go’

By CHENG YU  
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd, the world's largest battery maker for electric vehicles, told China Daily that its battery plant in Hungary is “proceeding as planned,” rebutting market rumors that the Hungarian plant had halted construction plans due to environmental issues.

Industry experts said that the plant is no doubt a “win-win” project for both China and Hungary, especially as the Central European country is striving to woo Chinese manufacturers to create a global hub for EV batteries.

Covering an area of 221 hectares — equal to around 280 soccer fields — CATL's planned gigafactory is located in Debrecen, Hungary, and aims to supply both cells and modules to European automakers under a deal announced in August last year.

With a battery production capacity of 100 gigawatt-hours, it has attracted a total investment of 7.34 billion euros (\$7.28 billion) from the Chinese battery giant and is expected to create 9,000 new

jobs for locals.

Zhang Xiang, an auto sector researcher at the North China University of Technology, said: “The plant is of great significance to Hungary as the government seeks more ties with Eastern partners like China. It will also help accelerate its plan to become a major EV hub under the European Union's plan to ban new internal combustion engines from 2035.”

Peter Szijjarto, Hungarian minister of foreign affairs and trade, noted earlier that the investment is “the biggest ever greenfield investment” in the history of Hungary, allowing the country to become one of the leading battery production sites of the world.

“Both global and European economies have been faced with tremendous challenges recently. We in Hungary have a clear goal to be a local exception from the continental recession. The best tool to achieve this goal is to attract state-of-the-art investments in the most revolutionary branch of the automotive industry, namely electromobility,” he said.

Zhang pointed out that recent years have witnessed rising prefer-

ential policies offered by the Hungarian government for Chinese companies, especially under the Belt and Road Initiative. Hungary was one of the first countries in Europe to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with China on jointly building the BRI.

Chinese electric-vehicle maker Nio announced in June last year plans to build its first overseas factory in Hungary while computer maker Lenovo also announced in the same month that its first European manufacturing facility in Hungary had started operations.

“For CATL, the Hungarian plant will also help it to get closer to automakers such as Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volkswagen to gain a lead in the European market and boost overseas expansion,” Zhang added.

Despite the unstable global supply chain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CATL is beefing up its international presence with more overseas plants. It 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.

## French green firm Veolia bullish

By ZHENG XIN  
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

French environmental solutions provider Veolia Group expects strong growth from the Chinese market this year as China has assured greater efforts to attract foreign capital and widen market access to ensure a level playing field for both domestic and foreign companies, said a top company official.

Veolia is committed to further investing in the decarbonization and depollution sectors in the country as China's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality presented foreign companies like Veolia with numerous opportunities, said Estelle Brachlianoff, CEO of Veolia Group, in Beijing on Wednesday.

Veolia will continue to step up investment as well as expand its existing business in water, waste and energy management sectors in China this year and in the years to come, considering the strong determination of the Chinese government to combat pollution, she said.

Veolia currently serves more than 100 sites in around 50 cities in China, including the biomass district heating project in Kedong, Heilongjiang province, and a full-fledged water management project for Yanshan Sinopec Petrochemical in Beijing.

Veolia's CEO said she is very optimistic about China's economy and its operations in the country this year, because of not only its huge market size but its speed of development and its willingness to further facilitate the country's green transition with Veolia's technologies and expertise.

Citing the company's water management service for Yanshan Sinopec Petrochemical, she said it is “a significant project for Veolia in China as it demonstrates the company's capabilities in providing sustainable and efficient solutions for industrial water treatment, reuse and the restoration of biodiversity at the same time.”

The company manages the full water cycle at Yanshan Sinopec Petrochemical to help the company comply with the strictest wastewater discharge regulations and to reduce its water and carbon footprint effectively. The treated wastewater is reused to restore a wetland, which is home to many rare birds, and a park for the local community.

Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, said policies that are continually optimized create massive opportunities in ecological and environmental protection in the country.

Multinational corporations in China find the country's current focus on high-quality development of a low-carbon and circular economy strategic for future business growth, Lin said.

Many foreign corporations have been stepping up efforts to align their core businesses with China's market demand, he said.

According to Brachlianoff, industrial services are key to Veolia's business growth in China, thanks to the massive demand for depollution and circular economy, ranging from water treatment, wastewater management, waste management solutions for industrial and municipal clients, as well as energy efficiency services.

“Veolia has been operating in China for more than 30 years, bringing investment, advanced technologies and operational expertise, as well as new business models to the Chinese environmental industry. As China is attaching more importance to environmental protection with focus on the development of a low-carbon and circular economy, we expect more business opportunities in the years to come,” Brachlianoff said.

## BUSINESSFOCUS

## Pearl sellers find treasure in livestreams

Zhejiang merchants' innovative online promotional skills serve as example at home, abroad

By MA ZHENHUAN and YU YIN  
in Hangzhou

China's first group of licensed pearl-selling livestreamers received vocational skill certificates in March from the National Gemstone Testing Center. The 54 licensees are from Zhuji, Zhejiang province.

Pearls that come from freshwater mussels are more affordable than saltwater pearls. They also come in a wider variety of colors and are considered longer lasting.

The township of Shanxiahui in Zhuji, known as the pearl capital of China, is the nation's largest freshwater pearl processing and trading center. It accounts for some 80 percent of China's annual freshwater pearl yields, and in 2022, its pearl transactions exceeded 40 billion yuan (\$5.8 billion).

"Zhuji's pearl industry is an important barometer of the freshwater market both domestically and globally. Other Chinese freshwater pearl businesses can learn from its practices in industrial transformation and upgrading," said Ye Zhibin, president of the Gems & Jewelry Trade Association of China, at the 2022 World Pearl Congress in Zhuji.

In recent years, Shanxiahui residents have ditched traditional sales models for digital selling.

"The traders used to buy pearls from farmers on credit, sell them to clients, and then pay their bills. If anything went wrong, farmers couldn't come up with the money," said He Lixin, Party secretary of the village of Xinchang, often called "pearl village".

Change came with livestreaming platforms.

He remembers watching villagers sell pearls via livestreaming for the first time in 2017. "Welcome to my livestreaming room," a villager said excitedly in front of a mobile phone, with a mussel in one hand and a tool in the other.

Only a few months after the launch of Taobao Live, Alibaba's livestreaming platform, the village's farmers had figured out a new way to sell pearls in the form of "blind boxes" — essentially a game of chance. Customers would spend 30 yuan on a mussel and then farmers would open it as they were livestreaming. Some customers may get lucky and receive a high-quality pearl while others would only get a blemished one.

Since then, the Party secretary has seen the innovative selling method become popular. "In this way, farmers also attracted a group of regular customers," he said. "Once a customer bought 4,000 mussels, and it took a dozen farmers working half a day to open them."

Of more than 800 pearl-raising households in the village, over 300 have been using livestreaming to sell, He said. Some 75 percent of villagers are involved in livestreaming-related jobs. In 2022, two-thirds of the village's total of 6 billion yuan in pearl sales were made through livestreaming.

Over the past six years, many young people have also returned to their homes in Shanxiahui to start pearl businesses.

More than 25,000 residents are involved in the pearl industry and over 3,000 work as livestreamers. Two livestreaming centers of the short-video platform Douyin have been built in the town.

Still, livestreamers have faced challenges as online selling models accelerate the development of the pearl industry.



Above: A salesman displays a pearl necklace to online customers in Xinchang village, often called "pearl village", in Shanxiahui township, Zhuji, Zhejiang province.



Left: Lu Yilei, a livestreamer in Zhuji, Zhejiang province, receives a vocational skill certificate issued by the National Gemstone Testing Center in March.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Zhuji's pearl industry is an important barometer of the freshwater market both domestically and globally. Other Chinese freshwater pearl businesses can learn from its practices in industrial transformation and upgrading."

Ye Zhibin, president of the Gems & Jewelry Trade Association of China

40 billion yuan

annual pearl transaction value of Shanxiahui township, Zhuji, Zhejiang province, in 2022

He Donghui, an executive of Angeperle, a pearl company in Shanxiahui, said livestreamers should be proficient in both knowledge about pearls and advertising laws.

Together with the National Gemstone Testing Center and the Zhejiang Province Pearl Industry Association, local authorities started a course on selling pearls online in the town in February. More than 100 people applied for the course and 57 were admitted. After the training, 54 of them received certificates and became the country's first group of licensed pearl-selling livestreamers.

Deng Shaozhen is one of them. "Some customers are more of an expert than we are. It's embarrassing when we cannot answer their questions. That's why all members of my team participate in each training opportunity about pearls."

Yu Jintang and his girlfriend He Tong have been active in selling pearls using livestreaming for nearly two years and both received certificates.

"As livestreamers, we should have a broad range of knowledge, which is not confined to pearls but includes laws such as those on consumer protection and taxes," Yu said. "The training course covers both theory and practice, such as knowledge about pearls and the details of livestreaming."

Yu Lingjun, Party secretary of Shanxiahui, said: "How well the livestreamers perform has a lot to do with the level of credibility the brands achieve in the market. Thanks to e-commerce and livestreaming, our pearls have become popular across the nation. We believe that the standardization of pearl-selling livestreaming activities will attract more people to the industry and will also make the industry better off in the long run."

People in other nations have also been inspired by Shanxiahui's experiences, especially Xinchang villagers' promotion of the traditional pearl industry through digital selling.

Stories about Xinchang village have been compiled into teaching materials used in Mexican colleges, according to Liu Qiang, who is in charge of Alibaba Group's digital economy training program, Global Digital Talent. "We hope teachers and students there will share these experiences with local companies to help them upgrade their industrial sectors with digital technologies."

The electronic World Trade Platform, an initiative started by Alibaba in 2017 to help small businesses and entrepreneurs build globalized businesses through cross-border trade, has a talent program that now operates in more than 15 markets across the world. It helps improve the knowledge of educators who, in turn, pass it along to their students.

Mexico has become the first stop in the Americas for the electronic World Trade Platform program. In February, a delegation of Mexican officials and educators arrived for a one-week visit in Xinchang.

"It's really good to see firsthand how the Chinese are conducting e-commerce and building all the necessary infrastructure," said Daniel Gonzalez Arroyo, director of the Irapuato State Training Institute in Guanajuato, Mexico. "We want to learn from you and replicate your success in Mexico."

Contact the writers at  
mazhenhuan@chinadaily.com.cn

## Freshwater gems a hit at Hong Kong event

By MA ZHENHUAN and YU YIN  
in Hangzhou

A delegation of nearly 800 people from more than 300 pearl companies in Zhuji, Zhejiang province, attended the Hong Kong Trade Development Council's combined jewelry fairs in early March. It was the first major international trade event held in Hong Kong since the special administrative region resumed quarantine-free travel with the Chinese mainland starting from Jan 8.

