

Blazing a trail

Nation's major carriers lay out R&D road map for 6G innovation

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Bleak future seen for Black Sea grain deal

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Ethnic celebration

Xinjiang displays diverse culture at international folk dance festival

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# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2023

## Death and destruction



Residents try to salvage their belongings from a house that was damaged in a landslide in Quetame, Colombia, on Tuesday. The landslide, which was triggered by heavy rains, left at least 15 people dead, authorities said. SANTIAGO MOLINA / REUTERS

## President vows to advance ties, cooperation with Cambodia

Xi says bilateral relationship has withstood tests of time since establishment 65 years ago

By CAO DESHENG caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping and Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni exchanged congratulations on Wednesday on the 65th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries, vowing to carry on the traditional friendship and bilateral cooperation and build a China-Cambodia community with a shared future.

In a congratulatory message sent to Sihamoni, Xi said that over the past 65 years, China-Cambodia relations have withstood the tests of the changing international landscape, becoming stronger over time.

He recalled his meeting with Sihamoni in Beijing earlier this year as well as their exchange of letters multiple times, saying that they have jointly led both countries in the construction of a high-quality, high-level and high-standard community with a shared future in the new era.

The "diamond hexagon" cooperation framework between China and Cambodia, which highlights the six priority areas of politics, production capacity, agriculture, energy, security, and people-to-people exchanges, continues to be deepened and enriched, Xi said.

Progress has been made in the construction of the "Industrial Development Corridor" and the "Fish and Rice Corridor", he added.

Noting that he attaches great importance to the development of China-Cambodia relations, Xi said that he is willing to work with the Cambodian king to achieve more fruitful results in China-Cambodia friendship, and bring tangible benefits to the people of both countries.

Sihamoni said in his message that based on mutual trust and win-win cooperation, the two countries have established a comprehensive strategic partnership and built an unbreakable "iron-clad" friendship.

Cambodia is willing to deepen cooperation in various fields with China to benefit both countries and their people, and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world, he said.

Premier Li Qiang and Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen also exchanged congratulatory messages on the anniversary on Wednesday.

Noting that China-Cambodia relations have reached a new starting point, Li said that he is willing to work with Hun Sen to promote pragmatic cooperation for more fruitful results.

Hun Sen said that Cambodia adheres to the one-China policy and supports the China-proposed major initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative.

### WORLD WATCH

By Augusto Soto

## EU should seek new synergies with China to promote collaboration

The European Union's industrial policy aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the continent's industry. China is an important partner of the EU in the industrial field, and the EU should seek new synergies with it, not view it as a "systemic rival".

As Premier Li Qiang stated recently in both Paris and Berlin, as well as at the Summer Davos Forum in Tianjin, "Businesses are in the best position to assess risk."

Governments should not overreach, still less stretch the concept of risk or turn it into an ideological tool, which means avoiding the politicization of economic issues and industrial policies.

But in Europe, some governments are interested in equating politics and economics, and industrial policies with geopolitics. For example, equating China's industrial policy with Russia's, although they are profoundly different.

Some months ago, the newspaper Le Monde published an interview with Martin Brudermueller, head of leading global chemical giant BASF. Questioned about BASF's business in China, Beijing's geopolitical stance and the potential risk of investing huge sums of money in China, he replied with figures that should be viewed as trajectories and trends. BASF is convinced that by 2030, China will represent 50 percent of the world chemical market, and if a company wants to be a global chemical giant, it is senseless not to be interested in half of the market. If the company is not there to exploit such growth, another company will take its place.

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### XI'S VISION | GREEN DEVELOPMENT

## Experts hail country's progress toward long-term energy security

By HOU LIQIANG houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

As China actively responds to climate change by following the green and low-carbon development path depicted by President Xi Jinping, curbing coal consumption in a phased manner will serve national interests and guarantee the country's long-term energy security, experts said.

They also emphasized that China will unswervingly honor its commitment to restraining coal consumption.

While addressing the Leaders Summit on Climate via video link from Beijing in April 2021, President Xi said that China will limit the increase of coal consumption over the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25) and phase down coal consumption during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

Tackling climate change is one of China's major concerns. During a two-day national conference on ecological and environmental protection that concluded on Tuesday, Xi noted that to promote the green and low-carbon transition in the country's approach to economic growth is the fundamental solution to ecological and environmental issues.

China will strive to build a clean, low-carbon, secure and efficient energy system, and accelerate the construction of a new electricity system, he said.

Xi also presided over a meeting of the Central Commission for Comprehensively Deepening Reform on July 11, which saw the adoption of a policy document to promote the gradual transition from dual control over the amount and intensity of energy consumption to dual control over the amount and intensity of carbon emissions.

It was noted at the meeting that persistent efforts must be made to create the conditions for this transition and to strike a balance between economic development and carbon emissions reduction in accordance with the actual situation.

The experts' remarks coincided with the four-day visit to China by John Kerry, the United States' special presidential envoy for climate. Kerry's visit, which was scheduled to end on Wednesday, came after China suspended climate talks with the US last year following the controversial visit by Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the US House of Representatives, to China's Taiwan region in August.

Coal consumption is a common concern of China and the US. In a 2021 joint declaration on enhancing climate change actions in the 2020s, they said, "Both countries also recall their respective commitments regarding the elimination of support for unabated international thermal coal power generation."

China announced in 2021 that it

would no longer build new coal-fired power projects abroad.

Recently, some foreign media questioned China's resolution to curb coal consumption because of what they alleged were increases in the country's coal consumption, as well as newly approved coal-fired power generation capacity.

Wang Zhongying, head of the Energy Research Institute at the Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said that these reports had no solid data support and failed to recognize the long-term trend of coal consumption in China.

China will have to make arduous efforts to realize its climate targets of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060, he said. The COVID-19 epidemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and volatility in the international landscape have posed more challenges as the country strives to reach the goals.

Against such a backdrop, "fluctuations in coal consumption (in China) are something normal", Wang said. "I hope everyone will look at the trend, rather than just focusing on a certain year or the past one to two years."

With the robust development of solar and wind energy in China, the annual operation hours of China's coal-fired power plants have been declining, Wang said.

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## Baby on board



Members of a medical team show a woman her newborn baby aboard Peace Ark, the Chinese navy's hospital ship, in Tarawa, Kiribati, on Sunday. This is the ninth baby delivered by the Peace Ark medical team, and the first on their current humanitarian mission. LIU WEI / XINHUA

## RISE OF THE ROBOTS A LIFT FOR SHANGHAI

Industrial use of high-end technology is reaping great rewards for the city

By WANG YING and YU YILEI in Shanghai

From exoskeletons used in physical rehabilitation, to table tennis training partners and farm and services-industry labor, the lucrative robotics industry is reshaping work practices and production in China.

Shanghai has been at the forefront of the advances in research and development, and production of industrial robots for more than 40 years.

In a hot pot restaurant in the city's People's Square, 11 robots can



now be seen helping staff members welcome guests and deliver dishes. The little robots not only offer diners a novel experience, but are saving the owners money on wages.

"The robots can usually deliver three layers of dishes at one time, but a human being can only bring one or two dishes," said Lan Jie, a team leader at the restaurant.

With more than 7,800 cafes and a need for 23,000 baristas, robots are

also helping fill staffing shortages in Shanghai's coffee industry.

In Minhang district, a robot developed by Jaka Robotics can make as many as 500 cups of coffee a day and rival a barista in "latte art". It takes two trained baristas eight hours to make 500 cups of coffee, with each earning about 8,000 yuan (\$1,108) a month.

"Businesses such as intelligent restaurants, unmanned cafes, and new retailers have the greatest applications for robots," Meng Xiaobo, vice-president of Jaka Robotics, told China Daily.

Li Tong, founder and CEO of

Shanghai-based Keenon Robotics, believes robots are designed to replace humans doing repetitive, boring chores.

"Using machines to do work like this allows humans to spend more time on providing better services," Li said, adding that the only requirement for robots to work around the clock is recharging them.

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Online See more by scanning the code.

# PAGE TWO

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In 2021, China's robot market in the catering sector more than doubled year-on-year to \$84 million, with Keenon Robotics, Pudu Robotics, Suzhou Pangolin Robot and Beijing Orion Star Technology taking the lion's share, according to a report by US market research firm International Data Corp.

With a 48.6 percent market share, Keenon Robotics had the highest yearly growth rate of 153.4 percent, the report said.

"We believe the Chinese food-service robot sector has passed its infancy and is becoming a teenager," said Li, whose Shanghai-based company also offers its services and products in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Japan and South Korea.

For Fang Minglun, a tenured professor at Shanghai University, the rise of robots is a dream-made reality. The octogenarian is the driving force behind Shanghai developing its first batch of industrial robots in the 1980s. He has long believed that robots can benefit humans by serving people's all-around needs.

"Back in the 1980s, I wrote an article titled, 'Tools for production and assistants in life'. More than three decades have passed, and I think my vision is still effective," Fang said.

"I believe that the further development of robots must play a very important role in the advancement of human society. To be more specific, they will change our production modes and alter our lifestyles."

## Training, therapy

At Shanghai University of Sport, a table tennis training partner robot is helping players hone their skills.

The device has been mass produced in China since 2020, said Ren Jie, deputy dean of the China Table Tennis College.

Different from previous ball-serving devices, the robot developed by the China Table Tennis College, replicates the experience of competing against a human player. The degree of difficulty of drop shots, spin and ball speed can be altered to fit players' practice needs, Ren said.

"We always wanted to provide a good product that could benefit both our players and average people, and the development of AI (artificial intelligence) has made it possible in the sports arena," Ren said.

In addition to training professional players, the robot — costing about 50,000 yuan — has been used in primary and middle schools, as well as schools for students with disabilities, he added.

Meanwhile, Fourier Intelligence in Shanghai is at the forefront of producing rehabilitation robots with AI exoskeletons that are already being used in hospitals in China and overseas.

The AI exoskeletons enable people with lower-limb disabilities to stand up and walk, while they can also assist in the rehabilitation of people with paralysis to do activities such as grocery shopping.

"China will see rising demand for rehabilitation therapists in the future, but training rehabilitation therapists need a lot of time," said Gu Jie, founder and CEO of Fourier Intelligence. "If we use rehabilitation robots to help therapists do the tedious and strenuous training, our rehabilitation therapists can focus on creating better treatment solutions for patients."

Launched five years ago, Fourier Intelligence's rehabilitation robots are now being used in more than 2,000 hospitals in over 40 countries and regions.

Facing an aging society and labor shortage, Gu sees huge market demand in China for their rehabilitation and other robots.



A visitor inspects a robot at this month's World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

# Shanghai: robots charge on

## HUMANOIDS OF THE FUTURE



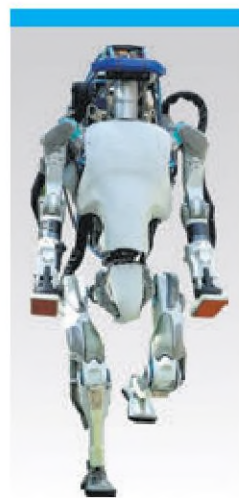
**Name:** Optimus  
**Manufacturer:** Tesla Inc  
**Height:** 172 cm  
**Weight:** 56.6 kg  
**Capabilities:** The robot has a flexible grip and can lift a piano with one hand. It can walk, go up and down stairs, squat and fetch objects. It can also protect the safety of itself and people around it. Tesla says in the future it will be able to cook, mow the lawn, take care of the elderly, and remove the need for humans to do mundane factory work.



**Name:** GR-1  
**Manufacturer:** Fourier Intelligence  
**Height:** 165 cm  
**Weight:** 55 kg  
**Capabilities:** The robot can walk at a speed of 5 km per hour and carry a load of up to 50 kg. It can move to avoid obstacles, ascend and descend a slope with stability, as well as withstand shocks. Using cognitive intelligence provided by tools such as ChatGPT, the robot is capable of collaborating with humans to complete various movements.



**Name:** Cloud Ginger  
**Manufacturer:** CloudMinds Robotics Co Ltd  
**Height:** 158 cm  
**Weight:** 62 kg  
**Capabilities:** Equipped with more than 40 intelligent flexible executors, the robot is capable of listening, speaking, seeing and moving based on multiple cloud-intelligent technologies. It can perform a variety of services including reception work, tour guidance, elderly care, cleaning, education and scientific research.



**Name:** Atlas  
**Manufacturer:** Boston Dynamics  
**Height:** 150 cm  
**Weight:** 89 kg  
**Capabilities:** The robot can deliver high power to any of its 28 hydraulic joints for feats of mobility. Moving at a speed of 2.5 meters per second, it can conduct highly diverse and agile locomotion, and plan movements through complex dynamic interactions. The robot is also capable of doing leaps and somersaults.

## Plowing on

Wang Jinyue, the son of a peasant family, started his business with a vision that one day agriculture will no longer be a backbreaking chore.

Seven years ago, he resigned from his position as the operations director of an Internet company and set up Shanghai Sweet AI Technology Co to invest in agricultural AI robots.

His robots cover the complete farming process, including rotary plowing, bedding, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. They can be controlled by smartphones via the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and a 5G connection.

The sharp decline in the working population in agriculture is a problem facing all countries.

However, the issue in China is compounded by aging agricultural workers. Li Daojiang, a professor from China Agricultural University told the Shanghai Observer.

Wang believes technology has the solutions. "Although our products are only used in six provinces at the moment, a breakthrough in our supply chain allowed us to launch mass production," he said.

"We are expecting to see thousands, tens of thousands or even 1 million of our robots replacing farmers in the future."

## Battle of the androids

Chinese manufacturers are also wasting no time in producing humanlike robots, the benchmark of the industry.

Humanoid robots are anticipated to meet labor shortages in the manufacturing sector and elderly care, said Li Jing, deputy director of Shanghai University's Shanghai Robot Institute.

Shanghai-based CloudMinds Robotics is one of the Chinese companies trying to get a foothold in the healthcare and elderly care sectors. China is projected to have about 310 million people aged 60 or above by 2035.

CloudMinds is in the process of

developing a mobile humanoid robot scheduled to be debuted by 2025, said Wang Bing, co-founder of the company.

Equipped with more than 60 intelligent flexible executors, the robot will be capable of walking on two legs and have the movements and flexibility of a human. This should enable it to do tasks such as helping senior people go up and down stairs.

The company has already launched a humanlike robot with two moving hands that can provide services related to elderly care and cleaning, as well as education and scientific research.

Fourier Intelligence unveiled its

latest humanoid robot, GR-1, at the sixth World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai this month.

Electric vehicle maker Tesla also exhibited its general-purpose worker droid, Optimus. Tesla CEO Elon Musk has projected the robot will sell for less than \$20,000.

"The launch of Tesla's humanoid robot prototype, the Optimus, has sparked a heated debate about the outlook of the sector. Some organizations have projected the particular robot will reach a sizable market share in the coming years," said Li Jing, deputy director of the Shanghai Robot Institute.

If hurdles such as product design, uses, technology, affordability and public acceptance can be overcome, Goldman Sachs envisions a market size of up to \$154 billion by 2035. The estimate is close to that of the global electrical vehicle market and one-third of the global smartphone market in 2021.

## Shanghai vision

China has formed a complete robotic industrial chain with sizable scale and quantity, said Shen Nanyan, executive vice-director of the Shanghai Key Laboratory of Intelligent Manufacturing and Robotics at Shanghai University. The innovative application of robots has been phenomenal, she added.

Cao Qixin, a professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and director of its Institute of Biomedical Manufacturing and Life Quality Engineering, believes there are reasons for the rapid development of the robotics industry in China, and Shanghai in particular. "Being a manufacturing giant gives China the strength to materialize many of the latest robotic application ideas," Cao said.

In the 1980s, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Shanghai University began research into the nation's first generation of industrial robots. With China's large talent pool, big corporations and technological strengths, it is easier to introduce robots across various sectors, Cao said.

Earlier this year, Shanghai unveiled a plan to promote its robot industry over the next three years. It aims to have 10 leading industrial robot brands, realize 100 robot application scenarios, and increase the city's robot industrial value to 100 billion yuan.

The targets are part of the city's efforts to spearhead the high-quality development of local industry, promote in-depth integration of robots and artificial intelligence, and use intelligent robots to shore up various industries, said Tang Wenkan, deputy director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization.

Shanghai's industrial robot sector and service robot sector made great progress last year.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, Shanghai saw its industrial robot output grow 6 percent to surpass 75,000 units in 2022, topping all Chinese cities. The use of service robots was applied widely in fields including medical care, construction, agriculture and commerce, Tang said.

Shen, from the Shanghai Key Laboratory, said Chinese robot manufacturers need to strengthen their foundations, differentiate their products and development, and cultivate talent if they are to produce higher-quality products.

Industry stalwart Fang called for more efforts on fundamental research. The robotics industry requires better core technologies to meet the challenges ahead, he added.

"In the meantime, innovative collaborations and integration of state-of-the-art technologies are equally important for the development of the sector," Fang said.

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By WANG YING in Shanghai wang\_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

## Automatons, for the people, shine at conference

Artificial intelligence will usher humanity into an era of abundance where "whatever one desires will be instantly obtainable," according to Elon Musk, CEO of electric vehicle maker Tesla.

Musk made the prediction in a video address to the sixth World Artificial Intelligence Conference, held in Shanghai from July 6 to July 8.

"In the future, it is projected that the number of robots on Earth will surpass the human population," Musk said, adding the powerful and efficient production capabilities of AI will usher humanity into an era of "post-scarcity".

More than 20 robots were exhibited during this year's event, many

shown to the public for the first time.

Tesla exhibited its general-purpose worker droid, Optimus (see box). The shape of an average adult, the robot has 28 structural actuators to help its "body" move freely, with flexible hands enabling it to grip objects.

The robot can walk, climb up and down stairs, squat and fetch objects. It can also protect itself and people nearby. In the future it will be able to cook, mow the lawn, take care of elderly people, and replace humans doing boring and dangerous work in factories.

Chinese tech startup Fourier Intelligence unveiled its latest humanoid robot, GR-1, at the conference.



Wang Bing, co-founder of CloudMinds Robotics, displays an android that can do many chores. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Using cognitive intelligence provided by tools such as ChatGPT, the robot is capable of collaborating with humans to complete various movements in industry, rehabilitative caring, household services, scientific research and more.

"General-purpose humanoid robots will gradually become a mainstream segment of the industry," Gu Jie, founder and CEO of Fourier Intelligence was quoted as saying by Xinhua News Agency.

In addition to the humanoid robots, robots with specific functions and applications also attracted wide interest.

Shanghai-based Clobotics displayed its intelligent blade internal inspection crawler for turbines for the first time.

The crawler removes the danger of people entering a turbine and improves the efficiency of inspections.

SenseTime exhibited two consumer products, an AI interactive *Xiangqi*, or Chinese chess, robot, and an AI interactive Go version of its SenseRobot.

The Chinese chess robot cannot only teach children how to play the game, but it is also capable of competing with master players.

The Go robot is equipped with cutting-edge AI and robotic-arm technologies that allow users to practice and play Go on a real board.

## TOP NEWS

# China, Algeria to expand scope of cooperation

Premier: Nations are good friends with high level of mutual trust, should deepen exchanges

By XU WEI  
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Premier Li Qiang highlighted the need for China and Algeria to work toward more concrete outcomes while cooperating on infrastructure development and expand cooperation to cover emerging sectors such as the digital economy.

In his talks with visiting Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in Beijing, Li called on both sides to forge a model for high-tech cooperation between developing nations.

Li also cited information technology, new-energy vehicles and aviation satellites as sectors for potential heightened cooperation between the two nations.

China and Algeria are good friends with a high level of mutual trust, good partners with a strong commitment to cooperation and good brothers who share weal and woe, Li said.

The two nations, which established diplomatic ties 65 years ago, have always respected each other, treated each other as equals and extended to each other steadfast support over issues concerning respective core interests and major concerns, said the premier.

Li highlighted Beijing's readiness to promote bilateral friendship and cooperation to a higher level, adding that the two nations should deepen exchanges and cooperation

in areas such as health, education and tourism.

China supports Algeria playing a bigger role in international and regional affairs, and is willing to work hand in hand with the African country to practice true multilateralism, oppose unilateralism and hegemony, and safeguard the common interests of both nations and other developing countries, Li said.

President Tebboune, who is on a state visit to China from Monday through Friday, underscored that China is a good friend of Algeria, and the two sides have always supported and helped each other.

He reiterated his country's adherence to the one-China principle and support for China's efforts in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Algeria is willing to learn from China's development experience, work toward heightened bilateral cooperation in investment, mining, construction and industries, and enhance coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs, he said.

