

**Fiddle diplomacy**

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# CHINA DAILY

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## China, Russia vow to boost cooperation

Xi says both sides should tap economic potential, create more growth points

By CAO DESHENG  
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping reiterated on Wednesday China's readiness to work with Russia to support each other on issues concerning core interests, and he called for enhancing all-around bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting in Beijing with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, who made an official visit to China on Tuesday and Wednesday at the invitation of Premier Li Qiang.

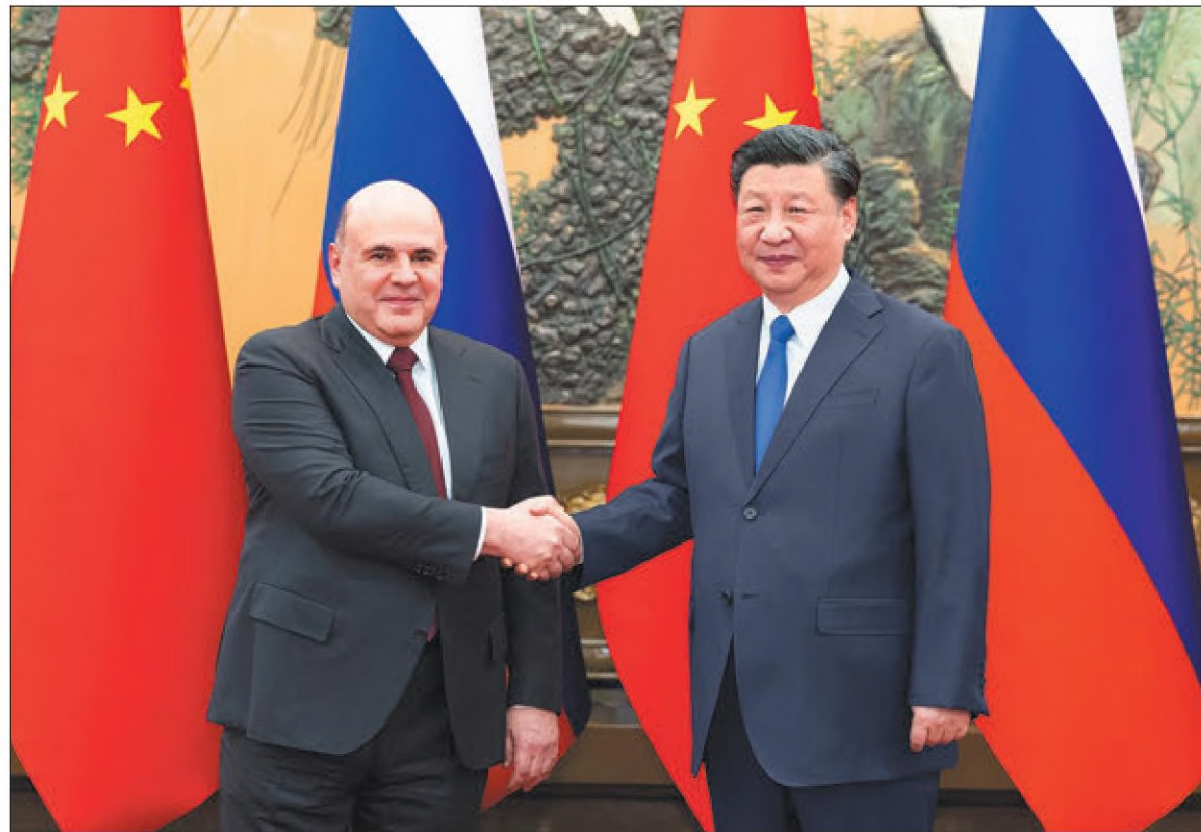
Xi asked Mishustin to convey his sincere greetings to Russian President Vladimir Putin, and he recalled his successful state visit to Russia in March, when the two presidents outlined a blueprint for the development of China-Russia relations and bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Consolidating and developing China-Russia relations is not only the shared aspiration of the two peoples, but also the overarching trend of the times, Xi said.

He emphasized that China is willing to work with Russia to firmly support each other on issues concerning their core interests, and to strengthen mutual coordination within multilateral frameworks, such as the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS and the G20.

Both sides should continue to tap the potential for economic partnership, consolidate and expand fundamentals of cooperation in the fields of energy and mutual connectivity, and create more growth points, he added.

China is willing to work with Russia and other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union to boost the synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union, advance the building of a more open regional market, and ensure stable and unimpeded global



President Xi Jinping meets with visiting Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Beijing on Wednesday. HUANG JINGWEN / XINHUA

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industrial and supply chains, Xi said.

Trade between China and Russia hit a record high of \$190.27 billion in 2022.

Between January and April, bilateral trade exceeded \$73.1 billion, up 41.3 percent over the same period of last year, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

Furthermore, energy cooperation continues to be a major stabilizer for the bilateral ties.

During the meeting, Mishustin conveyed Putin's warm greetings and best wishes to Xi, saying that Xi's historic state visit to Russia in

March opened a new era of the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

Russia is willing to work with China to implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, fully utilize the regular meetings between the two prime ministers and relevant cooperation mechanisms, and deepen pragmatic cooperation in various fields, he said.

The prime minister added that Russia stands ready to work with China to promote the multipolarization of the world and consolidate the international order based on international law.

Premier Li gave Mishustin a grand welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday before they held official talks. They also witnessed the signing of an array of cooperation documents.

Noting that strong resilience, great potential and broad prospects remain in pragmatic cooperation between the two countries, Li said that China is willing to work with Russia to optimize the trade structure, further enrich trade categories, expand cooperation in the fields of agricultural service trade and digital economy, facilitate trade and businesses, and improve customs clearance efficiency.

Li also called for strengthening subnational cooperation, promoting people-to-people exchanges, and expanding collaboration in such fields as education, science and technology, culture, tourism, sports and health.

Mishustin hailed the fruitful cooperation between the two countries, saying that the Russia-China relationship enjoys special, exemplary significance in international relations.

Against the backdrop of the turbulent international situation, Russia is willing to work with China to effectively respond to the new challenges faced by both countries, Mishustin said.

### WORLD WATCH

By Joseph S. Nye

## Soft power key for Sino-US relations

Since 2016, the United States and China have entered a new and difficult phase in their relationship, but it is a mistake to call it a new Cold War. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union had virtually no trade or cultural ties. By contrast, annual China-US trade totals more than half a trillion dollars, and more than 300,000 Chinese students and 3 million tourists are in the US each year. A better description of today's bilateral relationship is "cooperative rivalry" or "managed competition".

Since the end of World War II, US-China relations have gone through three phases that lasted roughly two decades each. Hostility marked the 20 years after the Korean War, followed by limited cooperation against the Soviet Union during the phase that followed president Richard Nixon's famous 1972 visit and talks with Chairman Mao Zedong. The Cold War's end ushered in a third phase of economic engagement, with the US helping China's global economic integration, including its entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001. Now, since 2017, the US National Security Strategy focuses on great power rivalry, with China as the pacing challenge.

While many Chinese analysts blame this fourth phase on US president Donald Trump, the view of China in Washington had already begun to sour before the 2016 presidential election. Trump's rhetoric and tariffs were merely gasoline poured on a smoldering fire.

The liberal international order helped China sustain rapid economic growth and reduce poverty dramatically.

But the US believes that China also tilted the trade field to its advantage by subsidizing State-owned enterprises, engaging in commercial espionage, and requiring foreign companies to transfer their intellectual property to domestic "partners". While many Democrats argued that Trump was mistaken to focus on the bilateral trade deficit, many supported his complaints about China's efforts to challenge the US' technological advantage. Moreover, China's growing military strength added a security dimension to the bilateral relationship.

While this fourth phase of the relationship is not a Cold War, it is much more than a typical trade dispute. Both countries are trying to "de-risk" their interdependence by subsidizing indigenous industries and altering supply chains.

Some analysts believe this fourth phase marks the beginning of a conflict in which an established hegemon goes to war with a rising challenger. In his explanation of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides famously argued that it was caused by Sparta's fear of a rising Athens. These analysts believe that China's rise will create a similar fear in the US, and use the analogy of World War I, when a rising Germany set hegemonic Britain on edge.

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## NATION OPENS DOOR WIDER TO FOREIGN GAMES COMPANIES

Supportive regulatory policies offer better environment for global stakeholders

By OUYANG SHIJIA  
ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreign companies are seeking opportunities in the world's biggest video games market as China implements supportive regulatory policies and provides a better environment for global stakeholders, analysts said.

The nation granted licenses to 27 foreign online games in March, including titles to be published by China's leading technology and internet companies such as Tencent Holdings, NetEase and Bilibili.

It was the second group of foreign online games to receive

### in-depth

publishing licenses since December, when the National Press and Publication Administration, or NPPA, approved the first batch of 44 foreign games for last year.

Analysts said the latest move marks a break with the past, as the NPPA usually grants licenses to foreign games in the second half of the year, especially in November and December.

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## New envoy set to enhance exchanges

By ZHANG YUNBI  
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

As Xie Feng arrived in the United States to assume his new post as China's 12th ambassador to the world's largest economy, observers said Washington should offer not just due hospitality, but also more sincerity for repairing the strained bilateral ties.

Beijing has shown a readiness to step up exchanges between the two countries and to bring their ties back on track, with the new ambassador making a number of remarks and issuing messages and letters upon his arrival in New York and in Washington, analysts said.

Xie was formerly the vice-foreign minister in charge of affairs related to North America and Oceania. His predecessor in Washington is current State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who completed his ambassadorial tenure and returned to China in January.

Speaking to the media at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York on Tuesday, Xie said he will "safeguard the interests of China" and "enhance China-US exchanges and cooperation" as a representative and envoy of the Chinese people.

After arriving in Washington on Tuesday night, the new top envoy to the US spoke to media from both nations, noting that "obviously there are profound differences between the two countries", and the ties have "once again come to a historical crossroads".

"We should make the two peoples feel assured and set the world at



Xie Feng, China's new ambassador to the United States, speaks to the media after arriving at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York on Tuesday. LI RUI / XINHUA

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In a letter to fellow compatriots in the US on Tuesday, Xie said, "We are committed to the three principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation put forward by President Xi Jinping, and wish to work with the US to explore the right way for the two countries to get along in the new era."

Matthew Miller, a spokesman for the US State Department, said at a news briefing on Tuesday that "the United States welcomes the arrival" of Xie and looks forward to working with him and his team.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Wednesday, "The ambassador is an important bridge and bond for communication and cooperation between China and the US, and it is hoped that the US could offer support and convenience for Ambassador Xie Feng in fulfilling his duty."

Mao underlined the significance of the two-way relations to both nations and the world, and she urged the US to "work toward the same goal with China, strengthen dialogue, manage and control divergences, advance cooperation, and push the China-US ties back onto the track of sound and steady development".

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# Games: China welcomes high-quality products

From page 1

In contrast with moves by the United States to crack down on Chinese technology products and apps such as TikTok, the analysts said China is committed to opening its doors wider to the outside world, sending a positive signal for foreign companies seeking opportunities in the ultra-large Chinese market.

Zhang Yi, CEO and chief analyst at iiMediaResearch, said, "Compared with the US' actions to suppress and even blacklist leading companies from other countries, the Chinese government has shown its confidence and tolerance."

The latest move by China to import new video games shows that the country is adhering to the reform and opening-up policies, which are also part of ongoing efforts to deepen reforms, Zhang said.

"As long as the contents of games are appropriate and they are operated legally, China is always open-minded about welcoming foreign companies to develop in its cultural and entertainment market," he said.

"With such a huge market, China welcomes high-quality products from all over the world to serve Chinese consumers. It is beneficial for foreign online games companies to expand their presence overseas and seek business opportunities in China. This will also benefit their Chinese counterparts by increasing market competition, which is conducive to improving the development and management levels of China's games sector."

Zhang said China is sending a positive signal that it will open wider to the outside world, offering huge growth opportunities for stakeholders from around the world.

With China on track for a steady recovery this year, Zhang said the nation will play an increasingly important role in spurring global economic growth, and its huge consumer market will also benefit global companies.

**Economy picks up**

National Bureau of Statistics data show China's economy is stabilizing. It picked up in the first quarter of this year, mainly driven by a gradual recovery in consumption.

The nation's GDP growth rebounded to a stronger-than-expected 4.5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter after reaching 2.9 percent in the last quarter of 2022.

Retail sales, a key gauge of consumer spending, grew by 10.6 percent year-on-year in March, compared with 3.5 percent growth in the first two months.

In the first quarter, retail sales rose by 5.8 percent compared with the same period last year, while in the final quarter of 2022, they fell by 2.7 percent from a year earlier.

Wu Baokang, an analyst at data

intelligence services provider iDigital, said it is highly likely that China will import more batches and games this year than in 2022, given the nation's accelerated approval process for such imports.

"I believe this implies a more supportive regulatory policy toward the games sector, and China will welcome more imported high-quality foreign games," Wu added.

In addition to the nation's accelerated approval for imported games, 347 domestic games were approved in four batches from January to last month, with the monthly number of approvals remaining basically stable at more than 80.

The COVID-19 pandemic sent shockwaves through the global games market. It saw growth in 2020 and 2021, but last year the market witnessed a year-on-year decline of more than 4 percent for the first time since industry consultancy Newzoo started tracking global games market revenues.

Meanwhile, China's games market also shrank for the first time in years in 2022. A recently released industry report said the market generated revenue of 265.88 billion yuan (\$38.85 billion), registering a 10.33 percent year-on-year decline amid a complicated and grim domestic and international situation, weakening market confidence and the pandemic.

Released during the China Game Industry Annual Conference in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, in February, the report said some companies had to reduce investment in the research and development of games, with the entire industry entering a stage of financial and business pressure last year.

Analysts said the significant drop in games revenues last year was mainly due to mobile games, which produced revenue of 193.06 billion yuan and comprised more than 70 percent of the Chinese market.

Mobile games revenue in China fell by 14.4 percent year-on-year in 2022, compared with a 7.57 percent gain the previous year, the report said.

China also reported its first fall in the number of games players for nearly a decade, with the figure declining by 0.33 percent year-on-year to 664 million last year. The number of mobile games players stood at 654 million last year, a fall of 0.23 percent year-on-year.

Wu, from iDigital, said that while China's games market experienced a downturn last year due to the sluggish economic situation and weakened desire to buy games during the pandemic, it will likely rebound and see strong growth this year amid the resumption of production and the rapid recovery of consumption.

"There will also be more market opportunities for foreign games companies that develop high-quality products," Wu said.



XING WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Overseas ambitions

With the nation encouraging imports of more quality games products, Chinese games developers are expanding their presence overseas, seeking new growth opportunities in emerging markets worldwide.

"Facing fierce competition in the domestic games market, Chinese companies are actively expanding their business abroad," Wu said.

While overseas sales of games produced in China fell by 3.7 percent year-on-year to \$17.35 billion last year, sales in the domestic market fell by 13.07 percent year-on-year to 222.38 billion yuan, the industry report said.

Despite being affected by the pandemic in recent years, China has made considerable progress to become the world's most developed mobile market, with Chinese mobile publishers ranked among the best in the world.

China overtook the US for the first time to dominate a list of the top 52 app publishers around the

globe. A total of 17 domestic companies earned places on this list, which was released last year by data.ai, a mobile analytics company based in the US.

China's top games and social media operator Tencent and leading Chinese games company NetEase retained the top two spots on the list for the fifth consecutive year.

NetEase Games said its products are played in a total of 200 countries and regions, including 140 that have joined the Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI.

The company's *Naraka: Blade point*, a combat game, has become a huge hit in the global market.

Within 30 days of its release, the game was being played in 126 countries and regions involved in the BRI, and as of June, more than 10 million copies of it had been sold globally, NetEase Games said.

It added that income from overseas markets accounted for more than 10 percent of its revenue. The company aims to further expand its overseas business, with 40 percent to 50 percent of its revenue coming from such markets.

Zhang said Chinese games companies have gained a competitive edge in the global market, and their overseas business has become an increasingly important part of their operations.

Despite these notable achievements, Zhang said some Chinese games companies seeking opportunities in global markets still lag

behind their international counterparts in areas such as marketing channels and methods.

"They need to operate in a more professional manner in overseas markets, especially in terms of attracting more global talent," he added.

"More efforts should also be made to increase the acquisition of overseas talent and teams. This would be beneficial for local operations and absorb first-class talent from different countries and regions in terms of creative culture, games design and localization channels, among others."

## Domestic enterprises set their sights on overseas expansion opportunities

By OUYANG SHIJIA

Chinese games companies are accelerating their push to expand overseas, betting big on rising growth opportunities in global markets, business executives and experts said.

Lu Xiaoyin, co-CEO and president of Perfect World Co, a leading Chinese games and movie conglomerate, said, "Going global' remains a key development strategy for Chinese games companies.

"A rising number of such companies preparing to expand overseas are looking to improve their international competitiveness."

Perfect World, which was among the first batch of Chinese games companies to seek a global presence, has expanded its overseas markets in recent years.

For example, the company's

mobile game *Tower of Fantasy* had its official global release in August in overseas markets such as Europe, the United States, Japan and South Korea.

On the day the game was released, *Tower of Fantasy's* performance in the iOS App Store saw it take top spot in 36 countries and regions worldwide on the most downloaded apps chart. The title also made the top 10 list for most downloaded game apps in 122 countries and regions.

Lu said the global release of *Tower of Fantasy* has been a runaway success, demonstrating the strong research and development capabilities of the company, which is based in Beijing, to produce products suitable for global markets.

With the company launching more games globally, he believes its overseas performance will help

drive the steady growth of its overall business.

Perfect World has set up overseas branches in Europe, the US, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia and other countries and regions.

"We will continue to expand our overseas games business and develop titles more suitable for global distribution ... to gradually release global products in various categories," Lu said.

Gamma Data Corp, a Chinese games database, said the US remains the largest overseas market for mobile games developed by Chinese companies, accounting for more than 30 percent of the sector's foreign revenue last year.

In addition to the US, Japan and South Korea, the United Kingdom and Germany are important international markets for mobile

games developed by Chinese companies, Gamma Data Corp said.

Notably, the US, Japan and South Korea account for 56.4 percent of such games produced by Chinese companies for overseas markets.

Xu Fanke, an analyst at the database, said, "Overseas sales of games developed in China reached \$17.35 billion in 2022, accounting for over 10 percent of overall sales in overseas markets."

While such sales last year fell by 3.7 percent year-on-year amid a sluggish global economic performance, the rate of decline was much lower than that in the global market, Xu said.

Citing Gamma Data Corp, Xu said the international competitiveness of Chinese games companies has improved notably.

More games developed by Chinese companies made the top 100

list of mobile games for earnings in markets such as Japan, South Korea, the UK and Germany last year, accounting for about 30 percent of the titles on the list, Xu added.

Faced with an evolving international situation, Chinese games companies seeking an overseas presence are encountering challenges related to localization, and different regulations globally.

Despite these challenges, Lu believes the long-term growth prospects in overseas markets remain unchanged, and there is still room to expand abroad, especially in emerging markets such as the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

Xu also sees huge growth potential in these three markets.

Despite the downturn in the global games market, the Middle East and Africa still saw growth of

11.1 percent in the mobile games market last year, Latin America saw growth of 6.9 percent, while Southeast Asia saw expansion of 5.1 percent, Gama Data said.

To better seize opportunities abroad, Xu said companies need to localize their overseas business, build their own overseas teams, develop a self-owned information base, and better monitor changes in overseas markets.

"We take a rosy view of Chinese games companies' future performance in overseas markets," Xu added.

"An increasing number of these companies will go global to expand their presence overseas. More Chinese games will make top 100 lists, among others, and there will still be room to develop in leading and emerging markets worldwide."



# TOP NEWS

## Tibet set for more growth based on its advantages

By YANG ZEKUN  
yangzekun@chinadaily.com.cn

The Tibet autonomous region has made remarkable achievements in high-quality development over the past decade and it will further improve the growth pattern based on its advantages, said officials and experts.