The combination of the two fairs — the 39th Hong Kong International Jewellery Show and the 9th Hong Kong International Diamond, Gem & Pearl Show — is the largest such event in Asia. This year's five-day event attracted more than 2,500 exhibitors from around the world and 60,000 buyers from 130 countries and regions.

Hong Kong is a leading trade and distribution center for pearls, and over 90 percent of freshwater pearls in the Hong Kong market are from Zhuji. This year, a 459-square-meter Zhuji pavilion was set up at the fair.

Xinma Jewelry, a pearl company from Zhuji, brought over 100 kilograms of baroque pearls for its debut at the fair. Baroque pearls have an irregular shape.

Wang Zhijie, founder of the company, said all the hard work was worth it.

"One of the biggest takeaways from the event has been friends. I've made many friends there, both Chinese and foreigners. After the fair, some visited my shop in Zhuji in person," Wang said.

Zheng Zongbin, an executive of Lezhen Jewelry, concurred. "The fair brought me many new clients," Zheng said.

Zhan Chunji, chairman of Zhejiang Yisheng Technology Co Ltd, a buyer from Zhuji, said his Hong Kong trip was a chance to learn the latest about the international pearl industry.

"It helps to bring our freshwater pearls to a larger market," Zhan said.

The Zhuji delegation included 49 exhibitors and over 300 buyers, and 70 percent of them attended the fair for the first time, according to Vice-Mayor Chen Wenjin. The deals made at the fair were expected to reach 100 million yuan (\$14.5 million).

"It was really much better than we expected. We also plan to attend exhibitions in Japan to promote Chinese freshwater pearls," says He Tiejuan, secretary-general of the Zhejiang Province Pearl Industry Association.



Above: Malaysian buyers pick pearl products at the Zhuji pavilion during the 39th Hong Kong International Jewellery Show in March.



Left: Pearl sellers from Zhuji, Zhejiang province, pose for a photo on a chartered flight to Hong Kong for pearl expos on Feb 28.

PHOTOS BY GUO BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

**Bird population:** ● 1,000 ● 100  
**Weight (unit: gram)**  
**Length (unit: centimeter)**  
 Jan | | | | | Dec  
**migrating** **breeding**  
**Number of eggs laid at one time by birds:** ●●●●● 4-7  
 The maximum wingspan of a Siberian crane compared to that of Yao Ming:  
 2.5m | 2.25m

**Yakutsk National Park, Russia**  
**Migration channels of Siberian crane (spots pinned on a map):**  
 Tahe River  
 Heihe River  
 Songnen Plain

**Global migration channels:**  
 East Atlantic channel  
 Black Sea/Mediterranean channel  
 West Asian-East African channel  
 Central Asian channel  
 East Asian-Australasian channel  
 West Pacific channel  
 Pacific Americas channel  
 Mississippi Americas channel  
 Atlantic Americas channel

## ON THE MOVE

Key nature reserve management bureaus in China have reported more birds, including some rare species, wintering across the country. **Li Hongyang** reports.

During the winter for the cranes. The Siberian crane is listed as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. Even so, the population of the birds has risen from about 3,000 to more than 5,000 over the past 20 years, according to Qian, who has been observing the birds around the lake since 1999.

"To protect them, we need to protect their habitat, which is mainly wetland," he said.

**Taking action**  
 In the recently released National Action Plan for the Protection of Bird Migration Channels (2021-35), 1,140 sites in China were identified as important breeding grounds, wintering grounds and migratory stops, including Poyang and the Yellow River wetland in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region.

China has 804 species of migratory birds, accounting for 55.6 percent of all bird species, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The plan said that relevant departments should monitor and assess migratory bird populations and compensate farmers for damages caused by the birds.

Since China joined the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1992, it has designated 202,600 hectares of wetland as Wetlands of International Importance, according to the administration.

To help solve this problem, the Jiangxi provincial government has built 70 hectares of lotus roots in Nanchang to provide sustenance and clean water, maintain biodiversity, help contain floods and prevent droughts.

Wetlands include coastal areas with a water depth of no more than 6 meters at low tide, but exclude paddy fields and expanses of water used for aquaculture and artificial breeding, the administration said.

According to a plan released by the central government in October, by 2025, China will have protected 55 percent of its wetlands.

After the Wetlands Protection Law — the nation's first law to focus on protecting wetlands — was introduced on June 1, 2022, comprehensive protection was strengthened, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The law clarified the division of management and introduced harsh punishment for people who damage wetland areas. It restricts construction at important national wetlands and bans harmful activities, including land reclamation, overgrazing, overharvesting and the discharging of wastewater.

**Populations growing**  
 Key nature reserve management bureaus in China have reported more birds wintering in the nation's wetlands, including some new rare species.

In February, the forestry bureau in Hunan province reported 72 species of waterbirds that were spending this past winter at Dongting Lake, which stretches across several counties and cities.

Mallards and Eurasian cranes are among the birds staying at the lake. Black-faced spoonbills, a rare and endangered species, were also spotted at Dongting after an absence of five years.

The number of the spoonbills has increased from 300 in the 1980s to more than 5,000 now, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

In December, staff members at the Shanghai Chongming Dongtan Bird National Nature Reserve recorded more than 2,900 tundra swans during a special monitoring session, up from some 1,000 seen during the winter in 2021.

Data from the Shanghai Forestry Bureau showed that in the 1980s, more than 3,000 of the swans wintered at the reserve. The number of the birds decreased for a time — at one point, only dozens of them were seen — but thanks to restoration efforts, the migration population has rebounded.

The black stork, a national first-class protected bird, has wintered at the Qinglong River National Nature Reserve in Liaoning province for four years.

According to monitoring data at the reserve, as many as nine of the birds have been seen during that period. Last year, four of the birds were spotted.

Contact the writer at [lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn)

**Poyang Lake, Jiangxi province**  
 Poyang Lake is the largest freshwater lake in China, and the second largest overall. The environment and climate there are suitable for birds wintering under the influence of the warm and humid southeast monsoon. Poyang is a key habitat and wintering ground for the Siberian crane and other rare waterfowl. About 310 species of birds inhabit the lake.

**High water season of Poyang Lake**  
**Dry season of Poyang Lake**

**Species profiles:**  
**Siberian crane:** Weight: 4,900-7,400g Length: 130-140cm  
**Mallard:** Weight: 500-730g Length: 42-73cm  
**Lesser white-fronted goose:** Weight: 1,400-2,300g Length: 53-66cm  
**Black-faced spoonbill:** Weight: 1,460-2,050g Length: 60-78cm  
**Spotted greenshank:** Weight: 125-170g Length: 29-32cm  
**Scaly-sided merganser:** Weight: 800-1,170g Length: 49-63cm  
**Spoon-billed sandpiper:** Weight: 20g Length: 14-16cm  
**Chinese crested tern:** Weight: 1,000g Length: 38-42cm  
**Relict gull:** Weight: 420-665g Length: 39-46cm

**Vertical list of birds and heights:**  
 12,000m: Ruppell's vulture  
 11,000m: airplane  
 10,000m: Whooper swan  
 9,000m: Mount Qomolangma  
 8,844.43m: Yellow-billed cuckoo  
 8,200m: Bearded vulture  
 8,000m: Lammergeier  
 7,300m: Bar-tailed godwit  
 7,000m: Mallard  
 6,400m: Helicopter  
 6,000m: Andean condor  
 5,000m: White stork  
 4,600m: 90 percent birds fly at this height  
 4,300m: Shanghai Tower  
 4,000m: 632m

**Shape of some bird wings:**  
 Tapered, Long and thin, Elliptical, Broad-slotted  
 Designers of aircraft wings learn from bird wing structure.

**Ways that birds with broadwings fly:**  
 Formation: V-formation, Rank, File, Irregular, Solitary  
 During flight, birds can fan their wings to keep themselves steady in the air.

**Two major ways birds fly:**  
**Gliding:** Birds obtain lift from the movement of the air flow while gliding.  
**Flapping:** Birds fly by flapping their wings, which generate upward momentum.

## CHINA

## Job seekers mulling remote work overseas

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai  
zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Young job seekers in China in search of a better work-life balance are increasingly considering working remotely abroad in response to the pressure of life in big cities and fierce competition in the job market.

InCareer, an app launched in 2021 by employment-centered social media platform LinkedIn, lists opportunities for remote work around the world.

Data from InCareer showed that the number of individuals searching and applying for remote work in China peaked in the fourth quarter last year.

Programmer, sales and business development are the top three fields in which remote workers are being sought, InCareer figures showed. Such workers are showing a preference toward working for Chinese startups overseas, as well as for small and medium-sized foreign companies.

Zhai Lujia, a software engineer in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, started working for an Australian company specializing in software development early this year. He said that nobody checks how many hours he works every day, and that this kind of work structure requires greater self-discipline.

Although his job involves flexible hours and working at various sites, he said that productivity is not compromised.

"My colleagues and I have frequent meetings, during which we discuss our plans," the 39-year-old said. "Considering the time difference, we all agreed to set a core work period of around four hours every day during which we can col-

laborate, because programming requires a lot of teamwork."

He stressed that he feels engaged and that his job is no different from a traditional one in terms of his tasks and opportunities for promotion.

Zhai, who previously worked from home for a company in Shenzhen, said that he doesn't want an office job again unless it offers a significantly higher salary to cover the cost of driving, parking and commuting.

He said that some overseas companies are interested in hiring Chinese candidates for remote positions like IT specialists because they are able to pay them lower wages.

The rapid rise of remote work is related in part to COVID-19, with global surveys showing that at least 45 percent of jobs shifted to work-from-home positions over the past three years, and office occupancy rates in big cities are still far lower than before the pandemic.

A McKinsey report revealed that more than 50 percent of employees worldwide said they preferred a flexible work model combining office and online work, and only 37 percent were in favor of continuing to work in an office.

Chen Yijing, director of product management at LinkedIn China, said that remote work overseas may help more Chinese companies expand their global footprint.

"With such a model, a domestic company's expenditure on physical administration and human resources is no longer essential when it enters a foreign market. It also empowers innovative startups that are more flexible and adaptable, while pursuing high-speed development and rapidly expanding businesses overseas," she said.



Travelers enter the railway station in Vientiane, Laos, to take the China-Laos Railway on Nov 25. KAIKEO SAIYASANE / XINHUA

## China-Laos Railway improving lives, trade

By LIN SHUJUAN in Shanghai  
linshujuan@chinadaily.com.cn

The China-Laos Railway has significantly increased employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for residents along the line, accelerated the development of local tourism, significantly increased domestic and foreign trade and continuously increased local investment, according to a recent survey and statistics from the Laotian government.