Also on Wednesday, Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, met with Tebboune. During the meeting, Zhao underlined China's readiness to work with Algeria to build an open world economy and take the global governance system toward a more fair and reasonable direction.



## Symbols of friendship

Children from member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization display their artwork after a training session in Beijing on Wednesday. More than 50 children attended the training, which was organized by the SCO Secretariat. SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming encouraged the children to learn more about the SCO during the session and to create their own works highlighting the Belt and Road Initiative.

JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

## US needs Kissinger-style wisdom, senior diplomat says

By MO JINGXI  
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Senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi hailed on Wednesday former United States secretary of state Henry Kissinger's historic contributions to the icebreaking development of China-US relations, and stressed that it is impossible to remold, contain or encircle China.

### Inside

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At a meeting with Kissinger in Beijing, Wang, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said the 100-year-old former diplomat has played an irreplaceable role in promoting mutual understanding between the two countries.

Washington now needs Kissinger-style diplomatic wisdom and Nixon-style political courage in its China policies, Wang said.

"China cherishes its friendship with old friends," Wang, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the

CPC Central Committee, was quoted by Xinhua News Agency as saying.

Their meeting, which came after a series of visits to Beijing by senior US officials, was the latest effort made by the world's two largest economies to reopen high-level communication and stabilize their ties.

Kissinger has made nearly 100 visits to China since his first secret trip to Beijing in 1971, when he was assistant for national security affairs to then US president Richard Nixon. That trip set the stage for Nixon's visit to China in 1972, which reopened the door to Sino-US exchanges.

He noted that China's policy toward the US maintains a high degree of continuity and follows the fundamental and long-term principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation proposed by President Xi Jinping.

They are also the right way for the two big countries to get along with each other, Wang said.

Noting that China's development has strong endogenous momentum and inevitable historical logic, Wang

said it is impossible to attempt to remold China, and even more impossible to block and contain China.

Wang also elaborated on China's position on the Taiwan question. He stressed that one China is the fundamental status quo of the Taiwan question, and the one-China principle established in the Shanghai Communiqué must be abided by.

"If the US sincerely hopes for stability across the Taiwan Strait, it should clearly and openly oppose 'Taiwan independence' and draw a clear line with 'Taiwan independence' separatist activities," Wang said.

Kissinger underlined the importance of a stable US-China relationship for world peace, stability and the well-being of humanity, saying that both the US and China have the ability to influence the world.

Regardless of difficulties, both sides should treat each other as equals and maintain contact, and any attempt to isolate or cut off the other side is unacceptable, he said.

Kissinger also said that the one-China principle is a solemn commit-

ment made by the US in the Shanghai Communiqué, and expressed his belief that this commitment will not be shaken or abandoned.

Li Haidong, a professor of US studies at China Foreign Affairs University, said the fact that Kissinger made a visit to China at such an advanced age shows how complicated and challenging it is to ease tensions in the China-US relationship.

"Both sides should cherish the bonds established by the older generations and ensure that China-US ties will not further deteriorate," Li said.

However, while China is committed to developing bilateral ties in a responsible way, the US, guided by a mindset filled with competition and confrontation, is very calculating in handling its relations with China, showing no respect for the past achievements, Li said.

Despite recent high-level interactions between the two countries, Li said it is yet to be seen whether Washington will take concrete actions to improve bilateral ties with sincerity instead of calling for decoupling.

## Accident kills tourists



People examine the wreckage of a bus that was carrying 21 Chinese tourists when it rolled over in Vietnam's central Khanh Hoa Province on Tuesday. Four Chinese nationals died in the accident, the Chinese Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City confirmed. The injured passengers were taken to hospitals, and Vietnamese media said the cause of the accident was being investigated. VNA VIA XINHUA

## Further steps in pipeline to boost FDI

By ZHONG NAN  
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China will further improve its conditions for foreign investment, and encourage global companies to invest in its services and financial sectors to stabilize the inflow of foreign direct investment in the second half of 2023, commerce officials said on Wednesday.

Given the slowdown in global economic recovery and the decline in cross-border investment, the country will continue to shorten the negative list for foreign investment access and offer timely assistance to overseas companies to help them solve their problems, said Guo Tingting, vice-minister of commerce.

Zhu Bing, head of the Commerce Ministry's Foreign Investment Administration, said at a news conference in Beijing that China will steadily expand its institutional opening-up in the services sector, and revise administrative

measures for foreign investors' strategic investment in listed companies to encourage overseas companies to invest in its stock market.

"Apart from effectively implementing existing policies, the government will prioritize addressing common concerns raised by foreign companies, including fair competition and investment facilitation," he said, adding that new measures will also be introduced in the second half of the year to boost foreign investors' confidence in China.

Foreign direct investment on the Chinese mainland dropped 2.7 percent year-on-year to 703.65 billion yuan (\$97.47 billion) in the first half of the year, according to data released by the ministry on Wednesday.

Zhu said that short-term data fluctuations have no bearing on the sustained positive prospects for foreign investment in China.

He pointed out the notable increase in visits by executives from multinational companies,

who actively explore new investment and cooperation prospects.

That sentiment is in line with the latest data. China saw its newly established foreign-invested enterprises between January and June reach 24,000, up 35.7 percent year-on-year.

Pan Yuanyuan, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics in Beijing, said more efforts should be made to meet the expectations of multinational corporations in the second half of the year.

There is an urgent need to simplify procedures for FDI, such as ensuring the regulatory processes are streamlined and efficient, Pan said.

Michael Hart, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said there is still room for China to improve its business environment, especially in areas of public procurement, standard establishment and protection of intellectual property rights.

According to the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, the return on FDI on the Chinese mainland had been around 9.1 percent over the past five years, while in Europe and the United States, it was around 3 percent.

Upbeat about the Chinese market, German conglomerate Siemens AG announced in June that it will invest 140 million euros (\$157.12 million) in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

The digital transformation of China's industrial sector is advancing rapidly, which is why the local market is very attractive to Siemens, said Roland Busch, chairman and CEO of Siemens AG. China is the world's largest industrial market, and its share of manufacturing output accounts for nearly 30 percent of the global total, he said.

During a visit to Beijing earlier this week, Yasuhiro Sato, chairman of the Japan-China Investment Promotion Organization, said that China is an important overseas market for Japanese businesses, and the vast majority of the organization's member companies are willing to expand investment in the country.

## Energy: Clean and secure system continues to grow

From page 1

China has been leading the world in both speed and scale regarding solar and wind energy development. "On average, the newly developed annual generation capacities for solar and wind energy in China almost cover one-third of the total annual global new capacity. Sometimes, even half," he said.

Meanwhile, the average annual operation hours of China's coal-fired power plants have decreased from the roughly 7,000 hours in the early period of China's reform and opening-up policy, which was launched in 1978, to about 4,000 hours now, he said.

"As the capacities for solar and wind power generation continue to grow, I expect to see the average annual operation hours continue to decline," he said.

Wang also said that to reduce coal consumption doesn't necessarily mean that China must reduce the installed capacity of coal-fired power plants, which are still needed as "peaker" plants that operate during times of high demand, to help stabilize power system operation.

The annual average operation hours of coal-fired power plants in Yunnan province, for instance, have been reduced to about 1,000. But these plants play a significant role in ensuring the stability and reliability of local power systems, he said.

"I suggest that media reporters wait until the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan period or the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan period to see the actual progress China has made in (reducing coal consumption). There are only two-and-a-half years to go," Wang said.

Quoting a 2021 study by Princeton University, Li Zheng, dean of the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University, stressed the importance of coal-fired power plants for the stability of China's power grid.

The study, which analyzes five pathways for the US to get to net-zero emissions by 2050, said, "To ensure reliability, all cases maintain 500-1,000 GW (gigawatts) of firm generating capacity through all years."

Li said, "Countries across the world all need a stable power source to guarantee the security (of their power systems). For the US, such a power source is electricity generated from natural gas. For China, it is coal-fired power."

Liu Yanhua, honorary director of China's national committee of experts on climate change, said that phasing down coal consumption serves China's own interests.

Currently, coal accounts for about 56 percent of China's energy consumption mix, Liu said.

The nation also depends on imports for 71 percent of its crude oil and 40 percent of its natural gas, he added.

## EU: More resilient industrial policy called for

From page 1

Highlighting this, the EU has seen its share of the global chemical market fall by a fifth in the past decade to 14.4 percent in 2020, and BASF's projection says that it will be almost 10 percent by 2030.

Or let's take the case of German car manufacturing, till now at the vanguard in China and the world. In the decade from 2007 to 2017, BMW, Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz established five research and development sites in Chinese territory, whereas in the five years since 2018 they have opened at least 11. The three companies have stepped up their R&D investment according to proven logic.

Competition drives improvement. China is akin to a fitness club that forces European companies to strive to be "a little bit faster, a little bit better," as Joerg Wuttke, former president of the

EU Chamber of Commerce in China, has repeatedly said.

Are there concerns about presumably stronger Chinese competition in the long term? Of course, but that logic is also valid in Europe among European competitors — not to mention well-known traditional entrepreneurial competition as well as industrial and trade competition between Europe and the United States.

"Systemic rivalry" should not be used in any future industrial policy vis-a-vis China. We live in interdependent times, and we have reached such a technological level that we urgently need to cooperate closer with Beijing in defining the limits of artificial intelligence before it is too late, as was mentioned at the Tianjin Summer Davos Forum in late June.

Last but not least, one important thing is for the EU to recog-

nize in the most realistic terms where it is now. With all its inherent disagreements typical of a successful organization made up of 27 members, the EU is more united than ever since the 2008 economic crisis. Yet, at the same time, it is more dependent than ever on the US, at a time when the US is facing a risky game of its own. The next US presidential election is looming, and the country is trapped in a dysfunctional democracy.

The EU should regard the aforementioned factors as a compass for a more resilient industrial policy. We will see if and when it may come into reality.

The author is a professor at the Esade Educational Institution of Ramon Llull University and director of the Dialogue with China Project in Spain. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

# CHINA

## National security office head welcomed in HK

Former vice-minister brings years of experience in the field to new post

By ATLAS SHAO in Hong Kong  
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The State Council announced on Tuesday that Dong Jingwei has been appointed director of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The appointment was welcomed by Hong Kong leaders on Wednesday, including Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu, who pledged that the SAR would continue to communicate closely with the office and implement the National Security Law in the city.

In accordance with that law, the central government established the national security office in July 2020. It is mainly tasked with safeguarding national security, assessing related developments, making proposals on strategies and policies, and handling relevant cases.

Zheng Yanxiang was the first director of the office. In January, Zheng was appointed director of the central government's liaison office in Hong Kong.

As a former vice-minister of state security, Dong has a lot of experience in the field — particularly in understanding national security threats, according to Lau Siu-kai, a

consultant for the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies, a think tank.

"In an environment where the United States and some Western countries continue to try to contain the mainland and Hong Kong, external forces will continue to use Hong Kong, a highly open city with a large assemblage of foreign intelligence agents, to threaten national security," Lau said.

Lau, who is also a professor of sociology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, believes that Dong's appointment will be effective in "strengthening cooperation between the central and SAR governments to deal with national security threats", enabling Hong Kong to have a better grasp of the national security threats facing the

country and enhancing the law enforcement capabilities of the National Security Department of the Hong Kong police.

Executive Councilor Jeffrey Lam Kin-fung also welcomed Dong's appointment, telling China Daily that he is a suitable candidate to head the office as he is familiar with the international situation, has extensive experience in maintaining national security and has close ties with the central government.

Lam, who is also vice-chairman of the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong, said the city, the subject of smears and suppression from some countries with ulterior motives, must remain vigilant against national security risks.

He believes that under Dong's leadership, the national security office

will accurately analyze Hong Kong's national security situation and make suggestions on related strategies and policies to help ensure that the National Security Law is fully and comprehensively implemented.

Lai Tung-kuok, Hong Kong's former secretary for security, said that given Dong's experience, he was a "natural" choice for the appointment and will definitely contribute to Hong Kong's national security efforts.

Dong, 59, was the director of the political department of the Ministry of State Security from 2017 to 2018, according to a resume published on the website of the China Law Society, of which he is vice-president. He previously served as director of the Hebei Provincial Department of State Security from 2006 to 2017.

## Beijing sees GDP increase 5.5 percent

By DU JUAN  
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The Chinese capital's GDP reached 2.06 trillion yuan (\$285.74 billion) in the first half of the year, with year-on-year growth of 5.5 percent, and authorities expect the upward trend to continue in the future.

"Beijing will continue to make efforts to accelerate economic recovery and high-quality development," Beijing statistics bureau spokeswoman Zhu Yan-nan said at a news conference on Wednesday.

"The overall economic recovery and development of the city is on a positive trend with improved efficiency."

The city government will maintain stable prices and keep increasing household incomes in order to achieve high-quality growth and new breakthroughs, according to the bureau.

The accumulative value of primary industries reached 4.13 billion yuan in the first half, down 4.6 percent year-on-year. For secondary industries, the accumulative value in that period was 286.64 billion yuan, a 0.3 percent year-on-year decline.

Among those industries, sectors including auto manufacturing and power saw impressive growth during the first six months of the year. The automobile industry grew by 16.1 percent year-on-year, and the power and heat production sector increased by 10.9 percent year-on-year.

## 1.77 trillion yuan

Value of the service industry in Beijing during the first half of this year, up 6.6 percent year-on-year

The accumulative value of the service industry reached 1.77 trillion yuan, up 6.6 percent year-on-year, the bureau said, which is impressive growth compared with the first quarter.

At the beginning of 2023, Beijing announced an economic growth target of 4.5 percent for the year.

That will help concentrate overall efforts to raise the city's high-quality development, Yin Li, secretary of the Communist Party of China Beijing Municipal Committee, said in a report earlier this year.

The city has been encouraging the private economy by providing support to private enterprises and attracting foreign capital with better services.

Haidian district, the biggest contributor to Beijing's GDP, is expecting to see its GDP growth exceed 6 percent year-on-year during the first half of this year, Li Junjie, the district's head and deputy Party secretary, said on Monday.

Last year, Haidian became the first prefecture-level district in the country to surpass the 1-trillion-yuan GDP threshold, driven by its scientific and technological innovations.

Haidian's 2022 GDP grew 3.5 percent year-on-year, said Wang Zhenrong, spokesperson for the district's bureau of statistics.

The district reported that the total revenue of its high-tech enterprises reached 3.8 trillion yuan in 2022, a year-on-year increase of 7.5 percent. The added value of core industries in the digital economy contributed to over 50 percent of Beijing's GDP.

In the last year, high-tech enterprises in Haidian spent 203.83 billion yuan in scientific research and development, increasing by 7.8 percent and representing 52.7 percent of the capital's scientific R&D spending.

City data show Beijing's GDP exceeding 3 trillion yuan for the first time in 2018 and reaching 4 trillion yuan in 2021.

## Readers line up for book fair in SAR

By OASIS HU in Hong Kong  
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Thousands of book lovers queued up on Wednesday and filed into the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre as the 33rd Hong Kong Book Fair kicked off.

The flagship book event was seen as a unique symbol of Hong Kong's culture and a significant platform for the city to profile itself as a hub for arts and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world.

The seven-day fair, organized by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, will run through Tuesday and feature more than 600 cultural activities, including talks, seminars and workshops.

The fair features eight seminar series and has attracted a star-studded lineup, including Hong Kong singers Elizabeth Wang, Ming-chuen and Alan Tam, and Chinese mainland writers Yu Hua, Xu Zhiyuan and Ma Boyong, who will give speeches.

This year, the book fair has adopted the tagline "Reading the World: The Joy of Reading for Children & Youth", with a focus on literature for children and young adults. In addition, this year's book fair has intro-



Visitors read at a booth during the 33rd Hong Kong Book Fair at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, Hong Kong, on Wednesday. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY

duced a brand-new art exhibition zone called the World of Art and Culture featuring children's literature from over 25 countries and regions.

Yang Bo, a 36-year-old marketing director who has attended the fair 10 times, said he was extra excited about this year's event.

Yang, who works in the cultural sector, said he was eager to visit the newly introduced World of Art and Culture exhibition zone as he wanted to learn how to combine literature and art more effectively.

In his view, the book fair is a significant platform for the city's lofty

goal of becoming a hub for arts and cultural exchanges between China and the outside world. It also offers people a chance to take a break from the hectic demands of daily life and enjoy the pleasure of reading.

Jonah Law, a physician, attended the book fair with his 11-year-old son.

The event was an opportunity to encourage his child's interest in reading, Law said, adding that they spent the whole morning scouring the fair for interesting books, with his son particularly drawn to science magazines.

Mike Wong contributed to this story.

## New orchid species discovered in Sichuan

By LI HONGYANG  
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A new species of orchid has been discovered in Sichuan province's Wolong National Nature Reserve, according to a release by the reserve's management bureau on Saturday.

Cheng Yuehong, a senior engineer at the bureau, and a research team led by Hu Guangwan from the Wuhan Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences conducted morphological and DNA molecular analyses on *Bulbophyllum wolongense*, confirming it as a new plant species.

Due to its unique distribution in the region, it has been identified as a species endemic to Sichuan.



The *Bulbophyllum wolongense*, identified as a new species of orchid. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The findings were recently published in the journal *Ecosystem Health and Sustainability*.

*Bulbophyllum wolongense* is the sixth new plant species discovered and named by researchers since the reserve's plant biodiversity field survey began in 2020.

Cheng and the team discovered the species in February 2021 at an altitude of about 1,600 meters

along a cliff in the reserve. After eight months of observation and specimen collection, the team conducted research on the plant together with the Wuhan Botanical Garden.

"We kept monitoring its growth in its original habitat, looking up references and comparing it with similar species," Cheng said. "After conducting molecular research and discussing it with experts, we finally determined it to be a new species in the *Bulbophyllum* genus. As it is located in the Wolong National Nature Reserve, we named it *Bulbophyllum wolongense*."

The orchid grows on tree trunks at altitudes between 1,600 and 1,700 meters. It blooms in September and October and is characterized by yellow flowers consisting of three duck-bill-shaped petals and a purplish-red center.

During field surveys in the Wolong Reserve from 2022 to 2023, the species was found to be growing in three areas. The reserve has since started developing conservation strategies, the bureau said.

Based on extensive investigations of plants in western Sichuan, Wolong is the only known habitat for this species, the bureau said.

Hu Guangwan, the researcher, said that the discovery of the orchid indicates that the plant diversity in Wolong is extremely rich.

"It is clear that conservation efforts have been made to preserve the rare, unique plants in this area over the past 60 years. With the increased attention being given to plant resource surveys, there will be opportunities to discover more new plant species," he said.

## Entries, exits soar, but still half of 2019's

By LIANG SHUANG  
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The Chinese mainland saw 168 million entries and exits at its border control ports in the first half of this year, up 169.6 percent year-on-year, immigration authorities said on Wednesday.

The National Immigration Administration released the figure in a statement on its website, adding that the figure still only accounted for 48.8 percent of the level in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly half of those entries and exits, or 80 million, were made by Chinese mainland residents. Some 75 million were made by Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan residents and about 8.5 million were visits by foreigners.

Cross-border transports soared to 9.8 million, representing year-on-year growth of 119.2 percent, but still only 53.8 percent of those in 2019.

## 10 million

ordinary passports were issued to Chinese nationals during the first half of this year.

During the first six months of this year, immigration authorities issued more than 10 million ordinary passports, more than 26 times the number issued last year, but about two-thirds of the pre-pandemic level. Issuance of mainland citizens' travel documents and exit endorsements — which allow mainland residents to visit Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan — also grew by more than 15 times to 42.8 million, almost matching the pre-pandemic level.

Zhang Ning, a spokeswoman for the administration, said that since the mainland optimized its COVID policy in early January, authorities have fully resumed regular exit-

and-entry services, including facilitating the issuance of travel documents for Chinese nationals, gradually opening 61 land ports for cross-border travel and resuming visa-on-arrival and visa-free transit policies for residents of some foreign countries.

The administration said that it has also found some 32,400 foreigners who illegally entered, stayed or worked on the Chinese mainland, and it has repatriated 13,600 of them. It has resolved some 16,000 criminal cases involving illegal border crossings and arrested 32,000 suspects.

Zhang said the administration will keep providing more convenience for residents and visitors, such as opening more green channels and developing online inquiry and reservation systems for more services, to guarantee communications and exchanges between China and abroad.

Yang Zekun contributed to this story.



## Job with a view

Electricians install components of a high-voltage electricity tower some 140 meters above the ground after hoisting them with a crane in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, on Wednesday. The project is intended to form a better network to provide greener energy to Jiangxi and Hubei provinces.

ZHENG XIANLIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

## POLICY REVIEW

## Development plan for opera released

Performances in Kunshan present opportunity for beneficiaries of training to shine

By CHEN NAN  
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The Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced the annual talent development plan for performers of traditional Chinese opera on July 4.