Tibet has maintained rapid economic growth while investing heavily in education, healthcare, culture, housing, employment and social security, and it has caught up with nationwide efforts to build a well-off socialist society in an all-round way, said the officials and experts attending the 2023 Forum on the Development of Xizang in Beijing on Tuesday. Xizang is the Chinese name for Tibet.

Wang Junzheng, Party secretary of the autonomous region, said at the forum that Tibet's high-quality development will adhere to the general principle of seeking progress while maintaining stability and actively serving as well as integrating with the new development paradigm.

"We will attach great importance to cultivating and developing industries and the real economy, continuously optimize the business environment, vigorously promote the development of strategic emerging industries such as clean energy, the digital economy, general aviation and cultural tourism, and actively develop industries closely related to the work and daily life of the people, striving to protect and improve people's livelihoods," he said.

Tibet is an important channel for China to open up to South Asia, and it will vigorously implement measures to revitalize border areas and enrich lives by upgrading infrastructure, public services and industrial development, improving port clearance capacity, expanding trade and further deepening cooperation with neighboring countries and regions, he said.

Maria Gustava, ambassador of Mozambique to China, said that during her visit to Tibet, she witnessed Tibetans' strong commitment to accelerating efforts in promoting high-quality development through hard work, conservation of the ecology and pursuit of peace and stability to consolidate the achievements made in poverty alleviation.

"The region has gained vitality and is really going through a tremendous transformation and development. ... Tibetans are living in much better conditions and their traditions, culture, language, religion and beliefs are being preserved and respected," she said.

She also praised the philosophy of inclusiveness in all endeavors related to rural development, enabling the region to develop based on its conditions and the protection of its local culture.



The region has gained vitality ... Tibetans are living in much better conditions and their traditions, culture, language, religion and beliefs are being preserved and respected."

Maria Gustava, ambassador of Mozambique to China

According to the regional government, the gross domestic product of Tibet increased from 71 billion yuan (\$10 billion) in 2012 to 213.2 billion yuan in 2022. About 628,000 poor families were lifted out of absolute poverty during that period.

In the first quarter of this year, Tibet's GDP grew by 8.2 percent and per capita disposable income for urban and rural residents increased by 4.1 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively, with growth rates ranking at the forefront of the country.

Wang Jingcai, deputy director of the region's development and reform commission, said that Tibet boasts significant advantages in terms of its resources and unique characteristics, ranging from mountains, waterways, forests and grasslands to abundant energy reserves, minerals and tourism, all supporting the region's comprehensive development.

"Tibet's overall strength has made significant progress, as it leaps from lagging behind by a significant margin to advancing at a rapid pace; its high-quality development is now in the express lane," she said.

In recent years, Tibet's total economic output has made significant breakthroughs, its fixed asset investment has grown rapidly, the pace of infrastructure construction has accelerated, major industries have been promoted and the living standards of residents have improved considerably, further narrowing its gap with other provinces and cities, Wang said.

Education in Tibet has also achieved comprehensive progress and historic achievements, providing sound support for the region's overall high-quality development, with unprecedented enrollment rates at all levels and types of education, said Dang Jing, head of the regional education department.

Tibet had 3,409 schools by the end of last year, with 944,000 students, or one-quarter of the total population, enrolled. The enrollment rate for preschool education hit 89.5 percent and the average length of education for the working-age population was 10.2 years, said Dang.



## No place to call home

A boy sits with his toy truck amid the ruins of his house after an Israeli attack on Gaza on Tuesday left more than 400 Palestinian families homeless in Deir al-Balah.

ALI JADALLAH / GETTY IMAGES

# DeSantis-Trump battle is on

On Twitter, Florida governor announces bid for 2024 Republican presidential nomination

By AI HEPING in New York  
aiheping@chinadailyusa.com

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis on Wednesday finally put himself in the race for the Republican presidential nomination, setting up what is expected to be a bruising primary season with former president Donald Trump.

DeSantis, 44, filed with the Federal Election Commission on Wednesday to run for president ahead of a live Twitter conversation with owner Elon Musk before his campaign releases an official launch video.

But the planned conversation early Wednesday evening encountered multiple technical issues that delayed it by more than 20 minutes as the platform kept crashing.

Musk blamed the technical difficulties on servers not having sufficient bandwidth for the hundreds of thousands of people who were tuning in.

Musk apologized: "I think we're definitely breaking new ground here. As far as I know, no major presidential candidate has ever announced their candidacy on social media this way, certainly in a Twitter Space. So, thank you for doing that."

DeSantis said he chose to announce via the social media platform because of his distrust of



Ron DeSantis

the media after its coverage of his response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He praised Musk for purchasing the social media company.

"I think what was done with Twitter is really significant for the future of our country. We cannot have a society in which the government is colluding with major tech platforms to enforce an orthodoxy," DeSantis said.

A spokesman for DeSantis told CBS News: "There is so much enthusiasm for Governor DeSantis' vision for our Great American Comeback that he literally busted up the internet. Washington is next."

During the discussion, DeSantis singled out national crime rates, promoted energy independence and the rise in migrants at the US-Mexico border.

"To voters who are participating in this primary process, my pledge to you is this: If you nominate me, you can set your clock to January 20, 2025, at high noon, because on the west side of the US Capitol I will be taking the oath of office as the 47th president of the United States. No excuses. I will get the job done."

When DeSantis was experiencing Twitter difficulties, the former president wrote on his Truth Social post: "Wow! The DeSantis TWITTER launch is a DISASTER! His whole campaign will be a disaster. WATCH!"

President Joe Biden tweeted, "This link works" – adding a link to donate to his own reelection campaign.

DeSantis has consistently ranked second behind Trump in nationwide polls of Republicans. Trump once endorsed DeSantis for Florida governor, but expecting DeSantis to enter the primary race, he has attacked him for months.

Trump is the first choice of 53 percent of Republican and Republican-leaning voters in the primary, roughly doubling DeSantis' 26 percent according to a CNN poll released Wednesday conducted by SSRS.

But the survey also finds that wide swaths of Republican-aligned voters are willing to consider either of the two.

Earlier Wednesday, Trump attacked DeSantis on social media calling him disloyal for running and pointing out votes DeSantis made as a congressman in favor of resolutions that would, among other things, raise the retirement age for Social Security. DeSantis has distanced himself from that recently.

"Also, he desperately needs a personality transplant, and, to the best of my knowledge, they are not medically available yet," Trump wrote.

A March CNN survey had Trump at 40 percent and DeSantis 36 percent. When voters in the new poll were asked about a second choice, however, DeSantis got 34 percent and Trump 15 percent.

Trump was banned from Twitter after the Jan 6, 2021, insurrection by his supporters at the Capitol, and he has yet to return to the site even after Musk reinstated him last fall.

"Announcing on Twitter is perfect for Ron DeSantis," a Trump adviser told NBC News in a text message. "This way he doesn't have to interact with people and the media can't ask him any questions."

DeSantis has said that he can win the general election against Biden, 80, while Trump, 76, can't. Trump has targeted DeSantis, using personal attacks and disparaging nicknames.

Prior to officially entering the race, DeSantis had taken trips to early voting states like Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada.

The challenge he faces other than trailing widely in polls is to convert Trump supporters without alienating them.

DeSantis represented Florida's 6th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives from 2013 to 2018. A graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School, he joined the US Navy in 2004, served as a legal adviser and was deployed to Iraq in 2007.

Agencies contributed to this story.



Political economist and global activist Laurence Brahm is presented with a hada, a Tibetan scarf, during the 2023 Forum on the Development of Xizang, in Beijing on Tuesday. JIANG QIMING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Ties: Ambassador's experience seen as important asset

From page 1

Observers noted that Xie has arrived in the US at a time when the bilateral ties continue to suffer tension, which worsened earlier this year after Washington hyped the incident involving an unmanned Chinese airship that strayed into US airspace and made further provocations to stir up the Taiwan Strait situation.

Wu Xinbo, dean of Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, said recently that Washington has sent some positive signals for improving political,

economic and trade ties with China, yet "it remains to be seen how far and how sincerely the US will go in this regard".

"Currently, China-US ties are still undergoing fluctuations at a low, because Washington has constantly been making problems and trouble, leading to friction and conflicts," he said.

Wu noted that Xie "has worked on dealing with China-US relations for 30 years and has experienced both the rosy and bumpy periods of the relations. ... Given the complicated, strained ties, such experience will be a very important asset

to his future interaction with Washington on behalf of China."

Xie has been a key participant in and witness to recent high-level bilateral meetings between Beijing and Washington, experts said.

Su Xiaohui, an associate research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said the comments made by Xie upon his arrival in New York and in Washington "reflect the great complexity of the relations and Beijing's proactive role in shaping the relations", and Xie's new post is "part of the proactive efforts".

Xie's new job comes at a time

when Washington "has gone to extremes recently in suppressing and coercing China, such as its utilizing the recently concluded G7 summit as a tool for strategic competition", Su said.

"The US knows clearly that China will not easily make concessions despite its open attitude toward communication with the US, and China surely will take countermeasures if the US continues stepping up pressure and damaging China's national interests," she added.

Minhu Zhang in New York contributed to this story.

## Phase: Nations need to cooperate to cope with threats

From page 1

Germany had already surpassed Britain in industrial production by 1900, while China's GDP (measured in dollars) is currently only three-quarters the size of the US economy. The US and China have more time and assets to manage their relationship than Britain had with Germany. China is also constrained by a natural balance of power in Asia, in which Japan and India have no desire to be dominated by it. Succumbing to the

fear that Thucydides described would be an unnecessary self-fulfilling prophecy for both countries. Neither China nor the US poses an existential threat to the other unless they blunder into a war. China and the US are too big to invade or change each other.

There is another dimension, however, that makes this fourth phase a "cooperative rivalry" rather than a Cold War. China and the US face transnational challenges that are impossible to resolve without the other. Climate

change and rising sea levels obey the laws of physics, not politics.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, borders have become more porous to everything from illicit drugs to infectious diseases to terrorism. The two largest economies will have to cooperate to cope with these threats. Some aspects of the relationship will therefore involve a positive-sum game in which US national security will require partnering with China, and vice versa.

The key question is whether the

If China and the US are able to attract each other, they improve the prospects for the cooperation that benefits both countries.

two countries are capable of thinking in terms of a "cooperative rivalry". In an age of populist nationalism in both countries, it is much easier for leaders to create fear about a new Cold War. This is why soft power is so important to the relationship.

Soft power is the ability to get what one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. Both China and the US use their soft power to compete for influence in third countries, but it can also play an important positive-sum role in the bilateral relationship.

If China and the US are able to attract each other, they improve the

prospects for the cooperation that benefits both countries. And soft power makes it more difficult for nationalistic leaders to demonize the other country and blunder into a disastrous war. Unfortunately, current political rhetoric is undercutting mutual soft power. Both governments should try to increase their soft power.

The author is a professor at Harvard University and author of Soft Power and Great-Power Competition. 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.



CHINA

# Asian locales on rise as overseas study options

Survey attributes changes to students favoring more friendly destinations

By ZOU SHUO  
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

A growing number of students from the Chinese mainland are choosing to study in Asia, in places where they can enjoy friendlier environments with similar cultures at relatively lower costs, while at the same time the United States, though still the most favored destination, saw a significant drop in its popularity, according to a recent report.

Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore have become popular destinations for Chinese students pursuing their studies outside of the mainland, the report said.

For students pursuing undergraduate degrees or lower, Hong Kong and Japan were tied as the fourth most popular destinations this year, favored by 15 percent of the surveyed students, followed by Singapore with 14 percent.

In 2019, only 10 percent of students chose Hong Kong, and 9 percent chose Japan and Singapore.

The US, the United Kingdom and Canada clinched the top three spots.

While the US remained the most favored overseas study destination for undergraduates in this year's report, chosen by 34 percent of respondents, this was a drop from 45 percent in 2019.

The percentage of students going to the UK and Canada remained relatively unchanged over the past five years.

For students pursuing postgraduate studies, the trend is similar.

The percentage of students going to the US for postgraduate studies dropped from 45 to 30 percent from 2019 to 2023, while those going to Hong Kong increased from 14 to 22 percent, and Singapore from 9 to 15 percent.

The UK remained the most popular overseas study destination for postgraduates in 2023, surpassing

the US for the fourth consecutive year.

The report was based on a survey conducted by Vision Overseas Consulting Co, a subsidiary of New Oriental Education and Technology Group, of 9,551 students who plan to go to school overseas. The report has been released annually for the past nine years.

The report found that almost half the respondents said they would prefer to go to destinations with a favorable attitude toward China, and one-third said they would consider applying to go to schools in various countries and regions.

Lin Xiaoya, a senior high school student at Changchun Foreign Languages School in Jilin province, said she plans to study in Singapore for her undergraduate studies due to the similarity in culture, beautiful scenery and the country's strength in higher education.

She said she wants to major in a STEM field such as math or computer science, and felt that her chances of being admitted to a college in the US or the UK were slim.

"It is almost common knowledge that top universities in the US and UK only admit a very small number of Chinese students for science majors, and even if they do, they would prefer students who have already studied abroad during high school."

Chen Yihan, 25, had thought about studying at a US university for postgraduate studies, yet due to various reasons he studied at Imperial College London in 2021 and returned to work at an internet company in Beijing last year.

"I wanted to major in chip technology, and it is common for the US government to put visa restrictions on Chinese students majoring in the sector, and studying in the UK does not have that problem," he said.

"I also worry about my safety as there are many gun shooting incidents in the US."

## Futuristic felines



Furry robotic cats attract visitor attention at the eighth China Robotop Summit in Yuyao, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. The fair showcases cutting-edge technologies and products in the sector of smart robots and internet of things. HU XUEJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Sino-German cooperation promoted

By HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou and WANG SONGSONG

Scholars, businessmen and officials from Germany and China gathered in the city of Quanzhou, Fujian province, on Wednesday for a forum aimed at boosting China-Germany friendship and sci-tech cooperation.

Themed "Creating a new future of Sino-German sci-tech cooperation: mutual support for common development", the third Sino-German Sci-tech Forum welcomed more than 200 participants from the two countries to discuss key areas with broad prospects for Sino-German cooperation, such as digital economy and intelligent manufacturing, new energy and automobile industry, life sciences and new pharmaceuticals.

Co-hosted by the Western Returned Scholar Association (Overseas-educated Scholars Association of China) and the Quanzhou government, the three-day event was received positively by the participants.

Ding Zhongli, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and president of the Western Returned Scholars Association, addressed the forum saying that in the current complex and ever-

changing international environment, multilateralism is the only way to tackle global challenges.

"Both China and Germany are beneficiaries and advocates of multilateralism and free trade. We hope that professionals from the scientific and business communities of both countries can, via the forum, deeply understand the long-term and sustainable complementary nature of industrial technology between the two countries, continuously explore cooperation potential, build mutually beneficial bridges, and achieve mutual accomplishments and common development through innovative collaboration," he said.

Otto Hauser, chairman of the Federal Association of the German-Chinese Alliance, said Germany, Europe and China can define joint projects that are in the best interest of all. All parties need new opportunities for cooperation and the task of creating them under the conditions of the time.

China and Germany have a lot of experience to be shared, particularly in society, education and health, he added.

Li Qingdang, dean of the Chinese-Scholar-Deutsche Technische Fakultät at Qingdao University of Science & Technology, said: "Germany has

accumulated many core technologies, but has a limited market and shrinking labor resources. China has more application scenarios, innovation and opportunities. Working together, we can integrate our advantages, build core competitiveness and promote common development."

Wang Zhihong, vice-mayor of Quanzhou, briefed the media prior to the event on April 25. "At the forum, the two countries can jointly explore and make use of our own advantageous resources to complement each other's strengths and promote scientific and technological empowerment to boost economic development and social progress."

Wang Pijun, secretary-general of the Western Returned Scholars Association, said the forum promotes international communication and people-to-people exchanges. "Only when more people get involved, can we promote mutual understanding," he urged.

The first Sino-German Sci-tech Forum was held in Berlin in 2018, and the second in Beijing in 2019.

Hou Tingting contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at wangsongsong@chinadaily.com.cn

## Water survey



Science workers test water quality at the Kumkol Basin on the northern slope of the eastern Kunlun Mountains in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on Tuesday. Xinjiang launched a scientific survey of water resources in the barely inhabited area this year to study the feasibility of utilizing the resources to support the development of water-scarce southern Xinjiang. DING LEI / XINHUA

# Method to treat celiac disease developed

LANZHOU — An international research team has developed a new method to treat celiac disease, according to Lanzhou University in Northwest China's Gansu province.

The study conducted by Chinese, Pakistani and other overseas researchers has been published in the journal Food Research International.

Aman Khan, leader of the study and a Pakistani postdoctoral fellow at Lanzhou University, has been engaged in research related to the treatment of celiac disease for several years.

According to Khan, the disease, an immune disorder triggered by gluten ingestion, is quite common in Asian countries including Pakistan, as they eat lots of food made of flour, which contains gluten. He hopes to use his knowledge to help people affected by this disorder.

Supported by his adviser — Li

Xiangkai, a professor with the environmental microbiology group in Lanzhou University — Khan has been isolating probiotic bacterial strains from Pakistani fermented sourdough bread to use them in preventing the occurrence of celiac disease.

According to Khan, the idea was taken from a previous study conducted by their group that isolated a probiotic strain from *jiangshui*, a traditional Chinese fermented food, which could degrade uric acid and regulate gut microbiota.

They then made yogurt with the strain and conducted a two-month human trial on 120 volunteers with abnormally high levels of uric acid in their blood. Results showed that the *jiangshui*-yogurt exhibited high degradation capacity for uric acid.

Guided by his adviser, Khan and his team successfully isolated probi-

otic bacterial strains called LZU-GM from Pakistani fermented sourdough bread and finished a series of experiments on mice.

"According to our experiment results and integrative analysis, isolated LZU-GM provides evidence that it can relieve adverse effects of gluten additive food and balance gut microbiota in mice," said Khan, adding that further clinical trials will be needed to determine the safety and efficacy of probiotics in fermented sourdough bread as a treatment for celiac disease.

Li said they will make yogurt with LZU-GM strains isolated from Pakistani sourdough bread and continue to conduct related experiments. "We are confident that the new solution will be a therapeutic adjunct agent in treating celiac disease," he said.

XINHUA

# Garbage sorting practices to be further intensified

By XIE CHUANJIAO  
in Qingdao, Shandong  
xiechuanjiao@chinadaily.com.cn

China has vowed to intensify nationwide initiatives to promote trash sorting practices, aiming to enhance civic literacy and develop an environment-friendly lifestyle among citizens, officials said recently.

Speaking at a national-level working conference held in Qingdao, Shandong province on Tuesday, Ni Hong, minister of housing and urban-rural development, emphasized the need for comprehensive grassroots efforts to raise awareness and understanding of trash sorting practices.

Ni highlighted the active participation of volunteers in trash sorting activities, the organization of public events and the integration of trash sorting education into school curricula to inspire younger generations.

"These collective efforts have successfully generated public interest and concern regarding trash sorting practices," said Ni.

Official data revealed that by the end of last year, trash sorting had been implemented in 297 cities at or above the prefecture level across China, with residential compounds achieving an average coverage rate of 82.5 percent.

The goal for this year is to surpass 90 percent coverage, with complete nationwide coverage targeted by the end of 2025, according to the working conference.

Significant progress has also been made in building facilities and recycling waste, with a daily solid waste processing capacity of 530,000 metric tons, of which 77.6 percent is handled through incineration.

Officials stressed the importance of aligning trash sorting practices with legal support and the utilization of advanced technologies in future endeavors.

In Beijing, trash-sorting management has been integrated with the city's property management regulations and standards of civilized conduct.

Xu Li, deputy director of the Beijing Commission of Urban Management, revealed that over 80 policies have been implemented to enforce trash sorting across various sectors, including restaurants, supermarkets, hospitals, schools, hotels, tourist attractions, e-commerce platforms and delivery services.

Qingdao, which initiated city-wide trash sorting efforts in 2017, has adopted big data technology in its trash sorting management.

In the city's West Coast New Area, also known as Huangdao district, urban management workers utilize data collected from 36,000 garbage trucks and waste facilities, which can be accessed in real time through a cloud platform.

Additionally, waste bins are equipped with chips that allow trucks to identify them. Jiang Ailing, an official from the district's urban management bureau, explained that the cloud system issues warnings if a truck is transporting inappropriate garbage based on unmatched information.

Furthermore, in a unique initiative, over 500,000 residents in the district are encouraged to take photos of their garbage cans at home. These images are submitted through a WeChat mini program, where an artificial intelligence-powered system evaluates the proper sorting practices.

"Residents who consistently adhere to correct sorting methods earn credits, which can be redeemed for daily necessities at nearby supermarkets or grocery stores," Jiang said.

# Investment, innovative policies benefiting startups in capital

By DU JUAN  
dujuan@chinadaily.com.cn

More than 161 billion yuan (\$23 billion) in early-stage investment helped nearly 2,000 startup companies in Beijing last year, demonstrating how the capital's preferential policies on innovation are having a positive impact on new businesses.

According to the city government, the capital in recent decades has attracted investment for 102 unicorns — startups valued at more than \$1 billion that are not yet listed on a public exchange.

"A new generation of unicorns is rapidly rising in Beijing, and half of them are developing hard technologies," said Xu Jian, director of the

high-tech industry promotion center of the Beijing Science and Technology Commission, and the Administrative Commission of Zhongguancun Science Park.

"In recent years, a group of young unicorns that have been established for no more than five years have emerged in the capital in fields such as artificial intelligence-assisted drug research and development, AI chips, industrial internet and commercial aerospace," he said.

Beijing HyperStrong Technology Co, a provider of energy storage systems and technology services, is one such unicorn founded in Beijing's Haidian district where Zhongguancun — known as China's Silicon Valley — is located.

Zhang Jianhui, the founder, chairman and general manager of HyperStrong, said he did not hesitate for a second to choose Haidian to establish his company when he returned from the United States in 2011.

"I went to Tsinghua University for undergraduate and postgraduate studies, then went to the US for my doctoral degree after graduation," he said. "I have deep connections with Haidian. Plus, Beijing, especially Haidian district, has a great business environment with many preferential policies that are attractive and helpful for startups. So I founded my company here."

Zhang, who spent time in Beijing's Haidian district during his col-

lege years at Tsinghua, now has his career based in the area where innovation is highly encouraged.

"The local government always plays the role of an efficient and swift problem solver when companies meet difficulties — financing or talent-wise — which I believe is one of their important merits for entrepreneurs," he added.

According to Zhang, HyperStrong has achieved extremely fast growth in the past three years.

"Since our company can help clients raise their energy storage and transmission efficiency, which echoes the current low-carbon concept, there are many opportunities both in domestic and foreign markets," he said.

Zhang said Europe and the US are the two most promising overseas markets for the business.

According to the Global Unicorn Index 2023 released by Hurun Research Institute, Beijing-based ByteDance, which was founded in 2012, is the world's most valuable unicorn for the second year running with a value of \$200 billion.

Four other Chinese companies made the top 10: Ant Group, Shein, WeBank and Cainiao, which were third, fourth, sixth and 10th respectively.

Beijing, which currently has 79 unicorn companies, is ranked third among cities worldwide, following San Francisco and New York. Shanghai ranked fourth with 66.



POLICY REVIEW

Policy aims to rev up rural NEV sales

Measures call for promoting green vehicles, charging infrastructure

By XU WEI  
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

The latest policy measures to bolster the development of new energy vehicles and charging facilities in rural areas have boosted automakers' confidence, with officials and business leaders highlighting the immense potential of the rural market to shore up the growth of the sector.

The measures were adopted at an executive meeting of the State Council, China's Cabinet, and outlined in a policy document issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration.

Key steps include strengthening the development of public charging facilities and providing greater support to operators of the stations.

There were about 13 million NEV owners in China by the end of last year, more than half the global total. China has also developed the world's largest and most wide-ranging NEV charging network, with 5.2 million facilities already built, according to the NDRC.

Meng Wei, a spokesperson for the commission, told a news conference on May 17 that a lack of charging facilities remained the largest obstacle to the growth of the domestic NEV industry, especially in rural areas.

"So we sought to solve the problem through innovative measures to promote the building, operation and maintenance of charging infrastructure in rural areas," she said.

Official figures showed that in 2021, rural sales of NEVs were up 169 percent from 2020, and in 2022, sales increased 87 percent year-on-year.

However, Meng pointed out that the NEV market in rural areas is still nascent, with relatively few owners, a lack of charging networks and underdeveloped after-sales services constraining the growth of the sector.

Government support

According to the latest policy document, the central government will use special bonds issued by local authorities to expand the coverage of charging stations at service areas on highways.

It also set out goals to build more charging stations at government buildings, public institutions, commercial areas and transportation hubs, with steps to expand the network to tourist attractions and gas stations.

The government will encourage NEV manufacturers to further develop their service networks and support vocational schools in efforts to offer maintenance training for NEVs in rural areas, the document said.

Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association, said there is still immense potential to promote NEVs in the rural market.

"It is a huge market and represents a major opportunity for automakers. It will also reshape China's consumption structure and lead to more sustainable consumer spending," he said.

Cui highlighted the need to pro-

mote the development of home chargers for rural families, in addition to the development of public charging stations.

With the majority of vehicles in rural areas currently powered by fossil fuels, the shift to NEVs would significantly contribute to national green transition goals, he added.

To boost sales of NEVs in rural areas, the policy document pledged to encourage automakers to diversify the supply of their products, and develop cheaper utility vehicles.

Businesses will be offered incentives to promote secondhand NEVs in rural areas, and the government will urge authorities, schools and hospitals in counties and townships to use NEVs.

The use of NEVs for public transportation, law enforcement, sanitation and logistics will also be promoted, the document said.

The government will roll out multifaceted policies to entice rural consumers, including issuing coupons and offering incentives to rural residents to replace their scooters with NEVs, according to the document.

The government will also ensure that financial institutions offer proper loan rates and payment terms for purchasers of NEVs.

NEV makers hopeful

Jiang Weidong, a deputy to the National People's Congress and founder of the Wuzheng Group, which manufactures NEVs for commercial use in Shandong province, said the policy measures will be a major boost to the growth of the sector.

"The cost of using NEVs to transport goods is significantly lower than that of gasoline-powered cars, and I believe more users will switch to our vehicles in the future," he said.

As China advances its rural vitalization strategy, the potential of consumer spending in the rural market will be further unleashed, he added.

To tap into the rural market, Jiang said his company will take advantage of its online platforms to offer rural buyers greater support in terms of financing and after-sales services.

Farizon Auto, a manufacturer of electric vans, trucks and mini-trucks that is part of the Geely Holding Group, said the latest policy measures will help shore up the growth of commercial NEVs.

The company will develop more

“So we sought to solve the problem through innovative measures to promote the building, operation and maintenance of charging infrastructure in rural areas.”

Meng Wei, spokesperson for the National Development and Reform Commission

vehicles tailored to the needs of rural motorists, it added.

The policy has also boosted the confidence of operators of public charging stations, who are eager to tap into the potential of the rural market.

An Shuo, founder of the Beijing Shi Ji Yunan New Energy Co., a company devoted to the development of public charging facilities, said that in order to fuel the expansion of charging stations in rural areas, operators must tackle difficulties in facility maintenance, and authorities should give greater priority to ensuring the safety of residents.

"The development of charging infrastructure must be planned in

a forward-thinking manner to spur the growth of the NEV sector," he said.

An explained that many rural drivers park their vehicles in front of their homes, so the development of home chargers is also important.

Meanwhile, as the use of electric vehicles increases, there will be heightened demand for fast-charging facilities, which will increase pressure on power grids.

He expressed hope that the government will roll out more detailed policy incentives for the renovation of power grids, and offer businesses more support in the planning of facilities and operation procedures.

Policy Digest

NHSA fighting medical insurance fund fraud

The National Healthcare Security Administration said it has taken a series of measures to fight medical insurance fraud over the past five years.

In a news conference held by the State Council Information Office last week, the administration's head Hu Jinglin, said that strengthening monitoring of the medical insurance fund and maintaining its security have always been a top priority for the administration.

Since 2019, the administration has carried out 184 unannounced inspections on 384 medical institutions, Hu said.

Focusing on orthopedic, hemodialysis and cardiology departments, as well as key medicines and consumables, the administration has worked with police and health authorities to investigate fraud. In 2022, more than 7,000 suspects were detained, and more than 1 billion yuan (\$140 million) was recovered.

The administration also uses intelligent monitoring and big data technology to prevent illegal use of the fund.

Guideline promotes elder care services

The general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council have issued a guideline for promoting inclusive and basic elder care services for eligible seniors.

The guideline provides a "national list of basic elder care services", which local authorities are required to implement.

Among the services offered are an "advanced age subsidy" for people age 80 and above, and a subsidy for people to receive training to help them care for their older, disabled family members.

The list may be readjusted based on economic growth and financial resources, according to the guideline, which also urged governments at the provincial level to come up with their own lists to provide more specific services to local seniors.

According to an official with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, there were more than 280 million people age 60 and above in China at the end of last year, accounting for 19.8 percent of the total population.

The guideline demonstrates the importance the CPC Central Committee and the State Council attach to elder care services, and it is an important policy designed to ensure that seniors feel happy and secure, the official said.

Rescue teams brace for extreme weather



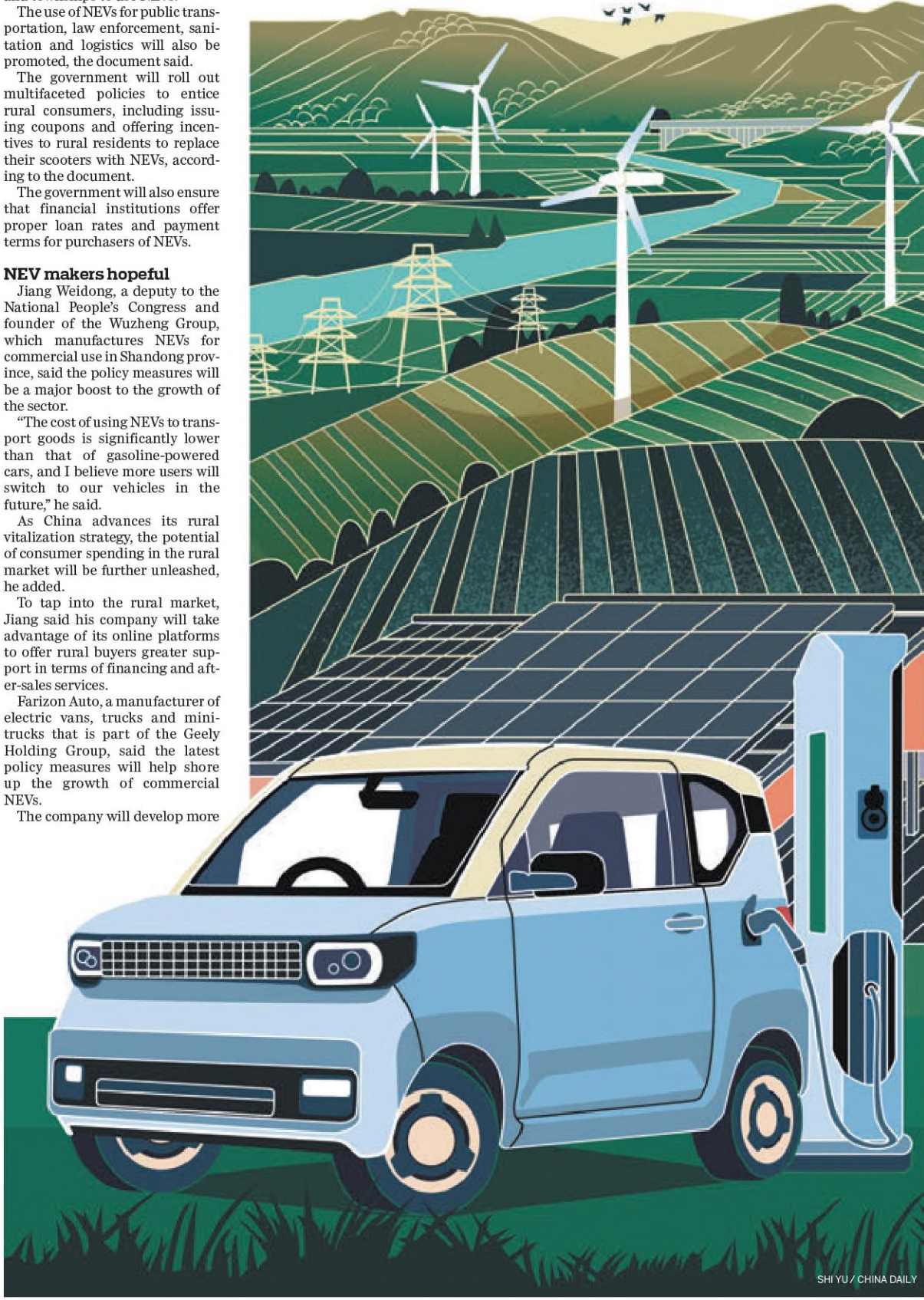
The National Fire and Rescue Administration held a virtual meeting earlier this month, asking fire and rescue teams around the country to spare no efforts in responding to floods and droughts resulting from extreme weather.

Extreme weather has been more frequent this year, leading to increased rainfall in both the northern and southern parts of the country, said the administration affiliated to the Ministry of Emergency Management.

According to the administration, serious flooding may occur in the middle and lower reaches of the Songhua and Nenjiang rivers in Northeast China, and of the Yellow River, as well as the Haihe River in North China and the valley of the Pearl River in South China.

Meanwhile, the country is also experiencing above average temperatures, with Yunnan province in particular suffering from acute drought.

WANG QINGYUN



Authorities lay emphasis on tackling high youth unemployment

By XU WEI

The Chinese authorities have rolled out steps to stabilize the job market, pledging to offer stronger policy support for businesses that create a large number of jobs.

In a policy document issued last month, the General Office of the State Council laid out a series of measures to expand employment, encourage entrepreneurship and boost vocational training.

Other key steps include encouraging State-owned enterprises to scale up recruitment and stabilizing the payrolls of government

departments and public institutions. An action plan will be put in place to create 1 million internship opportunities for young people, an initiative that will also provide employers with subsidies for the purpose of paying interns a basic allowance.

Experts said that tackling youth unemployment should continue to be a policy priority, and the government needs to come up with more pro-business measures to stabilize economic growth.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China's surveyed unemployment rate among

all workers in urban areas stood at 5.2 percent in April. However, the jobless rate for those age 16 to 24 stood at 20.4 percent, highlighting the need for stronger policy support to spur youth employment.

China is set to see a record 11.58 million students graduate this year, which will put even more pressure on the job market.

Wang Ting, a professor of human resources at the China University of Political Science and Law, said that offering young people more jobs and better employment services should be given equal attention by authorities

looking to resolve the unemployment problem.

He underscored the need for higher-education institutions to adjust their majors in line with demand from the job market to make it easier for graduates to find work.

Wang also highlighted that more internship opportunities will help the young and jobless improve their skills and better adapt to the job market.

He added that it is also important that vocational schools offer more training opportunities tailored to the needs of employers,

especially in the green and digital sectors.

Meng Wei, a spokesperson for the National Development and Reform Commission, told a news briefing on May 17 that maintaining a proper rate of economic growth remains the fundamental solution to stabilizing the job market.

She said that the government will adopt measures to encourage private businesses to take part in sectors such as infrastructure construction, telecommunications and energy, and to push domestic companies in the foreign trade sector to explore global markets.



WORLD

US aircraft carrier docks in Norway

OSLO/MOSCOW — The world's largest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford, sailed into Oslo on Wednesday, a first for such a ship of the United States, in a show of NATO force at a time of heightened tensions between NATO and Russia over the conflict in Ukraine.

Russia's embassy in Norway has criticized the planned visit as an "illogical and harmful" show of force.

"There are no questions in the (Arctic) north that require a military solution, nor topics where outside intervention is needed," the embassy said on Tuesday.

"Considering that it is admitted in Oslo that Russia poses no direct military threat to Norway, such demonstrations of power appear illogical and harmful."

The 337-meter ship and its crew will be conducting training exercises with the Norwegian armed forces along the country's coast in the coming days, the Norwegian military said.

The first-in-class aircraft carrier is a nuclear-powered ship with a displacement of more than 100,000 metric tons.

"This visit is an important signal of the close bilateral relationship between the US and Norway and a signal of the credibility of collective defense and deterrence," said Jonny Karlsen, a spokesperson for the Norwegian Joint Headquarters, the operational command center of the military.

Norwegian media reported the aircraft carrier would sail north of the Arctic Circle. Karlsen declined to comment on the reports.

Largest gas supplier

NATO member Norway shares a border with Russia in the Arctic. Last year, it became Europe's largest gas supplier after a drop in Russian gas flows.

The Norwegian military and NATO allies have been patrolling around offshore oil and gas platforms since fall, following explosions on the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea.

Meanwhile, a member of Russia's Security Council warned on Tuesday that the more destructive weapons that the West supplied to Ukraine, the higher the risk of "nuclear apocalypse".

Russia has repeatedly said the West is engaged in a proxy war with Russia over Ukraine that could escalate into a much bigger conflict.

The US has committed \$37 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since Russia started its special military operation in February last year.

US President Joe Biden told fellow G7 leaders last week that he backed a joint effort with allies to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets, a senior US official said, though there is no commitment as yet to supply the jets themselves.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



Visitors tour the 400-kV Konza substation in Konza, Kenya. XIE SONGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Kenya set to become Africa's high-tech hub

Ambitious project to expand country's IT sector as it woos Chinese investors

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

Konza Technopolis is courting Chinese investors, as the key project of Kenya's national development plan Vision 2030 is in its final stages of completion in the first phase.

Anna Wafula, manager of business development and innovation of the Konza Technopolis Development Authority, said there are many more opportunities in the special economic zone that can bring Africa and China together.

"For instance, here at Konza Technopolis, we have many investment opportunities that can be taken up by Chinese investors who will enjoy incentives, such as tax reliefs, while operating under a one-stop shop because the Technopolis is a special economic zone," she said.

Dubbed African Silicon Savannah, Konza Technopolis is a 5,000-acre (2,024-hectare) technology hub under construction by the Kenyan government. Located 64 kilometers south of Nairobi, it is expected to position the country as Africa's leading high-tech hub by expanding Kenya's nascent information technology-enabled services sector.

Being developed at a cost of \$14.5 billion, the project will be Kenya's future hub for business process outsourcing, software development, data centers, disaster recovery centers, call centers and light assembly manufacturing industries. A university campus focusing on research and technology is already under construction. The city will also host hotels, residential areas, schools and hospitals.

The sprawling technology hub will also include general and afford-

able housing for people working and living within the Technopolis as well as affordable housing for students.

"We are housed under the Ministry of Information, Communications and The Digital Economy," Wafula said. "So far, we are progressing well and we have already established the national data center in conjunction with Huawei, which is an important feature because it will enable the Kenyan government to digitize its services both at the national level and the county level."

Konza Technopolis Development Authority had engagements with several Kenyan counties for helping them with solutions that will enable them to enhance the dissemination of services in an efficient and cost-effective manner, she said. It also supports the innovation ecosystem by hosting them on the national data center and providing solutions for startups.

Good relationship

"We are happy to work with Huawei to establish this national data center, and we have enjoyed a good working relationship. We are hoping that more Chinese companies will invest in this project owing to the good relationship we have cultivated. The services of the data center are therefore available to anyone who wants to use it not only in Kenya but in East Africa as a whole."

Konza Technopolis has almost finished laying the necessary infrastructure, which was the main task in the first phase of the project. It is projected that Phase I of Konza Technopolis, upon completion, will generate 17,000 jobs and contribute an additional 2 percent of GDP to the country.

"So far, the first phase is 90 per-

cent complete, and we have been able to secure investors in areas including commerce, technology, industry and education," Wafula said. "We are ready and open for business, and we expect that in the next phase, the investors who have secured space will be able to start setting up now that the infrastructure is already in place."

"Under (the Ministry of) ICT, we invite Chinese technological expertise in areas like software development, and manufacturing of equipment and artificial intelligence. We also invite Chinese expertise in engineering since we have so much construction to do and China is a major Kenyan partner in infrastructure development."

The 400-kilovolt Konza substation, one of the key infrastructure undertakings in the Technopolis and being constructed by the China Aerospace Construction Group Co, is expected to supply power by March next year. More than 80 percent of construction and equipment installation have been completed, said Hu Jing, chief representative in Kenya of CACGC.

The project will ensure stable power supply to the Technopolis as well as the manufacturing, social and economic development in the vicinity.

The substation, in addition to the 40-km 400-kV Isinya-Konza transmission line, is financed by the Export-Import Bank of China to transmit geothermal, hydro and wind power from western Kenya to the east and to ensure power supply to Konza Technopolis.

"We designed the project for Kenya as an example in its implementation of the digital economy strategy," Hu said.

Since its construction in 2019, the project has created more than 400 jobs and trained more than 100 local workers and engineers.

China supports WHO's work in health response

By CHINA DAILY

China will continue to support the World Health Organization's work in global health emergency preparedness and response, said a Chinese delegate on Tuesday at the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

Representatives from WHO member states gathered on Tuesday to discuss how to build up stronger health emergency preparedness, response and resilience, or HEPR, architecture, a global framework that enables the WHO to better react to global health emergencies.

At the second committee of the assembly, the Chinese delegate said China concurred with the importance and urgency of strengthening the architecture and is willing to further provide the necessary human, technological and financial assistance to the WHO.

China suggested state parties should increase their investment in the public health system first, he said, and the country is now reforming its disease control system to "monitor, warn of, answer and address public health emergencies in a timely and easy manner".

China also proposed the convening of a committee as soon as possible to provide recommendations on the next step in long-term COVID-19 prevention and control, the delegate said.

A few weeks ago, the WHO declared that COVID-19 was no longer a public health emergency of international concern. However, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that the removal of the highest level of

alert did not mean the danger was over. The emergency status could be reinstated if the situation changed, he said. As of March, COVID-19 has killed nearly 7 million people.

At the WHA plenary on Monday, Tedros warned again of the threat of another variant, and a new disease even "deadlier" than COVID-19.

In his speech to the member states, Tedros called for a pandemic treaty that seeks to shore up global defenses against new pathogens.

The global pandemic treaty is considered to be one of the core issues in strengthening HEPR architecture, according to a WHO proposal by Tedros. The accord is being drafted by the state parties and is planned to be up for adoption at next year's WHA.

During a Monday meeting of the assembly, Cao Xuetao, vice-minister of the National Health Commission, said China has made great contributions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by helping the international community tackle the global crisis.

China donated \$50 million to the WHO and \$100 million to COVAX, an international initiative that distributes vaccines to low- and middle-income countries, he said. The country also dispatched 38 expert teams to 34 countries to help them fight the disease and supplied over 2.2 billion vaccines to more than 120 countries and international organizations.

Hu Qiangqiang, a spokesman for the NHC, said China will continue to collaborate with the global community to face health challenges and safeguard the well-being of people across different countries.



People sell fruits and vegetables in southern Khartoum, Sudan, on Thursday. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Clashes reported in Sudan's capital on 2nd day of truce

KHARTOUM — Clashes between rival military factions could be heard overnight in parts of Sudan's capital, residents said on Wednesday, the second full day of a week-long cease-fire designed to allow for the delivery of aid and lay the ground for a more lasting truce.

The truce was agreed at talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday after five weeks of fierce battles between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in the capital Khartoum and several other areas. It is being tracked by Saudi Arabia and the United States and is meant to allow for the delivery of humanitarian relief.

Residents of Omdurman, one of the three cities around the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile rivers that make up Sudan's greater capital, said there had been exchanges of fire late on Tuesday in several areas.

"We heard the sound of heavy clashes yesterday night in north Omdurman but the situation is better after the truce," Hassan Awad, a 48-year-old university professor, told Reuters. "Every day we have hope in the possibility that the nightmare of the war ends."

The cease-fire brought a relative lull in fighting in Khartoum earlier on Tuesday, though there has so far been little sign of a rapid scale-up in humanitarian relief, with aid workers saying that many of the supplies and staff arriving at Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast have been awaiting security permits and guarantees.

Sudan was facing severe humanitarian pressures even before the conflict broke out on April 15, forcing more than 1.1 million people to flee their homes and threatening to destabilize the region.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Racism impact more likely in black people with Alzheimer's

FREDERICKSBURG, Virginia — Constance Guthrie is not yet dead, but her daughter has begun to plan her funeral.

It will be in a black-owned funeral home playing songs of her ancestors, Jessica Guthrie said. She envisioned a celebration of her mother's life, not a tragic recitation of her long decline.

Constance will die of Alzheimer's disease, a scourge of black Americans that threatens to grow far worse in the coming decades.

Black people are more likely to develop Alzheimer's than white people in the United States. About 14 percent of black people in the US over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's, compared with 10 percent of white people, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

While some risk factors may differ by race, the large disparities among racial groups cannot be explained just by genetics.

The problems start much earlier in life. Health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes are known risk factors. Both are more common among the black population because of where they live in



Constance Guthrie smiles at her daughter Jessica, who is singing her favorite song in Fredericksburg, Virginia, on Sept 20. WONG MAYE-E / AP

relation to polluting industries, lack of healthy food choices and other factors.

Across the board, black people do not receive the same quality of healthcare throughout life as white people. And there is the insidious impact of racism.

Racism is a trauma that can lead to increased stress, which in turn can cause health problems such as

inflammation, a risk factor for cognitive decline, said Carl V. Hill, chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer of the Alzheimer's Association in Ohio.

In 2018, Constance started pointing at her stomach repeatedly, trying to tell her daughter she was in pain. Jessica took her to her primary care physician, who is white and brushed the concerns aside.

"My mother couldn't articulate that there was significant pain in the moment and the doctor of the practice basically said, 'Oh, well, you know, sometimes they just come in and put on a show and it seems like she's fine,'" Jessica said. They sent her home without performing further diagnostic tests. But the pain persisted.

Jessica took her mother to the emergency room the next day and a black male doctor ordered the necessary imaging. She needed emergency surgery to correct a painful, protruding hernia.

The problems black people face getting medical care are pervasive. Black people living with serious illnesses get less help managing pain and other symptoms, and they have worse communication with doctors, according to the Center to Advance Palliative Care in New York.

"I think that part of my journey would have looked significantly different if I were a middle-aged white person or a white male," Jessica said. "I would have been listened to the first time."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

**NOTICE OF MEETING OF CREDITORS**  
**IN THE MATTER OF SILVER BASE GROUP HOLDINGS LIMITED**  
**(IN OFFICIAL LIQUIDATION)**  
**AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT (as Revised)**  
Grand Court Cause No: 329 of 2021 (DDJ)

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** THAT pursuant to the Companies Act (as Revised) and the Companies Winding Up Rules, 2018, that an annual meeting of the creditors of the above-named company will be held at Room 818, 8/F, China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point, Hong Kong on June 9, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. (Hong Kong time), with dial-in facilities.

Business:

1. Provide an update on the liquidation; and
2. Any other business.

Should you wish to attend the meeting, please provide written confirmation of your intention to do so, to Briscoe Wong Advisory Limited no later than 5:00 p.m., June 6, 2023. Details of the dial-in facilities will be provided upon receipt of a valid proxy or confirmation of attendance. Copies of relevant meeting materials will be provided to all attendees in advance of the meeting. Further information regarding the meeting may also be requested from the liquidators at the contact details below.

Dated this 25th day of May 2023

Chan Pui Sze  
Joint Official Liquidator

**Contact for Enquiries:**  
Nichole Chan / Derek Lam / Alex Lau  
Telephone: (852) 3198 0800  
Email: silverbase@briscoewong.com

**Address for Service:**  
Briscoe Wong Advisory Limited  
Room 818, 8/F, China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point, Hong Kong



# WORLD

## Leaders express confidence in elevation of China-Eritrea relations

By MO JINGXI  
mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to work with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki to consolidate mutual support and strengthen all-around cooperation between the two countries so as to bring their strategic partnership to a new level.

Xi made the remarks as he exchanged congratulatory messages

with his Eritrean counterpart on Wednesday to celebrate the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations.

In his message, Xi said the relationship between China and the African country has weathered the changing international landscape over the past years, with both countries remaining steadfast in their mutual support on issues related to each other's core interests and major concerns.

The Chinese president recalled

Isaias' successful visit to China last week, saying that he and his counterpart had reached a lot of important consensus after an in-depth exchange of views on bilateral ties as well as international and regional issues of common concern.

Isaias praised the long-lasting friendship and growing relations between the two countries, saying that China has provided both moral and material support to Eritrea for

its national independence over the years.

He also said he was happy to see the elevation of the Eritrea-China friendly cooperation to a higher level that covers cooperation and coordination in all fields and expressed confidence in the future of the strategic relationship between the two countries.

On May 24, 1993, China and Eritrea established diplomatic relations on the same day the African country

formally achieved its independence. Since then, the two countries have always trusted and supported each other. Last year, bilateral trade reached \$610 million with a year-on-year increase of 32.2 percent.

During a meeting on May 15 in Beijing, Xi and Isaias agreed to further promote win-win cooperation and common development amid an international landscape full of instability and uncertainty.

## Collapsed Italy bridge known to be 'defective'

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

A bridge in Italy that collapsed in 2018, killing 43 people, was known to have been defective, the man who had overseen its management company has admitted.

At the time of the collapse of Genoa's Morandi Bridge, Gianni Mion had been managing director of Edizione, the holding group that owned Autostrade per l'Italia, the company that managed the crossing.

He told a shocked court on Tuesday that he had been concerned about the bridge in the Italian port city for some time before it failed during a storm on Aug 14, 2018.

"I didn't do anything and it's my greatest regret," he told the court, which has been hearing cases against 59 defendants since July.

Mion, who is among those facing charges, said: "It emerged that the bridge had an original design defect and that there was a collapse risk." But he said he did not push the issue because he was afraid he would lose his job.

Mion also told the court the defect had been discussed eight years before the disaster, and he had asked whether a third-party expert could investigate.

"In a meeting between managers and executives, doubts arose about whether the Morandi Bridge could remain standing due to a serious design flaw," he was quoted by Agence France-Presse as saying.

Mion said he was told "there's the self-certification", which he said seemed, at the time, to be the end of the issue.

"I didn't understand the meaning of that answer; I thought it was nonsense," the BBC quoted him as saying. "I should have done something about it, but I didn't."

### Facing charges

Those on trial are facing charges including multiple counts of manslaughter. They include managers and technical staff members at both the bridge's maintenance company and its management company, transport ministry officials and other civil servants.

All have pleaded not guilty.

The company that managed the bridge has already admitted responsibility and reached a financial settlement.

The court has heard how a 200-meter section of the elevated major highway crossing Genoa had been especially busy when it failed, because people were on the move to participate in a religious holiday the next day.

Dozens of vehicles plummeted 45 meters onto railway tracks, where many were hit by falling debris.

Accusations immediately surfaced that corruption could have played a part, with inferior materials potentially used or corners cut during construction, which prompted Giuseppe Conte, Italy's prime minister at the time, to say the failure was "unacceptable in modern society".

Italian media said Mion's testimony opens the door to questions being asked about why the bridge was not renovated or demolished before the accident happened.

A new crossing, designed by architect Renzo Piano, replaced the old bridge in August 2020.

## Millions died from wars waged by US

Washington has brought suffering to many countries post-9/11, report says

By ZHAO RUINAN  
zhaoruinan@chinadaily.com.cn

The wars the United States waged and fueled in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan following 9/11, under the pretext of counter-terrorism, have brought untold suffering to the local communities and plunged their governments and people into more complex and agonizing circumstances, according to experts and a recent report.

The report, "How Death Outlives War: The Reverberating Impact of the Post-9/11 Wars on Human Health", published by the Costs of War project at Brown University's Watson Institute, put the toll at 4.5 million, a figure that continues to rise as the effects of conflicts reverberate.

Among those fatalities, the report estimates, some 3.6 million to 3.7 million were "indirect deaths", caused not by outright violence but by consequent, ensuing economic collapse, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, destruction of public health services, environmental contamination and continuing trauma.

Such deaths grow in scale over time, it said. For instance, in Afghanistan, where the war ignited by the 2001 US-led invasion ended in 2021, the indirect death toll and related health problems are still rising.

"There are reverberating costs, the human cost of war, that people for the most part in the United States don't really know enough about or think about," said Stephanie Savell, the paper's author and co-director of the Costs of War project.

"We talk about it being over now that the US has left Afghanistan, but one significant way that these wars are continuing" is that "the people in the war zones are continuing to suffer the consequences", said Savell, as cited by The Washington Post.

Meng Qingtao, a professor of human rights studies at Southwest University of Political Science and Law in Chongqing, said that despite the immediate casualties on the battlefield, wars often inflict immense and long-term harm upon local governments and populations.

"The indirect damage caused by

war can be considered as secondary disasters, leading to far-reaching ripple effects such as ensuing waves of violence and hunger, and the resulting losses of the indirect toll may even surpass the direct ones," said Meng.

In a separate study in 2021, Brown University's Cost of Wars project found that the US' post-9/11 wars displaced at least 38 million people — more than any conflict since 1900, excluding World War II.

Meng said the US-style solution to terrorism — waging wars — ironically has given rise to more "terrorism" and "post-terrorism" problems, causing more damage to local communities and plunging their governments and people into further complex and agonizing circumstances.

### Counterterrorism pretext

"Terrorism is often the activity of a small minority and cannot be attributed to any sovereign state. Yet, the US, under the pretext of counterterrorism, arbitrarily and inconsistently defines terrorism, with everything being determined to serve its own interests," said Meng.

The US-led war on terror, cloaked under the guise of counterterrorism, has broadened and escalated conflict, even encroaching upon the sovereignty of other nations, he added.

One can still discern the double standards and hegemonic values of the US from the wars it waged, Meng said, adding that it is obvious that while the US emphasizes democracy, its foreign policies are guided by pragmatism and hegemony.

Although the US military withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, today Afghans are suffering and dying from war-related causes at higher rates than ever, the report said.

In addition to the staggering death tolls, millions more civilians were wounded and suffered other incredible hardships due to these wars.

"For instance, for every person who dies of a waterborne disease because war destroyed their access to safe drinking water and waste treatment facilities, there are many more who sicken," the study highlighted.

### Flood relief



Volunteers accompany two divers from the Italian Coast Guard and two volunteers from the Italian Red Cross to deliver cooked meals and drinking water to families isolated by flooding in Conselice, Emilia-Romagna region, on Tuesday. Italy approved an emergency aid package of 2 billion euros (\$2 billion) to help flood victims. The flooding last week claimed at least 14 lives. ANDREA CARRUBBA / GETTY IMAGES

## Screen-display giant wows at LA event

By YUHAO ZHANG in Los Angeles  
tony Zhang@chinadailyusa.com

A Chinese company is putting on a dazzling display at SID Display Week 2023 in Los Angeles, a prestigious event hailed as the "Oscars" of the industry.

BOE Technology Group Co Ltd, a world leader in the semiconductor display industry, brought some new products to the exhibition, including a 110-inch 16K UHD display; a 600Hz refresh-rate laptop, a foldable product that can be folded both lengthwise and breadthwise; and a smart cockpit.

The cutting-edge technologies appealed to visitors at the event run by the Society for Information Display (May 21-26).

"It's a very nice panel. It's big, and it's almost impossible to see the pixels; that's really nice," said

Irwin Bellers, who works for Roku, as he viewed BOE's 16K UHD display.

BOE, based in Beijing, also rolled out a realistic wood-texture display that can blend well with the interior of an auto.

"The one with the piece of wood," said Daniel Fischer, the UX/UI designer at BMW, on what impressed him the most, and "the information that brings to the surface".

His colleague, Olivier Pitrat added, "We know that BOE is one of the biggest Chinese OEMs doing displays in mass production. So we are curious to see all the inventions."

Data from Omdia, a global market research agency, showed that BOE ranked first globally in LCD screen shipments in 2022 in five major application sectors:

smartphones, tablets, laptops, monitors and TVs.

China's share of global semiconductor display capacity has risen from zero in the past to 60 percent now, and BOE is supplying one 1 of every 4 displays in the world, according to Yanshun Chen, the chairman of BOE.

By 2022, BOE had accumulated more than 80,000 independent patent applications. Among the annual new patent applications, over 90 percent are for invention, and more than 33 percent are for overseas, covering countries and regions including the United States, Japan, South Korea and Europe.

"We understand that in the industry, only cooperation leads to a win-win situation," Chen said. "We need to work with partners to promote the development of display technology."



BOE Technology Group Co Ltd, a world leader in the semiconductor display industry, shows its products at the SID Display Week 2023 in Los Angeles on Tuesday.  
YUHAO ZHANG / CHINA DAILY

### Briefly

#### GUAYANA Dorm fire deliberately set by student: Official

Investigators in Guyana believe a fire that killed 19 mostly girls trapped in a school dormitory was deliberately set by a student who was upset that her mobile phone was confiscated, a top official said on Tuesday. The suspect, who is among several injured people in the fire late on Sunday, had been disciplined by the dorm administrator for having an affair with an older man, National Security Adviser Gerald Gouveia said. The student allegedly threatened to torch the dorm

and later set fire to a bathroom area. The fire raced through the wood, concrete and iron-grilled building after it had been locked for the night by the dorm administrator to prevent the girls from sneaking out.

#### UNITED STATES Typhoon Mawar pounds Guam with strong winds

Typhoon Mawar roared over the US territory of Guam on Wednesday, bringing destructive winds to the Pacific military outpost. The eye of the storm passed just north of the island, its governor said, after forecasters had warned that winds of up

to 225 kilometers per hour could cause major damage. Local authorities earlier issued evacuation orders and opened temporary shelters. Warnings of extreme winds and flash floods have been issued for Guam, with the Office of Civil Defense cautioning that "widespread destructive winds of 115 to 140 mph" were moving over northern areas of the island.

#### AUSTRALIA 95-year-old woman tasered by police dies

A 95-year-old great-grandmother died Wednesday a week after being

tasered by an Australian police officer inside her nursing home, police said. Clare Nowland had been in critical condition in hospital since being shot with an electronic stun gun on May 17 in a confrontation that shocked Australians and made international headlines. Nowland passed away "peacefully" in hospital surrounded by family and loved ones, police said. Just hours earlier, a 33-year-old senior constable was charged with recklessly causing grievous bodily harm, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, and common assault over the taser.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

### 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

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#### WASHINGTON

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

#### SAN FRANCISCO

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

#### SEATTLE

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

#### HOUSTON

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

#### CANADA | TORONTO

4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K3  
Tel: 416-481-5706

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# LIFE

**Editor's note:** The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China set out a blueprint for China's path to modernization, with the aim of guiding the development of all walks of life in the new era and contributing positively to global progress. Through the year, China Daily will run a series of picture stories that highlight important waypoints on this journey. In this third installment, we focus on the conservators and restorers who combine traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge technology to ensure the longevity of the nation's cultural treasures.



**Right, above and top:** On March 31, veteran restorer Lan Desheng, 55, from Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, examines a Terracotta Warrior at the institute in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. He applies an eye drop on a terracotta statue to clean the eye. Thanks to his efforts and that of numerous conservators, many such statues are brought back to life after restoration. **Left:** Plastic sheets are applied to the rammed earth of the city wall of Pingyao Ancient City, in Jinzhong, Shanxi province, on Oct. 20, 2021.



**Online**  
Watch the video by scanning the code.



Dedicated craftsmen and women battle against time itself, breathing new life into China's precious ancient artifacts, report **Wang Kaihao, Zou Hong and Sun Ruisheng.**

**W**ith a long history and rich cultural splendors, ancient China provided the world with an uninterrupted lineage of civilizations lasting for millennia that are still inspiring.

Thanks to the cultural relics our ancestors left behind, key events that might have influenced the destiny of a dynasty, or special moments in the

lives of people long gone, come to life. However, when we pay to admire, and in some cases be astounded by such relics, we can hardly ignore the fact that, often, time has taken its toll on the relics, be they porcelain shards, fading murals or weathered roofs on ancient temples.

Fortunately, time has also witnessed the dedication and diligence of those who painstakingly keep the

lives of people long gone, come to life. However, when we pay to admire, and in some cases be astounded by such relics, we can hardly ignore the fact that, often, time has taken its toll on the relics, be they porcelain shards, fading murals or weathered roofs on ancient temples.

They are, of course, the conservators and restorers of cultural relics, millennia-old bronzes, scarred with verdigris and a timeworn pati-

na, or the magnificent underground legions of the Terracotta Warriors from the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). Generation after generation, deft hands and keen eyes, powered by robust hearts and unbowed enthusiasm, have skillfully kept the twin wolves of damage and decay at bay.

According to the National Cultural Heritage Administration, an army of more than 160,000 people is engaged

in cultural relic-related work nationwide, protecting the more than 108 million cultural relics, which are housed in China's public institutions, and the 767,000 "unmovable" monuments, ancient architecture, structures and heritage sites that are registered nationwide.

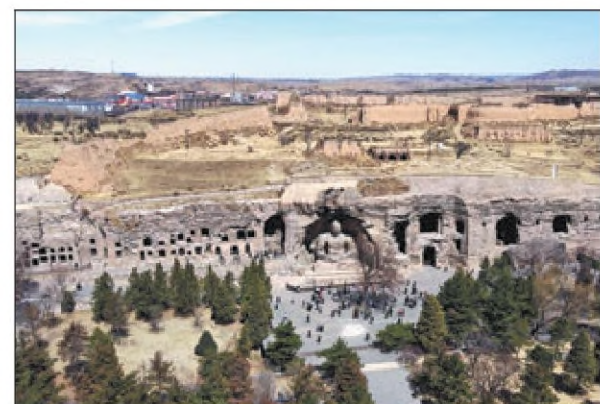
Contact the writers at wangkaihao@chinadaily.com.cn



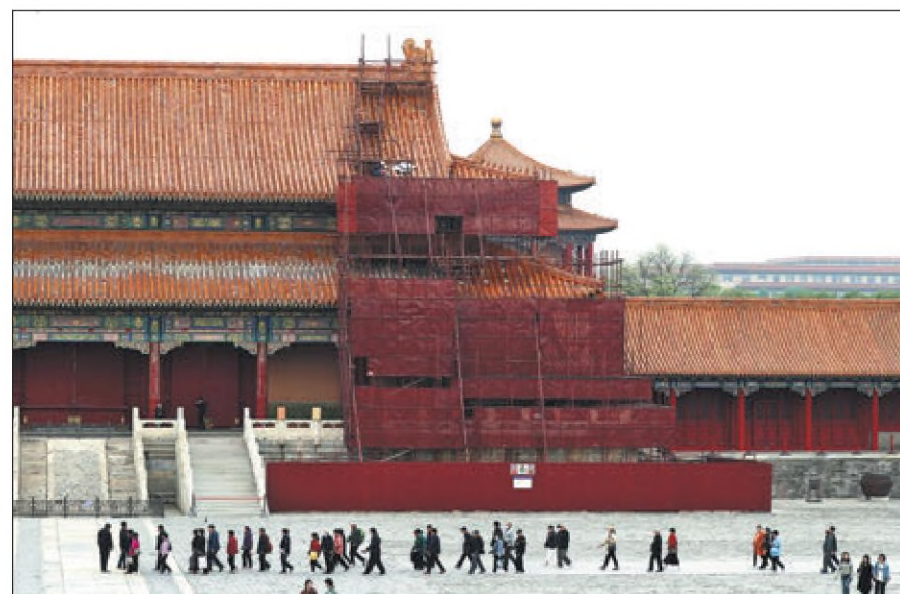
**Left:** A restorer working on parts of a Terracotta Warrior at Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on April 3. **Below:** A collection of restored painted pottery figures from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) on display at the Shaanxi History Museum in Xi'an, on April 2.



**Right:** Two young restorers gather 3D data from a statue in Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi province, on April 6. **Above left and above right:** On March 23, at Shanxi Museum in Taiyuan, Shanxi, a restorer works on a mural, while another takes a photo of a relic.



**Above, right and top right:** On May 16, Fan Zaixuan, 62, a restorer at Dunhuang Academy, works on a damaged mural at the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu province. Fan working on the site of restoration. He often visits the public cemetery where the late conservators of the Academy have been buried, commemorating his predecessors, who seem to still guard the Caves.



**Top and above:** Tourists walk by the Gate of Supreme Harmony, which is under restoration, at the Palace Museum, on April 23. A group of five weaving and embroidery restorers at the Palace Museum examine an emperor's dragon robe after completion of its restoration, on March 7 last year. **Right:** Xi Jitong, head of the Yongle Palace mural art protection research institute, introduces a mural at the palace in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, on March 28. **Top right:** An aerial view of Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi, on April 8.





## LIFE

## Country, and western China

Pioneering American fiddle player is looking forward to building new musical bridges between his native Oklahoma and its sister province of Gansu, **Zhao Huanxin** reports in Washington.

Oklahoman fiddling maestro Kyle Dillingham has always taken pride in being an American musician who brought bluegrass music to Dunhuang city in Northwest China's Gansu province, a meeting point of the East and the West for centuries.

What awed him most was that, after centuries of cultural exchange, there are still things to share and learn in a part of the world where his fiddle has made as strong a connection with Chinese audiences as it does in the United States.

It happened on a trip in 2017, when Dillingham brought his Horseshoe Road band to represent Oklahoma and the United States at the second Silk Road International Cultural Expo in Dunhuang, with additional concerts in Qingyang, another city in Gansu, and in Xi'an, capital of neighboring Shaanxi province.

Dunhuang is home to the millennia-old Mogao Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage site that showcases the cultural integration and mutual learning among different civilizations along the ancient Silk Road.

"I remember talking to the president of the CMA (Country Music Association) and just expressing how proud I was to represent traditional American music, country music and bluegrass for the very first time, adding to the thousands of years of interaction and cultural exchange from the East and the West in that city," he says.

Now after traveling to China 13 times and a hiatus of three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dillingham says he can't wait to go back to Gansu, the sister province of Oklahoma, to play for his friends and fans. The sistership was started in 1985 by Governor George Nigh and nurtured through music diplomacy.

"I can't stop thinking about the people and the friends that I've met, and how disappointed I was that we didn't get to meet in 2020," Dillingham says, referring to the 35th anniversary year of the friendship between Oklahoma and Gansu, and the fourth anniversary of the signing of a sistership between Edmond and Qingyang.

Dillingham was honored as Ambassador of Goodwill at the Oklahoma Hall Of Fame that year.

"I was like, the second it's possible to go back to China, that's when I want to go, because I'm so ready to go see my friends," he tells China Daily.

Dillingham picked up a violin when he was 9 years old and, at age 17, featured twice in the Grand Ole Opry, the definitive live country music showcase in Nashville, Tennessee — the spiritual home of country music — where he made his debut in July 2019 on a bill with several country stars, including the Oak Ridge Boys.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in instrumental music performance, he has fiddled his way to more than 40 countries, earning himself the title of "Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador".

His connection with Gansu dates back to 2015, when he was invited to provide the entertainment to a delegation from the province's office of foreign affairs, who were visiting Oklahoma to celebrate the 30th anniversary of sistership between the state and Gansu.

He started with traditional American fiddling, drawing "lots of applause but not a strong connection". Then he started playing a Chinese song, *The Girl From Dabancheng*, which caught the delegation off guard.

"Suddenly, they all began to sing along with my violin, and they were clapping and singing," he says. "When it finished, everybody stood up and started really talking and engaging. It was just a fantastic moment."

It was a performance that secured him an invitation to perform at a New Year's Eve concert with the Lanzhou Symphony Orchestra in Lanzhou, capital of Gansu. He was invited back for the first Silk Road International Cultural Expo the following year.

The musician from Enid, Oklahoma, says that he believes the sistership forged in 1985 is "a match



**Clockwise from top:** Kyle Dillingham gives an impromptu performance in front of the Oklahoma-Gansu friendship tree at the Five Springs Mountain Park in the provincial capital, Lanzhou. The tree was planted as a gift from Oklahoma governor George Nigh on his 1985 trip to Gansu province; Dillingham, musical ambassador from Oklahoma, and his bandmates, serenade Tang Renjian, then governor of Gansu, Oklahoma's sister province, at the Silk Road International Cultural Expo in Dunhuang, Gansu, in September 2017; Dillingham debuts in the Grand Ole Opry country music showcase in Nashville, Tennessee, the spiritual home of country music, on July 24, 2019.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

made in heaven", as Gansu and Oklahoma are 11,265 kilometers apart.

Some consider Oklahoma a "fly-over state" for travelers, just as Gansu has not been a priority destination for many tourists. Both places have a pace of life that is a little slower and more relaxed, Dillingham notes.

In addition, Gansu has a lot of ethnic groups, while Oklahoma has at least 70 Native American tribes.

"I started seeing all these parallels and realizing that, even though we're over 7,000 miles away, we are so similar in so many ways, and I didn't want to leave. I loved everybody I met and just had so much fun," he says.

For Dillingham, there have always been learning experiences and "ah-ha" moments during his trips to Gansu, which lay bare the vast diversity and different levels of development of China.

"I'm still finding and tasting new foods and learning about a new tradition, or discovering a different kind of tea ceremony or a different way of life," he says. "It's just astounding that, after thousands of years of history, there's still an opportunity to share something new with one another."

He watched the dances, singing and musical performances of various ethnic groups and picked up influences for his own music.

"We're always expressing the same ideas — love gained, love lost and a love for our home; the intrigue of something new, friendships, sadness and joy. All these things that we're expressing, it's the same stories over and over," he says.

He adds that when people visit big cities, which have become increasingly homogenized, they start leaving traditions behind. While visiting Beijing and Shang-



“The real purpose of music is that it naturally brings us together as a community, and it unifies.”

**Kyle Dillingham,**  
Oklahoma violinist

hai means that a person has been to China, setting foot in Gansu is really visiting the country, at least, in terms of getting close to its traditions.

"When you're in the smaller, more rural parts of the country, I think you're getting the pure form of tradition," he says. "I'm having a more pure encounter with Chinese culture, traditions and customs."

In 2019, Dillingham and his team conducted their Silk Road and the Fiddle Sister State Tour through China, giving concerts along the ancient Silk Road in the cities of Qingyang, Lanzhou, Tianshui and Baiyin.

"Without the Silk Road, you would not have the traditional American fiddle culture that I have grown to love," Dillingham says, noting that the origins of the violin can be traced back to Central Asia.

It was along the Silk Road that this bowed, stringed instrument made its way to the Arabian Peninsula, on to the Mediterranean and into Europe, to Italy where, hundreds of years later, it eventually evolved into the violin, which was exported to every continent, including North America, according to Dillingham.

"There's a thread that connects us all, and there are nuances, but in the end, what we find is that all the people will connect and share so many things they have in common, and we can learn about various traditions and cultures," he says.

Dillingham adds that he hopes cultural exchanges between China and the US will help improve relations between the two countries.

"My hope is that it does help, and I think that, in a time like this, especially when politically, there are tensions. It's a moment where cultural exchange and music diplomacy can really shine," he says.

The opposite of taking the time and slowing down to get to know each other is making a generalized decision about an entire country's population based on a headline or the latest news or political dispute, which he says is a "dangerous game".

"I think it's something that is in our DNA, and that we're all capable of love. But sometimes we have to be intentional, and we have to focus," says Dillingham.

The music tours across China have sometimes led him to wax philosophical on the underlying role and nature of music.

"I think there is a way to make a living as a musician, but I don't think that's the reason for music," he says. "The real purpose of music is that it naturally brings us together as a community, and it unifies."

There has even been research that points to the phenomenon that the hearts of musicians and the audience start beating in sync with the rhythm of the music and with one another.

"So, I can't help but feel how powerful that is," he says.

Dillingham talks about a concert four years ago in a county in Gansu, at which he won applause and

standing ovations from local people who had never even seen the guitar, fiddle and double bass as an ensemble all playing together.

But it was the response from an elderly woman that impressed him most.

"There was an older woman that came up to me; she didn't speak any English, but she took hold of me, and she looked at me and she was basically saying, 'I see you and understand you,'" Dillingham recalls.

It was exactly like a scene described by John Berry in *The Listener*, in which he recounts how an old lighthouse keeper reacted after listening to a Czech violinist play.

"I can never forget the look in her eyes. She seemed desperate to let me know that she got it," Dillingham says.

The episode reminds Dillingham that, sometimes sophistication — and even high levels of education — can inhibit a person from connecting as strongly and deeply as somebody who is enjoying the music from a purely emotional standpoint.

"I think if the music is good, especially if the intention of the message is pure, it can reach people without requiring a level of sophistication or deep cultural appreciation," he says.

On a 2013 visit to the Chimei Museum in Taiwan, a private museum that boasts the world's biggest violin collection, Dillingham had a chance to play some of the world's most valuable string instruments.

It came at a time when he had just launched the "Broken Beyond Repair" project, recording albums of music played on broken violins from a friend's "big box of deserted violins" to bring out the value and beauty of the "brokenness" in the instruments, the repair costs of which are prohibitive.

Dillingham says that, when he played those broken violins, he was surprised to hear sounds that were new, haunting and beautiful.

"In that moment, I just stopped, and I started laughing to myself," he says of his visit to the museum. "No matter how hard I try, I'm not going to be able to replicate the sounds of my little broken violin on this \$16 million instrument, and, of course, the opposite is true."

He says he realized that no one violin is better than another, as people might think, but they are just different.

"What's really required is not for the violin to change or for us to fix the violin, but... to see and discover the beauty that was in each one of these broken instruments," he says.

On a philosophical note, he adds, "We all have our brokenness. And yet we still have value."

Instead of passing by the brokenness — people begging, a tent city on a street corner and impending maladies, for example — and becoming numb, people can always set out to do something, one piece at a time, just like picking up a broken violin and playing music, he says.

During the pandemic, Dillingham produced videos to share his music, including personal videos serenading friends.

"It did a lot of good, but I couldn't wait to get back to performing live for people, because there's something about being in the same room as your audience. There's something about the real transfer of energy that occurs," he says.

Dillingham says that, on the 2019 tour, he wrote a song to celebrate the sistership between Oklahoma and Gansu. He performed the song, *Old Friends*, while on tour, using *zhongruan*, a lute-like traditional Chinese instrument.

It was a composition that merged American musical roots with traditional Chinese folk music, with the refrain, "Sing with me; drink with me; share with me. I'll soon be gone, but I'm coming back again."

He says that, if economically motivated, he would be focusing on the major cities, rather than going to Gansu.

"But, I can't stop thinking about all my friends. And I really want to go back," he says.

Contact the writer at [huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com](mailto:huanxinzhao@chinadailyusa.com)



# COMMENT

## Editorials

### Escalating its tech-trade offensive another self-harming action of US

Shortly after China banned the sale of some chips by US-based Micron Technology citing security concerns, politicians in Washington are seeking to escalate the technology war against the country by threatening to target an even wider range of Chinese high-tech companies.

China's cyberspace regulator announced late on Sunday that the US memory chipmaker had failed its network security review and that as a result it would prevent operators of key infrastructure from buying from the company as it posed "significant security risks to China's critical information infrastructure supply chain".

The decision was made after more than a month of investigation into the company's compliance with China's laws and regulations.

Yet rather than advising Micron on how to mend its ways, Washington has pointed an accusing finger at China, with White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre calling the ban "not based on fact". Mike Gallagher, chair of the US House of Representatives' committee on China, on Tuesday urged the US Commerce Department to impose sanctions on Changxin Memory Technologies, China's leading maker of DRAM memory chips, in retaliation.

Any possible US retaliatory measures risk exacerbating the tech-trade dispute between the world's two largest economies, and sending the already worsening bilateral ties to an even lower level. An intensified China-US technology war will also bring more uncertainties to the already

fragile global supply chains.

The lose-lose situation that China and the US, as well as the rest of the world, find themselves in stems from Washington randomly abusing national security as a justification for policies aimed at strangling the growth of China's high-tech companies.

Washington has banned approvals of new telecommunications equipment from China's telecommunications giant Huawei Technologies and ZTE on the grounds they pose "an unacceptable risk" to US national security. Other Chinese companies on the blacklist are surveillance equipment maker Dahua Technology, video surveillance firm Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology and telecoms company Hytera Communications. The consequences have been grave for the Chinese companies. For example, Huawei saw its profits drop by nearly 70 percent in 2022 as its business was hit hard by "a challenging external environment and non-market factors".

None of the punitive actions the US has taken against the Chinese high-tech companies have been based on fact. Yet despite this, there is no respite in sight. The US is reportedly mulling an executive order to ban US investment in high-end Chinese technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, 5G, and advanced semiconductors.

China and the US both stand to gain from cooperation, and lose from confrontation. Hopefully, this will be brought home sooner rather than later to those US politicians bent on intensifying the technology war against China.

### China-Russia ties nobody's business but their own

Although some Western countries have expressed their disapproval of Sino-Russian cooperation and seek to distort the economic and trade ties between the two countries as proof that China is supporting Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, this is part and parcel of the "evil empires" guff they are peddling to the gullible.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning stated categorically that "China-Russia cooperation does not target any third party, nor is it subject to disruption or coercion by any third party."

Her back-in-your-face response was a rebuttal of the disapprobation voiced by the usual parties at China hosting a delegation led by Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. The visit is intended to give substance to the agreement reached between the two heads of state to promote greater complementarity and joint development of traditional trade and emerging areas of cooperation.

China is Russia's largest trading partner, with trade between the two sides reaching a record \$190 billion last year, according to Chinese customs data.

Energy is an obvious lubricant for greater cooperation. Russia has it to sell and China wants to buy it. China became Russia's top energy customer last year.

But trade between the two countries is more than just energy. Thanks to their complementary trade

structures, the value of China-Russia imports and exports soared 41.3 percent on a yearly basis to \$73.15 billion in the first four months of 2023, indicating a bright prospect for the two countries to realize the goal of \$200 billion for bilateral trade, a target set by the two leaders for this year.

In today's turbulent world, that China and Russia are making efforts to expand their cooperation and strengthen ties should be perceived as a contribution to world peace, stability and development. Only those with a narrow world view and clinging to the Cold War mentality would question its purpose.

Guided by the two heads of state, China and Russia have blazed a path of major-country relations featuring strategic trust and good neighborliness, setting a good example for international relations.

But China, like the majority of the countries in the world, has adopted a different stance than the West over the Ukraine conflict, which forms a stark contrast to what the US-led Western countries have been doing in imposing sanctions on Russia and constantly fanning the war flames in Ukraine. For this reason, the US-led clique is trying to stigmatize China's relations with Russia.

Despite all the brickbats, China will continue to strengthen its cooperation with Russia while at the same time pushing for a lasting diplomatic resolution of the Ukraine crisis.

### Tokyo should search its soul for sowing discord

After Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Sun Weidong summoned Japanese Ambassador to China Hideo Tarumi and lodged solemn representations over the G7 Hiroshima Summit hyping up China-related issues on Sunday, the Japanese embassy issued a readout saying it was "natural" for the G7 to refer to issues of common concern.

It said that the group would continue to do so in the future as long as China does not change its behavior regarding the situations in East China Sea and South China Sea, the Taiwan question, "human rights issues" in Xinjiang and "economic coercion".

It also went further blaming China for "always hindering cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries whenever the atmosphere of Sino-Japanese relations deteriorates".

The statement shows Japan is stubbornly clinging to its mistakes instead of correcting them. Japan needs to draw the right lessons from China's official protest. As Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said, it needs to stop its wrongdoing, and work with China with sincerity to create an atmosphere conducive to improving bilateral relations. She urged Tokyo to change its ways.

By issuing a statement that only brings disgrace on its own head, Tokyo intended to show Washington it is faithfully playing the role assigned to it.

If a country is treated as a threat for just defending its own sovereignty, security and development

interests, and is not allowed to counter efforts to undermine them, what kind of "rules-based order" is Tokyo helping Washington to build?

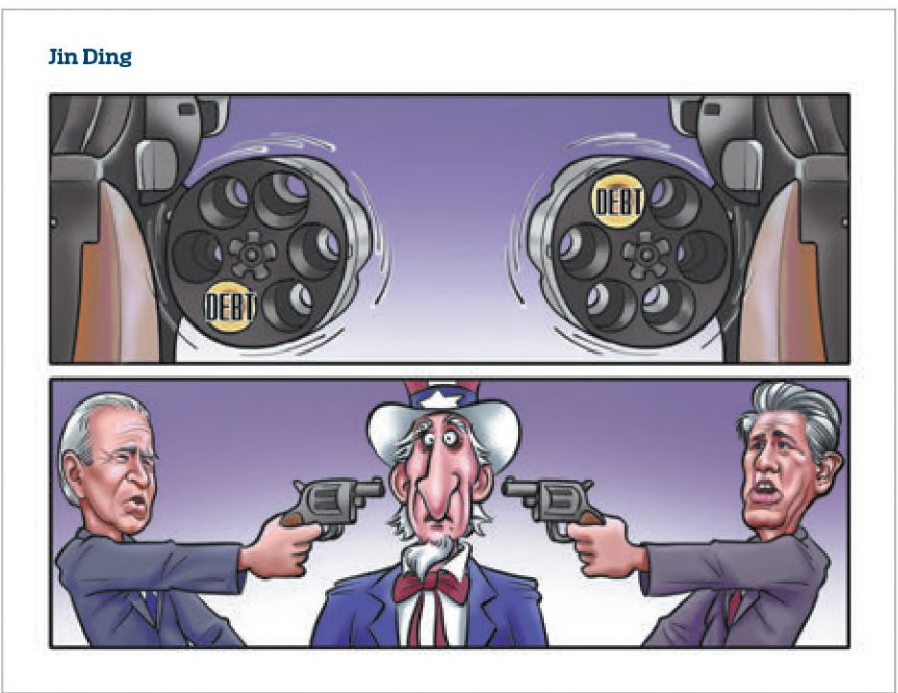
In a move showing the degree to which it is at the US' beck and call, Japan restricted the exports of 23 kinds of semiconductors on Tuesday citing national security reasons for the action. With such actions being taken by the US and its allies, Washington hopes to exclude China from the global supply chains and impede the development of China's high-tech sector.

That's just the latest example of Tokyo blindly doing Washington's bidding, ignoring the global consequences. The China-related parts of the series of documents the G7 summit released, particularly the G7 Leaders' Joint Communiqué, indicate that it will probably not be the last.

China has not harmed the sovereignty, security and development interests of the G7 countries, instead it has shared with them its development dividends and business opportunities.

In supporting Washington's strategy to establish a "free and open Indo-Pacific", whereby Washington will effectively be the issuer of letters of transit, Tokyo is undermining the region's stability from which it also benefits.

China supports friendly relations between the two countries in all areas, including people-to-people exchanges, which are the cornerstone for peaceful and stable relations.



## Opinion Line

### EU fines on Facebook owner expose data privacy loopholes

The European Union's data privacy watchdog, the Irish Data Protection Commission, imposed a record fine of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.29 billion) on Facebook owner Meta on Monday for illegally transferring EU user data to the United States.

Meta was also ordered to "suspend any transfer of personal data to the US" for five months and to stop "illegally processing (including storing) EU personal data in the US" for six months after transfer. In January, the DPC fined Meta 390 million euros over Facebook pushing ads on users in the EU. It had said at the time that 11 more investigations were active against Meta.

Earlier, the EU had slapped heavy fines on US internet giants over privacy issues. Luxembourg, for example, fined Amazon 746 million euros in 2021.

It is thought-provoking that the EU's data privacy regulator has come down hard against Meta in less than five months. This year marks the fifth anniversary of a new version of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, which is considered the toughest data privacy legislation in existence. Perhaps, the heavy penalty on Meta is meant to show the power of the GDPR. However, even more bizarre is that a Transatlantic Data Privacy Framework came into force last October between the EU and the US to address EU concerns about data transfers to the US. The DPC asking Meta to suspend data transfers to the US is equivalent to scrapping the Framework.

The European Court of Justice has already abolished two data transfer agreements between the EU and the US. On the surface, the

EU is more focused on protecting users' privacy, while the US is more focused on protecting the ability of data collectors to turn data into productivity. However, the bigger divide lies in the EU seeing the US internet giants as a threat to its security. The EJC has warned that EU users cannot be guaranteed protection from "snooping" by US security services when their data is shipped to servers on the other side of the Atlantic.

Not surprisingly, led by France and Germany, the EU launched its own cloud platform with clear digital sovereignty in 2021, to store, process and exchange data services for European enterprises. The EU's fine against Meta is not only for violating the EU GDPR, but also a counterattack against the US on data privacy.

— BEIJING NEWS

### Western media need to report truth about island

When Lee Tung-hsien, a Taekwondo athlete from the Taiwan island, won bronze at this year's Asia-Pacific Masters Games on May 14, he proudly held the five-star red flag.

On May 17, representatives of several major parties from Taiwan attended the 10th Dajiang Forum in Beijing and expressed their dream of reunification with the motherland.

On May 9, Kuo Jeng-liang, a former member of the island's "legislative yuan", said local Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party were so close to the United States that they might as well address the US as "daddy".

Many more such voices in the island have called for national reunification while slamming Tsai and the DPP. Yet Western media outlets black out these voices, reporting only calls for "independence", as if Tsai alone represents the island.

She does not. There are 23 million residents on the island and as is apparent from the voices mentioned above the call for national reunification enjoys considerable support. Therefore, it is unprofessional of certain Western media outlets and politicians to quote just Tsai and the DPP to magnify reports of people calling for "independence".

It is a common trick of certain

Western media outlets to selectively report incidents. Taiwan is just one such example. When they write about the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, instead of going there and talking to any of the 26 million residents, they choose instead to cite lies fabricated by ill-intentioned scholars and call them the real voice of Xinjiang.

And when some of them do visit Xinjiang, they edit their "documentaries" in such a manner that they end up promoting their propaganda. They surely need to go back to journalism school to learn the basics. Or start by telling the truth about Taiwan.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

### Man on mission to help get relations back on track

Xie Feng, China's new ambassador to the United States, met the media upon his arrival at the John F. Kennedy International Airport on Tuesday afternoon.

He said that as an envoy of the Chinese people, he saw it as his mission to enhance China-US exchanges and cooperation.

The former vice-minister of foreign affairs overseeing relations with the US said it had been 13 years since he last worked in the US, and both the US and the world have gone through great changes over that period, but he welcomed the opportunity to explore ways to deepen exchanges and cooperation.

That Xie's appointment came after the position had been vacant for more than five months highlights the prudence with which the decision was made, as Beijing attaches great significance to Sino-US relations.

Known for his "blunt rebukes" of the US' containment actions targeting China over the past few years, Xie acknowledged the challenges,

saying that he's looking forward to "properly handling sensitive and important issues, such as the Taiwan question," as well as engaging with US citizens "from all walks of life" to jointly contribute insights and actions and courage and grit so the two countries can get along.

Fluent in English, Xie was previously posted twice to China's embassy in Washington. An anonymous US State Department official told CNN: "He (Xie) is a professional, he's very capable. We've known him for many, many years ... We have seen how professional, how clear he is."

Xie met with Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman in the summer of 2021 in Tianjin, and at the end of last year he also met with top State Department and National Security Council officials who visited China following the meeting of the two countries' leaders in Bali, Indonesia, in November last year. That was one of many engagements Xie has had with officials of the Joe Biden administra-

### CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

**China Daily**  
15 HuiXin Dongle 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

Djoomart Otorbaev

## Win-win plans bind China, Central Asia

The China-Central Asia Summit in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, which concluded on Friday, laid a solid foundation for long-term cooperation among China and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The summit unveiled a comprehensive plan for collaboration, from building infrastructure to expanding trade, from prioritizing high-quality products to strengthening people-to-people exchanges. And China said it is ready to coordinate its national development policies and plans with those of the five Central Asia countries and promote modernization and common prosperity.

Also, President Xi Jinping emphasized that "We will jointly foster a new paradigm of deeply complementary and high-level win-win cooperation." During the summit, Xi said Central Asia was "the center of the Eurasian continent, which is located at the cross-roads connecting East and West, North and South", stressing that China intends to build a community with a shared future with Central Asia.

That China accords priority to its special relationship with the five Central Asia countries, which are its close strategic neighbors, is no secret. This fact was evident when Xi proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt in Astana, Kazakhstan, in 2013, and chose Kazakhstan as his first foreign destination after three years of strict COVID-19 prevention and control measures on his way to Uzbekistan to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit.

Not surprisingly, security issues were at the center of the discussions at the summit, with President Xi saying: "We must jointly pursue a global security initiative, resolutely oppose external interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region and attempts to provoke 'color revolutions', maintain zero tolerance for the 'three forces' (extremism, separatism and terrorism), and strive to solve the dilemmas of regional security." He also said the Central Asian states' "sovereignty, security, independence, and territorial integrity" must be protected.

The heads of state of the Central Asian countries were in complete agreement with Xi's statement, with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev saying: "We invariably advocate that Central Asia be a space for creation, and we do not accept the transformation of the



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

region into an arena of geopolitical confrontation."

China has become the largest trading partner of the five Central Asian countries, with their trade volume exceeding \$70 billion last year. In comparison, Central Asia's trade with the European Union was about \$47.5 billion, with Russia \$42 billion and the United States \$4.4 billion in 2022. And with the China-Central Asia trade volume in the first quarter of 2023 exceeding \$24.8 billion, up 37.3 percent year-on-year, indications are that annual trade will touch another high this year.

President Xi has urged China and the Central Asian countries to increase energy trade, deepen cooperation in the

energy sector, especially green energy and the peaceful use of nuclear power. Accordingly, it was announced at the Xi'an summit that the Central Asian countries will increase the supply of crude oil to China through the expanded Atyrau-Kenkiyak and Kenkiyak-Kumkol pipelines. Xi also said that building "Line D" of the China-Central Asia gas pipeline should become a priority for all sides.

More important, Xi emphasized that China will support the building of an international transport corridor across the Caspian Sea and accelerate the construction of modern transport hubs for freight traffic between China and Europe. The transit time for goods from

China to Europe through Central Asia and the Caspian Sea has already been reduced from 53 to 19-23 days. The goal now is to reduce it further to 14-18 days by the end of this year.

As Kazakh Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov recently said, "the transit time through the territory of Kazakhstan has been reduced by two times — from 12 to six days, and we are striving to reduce it to five days by the end of the year." This means the efforts to reduce the transit time for goods from China to Europe has been further reduced.

President Xi also suggested that China and the five Central Asian countries create new joint high-tech projects in the fields of finance, agriculture, green and low-carbon development, medical services, healthcare and digital innovation. He said that while China will devise a plan for deepening scientific and technological cooperation with the Central Asia countries, including sharing its experience on eradicating poverty, it will also urge Chinese companies operating in the region to create more jobs. "To bolster our cooperation and Central Asian development, China will provide Central Asian countries with 26 billion yuan (\$3.8 billion) of financing support and grants," Xi said.

The participation of the five Central Asian countries' presidents in the Xi'an summit has helped intensify collaboration. The heads of state of the five Central Asian countries decided to develop a comprehensive program for the economic development of Central Asia with an emphasis on strengthening regional trade and increasing exports to China. As for China, it can act as an investment driver facilitating economic cooperation and common development.

It is of fundamental importance that the holding of summits will become regular. The participants agreed to hold the next summit in Kazakhstan in 2025, signaling the beginning of long-term development for the Central Asian countries.

*The author is former prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, a distinguished professor at the Belt and Road School of Beijing Normal University, and the author of Central Asia's Economic Rebirth in the Shadow of the New Great Game (Routledge, February 2023). The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Zhu Songling

## DPP's shrinking global space its own making

Having failed, once again, to get an invitation to attend the 76th World Health Assembly, the Taiwan authorities are acting like a child denied a candy and engaging in international publicity stunts. The diminishing international space for Taiwan under the Democratic Progressive Party administration is not the fault of others, but only a consequence of the DPP's own actions.

The DPP's inability to secure an invitation to the WHA, the decision-making body of the World Health Organization, should not be conflated with the rights of Taiwan compatriots to participate in the assembly. The United Nations and the WHO resolved the issue of representation for both sides of the Taiwan Strait and Taiwan residents' relevant privileges a long time ago.

Specifically, UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 in 1971 restored the legitimate seat of the People's Republic of China in the UN, and the WHA adopted Resolution 25.1 in 1972, reaffirming that the PRC is the only lawful representative of China. The Taiwan authorities, since they do not represent the country, have been excluded from the WHO.

Since 1997, the Taiwan authorities have made many attempts to become a member of the WHO and participate in the WHA under different pretexts only to meet with failure.

However, after the historic meeting between Kuomintang honorary chairman Lien Chan and the then Communist Party of China leader Hu Jintao in 2005, the two sides issued the "common vision for peaceful development across the Taiwan Strait", which stressed the need to prioritize discussions on Taiwan's participation in the WHO's affairs after the resumption of cross-strait talks. The same year the WHA adopted the International Health Regulations, and Beijing and the WHO agreed on an arrangement for Taiwan.

**What the Taiwan authorities' foolhardy move did was to consolidate the international status of the one-China principle and damage the Taiwan authorities' reputation.**

According to the provisions of the arrangement, if Taiwan faces an epidemic, it can directly report to the WHO. If the epidemic becomes severe, the WHO can directly send experts to Taiwan to provide guidance on epidemic prevention and control measures, and the island's medical practitioners and researchers can participate in technical meetings organized by the WHO.

These provisions help Taiwan share information on epidemics and collaborate with WHO experts and member states. Since, there has been no barrier preventing cooperation between Taiwan and the WHO in order to contain an epidemic.

The DPP authorities' failure to participate in the WHA is the result of their refusal to adhere to the WHO's resolutions. Yet they have been trying to get invited to the WHA because they want to get political mileage by garnering the sympathy of some WHO member states.

In 2004, the DPP authorities spent a considerable amount of money and sought the help of foreign forces to get an invitation to the WHA, which prompted the WHA to put the issue to vote. As a result, more than 100 WHO members engaged in lengthy debates, which disrupted the WHA's set agenda and caused strong dissatisfaction among many member countries.

What the Taiwan authorities' foolhardy move did was to consolidate the international status of the one-China principle and damage the Taiwan authorities' reputation.

However, after Ma Ying-jeou was elected as the island's leader in 2008, cross-strait talks were held based on the 1992 Consensus that there is only one China, with the two sides agreeing that Taiwan, under the name of "Chinese Taipei", could participate in the WHA as an observer. The WHO Secretariat, after being duly informed about this, allowed the Taiwan representatives to participate in the WHA from 2009 to 2016.

In 2016, even after Tsai Ing-wen assumed office, the DPP authorities were allowed to attend the WHA. Dun Shixin, who served at the "mainland affairs council" for a long time and has attended the WHA multiple times, said that in 2016 thanks to the mainland's efforts, 10 seats were allocated to Taiwan. By showing genuine concern for Taiwan compatriots, Beijing hoped the Tsai administration would adhere to the 1992 Consensus.

But the DPP authorities refused to acknowledge the 1992 Consensus. As a consequence, starting from 2017, the DPP authorities have not received any invitation from the WHO to attend the WHA.

The DPP authorities go to great lengths every year to disrupt the WHA's proceedings by, for example, asking their supporters to stage protests outside the venue and playing the victim card.

As a special organization of the UN, the WHO cannot violate UN Resolution 2758 and WHA Resolution 25.1. In other words, without cross-strait consensus, Taiwan cannot participate in the WHA under any name or capacity. So the only precondition the Taiwan authorities can participate in the activities of any UN organization is by acknowledging the 1992 Consensus and improving cross-strait ties.

*The author is a professor at the Institute of Taiwan Studies, Beijing Union University. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Ong Tee Keat

## Time to treat illness in global health governance

The ongoing 76th World Health Assembly has a catchy theme, "WHO at 75: Saving Lives, Driving Health For All". Yet the annual meeting of the World Health Organization's highest decision-making body in Geneva, Switzerland, this year is less likely to stand out as a defining moment in the history of the WHO.

With the world still reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, the first fully in-person World Health Assembly is expected to shape the post-pandemic global public health governance. All the 194 member countries of the WHO are set to negotiate a global accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response to better protect humanity from public health emergencies in future.

In retrospect, the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc across the world, exposing the lackadaisical global public health governance system. The lack of coherent and coordinated emergency response to the coronavirus revealed the vulnerability of the international community in the face of the deadly contagion. Even after more than three years into the fight against the COVID-19, millions of people in the developing Global South still remain unvaccinated.

In May 2021, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus lamented that the world is in a state of "vaccine apartheid", with the least-developed and developing countries that make up half of the global population getting just 17 percent of the vaccine doses.

Even COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator under the auspices of the WHO, had dispatched only 68 million vaccine doses

to the developing world, falling way short of its target of 2 billion doses scheduled for 2021. Despite all this, the United States was reportedly hoarding vaccines more than twice the size of its population. But much to our dismay, the WHA remained deafeningly silent on the US' selfish act, prompting many to lose confidence in the WHO's public health governance system.

However, no country seems bold enough to ask what happened to the vaccine promises the big powers had made to the Global South amid the waning confidence in the WHO.

Meanwhile, the White House's pledge to provide 500 million Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines for low- and middle-income countries worldwide, in addition to an earlier commitment of 600 million doses, is still fresh in the international community's mind. Needless to say, the promise remains open-ended. Washington owes the world a follow-up account of vaccine distribution. Perhaps having been prompted by the failure of the advanced countries, especially the US, to fulfil their commitment to the global fight against the pandemic, the UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima had once commented that "empty promises will not save the world from COVID-19". Despite their tall claims, the G7 countries delivered only 13 percent of the promised 1 billion vaccine doses as of September 2021.

In this perspective, failure of the WHO to uphold its principle and improve global public health governance is undoubtedly one of the biggest problems confronting the world health body. Given the benefit of hindsight, when big pharmaceutical companies

were allowed to arm-twist vulnerable countries, the ambitious dream of getting 70 percent of the nation states, big and small alike, vaccinated before the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2022 became just that, an unrealistic rhetoric. Yet the unscrupulous deeds of Big Pharma were justified and the multinational pharmaceutical companies were allowed to go scot-free in the name of free market, albeit at the expense of millions of lives.

China, on the other hand, offered the COVID-19 vaccines it developed as public goods to the international community. Initially, it dispatched 265 million vaccine doses to countries worldwide. And its pledge to contribute \$3 billion to support pandemic response and socioeconomic recovery in the Global South was timely and laudable. So was its willingness to share the raw materials and technology needed to produce the vaccines.

All this, however, did not spare Beijing from being targeted, as fresh calls to trace the origin of the novel coronavirus were repeatedly made at the behest of Washington. Geopolitical interests were allowed to override facts, with the US' intelligence apparatus being deployed to establish Beijing's culpability within a time frame of 90 days.

The US-led West relentlessly pressed for a fresh round of "origin-tracing investigation". Aspersions were cast on China with the authenticity and transparency of the WHO-led origin-tracing study in China questioned. Not surprisingly, more than 70 countries opposed the West's demands that were conspicuously intended to politicize the origin-

tracing work, which is deemed crucial to better prepare the world in dealing with health emergencies in the times to come.

What remains baffling is that despite the lab-leak hypothesis being ruled out as "extremely unlikely" by the first WHO-China joint origin-tracing team, some Western countries, at the behest of the US, remain recalcitrant in demanding for a further probe into the hypothesis.

More bafflingly, the WHO, under the pressure of the US-led West, made a U-turn on the issue, casting doubts on the results of its own study conducted in collaboration with China. By doing so, however, the WHO could no longer conceal that the entire episode was motivated by geopolitical agenda merely to fulfil the narrow goals of a few instead of scientific truth-seeking in the interest of global public health.

While the WHA owes the international community an explanation on the episode, what matters to humankind most is whether we are prepared to tackle another pandemic with coordinated emergency response. Resources for public health governance should be wisely channelled to better shield humanity from the onslaught of any forthcoming outbreak.

And this can only be achieved with strong public health governance in the WHO, completely independent of political interference.

*The author is chairman of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for the Asia-Pacific, Malaysia. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



# GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

JAMES KIMONYO

## Key development driver

The Belt and Road Initiative is unlocking new opportunities for cooperation between Rwanda and China

This year marks the 10th anniversary of China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative, which was proposed in 2013 with the aim of improving connectivity and promoting cooperation on a transcontinental scale. In the current era of economic globalization, the Belt and Road Initiative embodies the spirit of cooperation, openness, inclusiveness and mutual benefit. The initiative promotes economic integration and unlocks economic potential, thereby contributing to global cooperation, creating new platforms and opportunities, and shaping a new outlook for the future.

As Rwanda has set its sights on becoming a middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income nation by 2050, China has emerged as a key and reliable partner for investment and trade. Chinese companies continue to invest in Rwanda, while at the same time Rwanda is finding valuable market opportunities in China to supply specialty agricultural commodities, such as high-quality chili, tea and coffee.

However, achieving these goals requires proper infrastructure and connectivity. Infrastructure and connectivity are key objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative and fundamental factors that determine the depth and breadth of cooperation between China and Rwanda, and Africa in general.

The Belt and Road Initiative pursues common development, aims at mutual benefits, and conveys a message of hope. Since its inauguration, the initiative has earned active support and participation from African countries. A significant number of cooperation projects between Africa and China are currently underway, while others are expected to deliver concrete benefits in the future.

For a country such as Rwanda, which joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2018, the initiative is a welcome opportunity to bridge the infrastructure gap in Rwanda and connect it to Africa and the rest of the world. Infrastructure has been defined as one of the bottlenecks for Africa's sustainable economic transformation, and Rwanda, and Africa in general, appreciate China's contribution to infrastructure building.

**Africa and China will continue to uphold the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and sharing mutual benefits for the well-being of the two peoples, and advance sustainable, high-standard, people-centered Belt and Road cooperation.**

The world demonstrated multilateral cooperation in combating the novel coronavirus pandemic and bringing it, hopefully, to an end. The pandemic had significant impacts on the economy globally. Today, the world economy is recovering slowly and the international trade and investment landscapes are undergoing major adjustments.

Despite facing various challenges, such as the global pandemic, climate-related shocks, and inflationary pressures caused by the conflict in Ukraine, Rwanda's economy has remained resilient and continues to achieve robust growth. In 2022, the country's economy grew by 8.2 percent, and it has gained a reputation as one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa due to its steady growth.

Under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and bilateral engagement, China supports many socioeconomic programs in Rwanda, including infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, trade and investment, among others. China is among Rwanda's top trading partners and contributes a large proportion of its foreign direct investment. Since 2000, China has been involved in infrastructure projects in Rwanda, particularly road construction. In recent years, numerous roads have been constructed in both rural and urban areas, mainly to enhance

exports and improve people's well-being by creating jobs. In the same spirit, implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative projects register significant growth in terms of infrastructure development, job creation and trading opportunities in Rwanda and Africa. This elevates the bilateral relations between the two countries to a shared development strategy through win-win cooperation.

Rwanda is ready to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Belt and Road Initiative and has already begun laying the groundwork for this. For instance, since 2019, Rwandan entrepreneurs and students have been attending various training sessions in China on e-commerce and trade. The program is already showing its positive effects, as some students have come up with an ambitious vision to start an e-commerce program that assists farmers in Rwanda to sell their agricultural products online.

Africa and China will continue to uphold the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and sharing mutual benefits for the well-being of the two peoples, and advance sustainable, high-standard, people-centered Belt and Road cooperation. As major active participants and beneficiaries of the initiative, African Union members have a good reason to believe that the Belt and Road projects will further continue the long history of cooperation between Africa and China.

Like the Dakar FOCAC Action Plan, the Belt and Road Initiative is aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063 with its First 10-Year Implementation Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. It is also aligned with the East African Community Vision 2050, which focuses on job creation and employment. Therefore, the major opportunities presented by the Belt and Road Initiative could not have come at a better time.

*The author is Rwanda's ambassador to China. 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.*

GERT GROBLER

## Engaging with continent of the future

The Belt and Road Initiative is playing a positive role in fast-tracking Africa's development and lending support to sustainable development on the continent

Since it was launched in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative — with the support and participation of 150 countries (more than 40 from Africa) and 32 international organizations — has grown into a multifaceted global initiative and is increasingly recognized as a historic development initiative on a scale never attempted by any other world power.

On Feb 18, President Xi Jinping sent a message to the 36th African Union Summit, expressing his readiness to work with leaders of African countries to further strengthen friendly cooperation between China and Africa, enhance coordination and collaboration on international and regional affairs, and work for the building of a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future.

Africa is indeed a continent of the future. To realize its potential, Africa needs to reduce its massive infrastructure deficit to both achieve structural transformation and market integration. Annually, there is a funding shortfall of up to \$100 billion for infrastructural development, which is a key driver for progress across the African continent and a critical enabler for productivity and sustainable economic growth. Infrastructure development contributes significantly to human development and poverty reduction, as well as the realization of the AU's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

The African Continental Free Trade Area created by the AU among 54 of its 55 member states must be seen as a pillar of the broader development integration agenda on the continent. It will bring the African continent a step closer to realizing the historic vision of an integrated market and creating a basis for increasing intra-African trade. According to a recent study by the International Monetary Fund, Africa's continent-wide free-trade area, if successfully implemented, could significantly boost economic growth and improve living standards at a time of rising geopolitical tensions and climate change. The involvement of China, Africa's largest trading partner for 14 consecutive years by the end of 2022, in cooperating with Africa under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative is therefore of vital importance in speeding up development of the AfCFTA.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine conflict and climate change have all hampered Africa's efforts to achieve the United

Nations' SDGs, which if achieved, have the potential to open \$12 trillion in market opportunities and create millions of jobs by 2030. Halfway toward 2030, most African countries are, however, struggling to meet most of the SDG targets.

On top of the impressive achievements made through its cooperation in the past decades, China is continuing to play a positive role in fast-tracking Africa's development and lending support to sustainable development on the continent. The Belt and Road Initiative has generated numerous funding opportunities in key priority development areas of infrastructure development, industrialization, energy, housing and intra-African trade, which are all reflected in the AU's Agenda 2063, as well as in regional and national development strategies.

In African countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, the Belt and Road projects have resulted in marked improvements to sectors such as transportation and energy with the initiative offering significant opportunities for African countries to address their substantial infrastructure deficits and other development challenges.

Increased Belt and Road Initiative-related investment and upgraded infrastructure continue to drive the growth of various economic sectors.

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway is a new standard gauge international railway that serves as the backbone of the new Ethiopian National Railway Network. It provides landlocked Ethiopia with access to the sea. More than 95 percent of Ethiopia's trade passes through Djibouti.

In Kenya, for instance, the 480-kilometer-long Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway, one of the flagship Belt and Road projects financed and built by China, has greatly facilitated the movement of goods and passengers.

The 56.5-kilometer asphalt road recently completed by the Chinese enterprises in Ethiopia's Oromia region, will not only facilitate the transportation of agricultural products, but more importantly, unleash the potential of tourism, a catalyst for job growth and economic prosperity.

Also the 1,344-km Benguela Railway constructed by Chinese companies in Angola has delivered many win-win outcomes. Chinese enterprises have provided technology, experience and standards to the country while local employees have acquired jobs, skills training and

higher incomes.

The Maputo-Katembe Bridge, a Chinese-built suspension bridge across Maputo Bay in southern Mozambique, was officially opened in 2018. It is the longest suspension bridge in Africa and will bring huge economic benefits to the country's community services, fishing and tourism sectors.

In the energy sector alone, China has funded more than 36 projects, mainly hydroelectric and solar power plants, in at least 19 African countries.

The \$568-million Chinese-built Isimba Hydropower Dam in Uganda's east is expected to improve access to power in Uganda. In addition to the Isimba Dam, China is financing the 600-megawatt Karuma Hydropower Dam in northern Uganda. Once fully active, the two hydropower dams will nearly double Uganda's power supply.

In the housing sector, the vast Kilamba Kiwira Social Housing Project, built by a Chinese company in Angola, consists of thousands of housing units in 20 plots in 14 provinces and cities across the country.

These projects are just a handful of some of the many infrastructure development projects that have been realized throughout Africa. It reflects tangible evidence that in Africa, under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the physical connectivity of infrastructure has made solid progress, the institutional connectivity of rules and standards has yielded fruitful results and the people-to-people connectivity featuring mutual help and assistance has continued to deepen.

It is also against this backdrop that Africa continues to value the Belt and Road Initiative's consistent adherence to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, ongoing commitment to the vision of transparent, green and clean cooperation, and the pursuit of the goal of high-standard, people-centered and sustainable development.

*The author is a senior research fellow at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University and a former senior diplomat in the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation. 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.*



ZHOU YUCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY



## BUSINESS

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## Economies to benefit from energy ties

Low-carbon investments involving BRI exceed those of traditional fuels

By LIU YUKUN  
liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn

Ties among economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative will be strengthened by closer energy cooperation — especially clean energy — following noteworthy results that have benefited all regions over the years, officials and experts said on Wednesday.

Over the past decade, the BRI-involved energy cooperation has yielded win-win results, contributing significantly to the construction of a greener and more inclusive future for the energy industry, as well as promoting global economic and social development, said Ren Jingdong, deputy head of the National Energy Administration.

"Our cooperation in green energy projects has been carried out with over 100 countries and regions, with green and low-carbon energy investments involving the BRI surpassing traditional energy," Ren said.

Going forward, the NEA will continue to strengthen clean energy cooperation through innovative cooperative mechanisms and the promotion of relevant projects. It will also actively facilitate cooperation in technological innovation in areas such as hydrogen and power storage, Ren said.

The remarks were made during the Belt and Road Energy Partnership Forum that opened on Wednesday in Xiamen, Fujian province.

"BRI-involving countries and regions are highly compatible in terms of investment, trade, technology, and production capacity, which is conducive to the establishment of long-term cooperative relations," said Li Jun, an official with the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization.

BRI-involving countries and regions have carried out extensive cooperation in the fields of energy trade, investment, equipment, technology and standards in the past 10 years, she said.

Li said that with the demand for primary energy rising to an estimated over 20 billion metric tons of standard coal by 2050 in BRI-involving countries and regions, the outlook for energy cooperation is promising and needs further efforts to optimize cooperation mechanisms, which include aspects such as policy coordination and technical cooperation.

Moin ul Haque, Pakistan's ambas-

sador to China, said during the forum that BRI projects have played an active role in promoting social and economic development in Pakistan. He said further efforts are expected to deepen BRI cooperation in the energy sector to promote the country's new energy development while ensuring energy security to support rapid economic growth.

China is now the world's largest market for clean energy, and has also become the biggest new energy equipment manufacturer, according to the NEA.

The country contributed over 70 percent of the global photovoltaic capacity and 60 percent of the wind power capacity, effectively driving down the cost of renewable energy worldwide and accelerating the green transformation for the global energy industry.

"Over the past decade, China has established government-to-government energy cooperation mechanisms with over 90 countries, regions, and international organizations and expanded BRI energy cooperation network. The country also rolled out a series of documents and launched multiple forums to create new opportunities for international cooperation in the energy industry," Ren said.

Chinese firms have also actively invested in and constructed a number of BRI-related energy projects.

State-owned China Petrochemical Corp, or Sinopec, for instance, has executed 292 contracts for oil refining and chemical engineering projects in recent years. Last year, the company completed crude oil trade of 238 million tons, finished oil products trade of 22.85 million tons and liquefied natural gas trade of 7.03 million tons with BRI-involving countries and regions.

"We will continue to deepen cooperation in oil and gas resources (with BRI-involving countries and regions) and strengthen the construction of energy transmission facilities between China and areas including Central Asia, Southeast Asia, forming an interconnected, smooth, safe, and efficient oil and gas pipeline network," said Zhao Dong, president of Sinopec.

Zhao said further efforts will be made to deepen cooperation in green energy by promoting the development of power generation from renewable energy and the construction of smart grids, collaborate on the mass production of green hydrogen as well as trade infrastructure construction.



A view of the booth of JD Cloud during an expo in Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Cloud players face off after price cuts

By FAN FEIFEI  
fanfeifei@chinadaily.com.cn

Competition in China's cloud computing sector is intensifying as major Chinese cloud service providers have announced price reductions on multiple core cloud products, leading to a price war, industry experts said.

The recent advances in artificial intelligence-powered large language models have also prompted the price cuts, they said, as more enterprises demand greater computing power despite slowing growth in the cloud market.

JD Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Chinese tech company JD, vowed on Tuesday to provide cloud products — covering computing, storage, networking and database — at the lowest prices compared to domestic rivals.

JD's move came after Chinese internet giant Tencent Holdings Ltd last week unveiled plans to slash prices of some of its core cloud services by up to 40 percent from June 1. China Mobile, a telecom carrier, said the prices of some cloud products will be reduced by up to 60 percent for a limited period.

Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing unit of Chinese tech behemoth Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, said in April that it was cutting the price of its core products by 15 to 50 percent, marking the biggest such reduction in the company's history.

The price of its storage products

will be slashed by up to 50 percent, as part of a broader push to expand its user base and improve its share of the cloud computing market, the company said.

Charlie Dai, vice-president and research director at consultancy Forrester, said a new wave of generative AI is bringing in new opportunities to digitally transform every industry in China and overseas.

"The price adjustment tactics of major cloud service providers in China for core products not only effectively help enterprises reduce costs and further accelerates digital innovation, but are also essential to power the revenue engine of these cloud vendors for sustainable business growth," Dai said.

According to market research firm International Data Corp, the revenue of China's public cloud services market reached \$18.84 billion in the second half of 2022. The scale of IaaS, or Infrastructure as a Service, a public cloud computing segment, witnessed a growth of 15.7 percent year-on-year during the period versus a 27.3 percent year-on-year increase in the first half of 2022.

Alibaba Cloud took the top spot with a 31.9 percent market share in the second half of last year, while Huawei Cloud ranked second, accounting for 12.1 percent share in China's public cloud market, followed by China Telecom's cloud services and Tencent Cloud, which had 10.3 percent and 9.9 percent of the market share, respectively.



## Spinning at top speed

An exhibitor showcases a product on display at the 25th Dalian International Industry Fair, which opened on Wednesday in Dalian, Liaoning province. More than 700 enterprises are taking part in the four-day event.

LIU DEBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Briefly

## Jointing work on steel frame finished

China Railway 24 Bureau Group Corp Ltd (CR24), a unit of China Railway Construction Corp, said on Wednesday its builders in Jiangxi province completed the jointing of a steel frame combination of the east station house of Lushan Railway Station and a steel column of the middle platform. With the help of 10 hydraulic numerically controlled jacking frames, the 2,100-ton steel frame combination advanced 26 meters, successfully spanning over the four tracks of Nanchang-Jiujiang intercity railway. The Lushan station aims to be an important transportation hub on the nation's major Beijing-Kowloon railway line. The project's yard has eight platforms and is connected by 25 lines, and both its east and west station houses have been constructed by CRCC.

## Shanghai foreign trade up in Jan-Apr

China's economic hub Shanghai posted a steady recovery in foreign trade this year, Customs data showed. In the first four months, the total value of Shanghai's foreign trade reached 1.39 trillion yuan (\$198.1 billion), up 13.5 percent year-on-year. Export value stood at 558.65 billion yuan, up 16.3 percent year-on-year, while import value reached 834.57 billion yuan, up 11.6 percent year-on-year.

## Ningxia to host wine conference, expo

Ningxia, China's leading wine-producing region, will host a wine-themed international conference and an expo in its capital Yinchuan next month, the event's organizers said. The International Conference on Grape and Wine Industries, as well as the third China (Ningxia) International Wine Culture and Tourism Expo, will be held from June 9 to 10.

## Bank supports logistics projects

China Development Bank, one of the country's policy banks, has stepped up financial support for the construction of modern logistics. Since the beginning of the year, the policy bank has issued loans worth 12.2 billion yuan (\$1.73 billion) to boost the construction of national logistics hubs and cold chain logistics facilities, among others. The bank pledged financial support to boost the development of modern logistics, focusing on promoting the major projects in key areas, including the national logistics hubs and regional logistics services network, said the bank.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

## Being US paren will only hurt Tokyo

## TALKING BUSINESS

By Ma Si

Japan seems to never learn from history.

On Tuesday, the Japanese government unveiled export control measures on 23 types of chipmaking equipment, aligning its trade rules with a US move to curb China's ability to make advanced chips. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also met the chief executives of the world's largest chipmakers, including Intel, Micron and TSMC, last week hoping to boost its domestic semiconductor industry.

The big question, however, is this: Can Tokyo's dream of revitalizing its chip industry come true by serving as Washington's pawn and cutting off close ties with Beijing in the chip sector?

History offers a clue.

Japan used to be a semiconductor powerhouse in the global market.

But since the 1980s, its chip industry has been suppressed by the United States and has gradually shrunk.

Back then, Washington, which viewed Japan's booming semiconductor industry as a threat, resorted to a slew of measures, including trade sanctions, to hammer Japanese companies. As a result, Japan lost its edge in semiconductors to the United States.

In recent years, even Toshiba had to sell its chip facilities to US chipmaker Micron.

It is fair to say that Japan's chip industry was a victim of coercion by the United States.

And, given that Washington had not permitted Tokyo to maintain its chip prowess in the late 1980s, how will the US government allow it to do so in future?

Tokyo should keep in mind that Washington's ultimate goal is to maintain its chip leadership, and it does not want that position to be threatened by anyone, no matter whether it is China or Japan.

Amid such a backdrop, the most pragmatic and effective way to grow Japan's chip industry, in fact, is deep-

ening ties with China, the world's largest semiconductor market that is highly complementary to Japan in industrial resources and structures.

China has the world's largest consumer and technology market, which are of great appeal to Japanese companies. The two countries' production and supply systems are also strongly linked. For instance, a large number of Japanese companies have built factories in China. Japanese semiconductor materials companies also import a large amount of important raw materials from China and have established a huge supply chain system in the country.

The Chinese mainland is the largest export destination for Japanese chipmaking equipment manufacturers. In 2022, such exports from Japan to the mainland hit 820 billion yen (\$5.9 billion) — exceeding 30 percent of Japan's total chipmaking equipment exports, according to the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

More important, Japan exports almost double the amount of US exports in the same sector to the Chinese mainland, which, by the way,

## Blacklist call tit-for-tat move for Micron decision, experts say

A US lawmaker's call to add Chinese memory chipmakers to a trade blacklist shows that Washington wants to abuse its political power to retaliate against Beijing's law-based decision on US-based chipmaker Micron Technology, experts said on Wednesday.

Mike Gallagher, the chair of the US House of Representatives' committee on China, said the US Commerce Department should add Chinese memory chipmakers such as Changxin Memory Technologies and Yangtze Memory Technologies Corp to a trade blacklist, Reuters reported.

If the US government agrees to that,

means that Japan will lose more from export restrictions to China than the US does.

For Japanese manufacturers in general, income from the Chinese mainland accounts for as high as 20-30 percent of their total income. For instance, for Tokyo Electron Co Ltd, Japan's largest semiconductor equipment maker, the mainland accounted for about 25 percent of its total net sales in fiscal year 2022.

China and Japan, in fact, have the potential to work for a new vision of

economic and technological cooperation. As members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, China and Japan will expand the proportion of zero-tariff goods exported to each other to 86 percent from 8 percent. The tariff reduction will certainly deepen cooperation in the semiconductor industry and serve its upstream and downstream industries.

As an Asian nation, Japan should know that serving as a strategic chess piece in the US' global and regional playbook is tantamount to

Economic Cooperation.

"The US government has banned Chinese companies amid national security concerns. Why is China not allowed to do so? We have national security concerns and we can take actions in accordance with our laws," Xiang said.

The decision on Micron was made after the government conducted a seven-week investigation into the company's products sold in China. The move is more transparent than Washington's ban on Chinese companies such as Huawei, Xiang added.

MA SI

bringing a wolf to the door.

Instead, by deepening ties with China, Japan can grow in its competitiveness in the global semiconductor market despite headwinds such as an overall decline across the industry.

Cutting off close ties with China will, however, backfire on Japan's chip industry. No country, Japan included, will emerge as a winner in the US chip war.

Contact the writer at  
masi@chinadaily.com.cn



# BUSINESS



HNA flight attendants board an aircraft at Haikou Meilan International Airport in Hainan province on Friday. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Airlines seek fresh faces as international travel recovers

With more outbound routes back on line, carriers enlarge recruitment scale

By ZHU WENQIAN  
zhuwenqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Domestic carriers have ramped up efforts to recruit more employees to embrace the comprehensive recovery of the international travel market following the COVID-19 pandemic.

So far this year, Haikou, Hainan province-based Chinese conglomerate HNA Group has resumed more than 60 international and regional routes, and plans to resume more in the next few months under the guidance of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, the company said.

Since January, when China resumed quarantine-free international travel after nearly three years of suspension, the group began recruiting international talents to prepare for the gradual recovery of the international air travel market. HNA has more than 10 airlines affiliated with the group, including Hainan Airlines, Capital Airlines and Tianjin Airlines.

During the May Day holiday, HNA launched a set of international routes to meet the growing

travel demand. The flights connect Shenzhen, Guangdong province and Paris, France; Chongqing and London, England; Beijing and Osaka, Japan; Beijing and Tokyo, Japan; Zhengzhou, Henan province and Bangkok, Thailand; and Hefei, Anhui province and Bangkok.

Gao Xiaolong, general manager of the Human Resources Department of HNA, said: "To fully prepare for the comprehensive recovery of the international air travel market, we hope to recruit more employees."

"We have increased the recruiting scale of talents internationally and will provide various positions both at home and abroad to meet the demand of international business growth. For instance, we will hire more marketing and ground service personnel at our overseas offices, and marketing and customer service employees that will be responsible for international business in China."

Owing to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years, many employees who

worked in the aviation sector left their positions. In 2022, the number of flight attendants working for the domestic civil aviation industry shrank by more than 3,000 compared with 2021, according to the CAAC.

"China's domestic civil aviation industry needs some new development ideas after three years of the pandemic. With an increasingly developed high-speed railway network nationwide, the air travel market needs to consider route plans and prepare to compete with high-speed trains for more customers," said Zou Jianjun, a professor at the Civil Aviation Management Institute of China.

In April, HNA signed a framework agreement with Commercial Aircraft Corp of China to purchase 60 home-developed C919 aircraft and 40 ARJ21, a regional aircraft model. HNA said that after the company introduced the new aircraft, it will launch more flights and require more staff members to provide services.

"For civil aviation safety assurance, aviation professionals must undergo strict and professional training and obtain corresponding qualifications and licenses before

they can officially undertake their positions. Thus, we usually need a grace period to recruit new employees," Gao said.

Meanwhile, Shanghai-based budget carrier Spring Airlines plans to continuously introduce new aircraft this year to meet the growing travel demand. The company said it plans to recruit 700 flight attendants this year and hopes to attract graduates who are good at foreign languages as it prepares for the recovery of more international flights.

Spring Airlines said it is fully confident in the company's growth prospects, and the recruitment of new employees serves as a barometer that reflects the development of the civil aviation sector.

"Various domestic airlines have posted job positions to hire new staff members, indicating that carriers have been getting ready to reserve more talents to expand operations," said Xiao Fei, assistant to the general manager of the Human Resources Department at Spring Airlines.

"We would like to hire more employees to prepare for further business growth during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period," Xiao said.

## Freebies gain popularity among consumers as marketers hit sweet spot

By ZHENG YIRAN  
zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

Consumers are going all out to grab freebies, a marketing tactic that is generating new business growth points for brands amid rising consumption levels and a booming tourism sector.

During this year's May Day holiday, a freebie given out by Chinese tea maker Heytea was in high demand.

Heytea launched city-themed fridge magnets, joining hands with 11 tourist hot spots, such as Guangzhou and Jiangmen in Guangdong province, Luoyang in Henan province and Sanya in Hainan province.

When Heytea handed out the magnets at some scenic spots and its own outlets, consumers lined up and the magnets were all taken within an hour.

The freebie — in the form of a fridge magnet — helps promote sales of Heytea.

In the outlets earmarked as fridge magnet claim stations, daily sales rose 180 percent from the level seen before the holiday.

"Knowing that Heytea had launched city-themed fridge magnets, I decided to try my luck as I happened to be traveling in Xi'an, Shaanxi province" said a tourist surnamed Zhang. "I got the fridge magnet at the Qujiang tourism service center. The fridge magnet demonstrates tourism elements, such as the Yongning Gate. It is a unique souvenir."

By May 16, there were over 1,700 posts related to the "Heytea city-themed fridge magnet" on lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu. Some users showed off the city-themed fridge magnet they had received on social media, while others became willing to spend 100 yuan (\$14.3) to buy the magnet from those who had received it as a freebie.

The Heytea experience demonstrates how business is being generated by freebies.

Last year, KFC launched the Psyduck (an animated creature resembling a yellow duck) as its Children's Day set meal gift. As the gift was handed out immediately, it was then priced at over 1,000 yuan on second-hand platforms. Likewise, when US coffee chain Starbucks launched a limited edition cat paw mug, the mugs were sold out within minutes after the product went on sale. The mugs were sold for 199 yuan at stores, but often resold online for as much as 1,800 yuan.

"The popularity of freebies comes from consumers' emotional appeal and consumption desire to their favorite brands or intellectual properties. It is also promoted by the development of the tourism industry," said You Xi, a researcher at the Kandong Research Institute, a technology-focused think tank.

"The launch of freebies not only raises consumers' interest in products, but also increases IP exposure and brand loyalty. It is a win-win marketing strategy," he said.

The launch of freebies not only raises consumers' interest in products, but also increases IP exposure and brand loyalty.

You Xi, a researcher at the Kandong Research Institute

According to a report by online market information observer canyinj.com, the reason for the popularity of freebies is that they have become a social currency.

"The products represent brands' culture and serve as something to talk about, stimulating consumers' desire to express themselves, while bringing them emotional value," it said.

"The fact that freebies are limited further makes consumers, especially young consumers, willing to buy and share them with friends. As limited editions are more precious, having the limited editions makes them feel good," said canyinj.com's report.

As more brands launch freebies, it has become challenging to attract the attention of consumers.

According to the report by Canyinj.com, successful brands are good at building an image, or IP, so as to make a deep impression among consumers.

For example, Heytea created Axi, a cartoon character as its IP, and applied the IP in different scenarios to form freebies. Axi personalizes the brand, and shortens the distance between the brand and consumers.

"In addition, it is important to build a freebie system, constantly bringing new products. In this way, consumers will have more faith in the quality and originality of the freebies, helping the brands accumulate more traffic," said the report.

To promote the sustainable development of freebie-related business, You from Kandong Research Institute suggested that merchants should pay attention to quality and creativity while designing freebies, instead of popularity and quantity. In addition, consumers should buy products rationally and avoid excessive spending.

"Also, the government should enhance supervision to prevent unreasonable price increases and vicious competition," he said.

## Listed companies win more projects in May on robust investment pipeline

By ZHUANG QIANG  
zhuangqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Supported by the expanding effective investment in the country, many listed companies along the infrastructure industrial chain recently announced the winning of major project tenders.

On Friday, Shanghai-listed China Railway Group Ltd (CREC) said it recently won several major projects with a total bid of around 82.33 billion yuan (\$11.67 billion), accounting for about 7.15 percent of its revenue in 2022.

Among the bids, the largest is located in Xiong'an, Hebei province, with the value standing at 9.59 billion yuan, CREC said in an announcement.

According to a Securities Daily report, as of Tuesday, there had been at least 10 listed companies, including CREC, who reported winning major project tenders in May. The projects involve railway construction, integrated transportation, construction investment and highway upgrades.

The listed companies' bid reports reflect the stable growth of investments, which in turn will better support the nation's economic recovery, said Liu Xiangdong, a researcher at the Beijing-based China Center for

International Economic Exchanges, quoted by Securities Daily.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China's infrastructure investment increased by 8.5 percent year-on-year in the first four months. Among the total, investment in railway transport increased by 14 percent year-on-year, water conservancy management by 10.7 percent and road transport by 5.8 percent, despite the relatively high base last year.

Looking at the intense promotion of infrastructure construction nationwide, experts said expanding effective investment will still be a main pillar for the nation's economy this year.

"According to the fixed-asset investment plans announced by local governments, expanding effective investment will continue to play an important role in boosting economic development. It is expected that infrastructure projects will continue to accelerate within the year," said Guan Tao, global chief economist of BOC International.

In addition, the commencement rate of projects in many areas around the country stands at a high level. According to a market research jointly conducted by China Media Group's financial news channel CCTV-2, heavy machinery maker

Sany Group and cloud tech firm Rootcloud Technology Co Ltd, among the 31 Chinese mainland provincial regions, 28 have seen a commencement rate exceeding 60 percent in April. Anhui province tops the list with 80.7 percent of new projects that began construction in April.

Driven by such factors, many listed companies in the infrastructure sector achieved growth in major business figures in the first quarter.

CREC said in its first quarter report that the value of new contracts reached 667.38 billion yuan in the first three months, up 10.2 percent year-on-year, while its peer China Railway Construction Corp Ltd (CRCC), also listed on the Shanghai bourse, said it achieved 539.63 billion yuan in contract value, an increase of 15.82 percent.

China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp Ltd (CR24), a CRCC unit, said it is bullish on its performance this year, as its engineering work is progressing smoothly across the country.

For instance, in Jingmen, Hubei province, two high-speed railway bridges spanning the Jiaozuo-Liuzhou Railway were rotated into position after 70 minutes of delicate engineering work last week, CR24 said.

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Guan Tao, global chief economist of BOC International

The work was completed with "coordinated efforts" from China Railway 11th Bureau Group Co Ltd and China Railway Siyuan Survey and Design Group Co Ltd — builders of the Jingmen-Jingzhou high-speed railway — and China Railway Engineering Design and Consulting Group Co Ltd, which is working on the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu high-speed railway with CR24.

Two 112-meter continuous T-beam bridges, built for two high-speed rail lines, were rotated 50 degrees to traverse the Jiaozuo-Liuzhou Railway. The bridges, weighing about 13,000 metric tons each, were built on the side of the operating rail, then rotated to position, with only a "minimum disruption to traffic", said Wang Ping, a manager



Two continuous T-beam bridges are rotated over the Jiaozuo-Liuzhou Railway in Jingmen, Hubei province, last week. The project is an undertaking partly built by China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp Ltd. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

on the rotation project.

To ensure safety during the rotation, construction workers collected and confirmed key parameters such as the speed of rotation, incremental displacement and the traction system. They analyzed and judged potential problems in the construction and formulated targeted measures and plans to ensure the

successful completion of the rotation, Wang said.

The Jingmen-Jingzhou and Shanghai-Chongqing high-speed railways are important parts of the national high-speed railway network. The two railways intersect and connect at Jingmen West Station, with a designed speed of 350 kilometers per hour.



# BUSINESSFOCUS

## Green bond with CEECs a big opportunity

Potential exists for cooperation with China in public goods domains such as waste disposal, transport, medical care

NINGBO — For 48-year-old Bulgarian entrepreneur Despodov Desislav Dimitrov, the picturesque eastern Chinese city of Ningbo, Zhejiang province, where he has just set up a new company, means much more than just the starting point of a new business.

This port city, featuring bustling cargo shipments and booming commerce between China and Central and Eastern European countries and beyond, is the beginning of a promising voyage for many dreamers.

### Thriving green partnership

Dimitrov's new company specializes in providing quality bio-packaging solutions that are starch-based, plastic-free and nontoxic to the environment. The market potential for eco-friendly lifestyles in China has made his green business possible.

"Green development is the future; that is why I chose to do biomaterials engineering. Like Bulgaria, China is also committed to ecological development, so there is broad space to tap into for cooperation," said Dimitrov.

His words ring true, considering Bulgaria is one of Europe's biodiversity hot spots with a dazzling array of flora and fauna, and habitat varieties. The country, in southeastern Europe, with a coastline on the Black Sea, encompasses three main biogeographic regions — alpine, coastal and continental. In recent years, the fallout of environmental crises has been felt acutely across Europe, particularly in urban areas.

Underscoring the "enormous opportunities" in renewable energy cooperation with China, a leader in the area of photovoltaics, Zahari Zaharev, chairman of the Bulgaria National Association for the Belt and Road, said that in Bulgaria there is potential for further cooperation with China in domains related to public goods, such as waste disposal, transport and medical care.

On the construction of waste processing plants, the expert said: "This is a sector in which Bulgaria lags behind but in which China has huge successes. And ... in addition to recycling, it is also directly related to energy production, of course."

There is great potential for cooperation between Slovakia and China in the electric car industry and green energy, as China takes the lead in the development and production of new energy vehicles. Slovakia boasts the necessary brainpower, Pavol Antal, chairman of the Slovak-Chinese Joint Business Council, said.

Take solar panel recycling as an example. Antal has visited factories in China that are recycling solar panels. These plants are "the next best investment opportunity" as solar panels reach the end of their life span after a period of 10



Geely's Geometry C electric car model is on display in Budapest, Hungary, on Nov 4, 2022. ATTILA VOLGYI / XINHUA



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**Despodov Desislav Dimitrov**, a Bulgarian entrepreneur whose new company specializes in providing quality bio-packaging solutions

to 20 years, he said.

"Bosnia-Herzegovina has broad prospects for cooperation with China and other CEECs in energy, infrastructure, green economic transformation and clean energy. We envision more cooperation projects in the future," said Zdravko Marinkovic, president of the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Addressing the China-CEEC Mayors Forum in Ningbo on May 17, Cristian Apostol, vice-president of Romania's Prahova County Council, said that China will always play a very important role in green sector investments, and there is broad room for green cooperation between the two sides, including reducing carbon footprint through modernizing infrastructure and developing the green energy sector through electric cars.

Neyko Genchev, vice-mayor of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, said the local government has been committed to a recycling economy, handling waste as a resource for the economy by turning them into raw

materials for manufacturing.

China, he noted, has created millions of "green jobs" in its economy in the past few years, and has gone from a country where renewable energy was almost nonexistent to one of the leading nations in renewable projects in just a decade.

Genchev underlined the sharply lower cost of solar power, wind power, and of batteries for electric vehicles in Chinese gigafactories, which he believes will underpin China's crucial role in reducing the global cost of clean energy production.

### Prospects for cooperation

Over the years, China and CEECs have inked a number of deals on green cooperation, and the dimensions for cooperation have increasingly broadened. In 2021, China and CEEC jointly marked the China-CEEC Year of Green Development and Environmental Protection as an opportunity to deepen exchange and cooperation in green economy, clean energy and other related areas.

Government officials, entrepre-

neurs, experts and scholars have agreed that green partnership represents a new growth point and key highlight for broader and more practical bilateral cooperation, and is where interests from both sides converge greatly. The two sides complement each other in new energy, smart manufacturing and intelligent transportation, among other areas.

Marko Selakovic, advisor to the mayor of Kragujevac, Serbia, believes "the sky is the limit" for China-CEEC green cooperation. "We have room for huge development. It might be trade, it might be joint development of innovative solutions for the benefit of the citizens. It might be bringing in different green technologies, it might also be the exchange of good knowledge, good expertise and good innovations. It might be an academic partnership. It might be investment."

Green, sustainable development has now leapt from the sphere of green materials to that of green manufacturing, green lifestyles and greener cities. Practical cooperation

can start from joint research in science and technology as well as the nurturing of talents in green partnership, experts say.

"I hope that from now on, once we have, let's say, exchanged our data, and we know much better of one another, we can create an exchange of our scientists. We can create bilateral, scientific projects and so on," Milena Dukanovic, a professor of the College of Electrical Engineering at the University of Montenegro, told Xinhua.

Dukanovic said that she is currently heading one scientific project in the area of cyber and data security with an information center in Beijing, and another one with Changsha University and Changsha University of Science & Technology.

"This would be an opportunity to start a project with universities in Ningbo ... Tomorrow, we will visit the University of Nottingham Ningbo China. We will see which areas we have potential to work on," she said.

XINHUA

## European exhibitors embrace nation's chic consumption trend

NINGBO — Around 3,000 types of new products, ranging from agricultural produce, wine and cosmetics to high-end manufacturing and services products, were showcased at the third China-Central and Eastern European Countries Expo & International Consumer Goods Fair, offering a glimpse into China's consumption upgrade trend.

As a first-time exhibitor at the China-CEEC expo, Grzegorz Sienkiewicz, CEO of Four Starlings, was excited to see visitors at his exhibition booth.

Founded in 2015, the Polish cosmetics company makes natural handcrafted cosmetics products that have entered more than 300 retail stores globally. "Our personal care products are based on natural raw materials of high quality," he said. "The company does not use artificial fragrances or plastic packaging, and all its products are handmade," he said.

China's consumption has changed in recent years, he said. Chinese people are increasingly paying attention to the environmental value of goods and are willing to pay for environmentally friendly and sustainable products.

To aid Chinese consumers' pursuit of eco-friendly lifestyles, the

company selected its best-selling products for this year's expo, such as handmade soaps and face cream.

"As the world's second-largest consumer market, China holds irresistible appeal to global businesses. I hope to use the expo platform to introduce more green products to Chinese consumers. I believe my company will experience massive development in China," he said.

At this year's expo, 14 products with European Union geographical indications made their debut, including the Polish beer Van Pur. It is the largest independent brewing company in Poland and has opened its first overseas representative office in Shanghai thanks to its rapidly growing sales in China.

China has always been a huge consumer of beer, but preferences are shifting away from industrial beers to more premium and craft brews. The demand for high-end beers has been rising in recent years, said Mateusz Gonet, sales director of the business unit of Van Pur.

"We noticed the consumption upgrade trend before entering China, so we studied the preferences of Chinese consumers and selected a wide range of high-quality beers with different flavors to satisfy the diverse consumer demand," he said.



The exhibition booth of Hungary during the third China-Central and Eastern European Countries Expo & International Consumer Goods Fair in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, on May 16. HUANG ZONGZHI / XINHUA



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**Grzegorz Sienkiewicz**, CEO of Four Starlings, a Polish cosmetics company

The company hopes to seize the huge opportunities in the Chinese consumer market by providing tailored, quality products.

The booth operated by Elan, a Slovenian ski manufacturer, is attracting a steady stream of visitors. As a first-time exhibitor, the company, which produces 600,000 skis a year, has set up an on-site ski slope to give visitors an immersive experience.

Snow and ice sports have become a niche in China. Driven by the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, winter sports have since been gaining popularity among Chinese people, said Cao Xing, vice-general manager of Beijing Snowelan Sport Development Co Ltd, Elan's general agency in China.

"When the brand entered China, we sold hundreds of skis annually. Now the figure has increased to about 20,000," said Cao.

According to a 2022 China snow and ice industry development research report, the total scale of China's snow and ice industry is forecast to exceed 1 trillion yuan (\$141.81 billion) in 2025. Chinese authorities have mentioned the promotion of the industry and the construction of ski tourism resorts in several planning documents.

"More cities in South China are building indoor ski resorts. We hope to explore the market in South China through this exhibition and achieve double-digit growth in China in the next few years," said Leon Korosec, who works with Elan, at the expo.

China and CEECs have seen closer economic and trade ties in recent years. As a trade catalyst between China and CEECs, the third China-CEEC Expo & International Consumer Goods Fair attracted more than 3,000 exhibitors, including over 400 exhibitors from CEECs and other European countries. The six-day expo concluded on May 21.

Data from China's commerce ministry show that since 2012, China's trade with CEECs has grown at an average annual rate of 8.1 percent, and China's imports from CEECs have increased at an average rate of 9.2 percent annually.

In the first quarter of this year, two-way trade totaled \$33.3 billion, up 1.6 percent year-on-year. The two-way trade of agricultural and food products totaled \$720 million from January to April, surging 34 percent year-on-year.

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