The survey, initiated by the Shanghai Institute of Technology in China and conducted by teachers from Souphanouvong University in Luang Prabang, Laos, was designed to determine the impact the railway has had on the lives of residents along the line.

Since 2017, the two universities have worked together to train Laotian engineers to work for China-Laos Railway Co, which is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the 1,035-kilometer railway.

The railway, which began construction in 2016 and started operating on Dec 3, 2021, connects Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, and Vientiane, the Laotian capital. The journey between the two cities on the railway's bullet train takes 10 hours.

A total of 1,000 Lao people participated in the survey by filling out online questionnaires on WeChat groups, Facebook and other social media platforms, according to the Belt and Road Lancang-Mekong

Railway Interconnection Center of SIT, which revealed the results of the survey during a symposium on March 29.

Most of the respondents — mainly students and farmers — have traveled on the China-Laos Railway many times, and more than 60 percent of the respondents said that doing so reduced their commutes, according to the survey.

It used to take four days to travel between the south of Laos and the north, but with the railway, it now takes less than half a day.

The railway, which has also cut transportation costs between China and Laos by 20 to 40 percent and has more than halved freight transportation time — compared with the time transporting freight on roads — has also helped boost consumption among residents who live along the line, as they are now traveling and shopping more, the survey shows.

Phakhasith Phomchlueth, consul general of the Laotian Consulate in Shanghai, said at the symposium that the opening of the railway has changed the way people travel in northern Laos, and has promoted trade and cultural exchanges.

Citing statistics from the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Laos, Phomchlueth said that most of the passengers traveling from Vientiane to Luang Prabang prefer to travel by train, which currently transports about 2,700 passengers between the two cities each day.

## Hair-raising experience



Tourists brave strong winds at Zhanqiao Pier, an iconic scenic area in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Wednesday. A new round of cold air hit the northern part of the country, causing windy, chillier weather. HUANG JIEXIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Cancer registration increases survival chances for patients

All-encompassing system collects key data to facilitate related research

By WANG XIAOYU  
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

China has built an all-encompassing cancer registry and has significantly increased cancer patients' chances of survival thanks to efforts in narrowing regional treatment capacity and stepping up early screening, according to experts and a recent report.

However, they said that new cancer cases and deaths remain high, and rolling out more refined screening programs is the key to tackling them.

He Jie, director of the National Cancer Center and an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said last month that China has set up a cancer registration system to collect key data on rates of incidence, survival and deaths and inform related research, prevention and control work.

To address the uneven distribution of medical resources, He said that China has so far built 24 provincial-level cancer centers and more than 100 city-level tumor centers or hospitals, forming a preliminary structure of a national cancer treatment network.

He added that a series of screening, early treatment and diagnosis programs targeting typical cancers in urban areas, rural regions as well as those among women and girls have been rolled out.

By the end of last year, central funds had subsidized 180 million free cancer screening tests, and the

local funds of 15 provinces had covered 60 million free screening examinations, he said during the 10th Annual Meeting of the National Cancer Center held in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, from March 24 to 26.

He Wei, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said during the event that an initial model of China's cancer prevention and control mechanism has taken shape.

A highlight in recent years has been the launch of a cervical and breast cancer screening program targeting rural women and girls, leading to declines in their death rates.

In China, the five-year overall survival rate of cancer has risen from 30.9 to 40.5 percent over the past 10 years.

However, He Wei also noted that the rate is still lower than that in developed countries, suggesting a formidable task ahead to fight cancer.

A paper published by The Chinese Journal of Oncology this month said that the incidence rate of cancer in China keeps increasing, reflecting a growing burden of the disease.

The paper, co-authored by He Jie from the National Cancer Center, offered a detailed look into cancer cases across the country in 2016. Such reports are usually delayed for several years due to time spent collecting and analyzing data.

The paper said that China reported about 4.06 million new cancer cases and 2.41 million deaths in 2016. The top five most common cancers



A medical worker tests the blood sugar of a cancer patient during a free health check in Neijiang, Sichuan province, on June 9.

LI JIANMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

nationwide are lung, colorectal, stomach, liver and breast cancers.

The paper said that while the incidence of conventionally common cancers such as esophageal, stomach and liver cancers was trending downward, their burden remained heavy. Meanwhile, cancers that are more prevalent in developed countries, such as breast, thyroid and prostate cancers, were becoming more common in China.

Wang Guiqi, head of the endoscopy department at the Cancer Hospital of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, said that health awareness of Chinese people has improved in recent years. For instance, the country performed around 38 million endoscopy or colonoscopy tests in 2022, up from 28 million in 2012.

However, the early diagnosis rate of gastrointestinal cancer stands at around 17 percent, lagging behind that in developed countries. He said that early screening tools for cancer should be convenient and accessible and should not scare away people due to discomfort involved during procedures. Wang also suggested conducting a preliminary risk evaluation to screen out high-risk groups, who can take more precise screening examinations at hospitals.

He Jie, from the National Cancer Center, said that the five-year survival rate of early-stage cancer patients can usually reach 90 percent, while the rate among late-stage patients is lower than 50 percent. He said enhancing early screening and promoting standardized diagnosis and treatment protocols are vital in boosting survival rates.

## Free HPV vaccines offered to students in Jiangsu

By CANG WEI in Nanjing  
cangwei@chinadaily.com.cn

More than 240,000 female students in Jiangsu province will receive free HPV shots this year to prevent cervical cancers, the vast majority of which have been confirmed to be caused by human papillomavirus.

The province will spend 172 million yuan (\$26 million) this year to ensure funding for the vaccination program, according to the provincial health commission.

In 2020, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution calling for the elimination of cervical cancer, and China became one of the 194 countries that resolved to end the disease.

The World Health Organization in 2017 said that HPV infection is related to about 4.5 percent of new cancer

cases worldwide, while 99.7 percent of cervical cancers are associated with it.

In China alone, more than 60,000 deaths and 110,000 new cervical cancer patients were linked with the infection in 2020, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

HPV vaccination has proved to be the most effective method to prevent cervical cancer and to make it the first cancer that can be prevented.

In 2021, the National Health Commission chose 15 pilot cities and 15 candidate pilot cities to promote cervical cancer prevention and control measures.

Some regions have made early progress by launching free trial programs for school girls, such as Chongqing, Shaanxi province and the Inner

240,000+ female students

in Jiangsu province will receive free HPV shots this year.

Mongolia autonomous region.

In 2022, four cities in Jiangsu — Nanjing, Wuxi, Lianyungang and Yangzhou — took the lead in giving free HPV vaccines to middle school girls, with 64,000 students receiving the vaccine free.

In Nanjing, school girls can choose free domestic HPV vaccines or pay to get imported vaccines. Girls who choose to take the imported 2-valent, 4-valent and 9-valent vaccines can receive discounts of up to 492 yuan, according to the Nanjing Health Commission.

According to the Nanjing Maternity and Child Health Care Hospital, the 2-valent vaccine can prevent about 70 percent of cervical cancer cases, while the 9-valent can prevent about 92 percent.

After receiving three doses of the 4-valent vaccine, girls can also choose to take the 9-valent one after a 12-month period, according to the hospital.

"Promoting HPV vaccination requires joint efforts from the government, school, parents and all of society," said Cui Xiaomeng, deputy director of the health commission from Nanjing's Jianye district.

"Besides girls, we also encourage mothers to make appointments for HPV vaccination and free screenings for cervical and breast cancer," she said.

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## McCarthy's provocative meeting with Tsai ruins US' national credit

Whatever excuse they use to try and cover it, US House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy's planned meeting with Taiwan regional leader Tsai Ing-wen on Wednesday will do irreparable damage to the Sino-US relationship.

It was solemnly written in the three Sino-US joint communiqués that "there is only one China and Taiwan is part of China." This has been recognized and affirmed by every US president every time the two nations' leaders have met since that truth was acknowledged by the US.

By allowing the independence-pursuing Tsai to "stop over" in US territory and arranging a political leader to meet her, the US government is ruining its own national credibility and the trustworthiness of any legal document signed by a US president and bearing the US seal.

The notice that McCarthy will host a bipartisan meeting with Tsai further shows that a consensus has been formed in Washington that the Taiwan question can be exploited to put pressure on Beijing.

An "anti-China" storm has swept through the Capitol Building bearing the dust of the Cold War mentality, which the members of Congress are unwilling to brush away, despite it getting into their eyes so they can't see clearly. The meeting will only further strain Sino-US relations.

All the signs show that the toxic dust of the Cold War mentality has contaminated the whole of Congress, leaving no one untouched on either side of the political divide. Upon taking office as House speaker, McCarthy immediately formed a

select committee on China, comprising 13 Republicans and 11 Democrats; when the House of Representatives passed an act prompting the Secretary of State to alter China's developing country status in international organizations, the voting was 415:0.

At a time when the divisions in US society and politics are becoming increasingly virulent, to counter China has become almost the only consensus between the Republicans and the Democrats.

On March 29, the US-based conservative think tank Heritage Foundation published a special report "Winning the New Cold War: A Plan for Countering China." The House speaker hosting a meeting with Tsai "deliberately invokes the legacy of the Cold War" as the foundation urged in the report. It is evident that red-baiting McCarthyism is rife once again.

Tsai should recognize that rather than being an honored guest she is simply viewed by her hosts as a useful piece on the US game board. When then Taiwan leader Lee Teng-hui "stopped over" in Hawaii in 1994, he was reportedly given a small room to rest in the military base there, received by a sergeant, without even being allowed to step on US soil. What the US is doing this time is anything but a routine practice as they claim. It serves only as a further provocation to Beijing.

Beijing has said that it will respond accordingly, which prompted Tsai to talk with US security officials via video link on Tuesday, exposing her worries about going too far without the support of the US and thus the weakness of her position.

## NATO major source of global instability

For Finland, formally joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the world's largest military alliance, which states that an attack on one member is an attack on all, would seem to provide the sense of security it desires given the situation in Europe after Russia launched its "special military operation" against Ukraine more than a year ago.

Finland, a relatively small Nordic country of 5.5 million people, clearly feels it needs shoulders to lean on as the situation in Europe has become increasingly volatile and uncertain. "From now on, we can rely on getting outside help should things get tough," Finnish Defense Minister Antti Kaikkonen said in Brussels on Tuesday as the country became the 31st member of NATO.

Yet whether its accession to NATO actually makes Finland more secure is questionable. Although it fought a war against Soviet Union at the beginning of World War II, Finland has enjoyed peace along the 1,340-kilometer border with its giant neighbor over the past eight decades, thanks mainly to its military non-alignment policy and maintaining friendly relations with Moscow, even throughout the Cold War.

Given Russia's firm opposition to NATO's eastward enlargement and the fact that it has no territorial disputes with Finland, the latest move by NATO to give it membership could be seen as a provocation and another squeeze on Russia, espe-

cially because it will double the length of the US-led alliance's land border with Russia.