According to the announcement, 20 traditional Chinese opera actors and actresses from around the country are on the list, and will give performances showcasing the results of the talent development plan in October in Kunshan, Jiangsu province.

This year's plan was launched in February and aims to train top performers of traditional Chinese opera.

Traditional Chinese opera comes in many forms and combines a variety of art forms, including singing, dancing, martial arts and acting, and is usually hundreds of years old. Performed in local dialects and once enjoyed by both royalty and ordinary people, it has been experiencing a decline as the result of the impact of modern forms of entertainment.

The plan covers different types of traditional Chinese opera, including Huangmei Opera, which is also known as *caichaxi* (tea-picking opera) and originated in Anqing in Anhui province during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and Qinqiang Opera, which is popular in northwestern China and particularly in Shaanxi province and has its roots in the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC).

There are 348 kinds of traditional Chinese opera, according to a report released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2017. "Compared to the figure contained in the book, *Traditional Chinese Operas Chronicles*, which was published in 1999 and which recounts the history and development of traditional Chinese opera, 47 varieties have died out and 17 are facing extinction," the report said.

The talent development plan was born from awareness of the need to protect and revive traditional Chinese opera. Plans have been launched since 2018, and an annual gala ceremony is held in Kunshan that unites top performers trained through the program.

Guo Xiao, an actress at the China National Peking Opera Company, is one of the names on this year's list of top performers.

She has been performing with the company since 2010, and has played leading roles in classic productions, including as Mu Guiying in *Female Generals of the Yang Family*, and has also performed in the experimental Peking Opera production of *Faust*, an adaptation of the Western classic by Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

"The talent development plan allowed me to learn under established Peking Opera masters and gave me more opportunities to perform onstage," said Guo, whose mother is a Peking Opera actress with the local Peking Opera troupe in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, and father is a member of the troupe's band.

She was introduced to the art form as a child. "When I was young, I learned piano, dance and calligraphy but I was interested in



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

“The talent development plan allowed me to learn under established Peking Opera masters and gave me more opportunities to perform onstage.”

Guo Xiao, actress at the China National Peking Opera Company

Peking Opera," she said.

Peking Opera, which is also known as *jingju*, is a 200-year-old art form that combines singing, dancing, acrobatics and martial arts and dates back to 1790, when four Hui Opera troupes visited Beijing as part of celebrations for the 80th birthday of Emperor Qianlong (1711-99). Hui Opera, or *huiju*, is a precursor of Peking Opera from Anhui province. In about 1840, Peking Opera began to take formal shape, growing rapidly under the reign of Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908), a

patron of the art. Afterward, Peking Opera went from strength to strength, with troupes formed in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai. In 2010, it was declared an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO.

"My parents didn't plan to teach me about Peking Opera because they know that it is difficult to learn and demand for performers wasn't very high. But I learned Peking Opera when my mother gave classes to other actresses in the troupe," said Guo, whose talent got her into Beijing's Middle School Affiliated to the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts to study when she was 10.

Though her parents were against the idea of Guo becoming a Peking Opera actress, they supported her dream. She specializes in *qing yi*, a female role that is mature and graceful, and graduated with a master's degree in Peking Opera performance from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts in 2010.

"Like many young Peking Opera performers, I wanted to perform onstage as much as possible because that is how we grow and develop into real artists," Guo said. One of her first break-

throughs was performing the classic Peking Opera piece, *Baolian Deng* (*The Lotus Lamp*), which is based on a Chinese folk tale about a young boy, Chen Xiang, who saves his mother.

"I was very lucky to have Peking Opera masters like Li Weikang and Geng Qichang guiding me. I was very young and they are national household names," she added.

According to Wang Yong, president of the China National Peking Opera Company, over half the company's 183 actors and actresses are under the age of 40.

"Young people need to get stage experience and encounter audiences as much as possible. It usually takes at least five years for them to grow into performers who can be called professionals," Wang said.

Peking Opera actor Huang Qifeng, who specializes in performing *wusheng* roles, or the male martial arts role, is also on the list, and will perform classic Peking Opera productions in Kunshan this October, including *Lin Chong Ye Ben*, or *Lin Chong Flees by Night*, one of the best-known Peking Opera pieces for *wusheng* actors.

"The government is devoted to

supporting traditional Chinese opera. The talent development plan for traditional Chinese opera offers young performers the opportunity to display their talent and move up to a new artistic level," said Huang, who works currently with the Tianjin Jingju Theatre Company.

He said that the key to training young actors and actresses in traditional Chinese opera is to have established artists teach them.

"I learned many classic Peking Opera pieces word by word, move by move, from established artists. Many of them are still performing onstage, which permits us to learn from them and improve ourselves," he said.

"Traditional Chinese opera is the quintessence of Chinese culture, condensing the wisdom and efforts of artists from many generations. It needs to be passed on and developed by younger performers."

One of the 40-something's main missions besides performing is coaching young *wusheng* actors at the Tianjin Jingju Theatre Company. He also gives workshops at schools in Tianjin, and is devoted to popularizing the ancient art form among the young.

## Policy Digest

## 10 million to be recruited to do new forms of work

China's trade unions plan to recruit more than 3 million workers a year through new forms of employment between next year and 2025, with a total of 10 million people to be recruited during the period, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions said on Friday.

The move is part of the federation's efforts to implement a three-year action plan to promote new forms of employment, which plays an important role in national employment.

Huang Long, an official with the federation, told a press conference in Beijing that China currently has 84 million people working in new forms of employment, and they include truck drivers, ride-hailing drivers, couriers and food delivery workers.

According to the federation, to better guarantee the legitimate rights of workers in new forms of employment, the federation will work to secure stability in terms of their salary and position, which concerns workers most.

It will also ask government departments to refine systems related to the protection of the workers' rights and encourage companies to better fulfill their responsibilities.

## Awareness, precautions against heat, floods

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has reminded tourists across the country to be more aware of potential risks during the summer vacation, which coincides with the main flood season, which starts late this month and continues till early next month.

In a notice issued on July 13, the ministry said that tourists should keep abreast of the latest weather forecasts and warnings and remain alert to the dangers of landslides, falling rocks, mudslides and other risks.

Tourists are also reminded to strictly abide by fire safety regulations and to avoid smoking, barbecuing or using an open flame in areas with flammable materials.

Given the high temperatures currently affecting many regions, the ministry advised tourists to arrange their travel itineraries rationally, avoid or reduce outdoor activities, and ensure they have reasonable rest.

## Zero tolerance for fraud, academic dishonesty

China maintains a zero-tolerance approach to scientific fraud and academic dishonesty as it has set itself the goal of becoming a leading country in education by 2035, an official at the Ministry of Education said on July 12.

Lei Chaozi, director of the ministry's department of science, technology and informatization, told a conference in Beijing that a major reason universities are falling short in supporting China's development is that they do not have enough top-notch people producing innovation.

Lei said that in order to create a better environment for research innovation and the training of talent, it is important to get tough on academic integrity by displaying zero tolerance for misconduct, especially at world-class universities. China has progressed significantly in terms of independent innovation over the past decade, as evidenced by the steady rise of its global ranking from 34th to 11th on the Global Innovation Index released by the World Intellectual Property Organization last year.

MO JINGXI

## Online live performance standards set for influencers, agencies

By CHEN NAN

The China Association of Performing Arts has released two notifications setting new standards for live performances on streaming platforms, the "Requirements for Operations and Services for Live Performance (Streaming) Platform" and the "Requirements for Operations and Services for Live Performance (Streaming) Talent Agencies".

The association's latest move follows the online live performance

(streaming and short video) terminology issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in March.

"The rapid development of live online performances (streaming) has played a positive role in boosting consumption, especially during the difficult period during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it has also led to problems and negative events. The healthy environment for live online performance (streaming) needs to be strengthened," the association said, adding that "the move will help shape a

healthy environment and the growth of the boom in the livestreaming sector".

The two notifications seek to expand the reach of regulatory authorities to livestreaming influencers.

The content of live online performances (streaming) will be examined and regulated, including the language used by online influencers, the way they present themselves, and the comments and *dammu* (video commentary consisting of scrolling viewer messages on

top of the video in real time) posted.

Agencies that manage online influencers are also being regulated and must follow rules regarding the management of online influencers, content verification, and advertising.

According to the China Association of Performing Arts, online performances (streaming) and livestreaming e-commerce have changed the way people consume. Last year, online streaming brought in 199 billion yuan (\$27.75 billion) in revenues, and there were about 150

million online accounts involved in online performances and livestreaming e-commerce.

In 2021, the Cyberspace Administration of China and six other government entities, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the State Administration for Market Regulation, released guidelines regulating the country's booming livestreaming industry and set standards for livestreaming e-commerce platforms, operators and hosts.

The guidelines were designed to

protect the rights and interests of consumers and tackle problems including false advertising and the sale of poor-quality goods.

Authorities have released rules and regulations and set standards for live online performances (streaming) because the rapidly growing audience reached 469 million in June last year, compared to 204 million in March 2020, according to a report by the Academy of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade released last November.

**Editor's note:** As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.

In Xiao Cunhai's memory, the mountains around his home village were shaped like "huge chicken claws" as they were dotted by gullies of various sizes.

The area also had poor vegetation coverage. "When the wind rose in spring, the loess soil would be blown up and fly everywhere," recalled the 45-year-old from Sanbaoyaozi, a village in Juungar Banner, Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Now the "huge chicken claws" are no longer visible. Instead, the area is covered by apple trees and grapevines. "I never imagined that the place could be transformed into what it is at present, with the blue sky and green land," Xiao said with a smile.

Locals like Xiao have not only benefited environmentally, but also financially. Working in the orchard near his home, Xiao can make 150,000 yuan (\$21,000) a year.

The stark contrast he described is due to the Dafanpu Mine, which has operated in the area since 2012, producing 6.5 million metric tons of coal every year.

As China forges ahead with advancing ecological civilization and rural vitalization, the mine, together with many other similar facilities in the area, is a microcosm of the synergy that can be generated when the two campaigns are promoted simultaneously.

### Ecological civilization

Ecological civilization is a concept promoted by President Xi Jinping that aims to provide balanced, sustainable development and features the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature.

Though China is not able to phase down coal consumption — which accounts for over 90 percent of its fossil fuel reserves — in the short term, mining is being conducted in a more environmentally friendly manner, with minimal pollution and environmental damage. This is illustrated by mines in Ordos, one of the country's main coal-producing areas.

Since the establishment of the Dafanpu Mine, the company that operates it — Inner Mongolia Juungar Banner Liliang Coal Industry — has made consistent efforts to afforest the surrounding area.

To date, about 100,000 trees have been planted across almost 160,000 square meters, said Li Bo, the company's chairman. Grass seeds have also been sown across 680,000 sq m, thus afforestation work has taken place everywhere conditions permitted, he said, noting that the company has invested about 61 million yuan in such efforts.

To better promote the remediation of the mine's subsidence area and explore its use, the company set up an agricultural subsidiary named Liangyun in 2018. That was about a year after six national government departments, including the then-Ministry of Land and

# Eco-friendly mining helps drive environmental cleanup

Rehabilitation and afforestation programs are transforming badly scarred landscapes. **Yuan Hui** reports from Hohhot with **Hou Liqiang** in Beijing.



An aerial photo of the vast array of solar panels built as part of Tianjiao Green Power, a rehabilitation project aimed at balancing the environmental and economic development of coal mines in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Resources, jointly issued a guideline promoting the development of green mines.

The old ministry was integrated into the Ministry of Natural Resources as part of a 2018 institutional reshuffle of the State Council, China's Cabinet.

The 2017 guideline demanded that all new mines nationwide must operate in an environmentally friendly manner. Meanwhile, existing facilities are gradually being upgraded to move them onto a green development track.

The document specified the fundamental requirements for green mining construction in seven sectors, including coal, petroleum and nonferrous metals.

In the coal sector, for instance, operators are required to adopt innovative, environmentally friendly methods. To reduce pollution, they must minimize land use and the amount of coal gangue (commercially worthless material) that is transported out of the mines, and take a range of measures to control surface collapse.

In areas with fragile ecosystems in the country's western regions, coal mining should be conducted with methods that favor the conservation of water and soil, while at least 85 percent of the wastewater generated in mines should be reused, the document said.

According to a March report by China Natural Resources News, more than 1,100 mines nationwide



A farmer picks apples in an orchard built on land surrounding the Dafanpu Mine in Ordos. QIAO WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

have been listed as national-level green mines, including the Dafanpu Mine, which made the list in 2019.

Li said that after the establishment of the agricultural subsidiary, grapevines, apple trees and vegetables were introduced to develop eco-agriculture as a way of rehabilitating the mining areas.

"We aim to leave future generations and local residents a green and sustainable industry," he said.

According to Liliang, Xiao is one of 80 locals who work as regular employees for its Liangyun subsidiary, with each person earning an average of 60,000 to 70,000 yuan a year.

Meanwhile, about 100 extra villagers are hired during the busy harvest season, with each worker earning 240 yuan a day, it said.

To date, more than 33 hectares of wine grapes, 40 hectares of apple trees and about 6.7 hectares of vegetables have been planted in the mining area, Li said. A winery with an annual production capacity of 200 tons is under construction and is expected to become operational in September.

Li said the company expects to see annual income of about 10 million yuan from both the winery and apple programs in 2028.

Meanwhile, by 2027, the apple orchard will be expanded to 66.7 hectares, producing more than

2,000 tons of produce a year, according to the company.

It said that it will explore a rural vitalization model to operate the apple orchard, and it will feature cooperation between businesses, village collectives and households.

Moreover, cooperatives will be established between the coal mine and villages to promote the planting of apple trees in other areas and create a win-win for the company and local communities.

The grapevines and apple trees have now transformed the "chicken claws" into lush mountains. In fact, visitors will find few clues to indicate that the area is a coal mine, as all its operations, ranging from production, storage to coal washing in sealed conditions and no coal is ever visible.

### Remedial measures

At the Minda Coal Mine which stretches for about 20 square kilometers in Ordos' Dongsheng district, rehabilitation programs have been rolled out since the open-pit facility started operations in March 2009, according to Jia Xudong, an executive with Minda Eco-agriculture, a subsidiary of the mine. "Once mining is finished in a plot, the remediation work begins," he said.

Thanks to the various agricultural activities, the mine looks like an orchard, even though it is still operating normally.

The 30,000-plus, apple, peach,

pear, apricot and date trees, and grapevines, have borne fruit, making the scene extremely colorful.

More than 17,000 pigs, chickens, horses, cows and goats roam a separate area. There are also four fishponds around the mine, plus about 270 greenhouses.

Jia said the eco-agriculture company employs 150 people, with roughly 70 percent of them being local residents.

In the wake of the 2017 guideline on the promotion of green mine construction, the Manlailiang Coal Mine in Manlai village in Ordos' Ejin Horoo Banner has also been making efforts to transform itself into a green facility.

The mine, which started operations in 2017, has an annual production capacity of 5 million tons.

Previously, the mine's operators sowed grass seeds as a way to rehabilitate the area. "After the guideline was released, we introduced even higher standards into the remediation program in accordance with the requirements for green mines," said Wu Runbiao, the mine's head.

"We aim to not only afforest the mining areas, but also generate social benefits."

In addition to planting landscaped woods, the company has introduced eco-agriculture projects to benefit local residents, Wu added.

For example, for one of the projects, named Huangshangliang, the company plans to invest about 20 million yuan to develop an agritourism resort that will combine catering, entertainment, healthcare, farming and breeding businesses.

"After we have made all the investment, the project will be transferred to the village for management. The profits will all belong to the residents," Wu said.

According to the company, part of the project opened for business in June last year, but it will become fully operational next year. More than 10 sq km of mining areas have so far been remediated in the facility.

Many villagers are already benefiting environmentally and financially as construction of the green mine continues.

"I grew up here. In my memory, it was a desolate area, windy and dusty in spring," said villager Li Zeng. "Now, thanks to the afforestation efforts, huge changes have occurred."

The village committee contracted an afforestation project from the coal mine last year. Zeng made 8,500 yuan a month from March to December last year by working as a bulldozer driver at the project, the 39-year-old said.

He has also been engaged in a new afforestation project since March. Together with the money he makes from his farmland, his family's annual income now amounts to 180,000 yuan, he said.

"Many villagers are taking part in the afforestation project. Some plant trees, some sow grass seeds. We are all very happy," he said.

"I used to work on construction sites and in coal mines in other areas. Now, I work just on my doorstep. That's really good news."

Contact the writers at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn



Left: Workers harvest grapes grown above the Dafanpu Mine in Ordos. QIAO WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Middle: A man tends crops grown around the solar panels of the Tianjiao Green Power project in Ordos, which is capable of generating 900 million kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. LI ZHIPENG / XINHUA



Right: Mulberries, a drought-resistant crop that can be used as fodder for livestock, are cultivated under and between the project's solar panels. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Solar power brings a brighter future for residents

By **YUAN HUI** and **HOU LIQIANG**

Before 2020, a coal mine dominated 2,800 hectares of Bartaat village, Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Even though mining operations have now ended, energy is still produced there. This time, instead of the black fuel, the area is outputting clean solar power.

With more than 1.1 million solar panels that cover almost half the area, the zone sparkles in the sun. Looking from a distance, visitors

can see the lush greenery among the power-generation facilities. All this makes it hard for people to have any idea about its recent past, unless they are told.

The scene represents a workable solution to the issue of how to rehabilitate areas scarred by years of coal mining in a way that balances environmental health with economic development.

With a total investment of more than 2 billion yuan (\$277 million), the project, named Tianjiao Green Power, can generate 900 million

kilowatt-hours of electricity per annum, which was roughly enough to meet the electricity needs of 950,000 people last year, according to Inner Mongolia Yizheng New Energy Technology Development, the company that operates the project.

The facility has generated many environmental benefits and financial gains for local residents, such as Guo Jun, who described the area as "desolate" before the solar project was introduced.

"Coal was mined below ground

and the surface was full of ravines. Although the company made greening efforts, the area still looked desolate," the 57-year-old said.

In stark contrast, numerous plants are now flourishing in the shade of and between the rows of solar panels.

In places that suffered surface collapse, small water channels and ponds were dug and plants were sown among them to expand the vegetation coverage.

The measures greatly curbed

water and soil erosion, the company said, adding that to date about 1,640 hectares have been covered with drought-resistant plants, including alfalfa, mulberry, sea buckthorn and apple trees.

Along with many local residents, Guo has worked fixing photovoltaic panels, planting grass and trees, leveling the land and on irrigation projects. "The daily salary is about 220 yuan," he said.

According to local authorities, when the trees planted in the area start to bear fruit, they are expected to bring the villagers combined income of about 7 million yuan a year.

Zhang Jun, Bartaat's Party chief,

said the project developer has pledged to contract some of the maintenance services for the solar power generation station to the village once construction is completed next year, including weeding, cleaning the panels and environmental cleanups.

That means the 400 jobless residents in the village will finally be employed, he said, adding that from next year every villager will receive an annual dividend of at least 1,000 yuan from the power generation project.

"We will be able to make consistent, stable incomes," he said.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

## WORLD

## Threads and needles link China, US

Post-pandemic, textile exporters take part in big numbers at NYC trade fair

By MINLU ZHANG in New York  
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As she placed small Chinese and US flags in front of the camera, Sina Lee, a fabric manufacturer from Guangdong province, conducted a live sales broadcast at a New York trade fair on her phone. Meanwhile, Lee's husband enticed customers.

This year, an increasing number of Chinese textile exporters, like Lee, are returning to the international market after the pandemic.

The three-day 24th China Textile and Apparel Trade Show opened on Tuesday at the Javits Center in New York. It is a platform for the latest industrial trends and for Chinese companies exploring the US market.

The China show is part of Texworld, the largest show ever held at the sprawling convention center in Manhattan, with about 1,000 companies participating — 80 percent from China.

China has the world's largest and most complete textile industry chain. It is also the largest producer, exporter and consumer of textiles, said Huang Ping, Chinese consul general in New York, at the fair's opening ceremony.

China's highly market-oriented textile industry is deeply integrated into the global supply and value chains of the sector, he said.

"The threads and the needles connect both sides of the Pacific and represent the inseparable economic



The 24th China Textile and Apparel Trade Show opens on Tuesday at the Javits Center in New York, as part of the Texworld show. Approximately 1,000 companies are participating, with around 80 percent from China. MINLU ZHANG / CHINA DAILY

ties between China and the US. Moreover, they weave the fabric of friendship between the two peoples.

"It is difficult for any country to completely replace China's huge market and strength in the industry," Huang said, adding the interdependence and complementarity between the two countries call for a healthy, stable and sustainable trade relationship.