The Russian Foreign Ministry immediately warned that "it will be forced to take military-technical and other retaliatory measures" to a move that marks "a fundamental change in the situation in Northern Europe, which had previously been one of the most stable regions in the world." This obviously does not augur well for the security of Finland as well as Europe at large.

As a product of the Cold War, NATO should have been consigned to history books with the end of the Cold War and the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact. Yet it has nearly doubled the number of its members over the past more than 30 years to serve the hegemonic objectives of the United States. The argument that it is solely a defensive alliance and it is not a threat to any country was already disproved by its military interventions in Serbia in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001 and Libya in 2011.

Now that Europe wants China to help hasten the end of the Ukraine crisis — European Union executive head Ursula von der Leyen and French President Emmanuel Macron are reportedly going to discuss the issue with the Chinese leadership during their visit to Beijing this week — it should at least start rethinking the NATO policy of seeking absolute security at the expense of the security of others, which has become the main source of global instability.

## Pandora's box of political polarization opened

Donald Trump's appearance in a Manhattan criminal court on Tuesday afternoon, in which the former US president pleaded not guilty to all 34 felony charges against him, has once again put the spotlight on the political polarization in the United States, with a debate raging between the Republicans and the Democrats over the legitimacy of the lawsuit.

As the next in-person hearing is scheduled for December, the lawsuit, which is expected to last for a long time, will necessarily exert an influence on the 2024 US presidential election.

Considering Trump's talents for turning adversity into opportunity, and that 63 percent of surveyed US voters think the litigation is out of political purposes, he will undoubtedly seize the chance to turn the case into political capital for his run at the White House. Something he has already begun doing. "The only crime that I have committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it," said Trump calling the criminal charges against him "an insult" to the US.

The unusually heavy security measures around the Manhattan court, the big rallies of his staunch supporters outside his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, where he flew to immediately after leaving the court, and the close watch both Democrats and Republicans are keeping on the fast-changing situation all speak volumes that no matter whether Trump is found guilty or not, the US society will con-

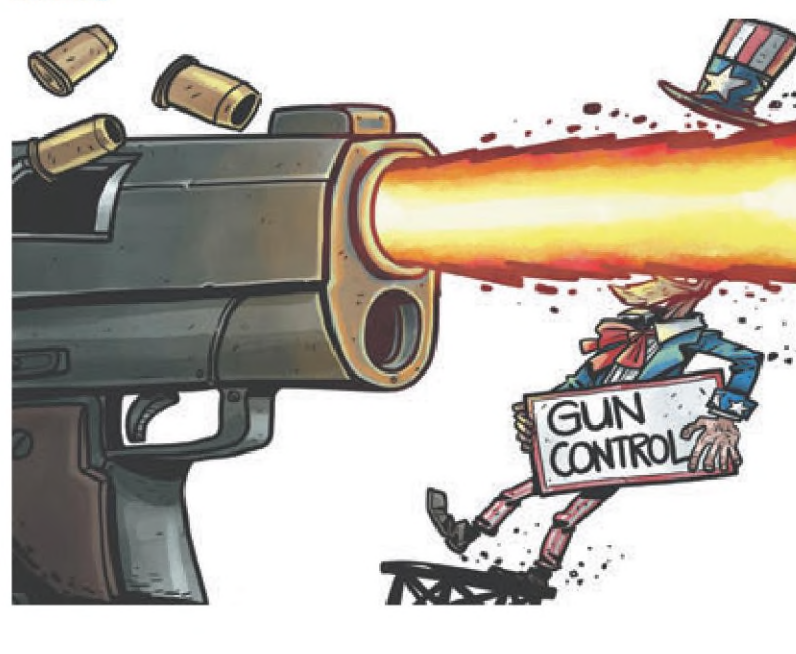
tinue to be torn apart by political polarization stoked by partisan politics. Be they substantiated or not, in their details, the dozens of charges the prosecutors have laid against Trump point to the extent to which money talks in US politics today, manipulating public opinion and bending rules and laws.

As shown by the fact that attention is focused on the political influence of the lawsuit rather than the charges themselves, the trial is being taken as an opportunity to make it more regulated and predictable for money to talk in US politics, so as to lower the collateral damage for both parties in the future should it be exposed by stepping-over-the-line ambition.

That being said, the result of the litigation will be a new compromise between the two parties on the future rules for their struggle as they will both have a direct legal reference — given the scale of the charges against Trump that encompasses almost all fields of the election politics and power exercise — on how far they can go in their tug-of-wars in the future.

With about 91 percent of US congressional elections today being won by the candidates with the most money, it is almost predictable that the governance of the world's most powerful country, as well as its diplomacy, will continue to be the exchange of interests among the rich who are becoming increasingly tacit in colluding with each other in creating divisions at home and beyond and speculating on them.

Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

## Abuse of hegemony is why de-dollarization is trending

Market expectations for the Federal Reserve to end interest rate hikes have picked up as core inflation data in the United States has dropped and the University of Michigan's consumer confidence index fell from 67 in February to 62 in March, yet worries abound about the outlook for the US economy.

Former US Treasury secretary Larry Summers said on Friday that it is too early to say that the US has shaken off the financial woes caused by its rapid interest rate hikes. The US economy is likely to experience a serious recession as a result of the banking crisis, with little chances of a "soft landing". With recession expectations picking up, the factors supporting a strong US dollar are disappearing.

Ever since the Fed ended its ultra-loose monetary policy and turned to a radical rate hike approach, the

international financial market has been in turmoil with many currencies depreciating sharply. That has forced many countries to reduce holdings of US Treasuries, diversifying foreign exchange reserve assets.

In mid-March, Russia's central bank reported that the ruble and "friendly" currencies together accounted for 52 percent of Russian export settlements at the end of 2022, surpassing the share of the US dollar and euro for the first time on record. The members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed at the end of March to strengthen the use of local currencies in the region and reduce reliance on major international currencies in cross-border trade and investment.

On April 1, India and Malaysia agreed to settle trade in Indian rupees. Data show that the proportion of US dollar reserves and

assets in global central banks' foreign exchange reserves has dropped from 65.46 percent in the first quarter of 2016 to 59.79 percent in the third quarter of 2022.

Despite its declining status, the US dollar still accounts for the largest share of global trade settlement, central banks' foreign exchange reserves, global debt pricing, and global capital flows. However, the abuse of the US dollar hegemony has led many countries to launch a "de-dollarization" campaign. The more the US dollar is used as a weapon, the faster it will be abandoned by other countries.

It's unrealistic that some in the US want to safeguard the benefits brought by the US dollar as a leading international currency, but don't want to shoulder corresponding international responsibilities.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

## Plugging the loopholes in AI era

The Italian government's privacy protection watchdogs have temporarily blocked OpenAI from getting access to Italian users' data, and ordered a probe into its suspected breaches of the European Union's strict privacy regulations.

Four years before Windows 1.0 was launched, in the early 80s, it was the European Parliament that passed the world's first personal data protection regulation, which it keeps updating. So when it comes to personal privacy protection, it is natural to see the EU taking the lead.

People are in the dark about what personal data ChatGPT takes from their communications, where such personal data is stored and what it does with it. It is therefore reasonable to probe the software and block its access until there is some clarity.

Some argue that such moves, although temporary, might hinder ChatGPT from progressing, and as the world's leading natural language model, ChatGPT's progress is of utmost importance to the sector.

However, its development should not mean having to choose between

privacy and technology, and the solution should not come at the cost of either. A better solution is for OpenAI to make ChatGPT more transparent to meet the demands of regulation on personal privacy protection, so that people can enjoy its advantages while ensuring the protection of their data.

That's how progress has been made throughout history, by constantly finding loopholes and filling them. The age of AI will be no different.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## Washington's chip war benefits no one

Hours before Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi set foot in Beijing for a two-day visit on Saturday, the Japanese government announced that Japan will join the United States and the Netherlands in curbing the export of semiconductor technology to China.

The announcement, issued late on Friday by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, said that the country would tighten exports of 23 types of advanced semiconductor manufacturing equipment to China, with the restrictions taking effect in July.

According to the announcement, stricter procedures are to be introduced for exports of the equipment to about 160 destinations such as China, while 42 countries and regions — including the US, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan island — are exempt from the stricter export control procedures.

That means, despite strong opposition from the Chinese side, the chip alliance proposed by Washington in October last year, when it banned Chinese companies from buying advanced chips and chip-

making equipment without a license, as part of its actions to stifle China's technology sector, have been formed with almost all major players in the chip industry. And weaponizing technology is increasingly becoming a tactic in its geopolitical games.

Except taking these countries to the World Trade Organization for these practices, which as China said "deviate from the principles of free trade and multilateral trade rules, seriously violate basic obligations under the WTO, and seriously undermine the stability of global industrial and supply chains", China's countermeasures especially in the chip industry are limited. As they are for any other developing country, exposing these countries' vulnerability in the current economic and trade order dominated by the West, as well as the unfairness of that system.

Given the long time it takes to settle disputes through the world trade body, especially compared with the fast pace of the upgrading of the chip industry, unless China can find replacement sources in time to maintain the sustainability of its

high-end chipmaking equipment, materials and technology, even if it wins the lawsuit in the WTO, the US-led "chip alliance" will cause irreparable harm to its high-tech sectors given the wide use of high-end chips in modern industries.

But that will also have negative influences on world trade as a whole as China is the largest trading partner in goods of about 160 countries and regions, affecting almost all countries, including members of the "chip alliance" themselves.

For instance, China is the world's largest semiconductor market and the largest export destination for Japanese semiconductor manufacturing equipment. Japan's latest move will not only undermine the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, but also cause losses to Japanese companies.

The chip war the US has brokered toward China is leading the world market to a fight of Kilkenny cats that serves no parties' interests except the narrow ends of those few China hawks in Washington.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

## CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

## Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

**China Daily Africa**  
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
+254 (0) 20 242 8589 (Nairobi)  
editor@chinadailyafrica.com  
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com  
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

## COMMENT

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

## Public debt as positive investment

The unprecedented fiscal firepower used to protect the vulnerable from the harsh socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic contraction have pushed the average government debt level in the Asia-Pacific region to its highest since 2008.

Public debt distress is expected to worsen amid the global economic slowdown, record high inflation and rising interest rates, and uncertainty induced by the war in Ukraine. And surging debt service payments are expected to put public debt sustainability of several developing Asia-Pacific economies at risk. Most concerning, debt distress risk is highest for countries with the highest development finance needs, including small island developing states.

Yet, a higher debt level is not necessarily a bad thing, according to this year's edition of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific. Current policy debates on public debt sustainability do not take into account the long-term positive socio-economic and environmental impact of public investments in laying the foundations of inclusive, resilient and sustainable prosperity.

Indeed, left unaddressed, development deficits and climate risks hurt economic prospects and public debt sustainability itself. Our analysis shows that social spending cuts increase poverty and inequality and undermine economic productivity in the long term. Conversely, investing in healthcare, education, social protection and climate action is good economics.

Multilateral lenders and credit rating agencies focus excessively on keeping debt sustainable in the short term. Such perceived optimal debt levels are too low and lead to suboptimal development outcomes. Revisiting current debt sustainability norms has also become necessary with the emergence of major non-traditional bilateral creditors and a drastic fall in concessional development lending to Asian and Pacific countries over the past decade.

It is time for a bold shift in thinking about public debt sustainability. We propose an augmented approach that assesses public debt viability that takes into account a country's SDG investment needs, government structural development policies aiming to boost economic competitiveness, and national SDG financing strategies.

It is time for creditors, international

financial institutions and credit rating agencies to consider the positive long-term economic, social and environmental outcomes of investing in the SDGs, while assessing public debt sustainability. Our research finds that public debt is found to decline over the long term when the socio-economic and environmental benefits of public investments are incorporated.

Rather than penalizing bold fiscal support for people and the environment, international creditors should consider if such spending would boost economic productivity. Lenders and credit rating agencies should see debt relief as helping support the fiscal outlook, rather than as a sign of an upcoming debt default.

Developing countries should also strive to balance investing in the SDGs with ensuring debt sustainability. Governments should not feel deterred from borrowing for essential, high-impact sustainable development spending; rather,

funds should be used efficiently and effectively. Public coffers should also be boosted by resource mobilization strategies designed to generate social and/or environmental benefits, such as through progressive taxation.

Effective public debt management reduces fiscal risks and borrowing costs, with several examples of good public debt management practices in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, countries with high debt distress levels may need pre-emptive, swift and adequate sovereign debt restructuring, while efforts toward common international debt resolution mechanisms and restructuring frameworks need to be accelerated.

We are in the fourth year of the Decade of Action to accelerate progress towards the SDGs with not much to show in gains. It is time for Asia and the Pacific to rise to the challenge of mobilizing the financial resources to realise the dream of resilient and sustainable prosperity for all.

The author is under-secretary-general of the UN and executive secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Liu Qing

## New era of cooperation and growth for RCEP

One year since its implementation, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world's biggest free trade agreement, offers a timely boost to long-term growth and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. And as the largest economy in the RCEP and the second-biggest market in the world, China has been facilitating the integration of regional economies.

The RCEP has introduced favorable policies, such as tariff reduction, cumulative rules of origin and trade facilitation to increase regional investment and boost global economic recovery amid fears of global recession and the rising trend of de-globalization. By integrating 27 trade arrangements and 44 investment agreements signed by the 15 member states, the RCEP has optimized bilateral and multilateral investment agreements, promoted regional trade and created new investment opportunities. Regional trade has been bolstered thanks to greatly reduced costs.

According to an estimate by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, the RCEP is expected to witness a net annual increase of \$519 billion in exports and \$186 billion in national income of its members by 2030.

The RCEP has introduced several provisions including investment promotion and protection, trade liberalization and facilitation, and the member states have prepared negative lists to provide bigger platforms for business cooperation. Last year, most of the RCEP members achieved growth by making the most of foreign direct investment.

Also, by 2025, the RCEP is expected to help its members increase outbound investment by 2.6 percent. The RCEP has made it possible for member states to cash in on the opportunities created by and share the development dividend of China's opening-up. Ministry of Com-

merce data show China's trade with the other RCEP signatory countries grew 7.5 percent year-on-year to 12.95 trillion yuan (\$1.88 trillion) in 2022, accounting for 30.8 percent of its total foreign trade.

While China's two-way trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2022 reached 6.52 trillion yuan, up 15 percent year-on-year, accounting for 50.3 percent of the trade with other RCEP members, its trade with Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos grew by more than 20 percent. Similarly, China's non-financial direct investment in other RCEP countries in 2022 increased 18.9 percent year-on-year to \$17.96 billion, and it attracted direct investment of \$23.53 billion, up 23.1 percent, from other RCEP members.

The RCEP integrates funds, resources, technologies and services to form a complete cycle of regional economic cooperation, while its members accelerated the allocation of market elements to promote institutional opening-up. The RCEP has also set unified rules to enable enterprises to make the best of their advantages, reduce trade costs and raise productivity. This will not only help expand and further stabilize the regional industry chains but also sharpen their competitive edge, expand their global

influence, and help create a stronger buffer against external risks.

The RCEP Industry Cooperation Committee was established in Beijing in 2021 to promote regional investment and industrial cooperation, with the members complementing each other for boosting intra-industrial transfer, strengthening cross-border economic cooperation, promoting industrial upgrading, bolstering emerging industrial models and better matching balance supply and demand. For example, China's intermediate products trade with other RCEP member states reached 8.7 trillion yuan in 2022, an 8.5 percent increase, accounting for 67.2 percent of China's total imports from and exports to other RCEP members.

As the first FTA to have China, Japan and the Republic of Korea as founding members, the RCEP is the first truly multilateral FTA that also covers Northeast Asia. The mega deal has reduced tariffs for all the three countries and further opened up their markets for each other. As a matter of fact, the three countries have taken the lead in implementing opening-up rules. Under the RCEP framework, the three countries are cooperating to advance manufacturing of machinery, vehicle and photoelectric equipment. And sectors such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence and financial insurance also have high cooperation potential.

Besides, the RCEP has helped China and ASEAN to deepen regional economic integration. The two sides started negotiations on the 3.0 version of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area in November, 2022, and it will focus on areas such as trade, investment, the digital economy and the green economy to build up an inclusive, modern, comprehensive and mutually beneficial ACFTA, which in turn will strengthen industrial cooperation, reduce operating costs and

make industry and supply chains more resilient.

The RCEP prioritizes regional development, and urges member countries to stay committed to the principles of openness, sharing and inclusiveness, foster multi-tiered and wide-ranging cooperation, and promote higher-level opening-up to provide an important platform for countries to cooperate and benefit from each other.

However, encouraged by the rising trend of de-globalization, unilateralism and trade protectionism, some countries have been trying to build "fences and barriers" against free trade, severely disrupting industry and supply chains, heightening the risk of economic fragmentation and threatening global economic development.

In contrast, as a true multilateral FTA, the RCEP has boosted the confidence of its member states in free trade, multilateralism and regional economic integration. It has set rules to help countries at different stages of development to work together and benefit from cooperation. Indeed, the RCEP has laid a solid foundation to build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future.

During the past year, the high-quality implementation of the RCEP enabled China to boost its institutional opening-up and promote China's application to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement. China will remain committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as a major country, and work with other RCEP members to promote an open global economy and contribute to global development.

The author is vice-president of the China Institute of International Studies. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.

kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

## Elderly people should mind their behavior to earn respect

**Editor's note:** As the Chinese government responds proactively to population aging, the country has adopted policies and fostered a social environment in which senior citizens are respected, cared for, and live happily in their later years, writes a veteran journalist with China Daily.

When I heard on the radio that peach and magnolia flowers were in full bloom in the Summer Palace and its Kunming Lake had visitors in the shape of migratory black swans, I lost no time and boarded a bus for the "Imperial Garden Museum" located about 20 kilometers from my home.

With my senior citizens' card, I got a free bus ride to the Summer Palace. Using the same card, I entered the garden for free. The views were beautiful, the atmosphere lovely and the trip relaxing. When I returned home late in the afternoon, I realized that I hadn't spent even a penny on the trip — I had a lunch box packed at home.

Millions of retired people in China travel on buses, and visit parks, museums and scenic spots each day for free using the senior citizens' card. In fact, about 90 percent of the passengers on the bus and visitors at the Summer Palace were elderly people.

The above benefits are just part of the welfare the elderly people enjoy. Pension has been increased at the rate of 4-5 percent annually for 19 years, medical insurance now covers more than 96.8 percent of the elderly population both in urban and rural areas, and thousands of more affordable nursing homes are being built.

Statistics show that by the end of 2022, more than 14 percent of the Chinese people (or about 267 million people) were aged above 60. Since the number is equal to almost 80 percent of the United States' total population, one can imagine the level of challenge the Chinese government faces in providing care for its senior citizens.

**We should keep in mind the old Chinese saying: The elderly who don't respect themselves are not respectable and should not be respected.**

Therefore, as elderly people, we should be thankful to society and exercise more self-discipline to become role models for the younger generations.

Unfortunately, we still read or hear reports about the uncivil behavior of some senior citizens. One media report said that hundreds of walkers in a city in Central China, unsatisfied with exercising in a park, were walking down the streets and blocking the traffic. When stopped by the police and pedestrians, they claimed their freedom was being curbed.

In another incident, photographs and video clips show a group of elderly people making obscene gestures while dancing in a park in a Northeast China city. Parents passing by had to cover their children's eyes to avoid embarrassment. When the park administrators and the police tried to interfere, the elderly people claimed their rights were being violated.

Senior citizens dancing to loud music in community squares has long been a source of noise pollution in cities. There have also been reports of disputes between elderly dancers and local residents, especially youngsters, because the elderly group invades community basketball courts or parking lots and uses them for dancing.

Even on planes and trains, some elderly people occupying the seats of other passengers refuse to shift to their assigned seats. On buses, cases of elderly people slapping younger people in the face just because the latter didn't offer their seats to them have been reported.

I was left speechless when I saw people of my age climbing up peach trees in the Summer Palace and shaking the branches so they could click good pictures of falling flowers.

And when two elderly women were caught trying to steal two geese from a park in Beijing earlier this year, people severely criticized them for it. Some social media users even asked whether "bad people" were getting old, or "old people" were acquiring bad habits.

The Chinese people have a long tradition of respecting the elderly. To better protect the rights of the elderly, the country passed a special law in 1996. Since then, the law has been revised four times to add more teeth to it. Apart from the law, Senior Citizens Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day are also observed in China.

Living a happy retired life, we elderly people should mind our behavior to earn respect. We should keep in mind the old Chinese saying: The elderly who don't respect themselves are not respectable and should not be respected.

# GLOBAL VIEWS

ZHAO HONGTU

## Balance of power

Reforms are needed to advance the global energy governance system and forge a new international energy order

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict, the intensifying sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union against Russia have put an end to free trade in energy that lasted for nearly half a century and created setbacks for global energy governance.