Huang visited a dozen booths at the fair. At the Ningbo Mondiland Fashion booth, Huang tried on a suit made with a new warp-knitting method.

"Your clothes are very beautiful. You should export more to the US market since the demand here is quite large," Huang said to the company's representatives.

Liu Zhibo, vice-chairman of the Haiyang City Sweater Association, met Huang at the fair. He said Haiyang city in Shandong province is home to about 100,000 sweater workers and about 6,000 merchants.

With an annual export of more than 20 million pieces of clothing, the sweater industry is the pillar of Haiyang's economy, Liu said. Many companies in Haiyang have

never been to the US market before, and they all turned out to participate in this year's exhibition, said Liu, who is also the chairman of Rosa Blu Textile.

Rosa Blu, which has received orders from Japan and South Korea markets, has developed a style specifically tailored for the US market. It employs a woollike material with special fibers that make the finished garments lightweight, Liu said.

Huang also visited Yantai North Home Textile, which specializes in making bedding fabrics for hotels and has an annual export volume

of about \$100 million. The North American market constitutes about 50 percent of its sales.

### Profound changes

Over the past few years, the world has undergone profound changes, and China-US ties have encountered significant challenges, Huang said. However, certain aspects remain unchanged: Economic and trade cooperation between China and the United States is mutually beneficial, and the two countries are highly complementary and interdependent, he said.

"I hope both countries can seize opportunities and strengthen cooperation and contribute to a healthy, stable and sustainable growth of China and US economic and trade relations," he said.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, some Chinese foreign trade companies have been transformed. Some manufacturers have embraced online channels, using live broadcasts and social platforms to promote and receive orders.

"Over the past three years of the pandemic, live broadcasts and social media platforms have allowed us to reach a wider customer base, attracting startup buyers," said Sina Lee, the founder of Gongguan Rainbow Touches Garment.

Rainbow Touches Garment is an export factory specializing in trendy men's clothing, operated by the Lee couple. With annual sales ranging from \$5 million to \$7 million, the company, which recently exhibited in Australia, is participating in the New York trade fair and has plans to showcase in Los Angeles next week.

## Texas probes treatment of migrants at border

By AI HEPING in New York  
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The Texas inspector general is investigating a state trooper's claims that superiors ordered officers at the Mexico border to push migrants — including small children and women with nursing babies — back into the Rio Grande and deny them water.

Nicholas Wingate, a trooper-medic from the state's Department of Public Safety (DPS), expressed concern over "inhumane" actions toward migrants in a July 3 email to supervisors, the Houston Chronicle reported Tuesday.

In the email, Wingate calls for several policy changes to prevent further injury to migrants, including removing barrels wrapped in razor wire in the river.

"The wire and barrels in the river need to be taken out as this is nothing but an inhumane trap in high water and low visibility," Wingate wrote.

He also told officials to reverse orders to withhold water from migrants.

"Due to the extreme heat, the order to not give people water needs to be immediately reversed as well," Wingate wrote, the Chronicle reported.

Headed, "I believe we have stepped over a line into the inhumane."

The trooper also said that razor wire deployed by troopers has injured people, including a woman who had a miscarriage while entangled in the wire, according to the Chronicle.

Travis Considine, a DPS spokesman, said in an email that the Office of the Inspector General, which investigates claims of misconduct by state employees, "is investigating the allegations made in the email in question."

"There is not a directive or policy that instructs troopers to withhold water from migrants or push them back into the river," Considine said.

The Houston Chronicle reported that the trooper, who works as a medic, sent the email to a sergeant on July 3 detailing some of the things he witnessed while on patrol in Eagle Pass where Governor Greg Abbott recently ordered the deployment of a floating barrier in the Rio Grande to deter migrant crossings.

"I believe we have stepped over a line into the inhumane. We need to operate it correctly in the eyes of God," the trooper wrote in the email, which the DPS gave to The Texas Tribune. "We need to recognize that these are people who are made in the image of God and need to be treated as such."

The trooper said in the email that he was out on patrol around 10 pm on June 25 when he and other troopers came across a group of about 120 people, including small children and nursing babies, who were "exhausted, hungry and tired" along a fence line on the US side.

"We called the shift officer in command, and we were given orders to push the people back into the water to go to Mexico. We decided that this was not the correct thing to do," the trooper said. "With the very real potential of exhausted people drowning. We made contact with command again and expressed our concerns and we were given the order to tell them to go to Mexico."

The trooper wrote in the email that five days later, a 4-year-old girl who attempted to cross the razor wire "was pressed back by Texas Guard soldiers due to the orders given to them." The temperature "was well over 100 degrees," and the girl passed out, the email said, adding that she had received medical treatment.

That same day, a man rescued his child who got stuck on a barrel in the water covered with razor wire, according to the trooper's email. During the rescue, the man got a "significant" cut on his left leg, the trooper wrote. A 15-year-old boy also broke his leg trying to walk around the wire in the river and his father had to carry him across to the US side, the trooper wrote.

Later that night, troopers found a 19-year-old woman stuck in the razor wire having a miscarriage, the trooper's email said.

On the afternoon of July 1, the Border Patrol reported that a mother and her two children were struggling to cross the river, the email said. A DPS boat team found the mother and one child, who later died at the hospital. The body of the second child "was never found", the trooper wrote.

## Envoy calls for fairness on how AI is governed

By MINLU ZHANG  
at the United Nations

A Chinese top envoy to the United Nations called artificial intelligence a "double-edged sword," saying that whether it is good or bad depends on how mankind uses and regulates it.

The international community should engage in extensive dialogue, constantly seek consensus and explore the development of guiding principles for AI governance, Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, told a UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday.

When it comes to AI governance, it is essential to adhere to the principle of putting ethics first, Zhang said.

"The potential impacts of AI may exceed human cognitive boundaries," he said, adding that to ensure the technology always benefits humanity, it must be people-oriented and used for good.

Efforts should be made to establish and improve ethical norms, laws and policy systems for AI, while allowing countries to establish AI governance systems that are in line with their own national conditions.

It is vital to adhere to safety and controllability, he said. The development and use of AI-related technologies entail many uncertainties, and safety is the bottom line that must be upheld.

"The international community should strengthen risk awareness and establish effective risk warning and

response mechanisms to ensure that risks beyond human control do not occur," he said.

It is important to insist on fairness and inclusiveness, Zhang added.

"Developing countries' equal access and utilization of AI technology, products and services are crucial to bridging technological, digital and development divides between the North and the South," he said.

"To seek technological hegemony, a certain developed country seeks to build exclusive small circles, maliciously obstructing the technological development of other countries with various excuses and actions. China firmly opposes these behaviors."

Zhang said it is also necessary to adhere to openness and tolerance.

"The development of science and technology needs to achieve a relative balance between technological progress and safe applications.

"The best path is to maintain open cooperation, encourage interdisciplinary, interindustrial, interregional, and cross-border exchanges and dialogues, and oppose various forms of exclusive clubs, decoupling and disconnection," he said.

He said there also should be commitment to peaceful utilization.

"The fundamental purpose of developing AI technologies is to enhance the common well-being of humanity. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on exploring the potential of AI in promoting sustainable development, promoting cross-disciplinary integration and innovation, and better empowering the global development cause," he said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Tuesday he was "shocked and impressed" by the new form of AI — generative AI, which has "enormous potential for good and evil at scale."

"Without action to address these risks, we are derelict in our responsibilities to present and future generations," he said.

## Black Sea grain deal disruption sends wheat, corn prices higher

By REN QI in Moscow  
renqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Wheat and corn prices on global commodities markets have jumped after Russia announced on Monday its pullout of a crucial deal allowing the export of grain from Ukraine.

Ukraine and Russia are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food products that developing nations rely on.

The Kremlin on Tuesday issued a veiled warning over the future of grain exports via the Black Sea, claiming Kyiv was using the export corridor "for combat purposes."

The Black Sea Grain Initiative — originally brokered by Turkey and the United Nations a year ago — has ensured the safe passage of ships carrying grain from Ukrainian ports. The UN said a final ship carrying Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea was inspected in Istanbul on Monday before the deal expired.

The international community sees the deal as "critical" to bringing down food prices around the globe, which spiked after Russia launched its special military operation in Ukraine in February last year.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday that Russia would not renew the pact right now, saying it "has been terminated."

Moscow has for some time complained it is being prevented from adequately exporting its own food and fertilizer, and Peskov cited that reason for pulling out of the deal.

"As soon as the Russian part is completed, the Russian side will return to the implementation of this deal immediately," he said.

Over the weekend, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the main objective of the deal — supplying grain to countries in need — "has not been realized," again complaining that Russia faced obstacles exporting its own food.

Peskov left the door open to reviving the deal in the future, saying that Russia will comply "as soon as the Russian part (of the deal) is completed."

Adam Hodge, a spokesman for the US National Security Council, said in a statement that Russia's decision will worsen food insecurity and harm millions of vulnerable people around the world.

Wheat futures on the Chicago Board of Trade jumped 2.7 percent



As soon as the Russian part is completed, the Russian side will return to the implementation of this deal immediately."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

to \$6.80 a bushel and corn futures rose 0.94 percent to \$5.11 a bushel as traders feared an impending supply crunch of the staple foods.

So far, the Black Sea deal has allowed for the export of almost 33 million metric tons of food through Ukrainian ports, according to United Nations data. The deal had been renewed three times, but Russia has been complaining it has been hampered in exporting its own products.

Speaking to reporters at the Council of the European Union in Brussels on Tuesday, French President Emmanuel Macron said Moscow had made a "huge mistake" with its decision to "weaponize" food by pulling out of the critical Black Sea grain deal, saying Russia assumed "a huge responsibility" toward numerous countries by participating in the UN-brokered deal.

"Middle Eastern, African, and even Asian countries are very much dependent on these agreements, which will be impacted by the unilateral decision of Russia," Macron said.

The Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned on Tuesday that Russia's decision to terminate the Black Sea deal is a "stab on the back at global food security prices."

Korir SingOei, Kenya's principal secretary of foreign affairs, said in a tweet Tuesday that the decision "disproportionately impacts" countries in the Horn of Africa that have already been impacted by drought.

In response, Moscow said it is allowing the deal struck to allow the export of Ukrainian grain to expire. The deal allowed Ukraine to export grain from its ports and navigate a safe passage through the Black Sea to the Bosphorus Strait in Turkey.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said officials were talking

with Russia and that he hoped the deal would be extended.

### 'Temporarily dangerous'

However, the Russian Foreign Ministry again declared the northwestern Black Sea area "temporarily dangerous."

Sergei Markov, a Moscow-based political analyst, speculated that if Ukraine doesn't heed the warnings, Russia could strike Ukrainian ports or place mines on shipping routes.

Andrey Sizov, director of SovEcon, a firm focused on the Black Sea agricultural markets research, said in an interview with the Russian newspaper Kommersant that the market is likely questioning the seriousness of Russia's rhetoric as it expects Ukrainian food exports to continue. According to Sizov, in general, Ukraine will be able to fulfill its grain export plan for this season even without using deep-water terminals on the Black Sea.

"Ukraine is already making active use of the Danube as a route for grain exports and recently sent the first Handymax class vessel via this channel, carrying around 20,000 metric tons of corn," the Russian expert said, adding that it exports foodstuffs via the European Union and to customers within the bloc itself.

The prospects for further implementation of the grain deal remain foggy, as Andrey Koshkin, head of the political science department at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, thinks that, most likely, Russia will reject another extension. "Naturally, if the situation does not change, all things considered, we can suspend our participation in this four-party agreement," the expert said.

Meanwhile, Russian farmers' associations welcomed the news that Moscow had terminated its participation in the grain deal. The pact had led to price discounts that benefited neither the country at large nor Russian farmers and exporters.

Russian Grain Union President Arkady Zlochevsky hailed the decision, terming it the right move and saying it would prop up Russian wheat prices.

On the contrary, the negative factors linked to it will now be eliminated, he argued, citing the marked Russian wheat price discount compared to the prices of Russia's foreign competitors.

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## WORLD

# NATO's Japan office plan sparks concerns

Military bloc's expansion to aggravate tensions in Asia-Pacific, experts say

By **JIANG XUEQING** in Tokyo  
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Experts questioned the significance of NATO's plans to open a liaison office in Japan as such a project is likely to aggravate pre-existing tensions in the Asia-Pacific region.

During a NATO summit held in Lithuania last week, French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated opposition to NATO's move to open a liaison office in Japan, alleging the alliance should focus on its responsibility of protecting the Euro-Atlantic area.

Since a unanimous agreement of all NATO members is required for the establishment of a new liaison office, a decision was not made at the summit. However, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the issue is still on the table and will be considered in the future.

The plan deviates significantly from NATO's original concept, and if pursued deliberately, it will fundamentally alter the nature of NATO, said Akira Yamada, a professor of modern Japanese history at Meiji University, as quoted by the Japanese daily newspaper Tokyo Shimbun.

Chen Xiang, an associate research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Japanese Studies, said NATO's eastward expansion will lead to mutual suspicion and distrust among countries in the Asia-Pacific region, reinforcing their independent strategies in security and military domains.

"Following the Russia-Ukraine conflict, countries in the Asia-Pacific region have made significant adjustments in their perception of the post-Cold War international situation.

"Some countries and regions in East Asia may feel anxious about NATO's eastward expansion, including its plans to open a new liaison office in Japan, which will lead to a tough response, thereby making the already tense and complex situation even more difficult to ease," Chen said.

Recently, there have been intensive diplomatic activities among the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea, aiming to make the Asia-Pacific region a focal point for strategic adjustments in major power competition.

## Camp confrontation

"The US is attempting to reshape the international order in the Asia-Pacific region since the Cold War and strengthen its objectives through strategic tools outside the region. This indicates that NATO's eastward expansion is likely to create a familiar scenario of camp confrontation in the region," Chen said.

Today, Asia has become one of the most important regions in the global supply chain and industrial chain, playing a crucial role in world peace and stable development.

"After expanding eastward into the Asia-Pacific region, NATO will inevitably interfere in regional affairs, disrupt peace and stability in the region, and trigger increased

political and military sensitivities among countries in the region," Chen said.

At the regional level, a NATO office in Japan creates unease, said Jean-Loup Samaan, a senior research fellow at the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore and a former research adviser at the NATO Defense College.

Like in Africa or the Middle East, the alliance suffers from a negative perception across Asia: the organization is usually seen as a mere extension of US foreign policy. Some commentators fear NATO would spread to Asia a destructive militaristic culture. This reflects the desire of Southeast Asian countries, and also India, to avoid importing a Western template for Asia's security architecture, Samaan wrote on the website of The Diplomat.

NATO's expanding military presence and practical cooperation with "Indo-Pacific" countries will likely be interpreted as offensive and threatening and, in turn, elicit backlash and counterbalancing, including increased Sino-Russian collaboration and cooperation, said Kelly Grieco, a senior fellow with the Reimagining US Grand Strategy Program at the Stimson Center in Washington, in an opinion piece published on The Diplomat website.

At the same time, NATO has little to contribute toward stability in the Asia-Pacific region. While the US already maintains a large military presence, the force projection capabilities of its European partners are rather limited, said Mangantar Simon Hutagalung, who serves in Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in an article in Nikkei Asia.

## Beating heat



Children swim in the trunk of a car while cooling themselves amid a heat wave in Al-Tah camp near the city of Idlib, Syria, on Tuesday. Firefighters were battling to extinguish multiple wildfires raging across the central Syrian countryside, local civil defense officials said. ANAS ALKHARBOULTI / ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Senior diplomat to attend BRICS meeting

By **ZHOU JIN**  
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Senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi will attend the 13th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisers and High Representatives on National Security in Johannesburg next week, a gathering aimed at making preparations for the BRICS Summit scheduled to be held in August.

Apart from attending the meeting, Wang, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, will also visit Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Türkiye, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning announced on Wednesday.

Calling the meeting an important platform for political and security cooperation among BRICS countries, Mao said China expects to discuss with BRICS partners the

current international security situation and issues of common concerns.

During the meeting, China looks forward to building up consensus and deepening cooperation with BRICS countries, so as to inject positive energy for a world that is experiencing turbulence and transformation, the spokeswoman said.

South Africa is the current chair of BRICS, a group of emerging economies that also includes Brazil, Russia, India and China.

On Wang's visits to the three African countries, Mao said China will work with the African side to deliver on the outcomes of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to further boost the growth of their comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership.

Beijing will also work with Ankara to actively advance Belt and Road

cooperation and push for the development of the strategic cooperation relationship between the two countries, she added.

As a strong supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative, Türkiye signed a memorandum of understanding with China in 2015 to align its Middle Corridor plan linking Türkiye and Europe with China via a trans-Caspian transport route.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin will participate in the BRICS summit by video call, Russia's state RIA news agency reported on Wednesday.

The Presidency of South Africa said in a statement that Putin will not attend the meeting in person and will be represented by Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Xinhua and agencies contributed to this story.

## Thai parliament blocks Pita's 2nd PM bid

By **YANG HAN** in Hong Kong  
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Pita Limjaroenrat, winner of Thailand's general election in May, failed to gain the parliament vote to be renominated as prime minister on Wednesday.

The Constitutional Court on the same day suspended him from parliament due to a disqualification case.

The attempt to renominate Pita for prime minister failed as 395 of 715 parliamentarians voted that the renomination violates Parliament regulation No 41, which deals with the submission of a repeat motion.

Lawmakers gathered in a joint session of the bicameral parliament on Wednesday to make a second bid to elect Thailand's prime minister, following last week's unsuccessful initial attempt.

Earlier in the day, Thailand's Constitutional Court suspended the Move Forward party leader and prime ministerial candidate Pita as a member of parliament pending the court's ruling on his disqualification case submitted by the Election Commission.

The court's decision came after it received a complaint filed by the Election Commission that Pita owned shares in a media company at the time of registering his candi-



Pita Limjaroenrat (left), leader of the Move Forward party, attends a meeting at the Parliament in Bangkok on Wednesday. SAKCHAI LALIT / ASSOCIATED PRESS

dacy for the May 14 election, which violates electoral rules.

Pita, a 42-year-old Harvard alumnus, left the chamber following the official order from the court. He has 15 days to respond to the case, according to the court's statement.

Move Forward party won the election, which saw a record turnout, with 151 MP seats compared with runner-up Pheu Thai's 141.

Protesters gathered outside the gates of the parliament to express their anger over the court's decision to suspend Pita as an MP. They later moved to the Democracy Monument in downtown Bangkok in the evening.

There was no voting on the prime minister position since Pita was the only one nominated for the

day. As he was the only PM candidate from the Move Forward party, the three candidates from the Pheu Thai party will be next in line.

If a new prime minister can be selected and a new government can be formed by August or September, the impact of the election on the Thai economy will not be serious and investment projects can proceed, said Thanawat Pholwchai, rector of the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and advisory chair of the Economic and Business Forecast Centre.

If, however, a new government cannot be formed by October or even later, disbursement of the 2024 fiscal year's budget will be postponed to the second quarter of the year, which will affect the national economy, said Thanawat.

The Bank of Thailand said on Wednesday that the election of the next prime minister will not have much of an impact on the country's overall economic outlook and it will enjoy a growth of 3-4 percent this year.

But the central bank expects the enactment of the fiscal 2024 budget bill to be delayed, said governor Sethaput Suthiwartnarueput, noting the economic forecast had already taken into account a political scenario of a delay in the formation of the next government.

## DPRK silent after US soldier crosses border

SEOUL — Pyongyang was silent on Wednesday about the highly unusual entry of a soldier from the United States who bolted into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during a tour in the border village of Panmunjom a day earlier, media reported.

The soldier — identified as Travis King, a private second class who has been in the army since 2021 — crossed the border "willfully and without authorization", said Colonel Isaac Taylor, a spokesman for the US military in the Republic of Korea.

King was the first known US citizen detained in the DPRK in nearly five years, The Associated Press reported.

King, 23, was a cavalry scout with the 1st Armored Division who had served nearly two months in a prison in the ROK for assault. He

was released on July 10 and was being sent home on Monday to Fort Bliss, Texas, where he could have faced additional military discipline and discharge from the service.

He was escorted as far as customs but left the airport before boarding his plane. It wasn't clear how he spent the hours until joining the Panmunjom tour and running across the border on Tuesday afternoon.

The US Army released his name and limited information after King's family was notified. But a number of US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, provided additional details.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that the US government was working with its DPRK counterparts to "resolve this incident".

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told a Pentagon news conference: "We believe that he is in (DPRK) custody and so we're closely monitoring and investigating the situation."

The US and the DPRK are still officially at war because the Korean War (1950-53) ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. The US still stations about 28,000 troops in the Korean Peninsula.