First, energy has become increasingly politicized. The escalation of the European energy crisis in the wake of the Ukraine conflict is a result of the constant upgrading of the US and European sanctions on Russian energy. In March 2022, the International Energy Agency released a 10-Point Plan to Reduce the European Union's Reliance on Russian Natural Gas. This comprises mainly non-market measures. Many multinationals have also chosen to sacrifice their commercial interests for political will. The deglobalization drive and decoupling endeavors spearheaded by the US-led West are also spreading into the clean energy sector. By hyping China's advantages in the clean energy industry chain and an alleged consequent threat to Western countries, the US has been vigorously promoting decoupling from China. In February 2022, the US Department of Energy published "America's Strategy to Secure the Supply Chain for a Robust Clean Energy Transition", in an attempt to maintain the US' role as the global leader in clean energy manufacturing and innovation.

Second, there exists an all-round rebound in energy competition among the world's major countries. On the one hand, energy competition between Russia, the US and the EU has become increasingly complicated. The US has pressured the EU to upgrade sanctions against Russian energy and urged the EU and G7 members to set a price cap on Russian petroleum products, thus continuously undermining Russia-Europe energy ties. In response, Russia has been quickening the pace of its strategic pivot to the East and to the South. On the other hand, European countries are seeking alternative sources to replace Russian energy supplies at an accelerated pace, resulting in fierce competition with Asian energy buyers. In 2021, about half of US liquefied natu-

ral gas exports went to Asia while in the first four months of 2022, US LNG exports to Asia fell by 51 percent year-on-year. The EU has been actively seeking alternatives to Russian energy across the globe, which has further exacerbated the supply shortages faced by some developing countries. For instance, unable to win the price competition against European nations, countries such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan have been hard hit by the rising energy prices.

Third, energy cooperation has become less inclusive. More US energy is flowing to Europe; Russia is slashing energy exports to Europe and scaling up exports to the Asia-Pacific region; and competition between energy consumers and energy producers is intensifying. On the one hand, the transatlantic partnership has been further consolidated. Energy decoupling between the EU and Russia is picking up speed, and the US and the EU are ramping up energy cooperation at an accelerated pace. On the other hand, the cooperation mechanism within OPEC+ is improving. Since the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict, OPEC countries have been trying to navigate a neutral course between the West and Russia and rejecting the calls of the US and the EU to increase crude production and take their side. The UAE abstained from voting on a United Nations draft resolution to condemn Russia and its energy minister explicitly said that Russia will always be part of OPEC+.

Against the backdrop of the anti-globalization tide and intensifying competition between major countries, global energy governance is faced with more grave challenges ahead.

First, we have witnessed setbacks in the globalization of energy governance. The success of the shale gas revolution and a slowdown in consumption have made the US and the EU focus less on the security of energy supplies, and more on climate negotiations and global emissions reduction. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the economic nationalism and anti-globalization trend, resulting in severe setbacks in global energy governance and

insufficient effective cooperation between energy consumers and producers.

Second, the stumbling blocks to global climate governance are mounting. The Ukraine conflict has highlighted the importance of energy security, and the global climate governance agenda has been marginalized to a certain extent. People in the EU are paying noticeably less attention to such climate agenda as reforms to the carbon trading system and carbon border tax. Certain countries have had no choice but to turn to high-emission fuels such as coal, slowing the pace of their low-carbon transition.

Third, the environment for international energy security is deteriorating. In a sense, the US and EU sanctions on Russia's energy exports have become the most important factor undermining the security of global energy supplies.

In the face of the setbacks and stalemates in global energy governance, we should deepen the international consensus and vigorously promote depoliticization of energy. The US has been imposing sanctions against oil-producing countries with the US dollar as a weapon, which to a certain extent has accelerated dedollarization in the global energy trade. On the heels of the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict, many countries are vigorously advocating global energy dialogue and cooperation and opposing the politicization and weaponization of energy issues, in an attempt to safeguard market stability.

We should advance reforms of the global governance system and forge a new international energy order. The international community needs to promote larger-scale and deeper-level opening-up of the energy sector, increase dialogue between energy producers and consumers, and reduce the barriers to trade and investment in energy. Mechanisms such as the G20 should be promoted to become more authoritative



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

platforms for global energy governance with greater global influence.

Emerging economies should also have a bigger role in global energy governance. In recent years, developing countries, emerging economies in particular, have fast-increasing demands for energy use. The share of the Asia-Pacific in the total global energy consumption has been increasing. However, under the current framework of energy governance, emerging market economies and developing countries have less discourse power than they deserve. In the new

energy governance system, developing countries and emerging economies should actively participate in reforms to the global energy governance system through such global platforms as the G20.

The author is the director of the Energy Security Research Center at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. 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.

JIANG YINGMEI

## Dedollarization gathers steam

With the rise of the Chinese economy and the acceleration of the renminbi's internationalization, the call for "petroyuan" is growing louder

In recent years, the global trend of "dedollarization" has become increasingly prominent, as a way to break the hegemony of the US dollar and respond to the US sanctions.

During the two World Wars, the change in the balance of power laid the foundation for the US dollar to become an international currency. Following the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the oil crisis in the Middle East in the 1970s, the United States signed an "unshakeable agreement" with Saudi Arabia, the leader of OPEC, with the aim of maintaining the dominant position of the US dollar in the international monetary system.

The deal set up a US-Saudi alliance based on oil exports paid in US dollars in exchange for security support, which was later extended to other OPEC countries. The petrodollar system was thus created, paving the way for the economic and financial hegemony of the US.

The country's overall national strength is the true reason behind the US dollar dominance. As a credit currency issued by a sovereign state, the US dollar has been playing a dominant role in the international monetary system, consistently ranking the first among all currencies in terms of international reserves, international payments and global foreign exchange. Some countries peg their own currencies to the US dollar, and the US treasury bonds are also considered the safest and highest-quality assets by investors worldwide.

The hegemony of the US dollar is a manifestation of the financial hegemony of the United States. The country collects "seigniorage" around the world by issuing dollars; it uses "US dollar tidal waves" to plunder wealth from around the world; it frequently imposes financial sanctions on "uncooperative" countries, and employs long-arm jurisdiction.

For example, due to the Iran nuclear issue, Iran was banned from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) in 2012 and 2018, which caused serious economic and financial impacts and isolation. Many companies in the European Union and China faced sanctions for doing business with Iran.

After the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the United States and Europe tightened their financial sanctions against Russia. In response, Russia announced that

it would gradually empty its holdings of US dollars and euros in foreign exchange reserves, keeping only gold, the renminbi and rubles, and using rubles, the renminbi, or the currencies of friendly countries for trade settlement.

Russia is also seeking to establish a new type of economic partnership in Africa that is independent of the US dollar and promoting the establishment of a settlement system among the BRICS countries.

For economic security reasons, some countries are considering promoting the use of their own currency in trade settle-

ment, to avoid excessive reliance on SWIFT. In recent years, OPEC+, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, has frequently taken a stance against the United States.

At the 2023 World Economic Forum in Davos, Mohammed Al-Jadaan, the finance minister of Saudi Arabia, said that Saudi Arabia is open to using currencies other than the US dollar for trade settlement.

Since the start of the 21st century, China's rapid economic growth has led to a remarkable rise of the country's currency. The renminbi now ranks the third in terms of

weighting in the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights basket (12.28 percent), and it is the fifth-largest payment currency in the world, and the fifth-largest reserve currency.

China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, has signed bilateral currency swap agreements with more than 40 countries and regions, with a total value of over 4 trillion yuan (\$582.3 billion). In 2022, the value of cross-border receipt and payment in the renminbi reached 42 trillion yuan, 3.4 times of that in 2017 and accounting for about 50 percent of the total value of cross-

border receipt and payment in home and foreign currencies.

The Renminbi Cross-border Interbank Payment System, or CIPS, is an important financial market mechanism that plays a critical role in supporting the internationalization of the renminbi. Currently, CIPS has more than 1,300 participants covering over 100 countries and regions globally.

In March 2018, crude oil futures priced and settled in the renminbi were officially listed and traded on the Shanghai International Energy Exchange, which created favorable conditions for improving the international crude oil pricing system and promoting energy and financial cooperation with major oil-producing countries. It also supports Middle Eastern countries to enhance their strategic autonomy and break away from US dollar hegemony.

As a matter of fact, the renminbi is gradually becoming a new choice for diversifying foreign exchange reserves in some Middle Eastern countries. For example, renminbi assets account for 21 percent of Iran's foreign exchange reserves; in 2022, the US' staunch ally Israel included the renminbi in its foreign exchange reserves for the first time.

In February, Iraq, the second-largest oil producer in OPEC, announced that it would allow direct renminbi settlement for its trade with China to reduce dependence on the US dollar. China has also established renminbi clearing banks in Qatar and the UAE to facilitate bilateral trade and investment.

The petrodollar pricing mechanism underpins the US financial hegemony, but it has many problems. With the rise of the Chinese economy and the acceleration of the renminbi internationalization, the call for the "petroyuan" is growing louder.

It is hard to shake the US dollar as the dominant currency in the short term. The road ahead for the "petroyuan" is long and arduous, but it can contribute to the reform of the international monetary and financial system.

The author is an associate researcher of the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. 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 XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

# LIFE



An ongoing group exhibition in Beijing, *Splendid Galaxy*, reviews key figures, schools, and movements active in Chongqing, between 1937 and 1949, a period that established a chapter of modern Chinese art. Among the paintings on show are *Night Sail Along Three Georges* by Li Hu (left) and *Set Sail* by Lyu Sibai (above).

## A place of sanctuary and creativity

Exhibition sheds light on Chongqing's influence on modern art and celebrates the spirit of a city that offered wartime resistance during WWII and spectacular scenery, **Lin Qi** reports.



From top: *Landscape* by Huang Binhong, and *Dunhuang* by Chang Shuhong are among the artworks on show in the ongoing exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In the spring of 1939, people flocked to take refuge in Chongqing, in Southwest China, amid the chaos caused by the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). Among them there was Fu Baoshi (1904-65), a university teacher of Chinese painting, and his family, who settled down in a shabby countryside cottage, in a mountain suburb known as Jingangpo among the locals. Today it is located in the Shapingba district. Fu lived there for more than seven years and, during this time, his reputation soared. In the years spent in the small, dark cottage, his career underwent a major transition, as he rose from a lesser-known artist to a prominent figure in landscape painting.

Fu was deeply immersed in the majestic landscape of Chongqing, with its mountains of wild, eccentric beauty, lush greenery and dense mist, which, along with the clouds, added a feeling of extensiveness and mystery. The scenery he saw every day inspired him to establish a highly individual style in the mountain-and-water genre of Chinese painting, and to also form the "Baoshi *cun*", later widely known as his signature brushstroke approach.

*Cun* is a method of dabbing, shading and layering in Chinese painting to create the form, surface and texture of rocks and mountains. And Fu further reformed this technique in his work to accentuate the fissures and cracks in the mountain stones and the high humidity of Chongqing, a riverside, mountainous city. This approach is sometimes called "Jingang *cun*", named after Jingangpo.

The progress in art Fu achieved in Chongqing continued to influence his later work, even after he left the city and moved back to Nanjing, in today's Jiangsu province, where he taught, painted and pioneered the "new landscape painting" movement.

Fu's intimate link with Chongqing is marked at a group exhibition in Beijing, *Splendid Galaxy*, which reviews important figures, schools, movements and publications active in Chongqing, between 1937 and 1949, a period that established a chapter of modern Chinese art. Organized by the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, in Chongqing, the exhibition is on at Today Art Museum until April 13.

Chongqing, tucked in the Sichuan Basin where the majestic Yangtze River runs, was not only the temporary wartime capital of the Kuomintang government. It was also a hub of celebrated artists, schools and cul-



From top: Other paintings on display at the ongoing group exhibition in Beijing include *Pumpkins* by Liu Yisi, *Spring Descends on Jialing River* by Wu Zuoren and *Still Life* by Chang Shuhong.

to the greatness of art, and to the social responsibilities artists undertook in a challenging period of time."

In his painting, Xu Beihong often detailed the difficulties people faced at the time, for example, descending and climbing slippery steps to fetch water from the river, several times a day.

Fu himself had firsthand experience of these daily hardships. His rented accommodation in Chongqing lacked sufficient space, and was poorly lit.

He once recalled that, when he painted, he had to move the table closer to the door and open it to let in more light to be able to work. That table was where his family ate and upon which he painted several great works; when he painted on the table, he had in his sight, through the open door, an expansive view of bamboo forests, streams and hills. He interpreted, under layers of colors, the scenes before his eyes and embedded in the mountains and trees an unyielding spirit.

Fu once said, "Jingangpo and its neighboring areas, which I visited quite often, produced scenery of unspeakable brilliance. The trees, woods, hills and valleys are all perfect models for sketching. The extraordinary scenery, often half disappearing in the mist, shows a realm of nature that is beyond the knowledge of a person, like me, who lives in southeastern part of the country and is accustomed to the landscape there."

Despite the difficulties caused by war, more than 500 exhibitions were staged in the city. There was a national art exhibition in 1943 showing modern works and antiquities, including bronzes, jade objects and lacquerware, and another show of paintings in 1945 focused on modernism, making it a landmark event at the time.

Chongqing was also instrumental in the rediscovery of Dunhuang: From 1940 to 1945, a survey team, consisting of historians, artists and archaeologists, set out from the city for the hinterland of the northwest, and investigated the Dunhuang grottoes, in what is now Gansu province, and other historical sites along the way. They held an exhibition in Chongqing in 1943 to show the public the glories of Dunhuang and the country's ancient artistic and cultural heritage.

He Guiyan, a professor at the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, says that the exhibition reveals a panoramic picture of Chongqing and its cultural landscape in the 1930s and '40s, adding that it introduces to people the cultural accumulations of this southwestern city, and how it kept fanning the flame of Chinese art and culture.

Contact the writer at [linqi@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:linqi@chinadaily.com.cn)

tural institutions whose presence there helped stoke the embers of modern Chinese art amid the fire and smoke of World War II, and their accomplishments helped, in part, to shape the country's art scene in the decades following the war.

Besides Fu, featured artists at the exhibition also include Xu Beihong, another luminary of 20th-century Chinese art who, while in Chongqing, depicted the plight of ordinary people during wartime and living in poverty, held exhibitions and opened up lectures to motivate people not to give up the struggle against the Japanese invaders and continue the fight for national independence.

In the latter years of his life, Xu often recalled his time in Chongqing, according to his wife Liao Jingwen (1923-2015) who once said, "in paintings he created, he inscribed places of Chongqing, such as Hualongqiao and Panxi. He developed a strong attachment to the city while he was there."

Xu Ji, a grandson of Xu Beihong and a chief curator of the exhibition, says the title is derived from *Guan Canghai* (Behold the Dark Green Sea), a poem attributed to Cao Cao, a statesman, military commander and poet living in the second and third centuries, referring to Chongqing's scenic magnificence and the courage of its people in the face of national crises.

"The city became a shelter and a center for those who evacuated from other parts of the country that were occupied by the Japanese. They made art, rebuilt schools, held exhibitions, formed groups and founded publications," says Xu Ji. "Through all sorts of activities, they voiced the pain and courage of the people and their nation. "Therefore, this show is a tribute

## LIFE



## ALL FIRED UP



Shanxi province craftsman displays a passion for preserving and innovating a millennia-old earthenware pottery style, **Yang Feiyue** and **Sun Ruisheng** report in Taiyuan.

An array of delicate earthenware, ranging from three-legged wine vessels to teapots and incense burners, adorn Zhang Hongliang's office in Pingding county, North China's Shanxi province.

Each piece exudes an artistic allure that captivates the eye and the mind.

They are made using historical Pingding earthenware craftsmanship that was named as a national intangible culture heritage by the State Council in 2014.

Zhang was named a national inheritor of the craft in 2018, and he has managed to transform the traditional earthenware, which was mostly rough, simple and utilitarian, into art.

"We have tried to combine techniques such as porcelain carving, lacquering, paper-cutting, calligraphy and painting to inject more vitality to Pingding earthenware," says Zhang, who has been engaged in local production and promotion of the craft for almost three decades.

"The variety of patterns and colors has also become increasingly diverse," he adds.

Zhang believes that such moves are important to ensure the sustainable development of Pingding earthenware, which carries a history of more than 2,000 years.

In 1972, a large number of earthenware fragments were excavated from a collapsed ancient kiln in the county, and experts confirmed they date back to the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC).

The local pottery then became a popular handicraft during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), according to the *Pingding County Annals* published in the 1980s.

In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Pingding earthenware was put on a pedestal after a widespread legend about Emperor Kangxi specifically asking for his medicine to be stewed in the pots.

"There's something to it," Zhang says.

"It is Pingding earthenware's strength in maintaining the stability of the medicine's properties, and preserving the original flavor and color of foods during cooking, that has made it so popular across the country," he adds.

Sitting in the middle section of the Taihang Mountains, Pingding is rich in mineral resources, of which large reserves of high-alumina soil, as well as refractory and siliceous clays, make excellent materials for producing earthenware.

The production process of Pingding earthenware is sophisticated, from material selection to the final glazing, each step requiring meticulous skill.

For example, the clay must be extracted 20 meters away from a



Zhang Hongliang has delivered many delicate earthenware items over the decades, such as an eagle-shaped wine dispenser and a cup (top left), a square cup decorated with four rams (top right), and a tea set (above). **Bottom:** Zhang polishes an earthenware pot at his workshop in Pingding county, Shanxi province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

local coal seam and be naturally weathered and refined.

"It has to be at the right balance of plasticity, malleability, and strength," Zhang says.

Arduous kneading is essential to increase the clay's stickiness and toughness.

The firing process is especially crucial, where the fuel and the earthenware must be precisely placed, and the temperature controlled accurately.

"The glazing process requires quick and exact movements to achieve the desired effect," Zhang says.

To date, Zhang has managed to develop more than 1,000 varieties of earthenware, and has restored the once-lost firing technique for thin-bodied items, the slimmest of which can be less than three millimeters.

"The earthenware that people see in daily life are generally thick and heavy to hold, but the fact is that, the thinner the earthenware, the better its permeability and thermal conductivity," Zhang explains.

Zhang experimented for three months and made his first thin-bodied teapot, but it exploded when he used it to boil water, spraying the hot liquid everywhere.

"It was really dangerous, but I wasn't scared and just wanted to keep going," he says.

It wasn't until three years later, after much trial and error, that he finally pulled it off.

"When using such a pot to stew or cook food, the taste will be particularly rich and thick," he adds.

Born into a family of ceramic art-



ists, Zhang developed a strong interest in earthenware as a child, especially under the influence of his father who was a provincial master of arts and crafts in Shanxi, and an inheritor of Pingding engraved porcelain.

In the early 1990s, Zhang started to study porcelain manufacture at a local plant, where he built a solid foundation for his craft.

As time moved on, Zhang saw many craftsmen switch profession, and witnessed many kilns grow cold.

"At that time, Pingding earthenware products were regarded as just ordinary utensils, such as pots and medicine jars," he recalls.

When modern kitchenware flooded the market, many local craftsmen believed that this industry had no future," he recalls.

Yet, he believed the craftsman-

ship that has been passed down for thousands of years could have new vitality.

In 1996, he founded his own pottery workshop and has since committed himself to the rescue and inheritance of the traditional craft.

In 2002, a businessman from the Netherlands came to Pingding looking for local earthenware, but requested that it featured a large, round opening; a small, thin bottom, and a smooth surface.

It was higher than local standards allowed for, and Zhang invited the best craftsmen to help meet the requirements, but eventually the effort was in vain.

There were very few written records on Pingding earthenware production available for reference, so Zhang had to test every step of the way. He built more than 10 kilns,

one after another, trying and failing repeatedly, almost bankrupting himself in the process.

However, he didn't give up and carried on. After over 1,000 experiments, Zhang eventually delivered more than 6,000 items, all of which met the expectations of the Dutch customer.

"Although I didn't make much money, I achieved dignity and hope for Pingding earthenware," he says.

The successful deal further strengthened Zhang's confidence in innovation. After continuous research, he developed a glaze spray sandblasting process, a groundbreaking move that rendered the earthenware's glazed color and thus improved its quality and black appearance.

"When combining the techniques of porcelain carving with earthenware, it was really difficult during the experimentation stage," Zhang recalls, adding that there was no precedent for the earthenware to have a glazed color.

Due to the different materials and firing methods, the two crafts were incompatible.

"If the glaze color is enhanced, it will cause the earthenware body to deform or even collapse, but if the body shape is ensured, the glaze color will become dirty or scarred," he says.

It was his father that helped him deliver the impossible.

"He encouraged me to go on and believed the idea of combining the two crafts was valuable," Zhang says.

After experimenting for five years, Zhang finally succeeded. His finished products received high rec-

ognition within the industry.

Zhang didn't rest on his laurels, and has continuously experimented with new techniques and recipes to add even more enhancements, both decorative and functional, to his earthenware products.

Now, his workshop can produce more than 700,000 Pingding earthenware items a year, many of which make their way to Japan, South Korea and the Netherlands.

In addition to perfecting the craftsmanship, Zhang has made a special effort to promote the historical art.

For the past 15 years, Zhang has traveled to many earthenware production regions across the country to learn about their crafts and collect related items.

In 2019, Zhang established an earthenware museum, which has displayed items from Pingding and other areas of the country, including production tools, molds, account ledgers, as well as text and photos from the county's ceramic factory which was set up in 1958.