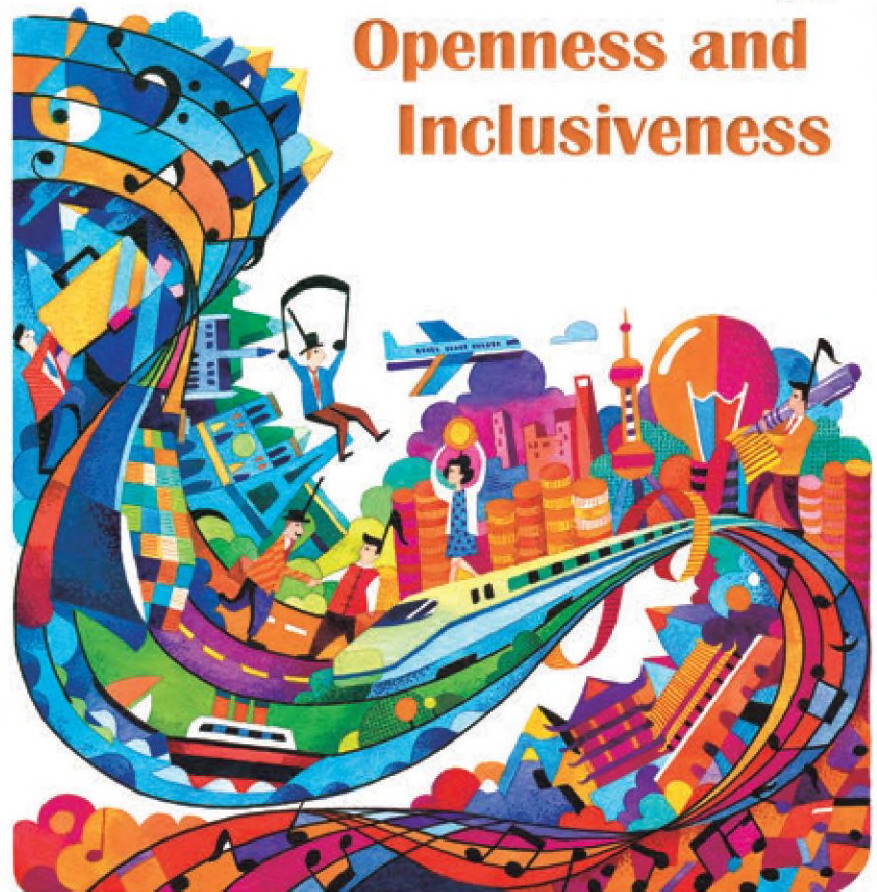
It wasn't known whether and how Washington and Pyongyang, which have no diplomatic relations, would hold talks.

Some observers say the two sides could still communicate via Panmunjom or the DPRK mission at the United Nations in New York.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

# The Belt and Road Initiative

Connectivity,  
Openness and  
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## BUSINESS

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## Baidu going full steam ahead to aid LLMs

By FAN FEIFEI  
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Baidu Inc will double down on efforts to bolster the application of large language models in a broad range of industries, and play an active role in the top-level design and formulation of national standards for testing LLMs, a senior executive at the Chinese tech heavy-weight said.

The company will participate in the research and development of core technologies for LLMs, industrial application and establishment of national standards and ecosystem for LLMs, to boost the healthy development of China's artificial intelligence industry, said Wu Tian, vice-president of Baidu.

The country's first standardization task force for LLMs was formed during the sixth World Artificial Intelligence Conference, which concluded in Shanghai on July 7.

The special team, headed by the Shanghai artificial intelligence innovation center, consists of six joint team leaders — Baidu, Alibaba Cloud, iFlytek Co Ltd, 360 Security Technology Inc, Huawei Cloud, and the research institute of China Mobile.

LLMs refer to computer algorithms that are trained with huge amounts of data and capable of generating content such as images, text, audio and video. They are the key technology underpinning ChatGPT, an AI chatbot developed by US-based AI research company OpenAI.

According to a new report by global market research company International Data Corp, the LLM launched by Baidu topped the list among all China-made ones in terms of comprehensive technical capabilities.

Ernie Bot, Baidu's ChatGPT-like AI LLM, received seven full marks out of 12 indicators, and secured the top position in algorithm model, general capabilities, innovation abilities and industrial coverage.

A total of 14 LLM developers, such as Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, Tencent Holdings Ltd, Huawei Technologies Co and iFlytek participated in the assessment.

Ernie Bot, which boasts strong capabilities in fields such as literary creation, business writing, mathematics, and understanding Chinese language, has been applied in segments including energy, finance, education and healthcare, Baidu said.

So far, more than 150,000 enterprises have requested beta testing for Ernie Bot.

As of May, China had developed at least 79 AI large language models, or rivals of ChatGPT, according to a report released by the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China.

The emergence of generative AI and large language models presents a transformative potential of AI in various industries to help people and organizations achieve more and have a positive impact on society, said Robin Li, co-founder and CEO of Baidu in a previous interview.

On responsible use and advancement of AI technology, Li said to prevent AI from getting out of control, nations with advanced AI technologies must cooperate in establishing the necessary rules and regulations.

Lu Yanxia, research director at IDC China, said Chinese tech companies have gained an upper hand in offering users AI-powered conversational results based on Chinese language and culture. "Generative AI has brought new business opportunities for domestic AI servers, cloud computing and chip companies," Lu said.

Last week, the Chinese authorities issued a 24-item guideline for managing generative AI services, which will take effect on Aug 15. The country will encourage the innovative development of generative AI and supervise on the fast-developing technology using methods compatible with innovation and development, according to the interim measures.

Employees work on the production line of an electronics company in Zixing, Hunan province.  
LI KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Industrial economy to get fresh boost

Implementation of policies for a wide range of consumption to accelerate

By MASI  
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China's top industry regulator said on Wednesday it will accelerate the implementation of policies to promote consumption in industries like automobiles and home appliances.

It will also draft new measures to fuel growth in 10 key industries, including electronics and steel.

China has been striving to buoy the recovery of its sprawling industrial economy, which is picking up pace amid a steady rebound in domestic demand despite external uncertainties.

China's industrial output, a gauge of activity in manufacturing, mining and utilities, grew 4.4 percent year-on-year in June after a 3.5 percent rise in May, the National Bureau of Statistics said.

Zhao Zhiguo, spokesman and chief engineer at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said despite difficulties like insufficient demand and declining profits, the fundamentals of China's industrial development and the trend of macroeconomic recovery and improvement have not changed.

The ministry will step up efforts to promote purchases of new energy vehicles, smart home appliances and green building materials in the countryside, and accelerate the development of medical equipment, aviation, yachts and other industries, Zhao said.

"We will partner with the China

Development Bank to implement special loan programs to increase investment in manufacturing. Meanwhile, we will encourage companies to explore markets in countries and regions taking part in the Belt and Road Initiative and consolidate the export of industrial products."

Since the beginning of this year, China's industrial economy has maintained a recovery and positive development trend. In the first half, industrial output grew 3.8 percent year-on-year, 0.4 percentage point and 0.8 percentage point faster, respectively, compared to a year earlier and the first quarter of this year.

As the backbone of the manufacturing sector, the equipment manufacturing segment has maintained a steady development momentum. Automotive, electrical machinery and equipment manufacturing have maintained high profit growth, Zhao said.

NBS data showed the output of semiconductor equipment manufacturing jumped nearly 31 percent year-on-year, while that of electronic components and mechanical equipment manufacturing rose 46.5 percent in the first half of this year.

Ye Yindan, a researcher at the BOC Research Institute, said going forward, the industrial economy will maintain a good recovery momentum on the back of the sustained rebound in domestic demand, which is expected to offset the pressure of falling external demand and become the main

force to drive production.

Meanwhile, the government is expected to maintain policy support, which will continuously restore the confidence of small and medium-sized enterprises, and improve market expectations, Ye said.

It is important to adjust policy priorities in a timely fashion based on economic recovery, Ye said, underlining support for the development of newly established enterprises in the form of tax incentives and financial support, and encouragement for State-owned enterprises to postpone the collection of rent from newly established enterprises.

Meanwhile, more efforts are needed to provide policy support and other kinds of assistance to manufacturers and bolster their digital and intelligent transformation, experts said.

Wei Qijia, head of industrial economy research at the State Information Center, said manufacturing is important to China's economic growth. It is necessary to combine the expansion of domestic demand with the stabilization of external demand, so as to overcome challenges in a better way.

Yang Yuanqing, chairman and CEO of Lenovo Group Ltd, the world's largest personal computer maker, said China's efforts to support the private sector and implement favorable industrial and financial policies are giving companies more confidence.

"We aim to grow our personal computer business at a growth rate that outpaces overall industry growth and maintain industry-leading profitability in the new fiscal year," Yang said.

## Experts: More active fiscal policy on agenda

By ZHANG YUE  
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China's fiscal policies will work more actively to boost both investment and consumption to secure a greater overall economic recovery in the second half, experts said.

Their comments came after the Ministry of Finance said on Wednesday that the country's first-half fiscal revenue grew 13.3 percent year-on-year, totaling 11.92 trillion yuan (\$1.65 trillion). Fiscal spending over the same period totaled 13.4 trillion yuan, up 3.9 percent.

In the first six months, tax revenue increased 16.5 percent year-on-year, with domestic value-added tax (VAT) growing 96 percent.

Specifically, domestic consumption tax over this period came in at \$27.2 billion yuan, contracting by 13.4 percent year-on-year. Corporate income tax came in at 2.686 trillion yuan, down 5.4 percent.

At a media briefing on Wednesday, Xue Xiaolian, a ministry official, noted that fiscal revenue growth in the first six months has been comparatively high. Such a notable growth benefited from the country's economic recovery, but was also influenced by the base effect of the large-scale VAT deferrals and refunds since last April. Such an influence has resulted in a prominent jump in VAT revenue this year between January and June, pushing up overall fiscal income accordingly.

Li Dawei, deputy director of the ministry's budget department,

said at the briefing that some 2.17 trillion yuan of special local government bonds have been issued in the January-June period, and this has supported a large number of projects that benefit people's livelihoods and shore up weak links.

Li said that China will guide local governments to speed up the issuance of such bonds in the second half.

A quicker and stronger recovery in the services sector, particularly in catering and tourism, has contributed to the significant increase in fiscal revenue in the first half, said Wen Laicheng, a professor at the Central University of Finance and Economics and an expert on fiscal policy studies.

"Going forward, fiscal revenue growth is likely to face some pressure, as the current economic recovery still faces challenges," he said. "For example, effective demand remains insufficient from both investment and consumption. Recovery of the private sector is not satisfactory. Plus, residents' willingness to spend is weak, which is leading to an increase in bank deposits."

He urged accelerated implementation of proactive fiscal policy measures to facilitate economic recovery this year.

"Efforts are needed to accelerate the issuance of local government special bonds to generate more real economy activity. In the meantime, fiscal policies that help promote investment and consumption should be quickly introduced," he said.

## Briefly

## Trade body: US moves hurting chip ties

Alluding to the United States' restrictions on US companies from exporting key chip-related technologies and components to China, a major trade body has issued a warning. The China Semiconductor Industry Association said in a statement on Wednesday: "Any damage to the current global supply chain, which developed over the past decades alongside the process of globalization, could create inevitable and irreparable harm to the global economy." The association also said it noticed media coverage that leaders of major US chip companies are trying to persuade the US government to avoid expanding trade restrictions and instead promote international cooperation.

## New HSR to connect Guangxi, Vietnam

The Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region in South China is building a high-speed railway in its prefecture-level city of Chongzuo, which is

expected to link with Vietnam's railway upon completion. The 81.52-kilometer Chongzuo-Pingxiang Railway, part of which is being built by China Railway No 4 Engineering Group Co Ltd, will connect with Guangxi's capital Nanning upon completion. Pingxiang is a county-level city under Chongzuo. The western end of the line can link with Vietnam's Dongdang-Hanoi Railway via the Huanan-Guangxi Railway that connects Huanan's Hengyang with the Friendship Pass in Pingxiang.

## Shenzhen sets up over 35m e-CNY wallets

The South China metropolis of Shenzhen, Guangdong province had opened 35.94 million e-CNY wallets by the end of June, 7.6 million more than the number recorded at the beginning of the year. Currently, more than 2.1 million businesses in the city accept digital yuan payments, according to the city's central branch of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

CHINA DAILY · XINHUA

## New guidance to help private firms

By CHENG YU in Beijing  
and HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou

China's latest guidance to promote development of the private sector will give full play to the dynamic role of entrepreneurs in driving employment and stimulating economic growth, and will give them the "greatest confidence" to develop amid rising economic uncertainties, company executives and industry experts said on Wednesday.

They made the comments as the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, the country's Cabinet, released a document on Wednesday detailing a total of 31 measures to drive development of private enterprises, which include breaking down market barriers and protecting rights of entrepreneurs abroad.

Pony Ma, chairman and CEO of leading tech company Tencent Holdings, said the guidance directly addresses concerns of entrepreneurs regarding business environment, policy support, regulatory guidance, legal protections as well as public opinion atmosphere, and introduces practical policy measures.

"Notably, the guidance has made clear the development direction of platform companies, which will greatly boost our determination and motivation for future development," Ma said.

The guidance said that more efforts will be made to support platform companies to develop in the direction of openness, innovation and empowerment, and to support platform companies in creating jobs, expanding consumption and engaging in international competition.

Ma said: "China's platform economy has entered a brand-new development period, and the traditional business development model is being transformed and renewed. The value of platform companies in driving (consumption) demand, innovative development, employment, entrepreneurship and public services is waiting to be fully tapped into. It sets clear the goal of platform enterprises to be open and innovative as well as enablers during future development."

Ma added that Tencent will develop in line with these directions to be a connector, a toolbox and an assistant, and promote its consumer internet business to

boost domestic demand, enhance its industrial internet business to help drive innovative development of the country's modernization, and beef up competitiveness of the company's overseas business.

Yang Hui, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and chairman of Yunzhanghu, an online flexible job platform, said that the guideline has given the "greatest confidence" to private enterprises and entrepreneurs to develop in the future.

"As the guidance has launched very detailed policies, private enterprises need not worry about whether they can expand investment, but only need to consider whether their business model is feasible, and to develop with greater resources input and the most positive attitude," Yang said.

The private sector has been a driver of the nation's economic growth and innovative development. Private firms contributed about 50 percent of the country's tax revenue, 60 percent of GDP and 70 percent of technological innovation, said the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

According to the latest data from

A view of the booth of Tencent at an expo in Shanghai.  
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

the State Administration for Market Regulation, the nation's top market regulator, the number of registered private enterprises exceeded 50.93 million by the end of May.

As the guidance also proposed to protect the physical and financial safety of entrepreneurs overseas and build a cooperation mechanism to prevent and resolve risks, Lei Jun, founder of smartphone firm Xiaomi Corp, said that it made them feel reassured and more encouraged and resilient to go boldly abroad for business opportunities.

Liu Shangxi, president of the Chi-

nese Academy of Fiscal Sciences, said in an earlier interview that economic recovery was weaker than expected in the first half, and that to stabilize market expectations, a "long-acting reassurance pill" must be given to private companies.

Noting that private investment has experienced negative growth in past months, he emphasized that the confidence of private enterprises, which are critical drivers of the country's economic growth, must be bolstered.

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# BUSINESSFOCUS

## China to lead ongoing innovation in 6G

Major carriers lay out R&D roadmap for next-gen tech in partnership with industry pioneers, institutes

By MASI  
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Chinese telecom operators are leaving no stone unturned in efforts to establish a beachhead in 6G, the next-generation wireless technology that has turned into a key battleground for innovation and industrial transformation.

The International Telecommunication Union last month approved a 6G vision framework, a foundational document for global 6G work, pressing the start button for renewed research and development across the world.

The newly approved 6G standard now includes six key usage scenarios, compared to only three for the extant 5G technology.

A key feature of 6G is that it will allow the interoperability of terrestrial networks with nonterrestrial technologies such as satellites, ITU said.

China Unicom is working hard to explore key potential technologies for 6G.

The company expects to complete technical research and explore early application scenarios for 6G technology by 2025, said Liu Liehong, chairman of China Unicom.

The commercial launch of 6G in China is expected to begin from 2030, he said.

China Unicom is determined to accelerate the R&D of 6G by tackling key technologies, said Liang Baojun, the telecom operator's deputy general manager.

The cellular network provider will promote close collaboration between the industry, the academic community and research institutes to carry out collaborative innovation in 6G unified network architecture and technologies, Liang said.

This is a crucial time to identify critical 6G technologies, said Gao Tongqing, deputy general manager of China Mobile, adding that the company will work hard to strengthen tech convergence and innovation.

The company last month kicked off its 6G public experimental verification platform, which provides an open and scenario-based joint R&D testing environment for industrial partners, supports the verification of various new business and application scenarios, and lowers the R&D threshold for 6G key technologies.

"6G will be commercially available around 2030 in China, and 3GPP (an international organization on telecom technology development) is expected to start 6G standardization in 2025. As the day is drawing near, 6G R&D has



A visitor checks out a display of latest 5G and 6G technologies during the 2023 Mobile World Congress in Shanghai in June. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



People experience virtual reality gadgets at this year's MWC in Shanghai. WANG XIANG / XINHUA

reached a key breakthrough period now," said Huang Yuhong, general manager of the China Mobile Research Institute.

In order to realize 6G commercialization by 2030, the base stations for forming 6G networks should be ready around 2029, Huang said. According to the ITU's 6G vision, the global telecom industry will likely verify 6G innovations in the next 3-4 years.

China started 6G technology

R&D in 2019, she said.

Chinese enterprises, universities and scientific institutions have already made breakthroughs in some key 6G technologies, such as new network architecture, integration of communication, AI for network and network for AI, and sensing re-configurable intelligent surfaces. These have laid a strong foundation for 6G exploration, Huang said.

In the past, Chinese companies had worked with international organizations to establish standards for 3G, 4G and 5G technologies, said Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecom industry association. They should enhance their partnerships and cooperation with foreign counterparts "to promote the formation of globally unified 6G standards", Xiang said.

“6G will be commercially available around 2030 in China ... As the day is drawing near, 6G R&D has reached a key breakthrough period now.”

Huang Yuhong, general manager of the China Mobile Research Institute

China's Minister of Industry and Information Technology Jin Zhuanglong said last month that the country will extensively push for greater R&D in the field of 6G.

China has established the IMT-2030 (6G) Promotion Group, a flagship platform promoting 6G and international cooperation.

As the next-generation mobile communication technology, 6G will integrate with advanced computing, big data, artificial intelligence and blockchain, according to a white paper issued by the group.

The world expects to see commercialization of 6G around 2030, and the 6G network will realize deep integration of the physical and virtual worlds, and build a new one featuring intelligent connections to everything, it said.

## Nation grabs pole position in telecom

By WANG YING in Shanghai  
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As the Mobile World Congress Shanghai celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, China — the world's second-largest economy — has grown from a quiet participant to a role at the center stage.

The MWC Shanghai 2023, held from June 28-30, attracted some 300 exhibitors, said its organizer, the Global System for Mobile Communications Alliance.

"I think the biggest achievement recently has been, in the earlier days of technology evolution here (3G and 4G), China was learning from the rest of the world, and now China is leading and showcasing to the rest of the world," said John Hoffman, CEO and director of GSMA Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of GSMA.

"I mean, (China is) by far the biggest market in the world — the most base stations, the most customers, the most vertical solutions; the innovation that's here has been amazing," Hoffman said.

5G is going through a turning point from quantitative growth to qualitative growth, as the nation's 5G users exceeded 561 million last year, said Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies Co, in a speech at the event.

For example, it is estimated that 5G directly drove 1.45 trillion yuan (\$202 billion) in China's economic output in 2022, Meng said.

According to Hoffman, China had traditionally taken a more quiet stance, but of late, especially with 5G, the country has gained international prominence in telecom, and it has a great story to tell and a lot of leadership to offer.

"I think that's the biggest transformation that I've seen. Obviously, the technical transformation, the scale, no one anywhere can compare. But the mentality of taking a leadership role, I think, is the biggest transformation that I've seen," Hoffman said.

GSMA, he added, is expecting China to surpass 1 billion 5G users by 2025, and the continuous growth will not only come from new innovations for consumers and small businesses, but also from the leadership shown in connecting everything.

As the world focuses on 5G, China's vigorous promotion of R&D of 6G — the next-generation telecom technology — can give it an edge in maintaining its leading position in the sector, Hoffman added.

"Unlike many other countries where 5G and innovation are located in dense urban pockets, China has been very good at rolling out to the rural areas, leaving no one behind. And I think that is a great strength," he said. "I think that China will continue to be a leader and showcase a model for others around the world. There's no doubt that the size and the scale give great opportunities."

For the first time this year, MWC Shanghai unveiled a Digital Shanghai zone, which displayed the innovations and achievements of the Chinese industry and highlighted Shanghai's international technology vision.

Since launching the event a decade ago, MWC Shanghai has experienced the industry transit from 4G to 5G networks, and the growth of China as a mobile infrastructure and device manufacturing giant, according to the GSMA.

"When 3G was launched in China, we said we needed to be in the biggest market in the world and we made the decision to come to Shanghai because, at that time, it was the most international city, a showcase. And a lot of business was done here," Hoffman recalled.

Mats Granryd, director-general of GSMA, called Shanghai — a technology hub in the world's biggest mobile market — the natural host city for MWC in Asia.

The reason why Shanghai was chosen as the venue was not only because the city had some 25 million people, but also because of its huge investment in science and technology, he said.

"During the last decade, the amount of money being put into science and technology research has been tripled," Granryd said during a news conference ahead of the event.

## Huawei to roll out 5.5G equipment

By MASI

Huawei Technologies Co will launch a complete set of commercial 5.5G network equipment next year, as part of a broader push to speed up the evolution of 5G and kick off the 5.5G era for the information and communications technology industry.

The plan comes amid rapid progress in 5G deployment over the past four years that is already yielding significant financial gains, experts said, adding that the fast-approaching 5.5G will be a key milestone in 5G evolution.

Huawei proposed the concept of a "5.5G Era" to protect telecom operators' investment in 5G, and improve network performance by 10 times. The 5.5G era will feature 10-gigabit peak downlink speeds and gigabit peak uplink speeds to meet increasingly diverse service requirements. It will also use new technologies like passive internet of things to unlock a market of 100 billion IoT connections.

"With a clearly defined standardization schedule, the 5.5G Era is already poised for technological and commercial verification," Yang

**100 billion** number of IoT connections that can be set up by 5.5G technologies

Chaobin, president of ICT Products & Solutions at Huawei, said during the Mobile World Congress Shanghai 2023 in June.

"In 2024, Huawei will launch a complete set of commercial 5.5G network equipment to be prepared for the commercial deployment of 5.5G. We look forward to working with all industry players to embark on the new journey toward the 5.5G era," Yang said.

Huawei has been working with multiple players across the industry on R&D and verification of key 5.5G technologies, with significant progress, specifically in extremely large antenna arrays which underpin 10-gigabit downlinks, flexible spectrum access that helps in realizing gigabit uplinks, and passive IoT that can enable 100 billion IoT connections.

According to the company, 5G PON is another key technology that

can enable 10-gigabit speeds for F5.5G ultra-broadband networks, and is expected to be extensively used in homes, campuses, and industry in the future.

Huawei has worked with over 30 operators around the world on technological verification and application pilots for these technologies, the company said.

The industry is still in its earliest stage of developing a vision for 6G, and has only just begun related research into key technologies. This is the reason why many have turned to 5.5G as their milestone for future development. The 10-fold improvement in network capabilities in the 5.5G era is set to enable numerous industries to unleash the productivity of digital technology, Huawei said.

There are more than 260 commercial 5G networks worldwide today, serving over 1.2 billion users, according to data compiled by Huawei.

In China, the number of 5G base stations exceeded 2.84 million by the end of May as the country ramped up efforts to build the world's largest and most advanced network infrastructure, said Wang Jiangping, vice-minister of indus-



Visitors check out Huawei's 5.5G technologies during the 2023 Mobile World Congress in Shanghai in June. WANG XIANG / XINHUA

try and information technology, during the Global Digital Economy Conference 2023 held in Beijing earlier this month.

With technologically advanced network infrastructure, China has been accelerating the development of the digital economy in recent years.

The scale of China's digital economy grew to 50.2 trillion yuan (\$7 trillion) in 2022. The share of the digital economy in the country's GDP rose to 41.5 percent, making it

an important engine for stable growth and transformation, according to data from the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology.

With service models and content evolving continuously, breakthroughs in technologies like goggles-free 3D are creating unprecedented immersive experiences for users. However, these new services require stronger 5G network capabilities, making a strong case for 5.5G modalities.

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Reckless attacks on China's high-tech sector are endangering growth of US chipmakers

The Joe Biden administration continues to tighten the squeeze on China's high-tech sector. Being an *idee fixe*, its architects ignore the obvious boomerang effect that inflicts pain on the US. But this is hurting US companies to such an extent that the major US chipmakers can no longer remain silent.

The chief executives of Intel, Qualcomm and Nvidia gathered in Washington on Monday to meet with the top officials of the Biden administration, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, to discuss how to ensure that the administration's aggressive policy does not shut these US chip companies out of the lucrative Chinese market.

This comes in tandem with the US-based Semiconductor Industry Association calling on the Biden administration to "refrain from further restrictions" on chip sales to China and urging the administration to allow "the industry to have continued access to the China market, the world's largest commercial market for commodity semiconductors." Last year, China accounted for \$180 billion in semiconductor purchases, around one-third of the world's total of \$555.9 billion, and it remained the largest single market, according to the SIA.

The huge and growing Chinese market has been pivotal to the US chipmaking industry, given that sales there provide the scale for US companies to fund high levels of investment in research and

development back in the US, from which come superior technology and products, which in turn reinforces the US leadership in technology.

However, "repeated steps ... to impose overly broad, ambiguous, and at times unilateral restrictions risk diminishing the US semiconductor industry's competitiveness, disrupting supply chains, causing significant market uncertainty and prompting continued escalatory retaliation by China," the SIA said in a statement.

The appeal for the Biden administration to forgo new tech curbs on China comes as the White House is planning a fresh round of restrictions on chip exports to China, further escalating its offensive against the Chinese mainland's semiconductor, quantum-computing and artificial intelligence sectors. The US already imposed sweeping export controls in October, making it almost impossible for companies to sell chips, chipmaking equipment and software containing US technology to China.

Such acts of "tech hegemony," which violate World Trade Organization rules and threaten the stability of global industry supply chains, risk compromising all the efforts the two countries have made recently to stabilize Sino-US relations. They also run counter to Biden's claim that the US has no intention to seek "decoupling" from China, to halt China's economic development, or to contain China. In an interdependent world, no country will emerge a winner from the politicizing and weaponizing of trade and technology.

## EU needs to soul-search on summit failure

Rather than showcase harmony and unity, as the host intended, the summit of the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Brussels from Monday to Tuesday, highlighted the two sides' positions on many issues are irreconcilable.

Both the EU and CELAC are well aware that it is Brussels' "de-risking" strategy in relation to China and its participation in Washington's scheme to enervate Russia that have forced the EU to turn to Latin America for raw industrial materials and energy, not the concerns of the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

To relieve the awkwardness caused by that, the EU president quoted Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges at the opening of the first EU-CELAC summit in eight years: "Contrary to love, friendship does not require frequency." But that only served to highlight the EU's attention is motivated by need.

Even some European leaders voiced recognition of the error of the EU's ways.

"You have to realize that in the past, we didn't pick up the phone when they had issues. So there is very serious irritation among a great many countries," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said. "That we get this back in our face now is also proof that we, as Europe, sometimes acted a bit arrogantly."

That the European countries don't treat Latin American and Caribbean states as equal partners even in the 21st century has been salt in the

wounds for the CELAC countries, many of which were former colonies of European countries.

As Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which holds the presidency of the 33-nation CELAC, said, "Most of Europe was, and still is, overwhelmingly the lopsided beneficiary in a relationship, in which our Latin America and our Caribbean, have been and are unequally yoked."

No official joint declaration was released after the summit nor were there any announcements on economic and trade deals. That no breakthroughs were made on even such long-stalled trade agreements as the EU-Mercosur deal between the EU and Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay — which has foundered for five years just short of full ratification — further exposes that the divergences that exist between the two sides run deeper than trade issues.

It is therefore ridiculous that some in the EU attribute the fruitlessness of the summit to China's engagement with Latin America, which they argue has helped raise the latter's profile.

Those people should do some soul-searching on the root cause of the difficulties in the EU's relations with the region, which it has never treated with due respect and on an equal footing.

And after surrendering its strategic autonomy to Washington, the EU is discovering that handling relations with Latin America, or any other part of the world that is not included in Washington's country club, can only be done in the shadow of the US.

## Washington should show acumen and courage

In his meeting with visiting former US national security adviser and secretary of state Henry Kissinger in Beijing on Wednesday, China's senior diplomat Wang Yi said that the US needs to demonstrate the diplomatic acumen of Kissinger and the political courage of former president Richard Nixon, and take actions to clearly and openly oppose "Taiwan independence."

The world is increasingly worried by the escalating frictions between China and the United States caused by the Joe Biden administration's reckless insistence on repeatedly provoking Beijing on the Taiwan question. It was therefore pertinent for State Councilor and Defense Minister Li Shangfu to warn again of the severe consequences of the current lack of communication between the two militaries in his meeting with Kissinger on Tuesday.

He told Kissinger, who was instrumental to the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations in the 1970s, that the Chinese side is committed to dialogue. But meaningful dialogue won't come easy, as both sides see the other as liable for its present lack of mid- and high-level communication between their militaries.

Washington has time and again blamed Beijing for turning down its offers to resume inter-military talks, which Beijing cut off following the visit of Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the US House of Representatives, to Taiwan in August last year.

Last month, a Defense Ministry spokesman attributed Beijing's refusal to talk with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on the sidelines

of the June Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore to the "unilateral sanctions on China", to which Li himself remains a subject. Such obstacles need to be removed before any exchange and cooperation can take place between the two countries, the spokesman said. Yet Washington has refused to lift the sanctions.

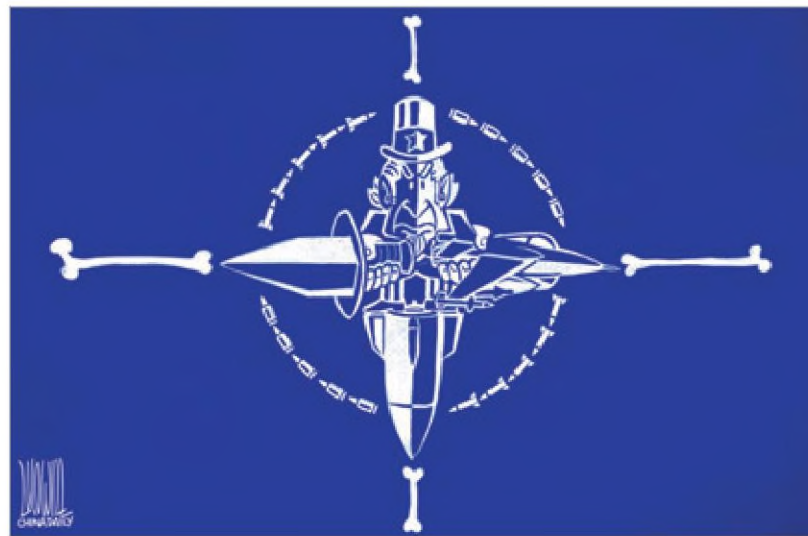
Li was correct in observing that the "interdependence between the two countries is being neglected, the history of win-win cooperation is being misinterpreted, and the atmosphere of friendly communication is being undermined." Kissinger, now 100 years old, is in Beijing "under his own volition", as the US State Department said, "not acting on behalf of the US government". So the impact of his meetings and talks in Beijing will therefore be limited.

But unobstructed military-to-military communication is the key to a stable, predictable and constructive China-US relationship, which both Beijing and Washington say they are committed to. As observers have warned, the prolonged absence of such exchanges may prove more dangerous than at any time during the Cold War.

In his meeting with Li, Kissinger said that history and practice have repeatedly proved that neither the US nor China can afford to treat the other as an adversary, and he called for strengthened communication between the two militaries so they can do their best to create positive results for the development of bilateral relations.

It is to be hoped that he can make that point convincingly persuasive on his return to the US.

Luo Jie



## Opinion Line

## Importance of engaging directly with private enterprises revealed

The National Development and Reform Commission held a symposium with private entrepreneurs on Monday, the third of its kind in half a month. The symposiums are a part of its efforts to set up a mechanism to learn about the difficulties private enterprises are facing.

The enterprises are in various industries across the country. The private entrepreneurs put forward targeted suggestions.

The feelings of private enterprises on macro policies and their suggestions should serve as important references for the authorities to study and formulate macro policies. Listening to the voices of entrepreneurs and understanding the accurate situation at the grassroots will help the authorities objectively evaluate

the implementation effect of current policies in a timely manner and promote the improvement of macro policy measures.

As for the specific demands and proposals of private enterprises, the NDRC said that it will coordinate with relevant parties to work out solutions, and introduce new policies or take measures to improve the old policies.

The NDRC vows to continue to improve the communication and exchange mechanism with private enterprises, adhere to such communications with private entrepreneurs on a regular basis, and organize local authorities at all levels to jointly listen to the voices of private enterprises, focus on optimizing the development environment for private enterprises, and form a joint

force to promote the development of the private economy.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Commerce and other departments, too, had recently held similar symposiums with relevant private enterprises.

This marks a key step for the authorities to improve market expectations and restore market confidence in development. This way, the authorities can further expand the channels for collecting opinions from the grassroots, respond to and solve their concerns in a timely manner, enhance the confidence and expectations of all types of enterprises and promote high-quality development of the economy.

— CHINA NEWS.COM

## Children's dress sense raises eyebrows

Some clothing designs that can be called "sexy" and which are best-suited to adults are now available for children to wear. Although there is nothing illegal about it, it still raises concerns.

Stricter norms apply for the children's clothing industry in terms of material used given their tender skin. Because of their underdeveloped understanding of the world, there should be a higher threshold when it comes to designing clothes for children too. Definitely, not all elements of adults' attire are suitable for minors.

To begin with, parents should fulfill their responsibility and make sure their children are dressed appropriately. They should help raise children's awareness so that they are not lured by what is in vogue because of a consumerist culture.

Schools are also obliged to help

inculcate in children a proper dress sense that aligns with good customs. E-commerce platforms are also expected to ensure that the products and services they offer do not violate public order and good customs, and guarantee, as far as possible, that their operations do not constitute threats to the rights and interests of minors or risks to their safety.

Those business owners who use child models to advertise the aforementioned inappropriate clothing and the platforms selling such attire are both suspected of breaching relevant laws and regulations with regard to minors' rights and interests.

It is the collective inaction of the guilds, marketing watchdogs and law enforcement departments that jointly makes the industry and supply chains in the above case complete. Even more so, parents who

allow their children to be used as models for the problematic commercials promoting the above kind of clothing should be held accountable for failing in their custodial duties.

It is suggested that the marketing regulatory departments make the channels through which people report such problems more responsive, and the punishments meted out to platform companies as severe as the harm their slack oversight has caused, not to forget the bad social influence it has cast, so as to deter others from doing the same.

And the garment and e-commerce industry must strengthen self-discipline and regulation.

In a nutshell, children should never have to pay the price for adults' greedy and foolish behavior.

— BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

## What They Say

## Japan's 'value diplomacy' falls flat in Middle East

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar from Sunday to Tuesday. Kishida's meetings with the leaders of these countries were on energy cooperation as well as regional and international affairs.

The fifth-largest oil consumer in the world, Japan relies on imports to meet around 97 percent of its demand. It imports more than 75 percent of its crude oil from Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Although Japan has a large stake in Russia's Sakhalin 2 project and can obtain 6 million tons of liquefied natural gas from Russia per year, due to the sharp deterioration of relations between Japan and Russia in recent years, Tokyo has a sense of panic, fearing that Russia will "run out of gas", so Japan now relies more on the Middle East for its energy supplies.

It is natural that energy cooperation was high on Kishida's agenda. However, it is beyond the expectation of many that Kishida also made use of the trip to promote a "free and open international order based on the rule of law" in light of the outcome of the G7 Hiroshima Summit.

However, by parroting Washington's doctrines and offering nothing new, Kishida has not achieved what he wanted regarding his US-style "value diplomacy", as the Middle East countries' focus now is on pragmatic cooperation rather than toeing the US line together with Japan.

Although his gung-ho performance to peddle US values might have won him praise from Washington, Kishida will have been made aware that not all the US' allies are as willing or as active as Japan in gambling their future on Washington's geopolitical game.

It should not be forgotten both US President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with a cold shoulder during their visits to the region.

Notably, during Kishida's visit, as reported by Japanese media, Japan and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement on joint investment in rare earth mining projects, in which Japan will pay for technology to find and develop rare earth in Saudi Arabia and third countries, presumably in preparation for China restricting its rare earth exports to it in the future.

In other words, even if the Kishida government has been painstakingly doing the US' biddings in the Asia-Pacific and beyond, it has no parties but itself to rely on to find solutions to the problems that are being caused by its blind following of the US.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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## COMMENT

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

## Disaster resilience crucial for Asia-Pacific

The world faces a disaster emergency, yet nowhere is the threat more immediate than in Asia and the Pacific. Ours is a region where climate change-induced disasters are becoming more frequent and intense. Since 1970, 2 million people have lost their lives to disasters. Tragically, but all too predictably, the poorest in the least developed countries are worst affected. They will find themselves in the eye of the storm as temperatures rise, new disaster hotspots appear and existing risks increase. Unless we fundamentally change our approach to building resilience to disaster risks, temperature rises of 1.5C or 2C will make adaptation to the threat of disasters unfeasible. Disaster risk could soon outpace resilience in Asia and the Pacific.

It is worth pondering what this would mean. The grim tally of disaster-related deaths would inevitably rise, as would the annual cost of disaster-related losses, forecast to increase to almost \$1 trillion, or 3 percent of regional GDP, under 2C warming-up from \$924 billion today, or 2.9 percent of regional GDP. The deadly combination of disasters and extreme weather would undermine productivity and imperil sustainable development. In the poorest parts of our region, such as the Pacific small island developing countries, disasters would become a major driver of inequality. Losses would be particularly devastating in the agriculture and energy sectors, disrupting food systems and undermining food security as well as jeopardizing energy supply and production. Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss would be remorseless, leading to climate change-driven extinctions and further increasing disaster risk.

To avoid this exponential growth of disaster risk, there is a narrow window of opportunity to increase resilience and protect hard-won development gains. To seize it, bold decisions are needed to deliver transformative adaptation. They can no longer be postponed.

This week, countries meeting during our Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction will consider key questions such as prioritizing greater investment in early warning systems. Expanding coverage in least developed countries is the most effective way to reduce the number of people killed. Early warning systems can shield people living in multi-hazard hotspots and reduce disaster losses everywhere by up to 60 percent. They provide a tenfold return on investment. To protect food systems and reduce the exposure of the energy infrastructure — the backbone of our economies — sector-specific coverage is needed. Investments at the local level to improve communities' response to early warning alerts, delivered through expanded global satellite data use and embedded in comprehensive risk management policies, must all be part of our approach.

Nature-based solutions should be at the heart of adaptation strategies. They

**Now is the time to work together, to build on innovation and scientific breakthroughs to accelerate transformative adaptation across the region.**

support the sustainable management, protection and restoration of degraded environments while reducing disaster risk. The evidence is unequivocal: preserving functional ecosystems in good ecological condition strengthens disaster risk reduction. This means preserving wetlands, flood plains and forests to guard against natural hazards, and mangroves and coral reefs to reduce coastal flooding. Forest restoration and sustainable agriculture are essential. In our urban centers, nature-based solutions can mitigate urban flooding and contribute to future urban resilience, including by reducing heat island effects.

Beyond these priorities, only transformative adaptation can deliver the systemic change needed to leave no one behind in multi-hazard risk hotspots. Such change will cut across policy areas. It means aligning social protection and

climate change interventions to enable poor and climate-vulnerable households to adapt and protect their assets and livelihoods. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation must become complementary to make food and energy systems more resilient, particularly in disaster-prone arid areas and coastlines. Technologies, such as the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence, can improve the accuracy of real-time weather predictions and how disaster warnings are communicated.

Yet to make this happen, disaster risk financing needs to be dramatically increased and financing mechanisms scaled up. In a constrained fiscal context, we must remember that investments made upstream are far more cost-effective than spending after a disaster. The current level of adaptation finance falls well short of the \$144.74 billion needed for transformative adaptation. We must tap innovative financing mechanisms to close the gap. Thematic bonds, debt for adaptation and ecosystem adaptation finance can help attract private investment, reduce risk and create new markets. These

instruments should complement official development assistance, while digital technologies improve the efficiency, transparency and accessibility of adaptation financing.

Now is the time to work together, to build on innovation and scientific breakthroughs to accelerate transformative adaptation across the region. A regional strategy that supports early warnings for all is needed to strengthen cooperation through the well-established United Nations mechanisms and in partnership with subregional intergovernmental organizations. At ESCAP, we stand ready to support this process every step of the way because sharing best practices and pooling resources can improve our region's collective resilience and response to climate-related hazards. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can only be achieved if we ensure disaster resilience is never outpaced by disaster risk. Let us seize the moment and protect our future in Asia and the Pacific.

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



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi

## A successful decade of BRI's contributions to Africa

The Belt and Road Initiative, although proposed by China, is an inclusive infrastructure development program which welcomes everyone to join. As a result, more than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have joined it in the 10 years since it was launched.

The 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative comes at a time when humankind is trying to overcome the impacts of the three-year COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and China is further opening up its economy. Against the background of rising regional and global insecurity and instability, people are wondering how to handle the enormously risky issues which could lead to conflict between major countries.

The good news is that China believes win-win cooperation and interdependence among countries are a guarantee for peaceful coexistence. The Belt and Road Initiative, combined with the Global Development Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, offers hope that working together the world can address the challenges facing the global economy.

In Africa, the Belt and Road Initiative is focused on removing the obstacles to the African countries' development, by helping build infrastructure, and providing capital and skilled workers.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative's framework, China has vowed to work with African countries to expedite the continent's economic development. And the results are there for all to see: many large-scale and economically beneficial infrastructure facilities such as roads, railways, ports and stadiums have been built in Africa in the past decade.

In terms of transport, China has helped build more than 6,000 kilometers of railways, 6,000 km of roads and nearly 20 ports in Africa. Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway, the Abuja-Kaduna Railway, and the Addis-Ababa-Djibouti Railway connect neighboring countries and communities in Africa.

Well-organized, smooth-functioning infrastructure leads to increased productivity in both the agricultural and industrial sectors. Take Ethiopia for example. The economy of Ethiopia, a country wrecked by famine and poverty till the recent past, is growing at an average annual rate of 10 percent due to its own indigenous reforms and hard work and the valuable contributions of China.

China has not only revolutionized hydropower production in Ethiopia but also helped build many large industrial parks which produce consumer goods, and even automobiles, for both the domestic and foreign markets. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway and the Djibouti Port, both built

by China, have turned out to be the artery through which Ethiopia imports and exports goods. While it imports materials such as fertilizers, it exports agricultural and consumer goods produced in the industrial parks.

Besides, the Lekki Deepwater Port in Nigeria, which is the largest deep-water port in West Africa and was built by a Chinese company, is expected to yield overall economic benefit of about \$360 billion and create 170,000 jobs, adding new vitality to Nigeria's economy.

In terms of skill capacity building through education, more African students are studying in China than the United States and the United Kingdom. China is also establishing research and development centers in several African countries, especially for agriculture and medicine. And through the "Health Silk Road", China has helped boost the capacity of African countries to produce vaccines.

While the above-mentioned projects represent just a few of those completed by China, they reflect the current and future impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on infrastructure connectivity in Africa and the continent's overall economic development.

As we look forward to another decade of the initiative, it is pertinent to mention that joint ventures have enabled Chinese enterprises to establish a presence in Africa, especially in three

key economic sectors: free trade zones and related sectors, transportation including aviation, and oil and gas.

Therefore, African countries and China should enter into more joint ventures now that business travel between China and African countries is becoming easier, in order to further boost Africa's development.

African countries, on their part, should encourage the employees of Chinese companies to learn the local languages and respect local customs and values when doing business with African governments or companies, while African government officials and companies' employees dealing with Chinese enterprises should learn the Chinese language, so they can better coordinate their actions and more easily reach consensus on issues.

In conclusion, the Belt and Road Initiative has proved helpful for developing countries. We look forward to another successful decade of the initiative, during which the international community will hopefully promote peace, harmony and prosperity, and help unleash the global economy's development potential.

*The author is the executive director of the Center for Nigerian Studies at the Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Zhang Monan

## US, EU de-risking biggest source of risks worldwide

The United States and the European Union say they are no longer pursuing "decoupling" from China and instead are pursuing a policy of "de-risking" trade from China. US politicians including US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the US does not seek confrontation. And the US plans to follow a strategy of "small yards with high fences" in the field of critical technology, and restrict the exports of advanced semiconductor technology to China, on the pretext of safeguarding national security, while conducting "normal" trade in other fields.

The first to use the term "de-risking", however, was European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. She mentioned the term in her speech on the EU's policy toward China in March, indicating the European bloc aims to reduce its economic dependence on China. The EU will achieve that goal by following the Economic Security Strategy, which it released recently, while Germany will do so by pursuing a new strategy toward China.

In recent years, the EU seems to be suffering from an increasing sense of insecurity in its relations with China, perhaps because it believes it is losing its trade advantages vis-à-vis China. As a result, the EU has only been pursuing a policy aimed at reducing its economic dependency on, and accelerating the decoupling of its supply chains from China, which have had a negative impact on Sino-EU economic cooperation. Also, since the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out, EU countries have been flocking to the US' security umbrella.

However, the US is using the term "de-risking" as a substitute for "decoupling". While it wants to continue to derive benefits from China, it has not abandoned its Cold War mindset of plotting to contain China's development.

**Such weaponization of trade will fail to reduce the risks, and cause mutual damage, further deteriorating the global trade environment.**

The US doesn't want to give up the benefits it derives from Sino-US trade and the vast Chinese market. Despite the souring of Sino-US relations over the past years, bilateral trade has continued to grow, with the total volume in 2021 reaching \$755 billion, up 28.7 percent year-on-year, and declining slightly to about \$700 billion in 2022.

China is a dynamic growth market, and its strong support for technological innovation and cooperation has helped innumerable US companies operating in China to make huge profits. Benefiting from the strong demand of its chips in China, Intel earned more than 40 percent of its revenue from the Chinese market from 2018 to 2020, and in 2021 Qualcomm and NVIDIA earned a combined \$12 billion from their sales in China. This shows the interdependence and mutual benefits of Sino-US economic relations, and the US cannot afford to give up those benefits.

Yet the US' strategy to check China's rise has remained unchanged. To engage in strategic competition with China, the Joe Biden administration has significantly strengthened its strategies and industrial policy, and has been trying to restructure the global industry and supply chains through "de-risking" and "reshoring" policies and by strengthening and expanding its alliances.

The Joe Biden administration is also persuading, even coercing, its allies to restrict their exports to China and use stronger containment measures against the country. The "high fences" are getting higher while the area of the "small yards" has expanded from the original cutting-edge industries such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence to the key mineral resources sector.

The US' "de-risking" approach is fragmenting and disintegrating the global industry and supply chains, as the US and some of its allies are trying to import some of their products from countries other than China, and restrict the exports of certain products and technologies to China. However, the global industry and supply chains are not made of one or two links. They require the coordinated efforts of all upstream and downstream industries, and smooth and effective functioning of logistics suppliers.

While the US is trying to forcibly reshape the global industry and supply chains through legislation and political intervention, it will taste only short-term success in forcing its allies to shift their trade away from China and end up destabilizing not only global industrial collaboration but also its own industries.

The EU's de-risking policy, too, carries significant risks and could seriously harm its economy. Through the Economic Security Strategy, the EU aims to achieve de-risking trade from China, and by using tools such as "anti-coercion measures", "resilient supply chains", "foreign investment screening" and "trade agreements", it hopes to safeguard its economic security.

The de-risking measures proposed by the EU are likely to create even greater risks. For example, to implement the "countermeasures", the EU may have to impose additional tariffs on, or intentionally delay or refuse to issue licenses to specific businesses. That will not only significantly increase the trade costs but also build more global trade barriers. Such weaponization of trade will fail to reduce the risks, and cause mutual damage, further deteriorating the global trade environment.

Hence, the de-risking measures of the US and the EU are the biggest source of risk globally.

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## GLOBAL VIEWS

GARTH SHELTON

## Toward a new golden age

China and South Africa have seen 25 years of friendship and cooperation, and the next 25 years promise to be even more rewarding

President Xi Jinping has expressed China's willingness to further strengthen China-South Africa relations ahead of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg from Aug 22 to 24. This has been widely welcomed in South Africa and has opened the way for enhancing political solidarity and strategic cooperation.

This year marks 25 years since the establishment of China-South Africa diplomatic relations, which, over time, have been characterized by an ever closer and a more mutually beneficial partnership. China is now South Africa's biggest trade partner, a key strategic investor and a close collaborator in the struggle to transform the global structure toward a more balanced, peaceful and equitable system. High-quality economic development in China offers South Africa a significant opportunity for expanded commercial engagement and mutual prosperity. A better understanding of China's economy could give South African traders a golden opportunity to share China's economic miracle.

Since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1998, China-South Africa relations have evolved from diplomatic bilateral interaction to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Commercial exchanges have flourished and a high-level political dialogue has evolved, forming a solid foundation for long-term cooperation and exchanges. South Africa joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2015 and has been an active supporter and participant in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation since its inception in 2000. With China's strong support, South Africa joined the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) mechanism and is now working closely with China to advance multilateralism, along with a common and shared future for all developing countries.

South Africa strongly values the potential for closer relations through the Belt and Road Initiative, which is regarded by many African states as the "fast track to prosperity". Stronger infrastructure links between South Africa and China through the initiative can open the way for continued mutual growth and common prosperity. South Africa thus seeks closer relations to take advantage of a "golden



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

age" for China-Africa trade, high-level strategic cooperation and mutually beneficial exchanges. The Belt and Road Initiative and FOCAC frameworks are comprehensive and clearly offer very significant benefits for South Africa and all African countries. The solid foundation of China-Africa relations confirms a bright future and enormous opportunity for increased cooperation and common prosperity.

China's drive for modernization and prosperity has been a great success and serves as a model for South Africa's own economic reform and future growth. Under President Xi's leadership, China has become an industrialized prosperous society and has overcome the challenge of extreme poverty. China's enormously successful experience in modernization shows all developing countries the way toward economic development and prosperity. Chi-

na's successful modernization is an inspiration, a guide and a motivation for South Africa to overcome its current challenges. China's unparalleled success gives South Africa a road map toward economic growth, reducing unemployment and poverty. To this end, China and South Africa have concluded a 10-year Strategic Cooperation Program (2020-29). This program offers South Africa enormous opportunity for the expansion of economic interaction.

A safe and fair business environment in South Africa can open the way for significant new Chinese investment and trade.

The next BRICS summit is expected to further strengthen China-South Africa exchanges and cooperation. Working shoulder to shoulder, China and South Africa can advance the BRICS agenda toward a more peaceful, harmonious and fair international system. BRICS is the ideal forum to advance a closer community of shared interests and a shared future. South Africa will work closely with China at the coming BRICS summit to advance shared interests along with strengthened unity and cooperation. BRICS is also expected to support the basic norms of international cooperation and oppose hegemony and power politics.

BRICS is expected to focus on expanding membership, increasing multilateralism, reducing the dominance of the US dollar and advancing intra-BRICS trade and investment. China and South Africa will work closely to support each other in advancing common interests and economic objectives.

A common history grounded in the struggle against imperialism and colonization forms the foundation for China-South Africa solidarity and friendship. Diplomatic relations have brought China and South Africa closer through high-level exchanges, trade, investment and international mechanisms for cooperation such as the Belt and Road Initiative, FOCAC and BRICS. The solid friendship and depth of interaction suggest a future based on a new "golden age" for China-South Africa cooperation for the next 25 years. Closer interaction will immensely help South Africa overcome its current challenges with electricity generation, job creation and poverty reduction. The China-Africa comprehensive strategic partnership and deep friendship have only just begun, the next 25 years will be more rewarding, more significant and more mutually beneficial.

The author is a professor of the International Relations Department at Wits University. 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.

**Editor's note:** China-Africa cooperation contributes to the building of a multipolar world, promotes a more equitable and fairer international order and helps shape a world where different civilizations coexist peacefully. Recently, scholars from the Institute of World Economics and Politics and the National Institute for Global Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences paid a research visit to Africa. It is hoped that through their dialogues with their African counterparts, the development of China-Africa relations can be promoted.

XIONG WANTING

## Highs and lows

New opportunities and challenges coexist for high-quality development of China-Africa investment and financing cooperation

The year 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. Over the past 10 years, China-Africa investment and financing cooperation has achieved fruitful results and ushered in new opportunities.

First, China and Africa's economies are highly complementary, and the two sides will continue to deepen cooperation in strong traditional industries and expand opportunities in new emerging sectors.

China's investment and financing in Africa covers almost all economic sectors. Building on traditional areas of strength, including transportation infrastructure, power and energy, China and Africa are advancing cooperation in new areas such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, the digital economy and green energy.

Take the digital economy for example. China, an e-commerce giant, can provide Africa with experience and technical support in such areas as e-commerce cooperation, digital infrastructure, and mobile payments. By the end of 2021, China had constructed over half of Africa's wireless sites and high-speed mobile broadband networks, serving over 900 million people in Africa. In South Africa, China and Africa have jointly established a public "cloud" serving the entire African region, and the first commercial 5G stand-alone network.

Second, innovative development and cooperation models have been proposed and executed. One example of such a model is to integrate the development of economic zones, free trade areas and iconic infrastructure projects. Lekki Free Trade Area, Nigeria's gateway to the west Atlantic, integrates the construction of Lekki port, the execution of free trade agreement between China and Africa and the development of adjacent economic zone. The project started with the infrastructure con-

struction of the Lekki Port. Development gradually expanded to the nearby Lagos Free Trade Zone and further to connect with other special economic zones. The project has done a great job in boosting the economy of Nigeria, having a positive impact on West Africa and connecting the continent with other parts of the world. For Chinese firms, such a model is also attractive, since it emulates China's development experience in the past decades and provides them with an accommodative local environment for business and production.

Third, the mechanism of financial cooperation between China and Africa is becoming more diverse, as collaboration in macro-policy and between commercial institutions deepens.

At the macro-policy level, China has signed bilateral currency swap agreements with South Africa, Morocco, Egypt and Nigeria. It has also signed memorandums of understanding on financial regulation cooperation with seven African countries. The Cross-Border Interbank Payment System of the renminbi has been extended to cover 19 African countries. China has also provided funding to multilateral development financial institutions such as the African Development Bank and the Africa Development Fund.

The number of cross-border financial institutions between China and Africa continues to increase with diverse cooperation models. As of 2022, Chinese financial institutions had established 15 branches in Africa, while 10 African banks had set up 10 branches in China. The number of equity acquisitions and joint ventures is also on the rise. For example, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China acquired a 20 percent stake in the Standard Bank of South Africa in 2008; the Agricultural

Bank of China and the government of the Republic of Congo jointly established the Sino-Congolese Bank in 2018. In addition, UnionPay International, Ant Group's Alipay, and Tencent's WeChat Pay have entered the African market, with market share expected to increase.

Despite the abundant opportunities, investment and financing cooperation between China and Africa also faces numerous challenges. On the one hand, Africa suffers from a widening financing gap as global liquidity tightens. Since 2021, central banks in the United States and Europe have significantly raised interest rates, with the US federal funds rate having reached 5 percent in May 2023. As a result, some African countries have to face steep rises in financing costs in international markets.

On the other hand, under the pressure of currency depreciation and capital outflows, Africa's debt problem has further deteriorated, making it difficult to secure future financing. According to the International Monetary Fund's Debt Sustainability Analysis, the number of African countries in debt distress has grown sub-



MAXUEJING / CHINA DAILY

stantially. Seven countries — Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe — are already in debt distress, while another 16 African countries are at high risk.

Moving forward, China and Africa can collaborate in the following three areas in order to achieve high-quality development

of investment and financing cooperation.

First, deepen capital market cooperation. It is suggested to diversify the currency portfolio, by encouraging the use of currencies such as the renminbi in sovereign borrowing and trade settlement. This can help better cope with the risks of currency depreciation of African countries against the US dollar, as well as financing rate hikes, as a result of the tightening monetary policies of the US and Europe.

Second, explore innovative debt resolution instruments, such as "debt-for-climate" swaps. The "debt-for-climate" or "debt-for-nature" swaps may offer a win-win solution for debtors, creditors and donors in meeting national development objectives of African countries in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. This is a special type of financial instrument that provides debt restructuring and relief for debtor countries in return for debtors' devotion and investment to achieve sustainable development goals such as climate mitigation, environmental protection, nature reservation and etc. These solutions can more effectively leverage resources from multi-lateral institutions and the private sector.

Third, both China and Africa should focus on the progressive adjustment and optimization of sovereign borrowing strategies. It is important to avoid a sudden drop in funding, enhance the efficiency of fund utilization, and promote the concentration of resources in key countries and priority industries.

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## LIFE

When dancers of the Xinjiang Art Theatre performed an excerpt of the dance piece *Jula* in Beijing last week, the audience got a glimpse of the Twelve Muqam — one of the four main regional styles that Xinjiang Uygur Muqam has developed.

Xinjiang Uygur Muqam is the general term for a variety of practices widespread among the Uygur communities, which includes songs, dances, folk and classical music and is characterized by diversity of content, choreography, musical styles and instruments used. It was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 (originally proclaimed in 2005) by UNESCO.

The dance performance served as a curtain-raiser for the 6th China Xinjiang International Folk Dance Festival, which will be held in Urumqi, capital of Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, from July 20 to Aug 5.

With the theme of Dancing Dreams and Harmonious Silk Road, the event, first launched in 2008, will stage 28 dance productions with about 60 performances, including ballet, folk dance, dance galas and dramas.

"Throughout its history, Xinjiang has been marked by a high degree of cultural exchange between the East and the West, due to its location along the Silk Road," said Xu Ruijun, Party secretary of the department of culture and tourism of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in Beijing last week, adding that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative, which makes the 6th China Xinjiang International Folk Dance Festival a significant platform for cultural exchanges among international artists.

The opening performance will be Chinese dance drama *Zhang Qian*, produced and performed by the Xinjiang Art Theatre. According to the dance drama's director, Xing Shimiao, the dance drama follows the epic journey of Zhang Qian, a royal emissary of China's Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), whose expeditions paved the way to what later became the Silk Road — the historic trading network linking the East and the West, with world-binding influences expanding to the cultural, social and other aspects that continue to influence today.

"It took us about four years to finally stage the dance drama, which combines contemporary dance, ballet, traditional Chinese dance and Chinese folk dance," says Xing. "The version that will be staged during the 6th China Xinjiang International Folk Dance Festival will be an updated version. For example, a large treadmill, which is about 7 meters long and 2.8 meters wide, will be installed onstage, since the core of the dance drama is about

# Dance festival celebrates ethnic unity

Xinjiang's diverse culture and crucial trading role acknowledged by domestic and international acts, **Chen Nan** reports.



Zhang Qian and his team traveling to the West. Along the journey, they met people of different cultures and they communicated."

The dance drama was premiered last year. Xing notes that the dancers of the Xinjiang Art Theatre, which was founded in 1949, are of different ethnic groups, such as Han, Hui, Uygur, Uzbek and Tajik.

One of the best-selling Chinese dance dramas, *Poetic Dance: The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting*, will also be staged during the upcoming festival on Thursday and Friday.

Choreographed by Han Zhen and Zhou Liya, it was inspired by *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains*, a classic artwork exhibited at the Palace Museum in Beijing, which was created by artist Wang Ximeng during the Song Dynasty (960-1279)



**From top:** Dancers of the Xinjiang Art Theatre will perform *Jula* during the 6th China Xinjiang International Folk Dance Festival, which will be held in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, from Thursday to Aug 5. They will present Chinese dance drama *Zhang Qian* as the opening performance.

when the artist was 18 years old. It is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important works in the history of Chinese fine art. The 11-meter-long scroll painting is a record of people's lives and the natural scenery of that time, mixing realism with creative imagination. There are mountains, rivers, villages, ports, temples and pavilions. The painting is housed at the museum.

According to Jing Xiaoyong, head of the China Oriental Performing Arts Group, since its premiere in 2021, the dance drama has been performed nationwide about 332 times in 41 cities.

Other highlights of Chinese art troupes during the festival include *The Awakening Lion*, by the Guangzhou Song and Dance Theatre, which is about traditional lion dance; *Spartacus*, a ballet piece choreographed

by Russian dancer-choreographer Yuri Grigorovich and performed by Liaoning Ballet, and *The Station*, a contemporary dance piece by dancer-choreographer Li Xing.

Performances by international artists from 11 countries, including *Sleeping Beauty* by the Ballet Troupe of the National Grand Theatre of Belarus, *Georgia's Treasures* by the National Dance Troupe of Georgia, and *Soul of Ubuntu* by Elvis Dance Troupe of South Africa, will also be shown at the festival.

For the first time, the festival will have a street dance session, featuring performances and a competition, according to Xia Rui, deputy director and secretary-general of the China Hip-Hop Union Committee, which was founded by the China Dancers Association in 2013.

"We will have about 500 street dance performers from around the country join in the festival and half of the performers are from Xinjiang," says Xia.

There are more than 30 subcommittees across China, involving more than 300 cities and about 3 million people. According to the China Hip-Hop Union Committee, there are more than 8,000 registered street dance studios in China.

"The competition will cover all kinds of street dance, such as locking, popping and breaking," he says, adding that Xinjiang has a large fan base for street dance, as well as local street dance artists who are devoted to the art form.

"The dance festival is an international event, which will bring international artists to Xinjiang. They will see the beautiful place and the diversity of its culture. Though street dance is young in Xinjiang, compared to its folk songs and dances, it grows fast and vibrant," Xia says.

One of the street dance pioneers in the region was Firkat Bahadeer, a Uygur who was born and raised in Urumqi. He will participate in the street dance session of the festival. His father, who taught mathematics at Xinjiang University and studied in Japan in the early 1990s, showed Firkat a video of Japanese street dancers, introducing him to the dance form.

Firkat, who graduated from the law school at Xinjiang University and worked briefly as a lawyer, decided to quit and travel to Shenzhen, Guangdong province, and then to Shanghai in 2001. After training with professional street dance performers, Firkat opened his own street dance studio, DSP (short for "dream, soul and passion") in Urumqi.

"We had street dance competitions in Xinjiang. Those competitions felt more like a festival, where dancers practiced, communicated and had lots of fun together," says Firkat.

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**From left:** International artists from 11 countries, including those from the Ballet Troupe of the National Grand Theatre of Belarus, Turkmenistan's national dance troupe, and Zorenka, a dance group from Russia, will also perform at the festival. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



## Respect on the menu as impaired seniors take cafe, shop assistant jobs

TIANJIN — It seems just like another day for 73-year-old Wang. After making coffee at a cafe, like a barista, she goes to a grocery store to buy daily necessities and then waits at a bus stop, ready to return home.

Wang has a serious cognitive impairment. She has forgotten the names of her children, constantly loses track of time, and does not know that the people she encounters — from cafe customers to shop assistants — are her fellow residents at a Chinese rehabilitation facility.

This Hetong Cognitive Rehabilitation Center in North China's Tianjin has built lifelike settings, including a restaurant, a cafe, a cinema, a grocery store and a bus stop, to engage seniors like Wang in social activities, encouraging them to live

and work like other citizens. All these elements form an integral part of role-playing rehabilitation therapy provided to senior citizens with cognitive disorders.

Chai Dingfang, a social worker at the center, says the role-playing activities can help the elderly retrieve their identities through social interactions, resist further cognitive decline, and improve their physical and mental condition.

"For example, the center's unfamiliar environment often triggers a desire in newly arrived elderly individuals to return home. In such situations, I would guide them to the 'bus stop'. Seeing a familiar bus route at a bus stop would ease their anxiety, and they would wait quietly for the 'bus' until the nurses pick

them up," she says.

In the restaurant, which is open to participation from people outside the facility, four "waiters" walk around elderly-friendly tables and on non-slip mats.

A "waiter" surnamed Chen, 63, has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Despite having participated in the exercise before, Chen continued to make mistakes. Her handwriting on orders was illegible, and she couldn't remember the numbers of the tables waiting to be served.

She was also unable to recognize that one of her customers, Hao Shuang, was her own daughter. Nevertheless, Hao displayed exceptional patience as she received her mother's services.

"I'm glad to see her calmness has

been restored in this new job. This is so different to how she used to be — grumpy, stuck at home and unable to take care of herself because of the disease," Hao says.

She says that the role-playing experience has also been a salvation for her family. "Seeing my mother bringing the hot dishes to the table, just like she did when I was a child, brings back my most cherished memories of her," she says.

According to a report released by the China National Committee on Aging, more than 15 million people in China aged 60 and above have cognitive impairments, and the figure is expected to reach 22.2 million in 2030.

But, the good news is that public awareness is also rising. According

to sources at the Tianjin center, there have been an increasing number of volunteers, including college students, who offer to dine at the restaurant and chat with the patients serving them.

"Everyone is trying their best to be kind to our 'waiters' and to immerse them in a warm and loving atmosphere," Chai says.

In June, the National Health Commission said a nationwide campaign would be launched from this year to 2025 to promote the prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's, with efforts to raise public awareness of the disease and guide the country's elderly population to pay attention to their brain health.

Fang Jiake, chairman of the Hetong Public Welfare Pension Group, which runs the rehabilitation facility,

says that humanistic care is important at a time when effective medical cures for cognitive disorders remain scarce.

"We hope to use these kinds of activities to help elderly patients rediscover their value of life and live with dignity," Fang says.

According to Chai, an increasing number of patients are willing to open their hearts and talk with the care workers at the center through the role-playing rehabilitation therapy. She also keeps a record of the daily lives of the elderly patients in writing or on video and sends updates to their families.

"I want to document these good memories before they are erased from their brains," Chai says.

XINHUA

# LIFE

**Y**ou are standing on a piece of floating ice, surrounded by water. With a forceful stamp of your foot, the ice instantly breaks, and you find yourself plunging downward.

This captivating scene unfolds within the virtual world of a head-mounted device. What truly enhances the sense of reality and fear is the tactile feedback you experience when the surface of the ice breaks, evoking the sensation of falling.

Even though it's a virtual experience, the fear sends your heart rate shooting up.

As well as a head device, there is a mat to stand on, and a curved-origami device that is held in the hand.

The equipment that allows people to touch and feel objects in the virtual environment was recently developed by a research team, led by Professor Jiang Hanqing, from Westlake University in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

The handheld origami-enabled variable stiffness module enables users to actively sense the feel of different objects in the virtual world, ranging from soft to hard and from positive to negative.

Zhang Zhuang, a member of Jiang's team and a postdoctoral research associate at Westlake University, together with other team members, had a paper published online in *Nature Machine Intelligence* on May 29, titled *Active Mechanical Haptics with High-fidelity Perception for Immersive Virtual Reality*, introducing their recent research breakthrough.

In contrast to the typical reliance on visual and auditory cues, with this novel device, the incorporation of touch amplifies the realism of the virtual scenario, allowing for a more immersive and engaging experience.

According to Zhang, Jiang brought up the idea of developing an active mechanical haptic device applying the principle of origami at the end of 2021.

The hand module is the result, Zhang says.

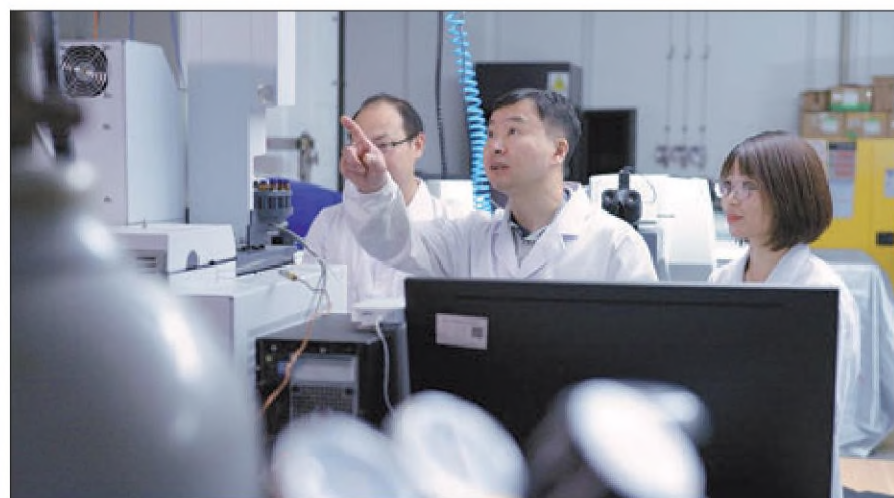
The handheld device, shaped like a ball, has five positions, each corresponding to a finger. Under each position, there are two plastic sheets that are folded like crosses, which can be twisted by a motor.

Once they are pressed vertically, the feedback from the rebound of the plastic sheets will be different, depending on the angle between the curved panels. This change in tactile sensation is transmitted to the brain, which then makes judgments about whether the object being touched is cotton, wood or a steel ball, Zhang explains.

The foot-mat device works in a similar way but uses multiple steel plates arranged in a matrix pattern. Changing the angles of the folded plates makes the device stiffer or softer.

The handheld device can currently simulate the feeling of touching a soft ball, an elastic ball, a wooden ball, and the sensation of crushing an eggshell and the foot device can give people the feeling of walking on a hard surface, grass or ice, according to Zhang.

"If we continue this research, we



**From top:** The handheld device, developed by Jiang Hanqing and his team, enables users to actively sense the feel of objects in the virtual world. The plastic sheets in the device can be purchased online. Jiang (right and center) and colleagues in a lab of Westlake University. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

can create even more realistic sensations with different textures," he adds.

The biggest creative idea in the team's research is the "paper folding". However, the greatest challenge lies in figuring out the best way to fold the materials — they need to achieve both perfect active touch sensations and fit within limited space.

Zhang explains that the team has conducted extensive calculations and experiments to determine the appropriate materials and angles for folding.

It's surprising that these devices

don't need expensive or hard-to-find parts. The plastic sheets in the hand device and the steel plates in the foot mat are easily purchased online and can be replaced with flexible materials, Zhang says.

In the final part of the study, the research team wanted to make sure their findings were accurate. They did this by asking people how they felt and by measuring their muscle activity and heart rate.

The graph shows the highest point where the participants' heart rates increased rapidly when they stepped on the virtual ice and it broke. This sudden collapse made

them feel scared, as if they were actually falling, Zhang explains.

Even though the devices are designed with fixed shapes, and the origami-inspired basic structure remains the same, the hardware devices can be made bigger or smaller, which means that once they find the right uses for these devices, they could quickly start customizing them.

According to Zhang, their research not only provides a fresh approach and experience for interactive virtual reality but also, holds promise for broadening the applications of VR technology in various

fields, such as entertainment, remote operations, medical diagnosis, rehabilitation robotics and treatment for fear of heights.

### Interdisciplinary teamwork

The success of the haptic device research can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of Jiang's lab members. The team is deeply engaged in interdisciplinary research. It comprises more than 30 members with diverse backgrounds in fields such as mechanics, engineering, chemical engineering and robotics.

"The backgrounds of our laboratory members may appear varied, but they all share a common thread of mechanics. Whether it's robotics, interaction, or any other field, the fundamental principles are rooted in mechanics," explains Jiang.

Jiang, 48, a Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, joined Westlake University as Chair Professor of Mechanical Engineering in 2021 and established his laboratory.

Jiang's expertise lies in engineering mechanics, primarily focusing on applying theoretical principles of mechanics to solve practical problems.

He stumbled upon the field of paper folding by chance and started exploring its applications in mechanics 10 years ago.

"Paper folding has an intriguing aspect: its high reconfigurability. Different folds in a piece of paper result in different performance characteristics. Our research revolves around designing these folds," he says.

"In the past few years, we found curve folding interesting and discovered that a single curve fold can impart a wide range of specific properties."

After working on "origami research" for 10 years and witnessing the rapid growth of the metaverse, Jiang had the idea to combine the two. He realized that folded paper materials can be both soft and hard, depending on how they are folded. By using folded paper-like structures in robots, they can easily adjust their level of softness or hardness as required.

Jiang mentions that their team's passion lies in further refining the current research achievements and their scientific goals. They are currently in the process of selecting suitable partners for commercialization and transforming their work into practical applications.

"Scientific research requires innovation and should have societal impact, making genuine contributions to society," Jiang says.

In the future, the research team will continue their efforts to enhance the perception of multiple senses and recreate a more complete sense of touch. They are working on using folded paper to create larger-scale experiences and interactions in bigger settings.

Jiang says: "For example, in a game where you need to ride a motorcycle, could we directly 'grow' a touchable motorcycle from the ground?"

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“Scientific research requires innovation and should have societal impact, making genuine contributions to society.”

**Jiang Hanqing**, professor, Westlake University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

**BIODIVERSITY IS LOVE.  
BIODIVERSITY IS LIFE.  
BIODIVERSITY IS THE FUTURE.**



## LIFE



Actress Cai Ming (second from right) and actor Liu Peiqi (third from left) speak at a news conference to launch the new play, *From West to East*, about the century-old hot pot restaurant Dong Lai Shun, in Beijing on July 10. PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

## Recognizing universality key to seeing logic of other cultures

When I adopted my dog, Loi Loi, I prepared my home in order to help him acclimate to what would be his new living space. He had a brand-new bed so that he wouldn't sleep on mine, a leash so that I wouldn't have to chase after him, and chew toys so that he wouldn't tear up my furniture or wall paper. I collected him from the doggy delivery service and introduced him to my new apartment, where he promptly emptied his bowels. We had already encountered our first conflict. He needed to go to the bathroom, and I needed him not to.



Haydn James Fogel  
Second Thoughts

We were going to have to develop a new culture together.

Cultures are formed gradually. First behaviors are developed to satisfy needs and then they are negotiated between people and groups. The needs exist first, from which all else follows. This was a lesson I needed to learn

when I first moved to China, and it's a lesson I suspect many expats and immigrants also learn — consciously or otherwise. Upon first introduction to an unfamiliar culture, one common first response is to perceive it as wholly foreign. Mannerisms, behaviors, choices, and values can appear illogical at best, or immoral at worst. One can be forgiven for this short-term ignorance. I am glad that I grew out of it.

The process began when local Chinese would ask me: "Why do Americans do this?" Or "Why do Americans do that?" At first, my response was to explain that things were done a certain way because these methods were clearly the most logical. Eventually I realized that I was taking "common sense" for granted.

To uncover true common sense, we must look beyond behaviors — toward universal basic needs, such as food and community. A dinner with friends fulfills both of those needs, and so it wasn't hard at all to grow fond of the shared eating style in Chinese culture. Because it is a group activity, a negotiation has evolved into table manners, such as eating order (to show respect), utensil regulations (to maintain hygiene), and a grab-and-rotate process with the lazy Susan (because everyone needs to eat). Shared needs beget complex differences, but we ought to recognize the universality of them first and foremost.

Recognizing that needs are universal, and that cultures are circumstantial, has been liberating. I now understand that no culture is a default setting; that everyone's reality exists simultaneously. Understanding Chinese culture has enabled me to observe my native culture as an outsider. I can see the differences borne from similarities. I can use this vision to better understand conflicts, to see the shortcomings of my own culture and to sympathize with the goals of another.

Loi Loi is no longer an intruder in my home. We share the same space and have the same needs. I've learned his patterns and, I believe, he has learned mine. Our schedules and habits have adapted in such a way, that rarely is there a miscommunication, even if I sometimes drag my feet to take him for a walk. Cross-cultural relationships can function the same way. We only need to agree not to poop on each other's carpets.

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# A tasteful production

Scriptwriting veterans team up to create a star-studded play about a 120-year-old Beijing restaurant, promising that it will be a future classic, **Chen Nan** reports.

For Chinese scriptwriter Zhang Heping, who has written scripts for TV dramas and movies and currently serves as the president of the Beijing Federation of Literary and Art Circles, one of the highlights of his decades-long career was being the president of the Beijing People's Art Theatre from 2007 to 2014.

The top theater is known for its long list of classic plays, such as *Teahouse*, *Beneath the Red Banner* and *The Top Restaurant*, which enjoy huge popularity throughout the country.

"Creating more classic plays was always a top priority when I worked with the Beijing People's Art Theatre and, even after my resignation, it is still my wish," says Zhang, 77.

Now, Zhang is working with his longtime friend, scriptwriter Liu Heng, and veteran director Lang Kun, on a new original Chinese play, titled *From West to East*, which is about the rise and fall, and rise again, of the century-old Beijing Muslim hot pot restaurant Dong Lai Shun.

"Beijing People's Art Theatre created *The Top Restaurant*, which premiered in 1988 and tells the story of the famous Peking duck restaurant Fu Ju De. When I read the script of *From West to East*, I was very excited. I know it will become a classic because it's about Chinese food, recounting Chinese history and connecting with Chinese people. Along with the creative team, we revised the script eight times, hoping to present the little-known story about the time-honored brand," says Zhang, adding that the play will premiere in the capital on Sept 16 and will run for five days before touring nationwide.

The play tells the story of the restaurant from its very beginning to 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded. Established by Ding Deshan, a man from Cangzhou, Hebei province, in 1903, the restaurant started from a small booth in Dong'an market, a commercial area located in the bustling Wangfujing street, and became famous for its distinctive copper pots, thin-sliced strips of mutton and sugar garlic. In its 120-year history, the restaurant



“When I read the script of *From West to East*, I was very excited. I know it will become a classic because it's about Chinese food, recounting Chinese history and connecting with Chinese people.”

Zhang Heping, scriptwriter and president of the Beijing Federation of Literary and Art Circles



“Twenty seven years ago, he (Zhang Heping) gave me the chance to play the role of Qiao Anshan and now he came to me with the script of *From West to East*. I am very grateful and I hope that the play will be enjoyed by the audience.”

Liu Peiqi, veteran actor

went through many ups and downs, which reflected the fortunes of Chinese society. Now, Dong Lai Shun has more than 150 branch restaurants across the country.

Veteran Chinese actor Liu Peiqi will play the leading role of Ding Deshan. At 65, Liu is known for his roles in TV dramas and movies. He attributes his major breakthrough to Zhang, who traveled to meet Liu at his home in Tianjin with the script for *The Days Without My Comrade*, which is about Lei Feng — a soldier and a national icon. The movie, written by Zhang, was premiered in 1996 and Liu rose to fame by playing the role Qiao Anshan, one of Lei Feng's former colleagues.

"Twenty-seven years ago, he (Zhang Heping) gave me the chance to play the role of Qiao Anshan and now he came to me with the script of *From West to East*. I am very grateful and I hope that the play will be enjoyed by the audience," says Liu.

"Chinese food culture is famous worldwide. Food culture is closely related to society. Dong Lai Shun is known for doing hot pot the northern way, also known as *shuan-yangrou*, or instant-boiled mutton. There's plenty of competition these days, but the restaurant remains popular," says Lang, who has directed CCTV's annual Spring Festival gala — one of the most-watched TV shows in the country — five times and directed his first dance drama, *The Flower of War*, in March.

"We went through the materials about Ding Deshan, learning his stories. He was a man with determination and a warm heart. He wanted to make delicious food for people, so although the restaurant was destroyed several times due to fire, he was strong enough to start over again and again," says Lang.

Lang notes that there will be more than 50 characters in the play. Famous actors and actresses, such as comedian Cai Ming, and young *xiangsheng* (crosstalk) performer Yang Jiulang, will feature among the cast.

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## Lake attracts expert as it inspires new wave of research and learning

SHIJIAZHUANG — On a summer day, a group of students accompanied John Howes, a bird expert from Britain, on an enchanting educational expedition to an islet in Hengshui Lake, North China's Hebei province.

On the islet, Howes captivated his audience with simple yet compelling storytelling techniques. He delved into topics, such as wetlands, their significance, and the intricate web of life that sustains them.

The participants in the study tour were mainly students from the Zhizhen Middle School in Hengshui city, Hebei. Through interactive discussions and role-playing

activities, students were able to grasp the importance of ecological diversity and the interconnectedness of all living beings.

"This biology class has provided us with a wealth of ecological knowledge, and more importantly, helped us develop an ecological mindset to care for nature, starting with ourselves," says Mou Zhijie, a student who was part of the group.

The lake has become an important ecological research and learning base for environmental agencies, schools, and various organizations throughout the country. It is recognized not only for its educational value,

but also as a sanctuary for a wide variety of bird species.

Hengshui Lake is a national nature reserve that boasts a complete wetland ecosystem. It is home to 333 bird species, including 21 that are under China's top protection.

Howes has been a frequent visitor to the lake. The ornithologist's excursions to the lake started back in 2015, when the rare Baer's Pochard was discovered, marking the beginning of a journey of collaboration and conservation.

"The ecology of Hengshui Lake is unique and holds great research value. I love this

place," Howes says.

Hengshui Lake has become the most important known breeding location for Baer's Pochard, a type of diving duck listed as a critically endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. In 2017, 308 pochard ducks were recorded at the lake.

According to Howes, he sees improvements every time he comes to Hengshui Lake.

To boost the ecological environment of the entire Hengshui Lake wetland, the municipal government has taken measures such as sealing off sewage outlets that discharge into the lake, demolishing illegal constructions

along its shore and relocating surrounding villages and main roads, says Liu Zhenjie, deputy director of the administration committee of Lakeside New Area.

The new area that administers Hengshui Lake has also restored 350 hectares of waterfowl habitats at the north of the lake, designated seasonal core areas to reduce human interference, and planted crops such as wheat and corn to provide food for the birds, according to Zhang Yuguang, an official with the Hengshui Lake national nature reserve.

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