The move is out of his concerns for the inheritance of the traditional craft.

"It is difficult to cultivate successors, as it requires a lot of time to pick up the related skills," Zhang says.

"Second, fewer young people are willing to engage in the trade, which is arduous," he adds.

The museum has enabled local students to experience and develop an interest in the earthenware firsthand.

"They have to appreciate its charm and come to like it before they can voluntarily continue the tradition," Zhang says.

To help more people understand Pingding earthenware, in 2019 Zhang started to showcase the manufacturing process of sand pottery on the short-video platform Kuai-shou.

To date, he has posted more than 400 short videos and delivered in excess of 100 livestream broadcasts, which helped him to gain more than 100,000 followers.

Wang Xia from Hebei province purchased several Pingding earthenware items for brewing and drinking tea after seeing Zhang's performance.

"It's amazing how ordinary clay can become a work of art in the hands of a master," Wang says.

Speaking about his future plans, Zhang says he wants more people to see the charm of earthenware.

"The path of inheritance is endless, and my dream is to carry forward the Pingding earthenware craft and bring it to the world's attention."

Contact the writers at [yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn)



## LIFE

## Embracing all that jazz

Accomplished musician, Liu Yue, and his band release their first live album, *In Your Arms*, recorded during a 2018 performance at an iconic venue in Beijing, **Chen Nan** reports.

On the night of Sept 9, 2018, a performance was staged at Beijing's East Shore Jazz Cafe.

Liu Yue, the bassist, was about to perform with his trio, which included keyboardist Zhou Xia and drummer Xu Zhitong.

"We are going to record tonight's show and publish it. It would be highly appreciated if you could join us and keep it quiet," Liu said to the audience.

For Liu and his trio, it was the first time that they recorded a live album. For the audience, it was also a new experience.

"They (the audience members) were very cooperative and two of them joked that we should give them copies of the album when it was published," recalls Liu.

On March 13, the album, titled *In Your Arms*, was released by China Record Group, one of the biggest and oldest record companies in the country.

The album features four works: *Apple Pie*, *Yellow Earth*, *Love of Bajie* and *In Your Arms*, all written by Liu.

"We performed about eight pieces during the show and we chose four because those four works are different in terms of their styles. We love our performances of those four works that night," says Liu, 48. "Back in 2018, it was rare for jazz musicians to record albums live. It was a very memorable and valuable experience for all of us."

The title song, *In Your Arms*, was written by Liu in 2013, featuring musical elements of the *urtiin duu*, known as the "long song," which is one of the most iconic forms of Mongolian ethnic music.

Liu recalls vividly that for a long time, he couldn't name the work. Several years ago, when he performed during the Beijing Nine Gates Jazz Festival — one of the bigger such events in the country — Liu introduced the piece, saying that it didn't yet have a name and encouraged the audience to help him come up with one.

"Right after my performance, an elderly man walked up to me, telling me that he had a name for the piece — *In Your Arms*. I loved the name and decided to adopt the title immediately. I didn't ask him why he thought it should be named that. I guess that the piece brought him warmth and the feeling of missing someone," says Liu.

*Apple Pie* was written by Liu many years ago, and was featured in his debut album, *China Girl*, in 2011. *Yellow Earth* was inspired by the devastating earthquake in Wenchuan in 2008, in Southwest China's Sichuan province, and Liu imbued the piece with folk music elements of the remarkably high-pitched *xintianyou* songs from Northwest China's Shaanxi province.

As for *Love of Bajie*, Liu portrays a mysterious and surreal picture about the slow-witted and clumsy Zhu Bajie, one of the three animal spirits, portrayed in the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, who, as part of his entourage, accompanies the Buddhist monk Xuanzang on his journey to



**Top:** Born in Beijing, Liu Yue has a background in traditional instruments, and learned the guitar and bass upon his introduction to jazz in his early 20s. **Above:** Liu Yue (right) poses with drummer Xu Zhitong (left), keyboardist Zhou Xia (second from right) and veteran musician Liu Yuan (second from left) in a Beijing studio. PHOTOS BY SONG XIAOHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

India in search of sacred scrolls.

"Some of the pieces took me only 10 minutes to finish, while some took me weeks, or even months. It usually starts with a simple idea, either a melody or a concept, and then I try to develop it into a complete piece. It takes time for the piece to grow, and the best way to do that is through live performances," says Liu, when asked about his song-

writing process. "When I perform a piece live, the concept grows, which is natural, and eventually, the composition completes itself."

Born in Beijing, Liu learned to play *liuqin* and *pipa*, both traditional, plucked musical instruments, in childhood. As a teenager, he started to play guitar. He studied bass at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and

after graduation, he joined the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra, which allowed him to learn and enjoy traditional Chinese music.

"I play contemporary instruments, like guitar and bass. I also love traditional music since I have been exposed to many traditional Chinese musical works and contemporary musical works written for traditional musical instruments. It's natural for me to combine Chinese music with jazz, which is like a language exclusively used by me," Liu says.

The other members of the trio, Zhou and Xu, recorded with Liu on his album, titled *Bamboo's Murmurs*, which was released in 2017.

"Though they are very young, they have impressed me with their musical talent," says Liu, adding that, before recording *Bamboo's Murmurs*, he heard about Zhou and Xu, but didn't know them. After rehearsals, they quickly recorded the album in the studio.

"It was a fun experience, recording with a real audience," says drummer Xu, 28, who started to learn the piano at the age of 4 and could play jazz drums by 7. "Liu Yue's music is full of originality and one of my favorite pieces of his is *Apple Pie*, which is lovely and rhythmic."

A graduate of the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich in Germany, with a doctoral degree in jazz performance in 2019, Xu has known Liu for a long time, since Xu's twin brother studied guitar with Liu as a child.

Liu also pays tribute to a key figure behind *Bamboo's Murmurs* and the latest album, *In Your Arms*, who is veteran jazz musician Liu Yuan.

Liu Yuan was the supervisor of the album, and was also the one who initiated the idea of recording a live album at East Shore Jazz Cafe, located on the bank of Beijing's Houhai Lake, of which he is the founder.

When Liu Yuan started playing the saxophone in the mid-1980s, few people in China knew what jazz was. As the genre took root in China, Liu Yuan witnessed the growth of a vibrant and fast-developing jazz scene.

Liu Yuan was a folk musician in his 20s when he learned to play the saxophone, and performed with Chinese rock music legend Cui Jian.

He launched East Shore Jazz Cafe in 2006, which helped to build the Beijing jazz scene.

"I played at East Shore Jazz Cafe in June 2006, on the first day the venue opened. Almost every Thursday, I played there. It's like a home to me and many other jazz musicians in Beijing," says Liu Yue.

"I once read an article introducing and reviewing the album *Bamboo's Murmurs*, which said that the album gathers four people, respectively born in the 1960s (Liu Yuan), 1970s (Liu Yue), 1980s (Zhou) and 1990s (Xu). That is inheritance and innovation," says Liu Yue.

Contact the writer at [chennan@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:chennan@chinadaily.com.cn)

## Tears of joy over jumbo Chinese onions

The average Indian homemaker, who's also by definition an accomplished cook, would be thrilled to visit vegetable markets in China. Onions almost double the size of a "deuce ball" (an Indian colloquial corruption of the hand-stitched Dukes leather ball used in cricket matches) would trigger waves of culinary creativity in their frontal cortex.

I am not a homemaker. For me, cooking is an adult survival skill, or, at best, a therapeutic option when boredom threatens to advance into cognitive dissonance and psychosis. And yet, I felt a surge of excitement when I walked into a market near my apartment in Beijing and laid eyes on those big, red onions, each weighing at least three times the 163-gram standard ball allowed in international men's cricket. I was so amused that I spontaneously

shared my observations with a Pakistani friend accompanying me, almost certain he would get the cricket analogy, given our countries' famous rivalry on the pitch. He looked somewhat embarrassed, and it took me a bit to realize that I had referred to the "deuce ball" in plural and inadvertently omitted the operative word while doing so.

Now, I am not the only Indian who's been overwhelmed at the sight of jumbo Chinese onions (the best variety in my hometown Kolkata is perhaps as big as a golf ball). A colleague's wife, who hails from India's culinary capital of Lucknow in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, says she's so inspired by the size of Chinese onions that she's been preparing fish or meat dishes every day.

Yet another acquaintance in Beijing, who is originally from New Delhi, sees to it that the onions she buys are finely chopped all in one go, to ensure "easy storage". She guiltily admits to buying more onions than she needs each week. A conditioned reflex, she adds.

To even laugh at our bizarre infatuation with the pungent, bilious vegetable, one must understand the storied history of this Indian kitchen staple, a key ingredient in the common gravy base called masala.

According to an article published in the Los Angeles Times in December 2010, Chinese traveler Xuanzang visited India in the 7th century and, judging by his accounts, the onion remained "something of a medical and sensual sideshow for centuries". Ancient medical texts extolled its curative powers, but Hindu scriptures despised it as anathema to a life of meditation and austerity. Xuanzang wrote, according to the newspaper.

Roughly four decades ago, the onion became a tear-jerker beyond the kitchen, and a powerful tool to make or break governments in India. "The price of onions... has an almost mystical political significance," The New York Times said in an article in October 1998, ahead of the crucial state assembly elections in Delhi and Rajasthan, being fought over a range of issues including onion prices. The article referred to how former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi toppled the apple cart of Hindu nationalists and returned to power in 1980, waving onion garlands at political gatherings and assailing the central government for its failure to control food inflation. Incumbent governments in both states were routed in the 1998 polls.

In 2019, a kilogram of onions cost one-third of an average Indian's daily income, having hit a record high of 200 rupees (\$2.79), sparking thefts, robberies and fist fights across the nation, and prompting the Narendra Modi government to release a raft of damage-control measures.

On a lighter note, it gave rise to maverick marketing strategies. For example, a vendor of China-made smartphones in eastern India logged record sales after he advertised that he'd give away a kilogram of onions with every model purchased. Memes on Twitter and TikTok became commonplace. One showed people paying taxi fares in India with onions instead of cash, while another suggested the onion would become a stronger currency than the US dollar and British pound. A famous comedian said he and his wife were conferring on how many onions they should keep in their safety deposit box.

Right now, onion prices in India are stable, thanks to a good harvest and zero external challenges to the supply chain. But perhaps there's no harm in putting away a few jumbo Chinese onions in a vault (climate-controlled, of course). At least my family will shed tears of joy during India's next great onion crisis.

Contact the writer at [moumita@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:moumita@chinadaily.com.cn)



Bassist Liu Yue (left) relaxes with band members, drummer Xu Zhitong (middle) and keyboardist Zhou Xia. Their live jazz album *In Your Arms* was released by China Record Group in March. SONG XIAOHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY