

Protectors of nature

Dedicated rangers help to ensure survival of endangered monkeys

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Policy boost urged to restore health of realty

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Rallying to ease tensions

South Koreans call for peace as 70th anniversary of armistice nears

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CHINA DAILY

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Protest over Quran burning



Iraqis participate in a protest on Saturday near Baghdad's Green Zone denouncing the burning of the Quran in Sweden. MURTAJA LATEEF / AFP See story, page 7

Expansion of BRICS set for discussion

Expert: Membership of additional developing nations would better represent Global South

By MO JINGXI mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

The discussion on expanding BRICS, the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is expected to be high on the agenda of an upcoming meeting of senior officials to prepare for the BRICS Summit in August, observers said.

They also said that since its inception in 2006 as BRIC (South Africa was added in 2010), the group of emerging economies has upheld the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, practiced true multilateralism and achieved solid results in pragmatic cooperation, thus becoming increasingly attractive to other countries.

China has sent Wang Yi, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, to attend the 13th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisers and High Representatives on National Security in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Monday and Tuesday.

South Africa is this year's BRICS chair. According to Anil Sooklal, the country's ambassador to the group, more than 40 countries, including all the major developing Global South countries, have expressed interest in becoming BRICS members, and 22 countries have formally asked to join.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has also invited the heads of all African countries to the upcoming BRICS Summit in Johannesburg to engage in dialogue with BRICS leaders.

"With the joining of more developing countries, BRICS is expected to better represent the Global South with a louder voice on the world stage," said Yao Jinxiang, an assistant researcher at the China Institute of International Studies' Institute of Developing Countries.

While BRICS members account for 42 percent of the world's population, they have less than 15 percent of voting rights in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

"African countries and BRICS nations share similar views and interests in improving and reforming the current international order and global governance system. Africa as a whole can make a joint call with BRICS for accelerating reforms in financial, monetary and other sectors," Yao said.

He Wenping, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, said that to join or cooperate with BRICS will help Africa expand cooperation with

more emerging economies and developing countries.

"For example, the BRICS New Development Bank can provide Africa with more opportunities in trade and economy, investment and financial assistance, among other things," she said.

She said China and Africa are also expected during Wang's visit to find common ground on how to resolve the Ukraine crisis.

According to the researcher, as the crisis continues, inflation as well as energy and food crises triggered by Western sanctions have had a negative impact on African countries.

"Africa and China have highly consistent positions regarding the crisis, and the two sides can play a joint role in promoting peace talks," she added.

Besides the two-day BRICS meeting in Johannesburg, China-Africa cooperation is also on the agenda of Wang's trip, which has taken him to Ethiopia and Kenya.

Wang reiterated China's commitment to cooperation with Africa under the frameworks of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in meetings with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Kenyan President William Ruto.

They spoke highly of the mutual respect that China has shown in its cooperation with African countries and hailed China as an example for developing countries.

The visits to Africa by high-ranking Chinese officials highlighted the great importance that China places on its relationship with Africa as well as its efforts to promote African integration, said He, the senior researcher at the CASS.

According to Yao, from the China Institute of International Studies, "While some officials from the United States and other Western countries only make groundless criticism of China during their visits to Africa, we can tell from Wang's trip that China is more focused on pragmatic cooperation with Africa based on mutual benefits."

"China-Africa cooperation does not target a third party nor engage in so-called 'geopolitical confrontation,'" Yao said.

Yao noted that countries on Wang's itinerary are all important countries in Africa, but are currently facing challenges such as power shortages, public health crises, the rise of terrorism and internal military turmoil.

The visit is also aimed at helping these countries cope with such crises, as China fulfills its duties as a responsible major country, Yao said.

WORLD WATCH

By Eddy Chan

RCEP will boost trade, help SMEs 'go global'

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership took effect for all 15 member states on June 2. Since being signed in early 2022, the RCEP has been promoting intraregional trade and economic development, and China, as an RCEP member, has seen steady growth in its imports and exports.

China's foreign trade will help boost its economic development and "dual circulation" development paradigm, in which the domestic market is the mainstay and the domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other. It will also play a bigger role in the world economy. In this context, the comprehensive implementation of the RCEP, the world's largest free trade deal, indicates greater generation of momentum.

The RCEP is a free trade agreement covering the largest population with the most diversified membership structure and the greatest development potential. It covers about 30 percent of the world's population, economic volume and total trade. As RCEP member states gradually fulfill their commitment to lower tariffs, open markets and reduce barriers to trade, the economic and trade relations in the region will become stronger, and the market potential of most member countries will continue to be unleashed, shoring up regional trade in Asia.

It is therefore clear that the RCEP will play an increasingly important role in China's foreign trade, and effectively drive trade growth in the region by reinforcing business ties between China and other regional markets.

How can small and medium-sized enterprises take advantage of the opportunities offered by the RCEP?

See RCEP, page 3

Panda envoy of friendship between China and France, diplomat says

By CHEN WEIHUA in Paris chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Giant panda Yuan Meng of the Beauval Zoo is an "envoy of friendship" between the people of China and France, and a shining example of the "mutual understanding and affinity between the two countries," said Lu Shaye, China's ambassador to France.

Yuan Meng — the first giant panda ever born in France — is scheduled to leave the zoo in Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher on Tuesday and board a plane from Paris to Chengdu in Southwest China's Sichuan province.

His parents, mother Huan Huan and father Yuan Zi, were transported to the zoo in central France in January 2012 from Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, marking the start of a 10-year collaborative conservation research project between the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens and the Beauval Zoo.

Yuan Meng, whose name means "dream come true", was born through artificial insemination on Aug 4, 2017.

"Many French and European people got to know and like China through Yuan Meng," said Lu, who first visited the giant panda and his parents at the zoo on Aug 26, 2019, a few weeks after arriving in Paris in his present capacity.

The ambassador recalled the heartwarming story of a 10-year-old French girl, Ninon Vermay, with a genetic disease, whose dream of visiting the Chengdu panda base came true in May thanks to the help extended by institutions and people of both countries.

The family was overwhelmed by the hospitality they received in China and the country's natural beauty, and the little girl said she couldn't wait to share stories back in school about her memorable trip.

This touching story about strangers in China and France coming together to fulfill Ninon's dream of visiting giant pandas in Chengdu is a testament to how people of both nations are united by a sense of common humanity, Lu said.

"Virtues shared by humanity such as kindness, hospitality and

universal love can break the barriers of border, language and culture," he said, adding that giant panda conservation helps stir up these wonderful feelings.

Since he was born, Yuan Meng has been the darling of the French people, drawing millions of visitors to the zoo annually, and boasting scores of fans on the zoo's social media platforms. Many fans visit the zoo to celebrate his birthday every year, and some even bring cakes.

In 2017, the beloved bear won the Gold Award in the "Panda Cub of the Year" category following online voting conducted by Giant Panda Global, an organization that promotes panda conservation work around the world. Two years later, Yuan Meng won the coveted "Panda Personality of the Year" award.

Lu noted that the name Yuan Meng was given by Peng Liyuan, wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping, and French first lady Brigitte Macron.

See Panda, page 3



Online See more by scanning the code.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE SALES GAIN TRACTION IN RURAL AREAS

Automakers look to overcome hurdles to expand into new market

By FU SHENG

Dong Yixuan, a 27-year-old electrical engineer in Beijing, has recently been at odds with her father.

For several months, Dong has been trying to persuade her father, a farmer in Jinzhou, Liaoning province, to replace his four-wheel "elderly scooter" with a car.

Known as *lao tou le*, or elderly scooters, the three- and four-wheel vehicles covered by cabins



are a preferred mode of transportation for older people, which is how they earned the nickname.

Even though Dong offered to pay for a new car, she has not succeeded in changing her father's mind.

"He just won't give in," Dong said, adding that her father

argues that the 18,000 yuan (\$2,505) scooter meets his transportation needs, as he only rides it around his village, and it will last him for several more years.

However, Dong insists he should buy a car for safety reasons. Although they are tolerated on roads in many parts of the country, the elderly scooters, similar to e-bikes, have no regulatory controls.

See Autos, page 2

Fatal accident



A crowd gathers at the scene of a bus accident in Jhalakathi district in southern Bangladesh on Saturday. At least 17 people were killed and several others injured when the bus plunged into a pond after its driver lost control. XINHUA

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PAGE TWO

Autos: NEVs push for bigger sales in the countryside



Charging facilities have been recently installed in Tuncheng town, Tunchang, Hainan province, as part of the campaign to promote the use of NEVs in rural areas. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From page 1

The scooters' low-level performance means they are not covered by motor vehicle safety standards and they do not require registration, license plates or insurance.

"I am worried about his safety and the safety of others as well," Dong said. "It is really scary to see people driving these scooters when you don't know whether they are qualified to drive," she added.

Statistics from the Ministry of Public Security show that there were 830,000 traffic accidents involving elderly scooters from 2014 to 2019, which killed 18,000 people and injured 186,000 others.

Last year, 138 people died in 131 traffic accidents involving three- and four-wheel scooters in Beijing.

A number of cities, including Wuhu in Anhui province and Binzhou in Shandong province, have instigated policies to phase out the scooters to improve traffic safety.

Beijing's transport bureau announced in July 2021 and reiterated in April that elderly scooters will be banned from the capital's roads from Jan 1, 2024.

Safety priority

It is natural that authorities are tightening controls on three- and four-wheel scooters, said Wang Du, assistant to the president of the China Auto Dealers Association.

"The most basic requirement for a vehicle model to be on the road is that its safety is certified. Yet almost all of such scooters available on the market are not on the list of models promulgated by the authorities," Wang said.

With similar sizes and prices, small electric vehicles from carmakers like Wuling and Chery are strong alternatives to elderly scooters. However, they require insurance and the driver must be licensed, both of which have dissuaded some potential buyers.

Dong said her father has reluctantly agreed to have a test drive of a Wuling Mini EV, China's most popular mini electric vehicle model. She is hoping he changes his mind after the test drive.

"At least I would be more reassured if he has a real car. After all, he is getting old and I would like to make sure that he is safe," said Dong.

In 2020, China started to promote new energy vehicles, including electric ones and plug-in hybrids, in its rural areas to improve traffic safety, cut carbon emissions and stimulate consumption.

This year's promotional campaign of new energy vehicles in rural areas started last month in three cities: Wuxi, in East China's Jiangsu province; Qionghai, in South China's Hainan province; and Jingzhou, in Central China's Hubei province.

The campaign is scheduled to run till December, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, one of five government departments that launched the event.

A total of 69 NEV models, small and medium-sized ones, are being offered at discounted prices during this year's campaign.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said over 170 promotional events have been held in rural areas in more than 10 provinces since 2020. At the events, 140 models including sedans, sport

utility vehicles, multipurpose vehicles and light trucks from 45 vehicle makers with combined sales of 4.12 million units, have been featured.

"Models involved in the campaign have seen their average sales grow at 10 percentage points higher than the overall NEV market," said Xu Haidong, vice-chief engineer at the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

NEVs are now a popular choice among car buyers in China, especially in cities.

Statistics from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers show that NEVs accounted for 25.6 percent of total vehicle sales in the country in 2022. However, NEV sales in rural areas only made up 4 percent of total sales.

"As China advances its rural revitalization strategy, farmers have seen their living standards improve. Rural areas, with a combined population of over 500 million people, will prove to be a huge market for NEVs," said Xin Guobin, vice-minister of industry and information technology.

There is immense potential for NEVs in the rural market, said Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association. "It is a huge market and represents a major opportunity for automakers. It will also reshape China's consumption structure and lead to more sustainable consumer spending," he said.

Hurdles ahead

A growing number of carmakers are making rural areas a priority in their sales and marketing campaigns, as large cities already have fierce competition for sales.

Farizon Auto, a manufacturer of electric vans and trucks that is part of the Geely Holding Group, said it will develop more vehicles tailored to the needs of rural customers.

Analysts said Farizon is making a good move, as models that are popular with urbanites do not necessarily meet the demands of rural residents.

Mini-sized cars, due to their low prices and easy handling, are the most popular vehicles, according to recent statistics, said Xu from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.



Elderly scooters will be banned from Beijing's roads from next year.

138

people died in 131 traffic accidents involving three- and four-wheel scooters in Beijing last year

Wuling's Mini EV as well as Ora's Cat series vehicles have been among the top sellers since the annual promotion campaign started in 2020.

However, pushing NEV car sales in rural areas also faces hurdles. Although automakers have started to establish dealerships in smaller cities, rural residents usually have to travel lengthy distances to inspect the vehicles.

BYD, China's largest NEV maker, has only two dealerships in Chaozhou in Guangdong province, according to a Beijing Youth Daily report. One of the dealerships opened in 2021 and the other in 2022.

The carmaker has been involved in the campaign to promote NEVs in rural areas for three consecutive years. BYD said it will step up efforts to build more county-level dealerships so that rural residents can learn about its vehicles more easily.

A BYD salesperson in Chaozhou told Beijing Youth Daily that NEVs are different in many aspects from gasoline vehicles so it is necessary for potential buyers to try them.

Charging stations

Lack of charging facilities is another problem that affects rural residents' enthusiasm about NEVs.

China is home to the world's largest charging network for NEVs. By the end of last year, there were 5.21 million charging

facilities and 1,973 battery-swap stations, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Yet most of them are located in cities, especially large ones, and only 9.45 percent of the piles and stations are in the countryside, said Tong Zongqi, deputy secretary of the China Charging Infrastructure Promotion Alliance. Cui, from the China Passenger Car Association, highlighted the need to promote the development of home chargers for rural families, in addition to the development of public charging stations.

Meng Wei, a spokesperson for the National Development and Reform Commission, told a news conference in May that a lack of charging facilities remains the largest obstacle to the growth of the domestic NEV industry, especially in rural areas.

She said solutions to the problem needed to be found "through innovative measures to promote the building, operation and maintenance of charging infrastructure in rural areas".

The State Council, China's Cabinet, has urged efforts to speed up the construction of charging infrastructure in rural regions to better promote NEVs and facilitate rural revitalization. It has also called for efforts to focus on solving bottlenecks that hamper NEVs' use in rural areas, building more charging facilities, and upgrading their construction, operations and maintenance.

A guideline released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration in May encouraged local rural governments to offer special incentives for the construction and operation of public charging facilities in their areas.

They were also urged to offer coupons to rural residents to encourage them to buy NEVs.

Wu Jianyuan, Party secretary of Huishan district in Wuxi, where this year's NEVs-going-rural campaign was launched in June, told reporters that the district will seize the opportunity to boost NEV sales and accelerate construction of charging infrastructure.

For the duration of the campaign, the Wuxi government is offering total subsidies of up to 30 million yuan for NEV buyers.

Many other cities across the country have similar favorable policies in place.

In Zhengzhou, Henan province, authorities have earmarked 50 million yuan in coupons for NEV buyers who place their orders between June 21 and Aug 31.

In Sanya, Hainan province, NEV buyers are eligible for up to 5,000 yuan if they place their orders before Aug 31.

Incentives to buy

The central government has also taken strong financial measures to boost the sector's development.

In June, the State Council announced the extension of tax breaks on new energy vehicle purchases until the end of 2027.

NEVs bought in 2024 and 2025 will be exempted from purchase tax, with a ceiling of 30,000 yuan (\$4,175) per passenger vehicle.

The purchase tax on NEVs purchased in 2026 and 2027 will be halved, which means each passenger vehicle purchase is eligible for a tax exemption of up to 15,000 yuan.

The measures equate to 520 billion yuan in tax exemptions and reductions, said Xu Hongcai, vice-minister of finance, at a news conference in June.

Cui, from the China Passenger Car Association, said the stimuli show the importance the central government attaches to the booming NEV sector.

He added that the four-year extension of the tax exemptions to the end of 2027 will enable carmakers to better plan production and sales targets.

The China Passenger Car Association estimates that sales of passenger NEVs are expected to reach 8.5 million units this year, accounting for 36 percent of total vehicle sales in the country. It also predicts the NEV market will continue its growth momentum in 2024.

China's NEV industry has been developing at a fast speed. In early July, the 20 millionth new energy vehicle rolled off the production line in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

With this landmark, the sector has entered a new stage of large-scale, globalized and high-quality development, and is becoming an important part of China's modern industrial system, said Fu Bingfeng, executive vice-president and secretary-general of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

In the first five months of this year, Chinese carmakers produced over 3 million units and sold 2.94 million NEVs, up 45.1 percent and 46.8 percent year-on-year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

It estimates sales of NEVs will reach at least 9 million units this year, up from 6.88 million units in 2022.

At the event celebrating the 20 millionth NEV rolling off the assembly, Xin, the vice-minister of industry and information technology, said, "The NEV is the main direction of the transformation, upgrading and green development of the global automobile industry, and is also the strategic choice for the high-quality development of China's automotive industry."



Left: Workers make NEV charging facilities in Huzhou, Zhejiang province. XIE SHANGGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY Right: A resident inspects a sedan displayed at an event in Qionghai, Hainan, to promote NEVs in the countryside. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



TOP NEWS

Major test for new type of rocket engine completed

By ZHAO LEI
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China's rocket scientists and engineers carried out a major test on Saturday on a new type of engine, which will be the most important component in the nation's attempt to land astronauts on the moon.

The multiple-ignition test, which took place at an engine testing facility in Fengxian county in Shaanxi province, successfully verified the engine's operating procedures, according to the Xi'an, Shaanxi-based Academy of Aerospace Propulsion Technology, China's major manufacturer of liquid-propellant rocket engines.

The test's results will be used to finalize the engine's design and improve its reliability, the academy, a subsidiary of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, said in a news release on Sunday.

Zhou Xianqi, a researcher at the Xi'an academy's 165th Institute who took part in the test, said it proved the engine's working stability and provided a great deal of useful data.

He said there will be several tests of the new engine in the coming months to check its capability.

According to its designers, the new engine consumes liquid oxygen and kerosene, has a thrust of 130 metric tons and is reusable. Incorporating advanced technologies such as the continuous variable thrust system, the machine will be the main propulsion on the first core stage and side boosters of the Long March 10 carrier rocket, which will be tasked with taking astronauts to the moon.

So far, the engine has undergone seven ignition tests, accumulating a working period of nearly an hour.

Considering the engine's important mission, designers said it must have excellent capability and reliability, and therefore must be comprehensively tested.

Wu Peixin, an aerospace industry observer, said designers want the new engine to be not only powerful but also reusable, so it must be capable of withstanding extreme heat, high pressure and ultrafast speed during a launch and be able to return safely to Earth.

"Making such engines is a real challenge to Chinese scientists and engineers, but I am sure they will make it because the engine is the key to whether this nation can realize its goal of landing Chinese on the moon," he said.

China is determined to land its astronauts on the moon before 2030 and plans to establish a crewed science outpost in the foreseeable future.

To achieve this goal, the China Manned Space Agency has arranged research and development of a host of new-generation space hardware like a new crewed spaceship and lunar rover.

According to the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, the nation's major rocket maker, the moon-mission rocket — the Long March 10 — will be 88.5 meters tall, which is roughly the height of a 31-story residential building. The gigantic rocket will have a liftoff weight of 2,187 metric tons and will be capable of transporting spacecraft weighing at least 27 tons to an Earth-moon transfer trajectory.

RCEP: Enterprises will have more room for development

From page 1

The SMEs that make up 99 percent of China's enterprises are an essential part of the country's foreign trade. Benefiting from the simpler customs procedures, better trade facilitation and lower tariffs that come with the RCEP, these SMEs will get more room for development in the international market, and in turn create new opportunities for the robust growth of foreign trade.

The RCEP values the SMEs' contribution to economic growth and has created a favorable business environment for them. Through measures including pre-shipment inspection and pre-arrival processing, the RCEP streamlines customs procedures and speeds up customs clearance, enabling SMEs to participate in regional supply and value chains more efficiently.

The tariff concessions in the RCEP region will help the SMEs

reduce their import and export costs, because the RCEP will ultimately eliminate tariffs on more than 90 percent of goods trading among its signatory parties immediately or within 10 years, which will incentivize the SMEs to "go global".

Survey results indicate that since the RCEP took effect, China has seen growth in both the number of small and medium-sized foreign trade enterprises exporting to the region and the income they have earned.

Lower tariffs also mean making more affordable imported goods available to consumers, which will improve their ability to buy and enable the SMEs to open up to a larger consumer market. This, by the way, will be accompanied by the high requirement for delivery speed and challenges for cross-border delivery of goods. As such, the SMEs urgently need reliable cross-border logistics partners to help them seize the enormous opportunities created by the growth of regional trade.

The RCEP will not only help boost the development of the SMEs and the regional economy, but also facilitate closer ties between China and other RCEP members in a wide range of industries.

The author is senior vice-president of FedEx Express and president of FedEx China. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Time to act

The Climate Clock — which indicates the alleged time left to act to limit global warming to 1.5 C — is projected onto the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Saturday.

CARLOS FABAL / AFP

RMB globalization to promote stability

Analysts call for further deepening financial reforms, trade cooperation

By ZHANG YUE and ZHOU LANXU

The internationalization of the renminbi is gathering momentum, and such a trend will help facilitate China's further opening-up and encourage the country's global trade and investment, scholars and analysts said.

Their remarks came after global financial messaging platform Swift announced on Thursday that the RMB's share in global payments had increased for five consecutive months to 2.77 percent in June, the highest level since January 2022 when the share was 3.2 percent.

The RMB's share stood at 2.54 percent in May, Swift said, adding that the Chinese currency has retained its position as the fifth most active currency for global payments by value.

As of the end of 2022, the Renminbi Internationalization Index increased by 18.08 percent from the previous year and is maintaining a long-term upward trend, a research report released on Saturday by the International Monetary Institute at the Renmin University of China showed.

Speaking on Saturday at a forum held in Beijing, Chen Yulu, president of Nankai University, said the RMB is gaining momentum in its level of internationalization, and "is expected to become the most dynamic and promising global high-quality public product".

Noting that the RMB has become one of the major international currencies, Chen said that efforts are necessary on three fronts to strengthen its globalization further.

For starters, a modern industrial system that is underpinned by the real economy should be completed, he said.

"Progress is also needed in deepening financial market reforms and in the establishment of infrastructure for RMB globalization. In addition, there must be a high level of balance between the institutional opening-up of China's financial system and its risk control," he said.

Current global challenges, such as the impact of the pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, have made the problem of insufficient international currency supply more urgent, Chen said.

"The internationalization of the

RMB offers emerging markets and developing economies a new option, and also drives the international monetary system toward a direction of diversified competition. This will, in turn, enhance global economic stability," he said.

On Thursday, the People's Bank of China, the nation's central bank, adjusted several rules to allow businesses to borrow more overseas, opening up the door for more foreign capital inflow.

The macro-prudential adjustment parameter — a multiplier that decides the upper limit of outstanding cross-border financing available to corporates and financial institutions — was revised from 1.25 to 1.5, effective immediately, according to the PBOC.

Wang Fang, deputy dean of the School of Finance at Renmin University of China, said global trade and investment cooperation is a viable way for RMB internationalization.

She suggested that RMB internationalization be steadily promoted via various levels of economic and trade cooperation, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement, and that

conditions for RMB transaction be promptly improved.

Eddie Yue, chief executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, said that currently, businesses across the world are seeking risk diversification in a highly uncertain macroeconomic environment, which might boost demand for the renminbi.

Also, while central banks in major economies have significantly raised interest rates, China's comparatively low interest rates have bolstered the RMB's attractiveness as an international financing currency, he said, citing that "dim sum" bonds, or renminbi-denominated bonds issued in Hong Kong, have recently seen rapid growth.

To accommodate the potential rise in the demand for the renminbi, the HKMA is working to improve financial infrastructure connection with other central banking institutions to provide adequate offshore RMB liquidity, Yue said.

"But currency internationalization would be a very long and complex journey," he said, adding that the dollar will remain a very important currency in the global financial system, and the most necessary task in RMB internationalization is to change the real economy enterprises' habit of using the dollar and boosting their demand for the RMB in trade settlements.

On Friday, the central parity rate of the RMB strengthened 10 pips to 7.1456 against the dollar, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

Contact the writers at zhangyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Panda: Exchange of expertise helping breeding program

From page 1

"It carries the best wishes for the long-lasting friendship between China and France," the Chinese diplomat said, as he described French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife as Yuan Meng's biggest fans.

The French first lady, who is also Yuan Meng's godmother, told reporters during her visit to the zoo in May that she has known the bear since he was a cub, and every time she looks at him, she is overcome by a feeling of peace and happiness.

She said she'll miss Yuan Meng when he leaves France, and expressed her desire to go visit him in China.

"President Macron has said he will make visits to China every year, and it is possible that Chengdu will be part of the itinerary during his next trip," Lu said.

According to China's giant panda loan agreement with other nations, cubs born outside the country must return to China to join the breeding and conservation program. Yuan Meng's return was delayed due to

the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the past 11 years, China and France have seen fruitful results in their cooperation in giant panda conservation, making headway in artificial breeding programs.

While China sent experts to help with giant panda breeding, management and disease prevention, the Beauval Zoo provided medicines and equipment, including GPS collars, to the Chengdu base to support the release of pandas into the wild.

Unhindered exchange of tech-

nical expertise led to Yuan Meng's parents giving birth to twins — Huan Lili and Yuan Dudu — in August 2021.

Lu said that due to the excellent collaboration, the Sino-French agreement on giant panda research has been extended till January 2027.

"This (cooperation) fully demonstrates the firm willingness of China and France to join hands in wildlife conservation. ... It is of great significance to the conservation of endangered species around the world," Lu said.

Chengdu games village now ready to welcome athletes

By HUANG ZHILING in Chengdu
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The Chengdu FISU World University Games Village opened on Saturday in Chengdu, Sichuan province, with members of the Chinese delegation becoming the first guests to move in.

Wang Jiayi, vice-minister of education and vice-president of the sports event's organizing committee, said the village's opening means that the home for all athletes during the Chengdu games is now fully ready.

"Standing in the village, we now send a sincere invitation to athletes from all countries and regions to take part in the celebration of youth, enhance our mutual understanding, promote friendship and carry forward the common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom for all mankind," Wang said.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the village, Eric Saintrond, secretary-general and CEO of the International University Sports Federation, said that the village is "one of the best



A flag-raising ceremony is held on Saturday during the opening of the games village for the Chengdu FISU World University Games in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA

we've ever had" and hailed the ceremony as the best of its kind.

"After two years of postponement,



athletes from all over the world will gather in Chengdu to compete and explore the future together. The village's opening is a symbolic moment," Saintrond said.

"We know the great efforts the organizing committee, the Chinese authorities and thousands of volunteers have put in to make this possible. This village will be one of the greatest legacies of the Chengdu FISU Games," he said.

The 800,000-square-meter village, located on the campus of Chengdu University, can accommodate 11,000 people. It caters to the residential, operational and transportation requirements of the games. In the village, athletes will be provided with food and accommodations, and will

have access to fitness facilities, leisure and entertainment facilities, cultural exchanges and other services.

As the largest noncompetition venue of the games, the village will provide 24-hour services for athletes and team officials from Saturday to Aug 11.

According to Xian Rongsheng, the village head, the village will offer various foods that cater to the tastes of athletes from all over the world. It is equipped with self-driving buses, a new generation of intelligent translation system and other technological facilities.

Moreover, various cultural activities, including those aimed at highlighting traditional Chinese culture and promoting cultural exchanges between young people from different delegations, will be hosted in the village, he said.

A welcoming ceremony for the Chinese sports delegation was also held on Saturday.

The Chinese delegation comprises

more than 700 people, including 411 athletes from more than 100 universities in 25 provincial regions. The athletes will participate in all 18 sports of the games from July 28 to Aug 8. The event, originally scheduled to be held in 2021, had to be postponed twice due to COVID-19.

Chengdu is the third city on the Chinese mainland to host the biennial event, following Beijing in 2001 and Shenzhen in 2011.

At present, more than 300 members of the Chinese delegation are staying in the village, including those taking part in the taekwondo, judo, tennis, table tennis, archery, swimming, diving, men's water polo, track and field, men's basketball, women's basketball and rhythmic gymnastics competitions.

As one of the first athletes to live in the village, Tang Qianhui, a tennis player from the Chinese delegation, said: "The environment here is very good and the volunteers are very enthusiastic. I will do my best to achieve good results in the games."

CHINA

What time is it?



Children from Shaanxi province and the Ngari prefecture of the Tibet autonomous region learn about ways to tell time in ancient China at the National Time Service Center in Lintong, Shaanxi province, on Sunday. About 110 students and teachers from Shaanxi and Tibet are participating in a six-day summer camp to bond and learn about Chinese history. YUAN JINGZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Curbing online misconduct

Authorities, platforms tackle issue, but netizens also urged to regulate behavior

By CAO YIN

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Multiple government departments and internet enterprises have taken measures recently to crack down on online disorder, but experts have said netizens also have to regulate their own behavior in cyberspace.

Although the authorities' and platforms' joint efforts will provide stronger protection for netizens, the online environment will truly become orderly only when every internet user shuns disorderly conduct, they said.

Their remarks came after Chinese judicial authorities, and internet regulators and operators, released documents in recent weeks to fight against online misconduct such as cyberbullying and conveying false information.

On Tuesday, 16 internet enterprises signed an agreement with the Beijing Internet Association to increase their self-management in order to promote the healthy development of cyberspace.

The enterprises include short-video service providers Douyin and Kuaishou, as well as Sina Weibo, China's Twitter-like platform, and Baidu, the nation's largest search engine.

They pledged to work against cyberbullying by upgrading their early warning systems to protect users and by strictly punishing netizens who insult others or instigate conflict, with stricter reviews on "We media" — personal social media accounts and other media platforms run by individuals — to prevent the

spread of online rumors.

They also vowed to offer more high-quality videos, photos, articles and livestreams by following algorithms, and to blacklist or shut down "We media" accounts that convey illegal information.

Earlier, the Cyberspace Administration of China, the country's top internet regulator, issued a notification requiring websites and platforms to intensify their management of "We media" accounts to maintain order in cyberspace.

On July 7, a draft regulation on combating cyberbullying that was formulated by the administration began soliciting public opinion. The draft specifies that internet service providers must set up early warning systems to detect online bullying as quickly as possible, with channels set up for victims to protect themselves. The deadline for collecting the public's comments is Aug. 6.

A month ago, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, along with the Ministry of Public Security, also gathered public opinions on a draft guideline against cyberbullying in order to more effectively prevent such behavior.

That draft identifies some behaviors that qualify as cyberbullying and specifies what crimes should lead to criminal charges. The solicitation ended on June 25.

Zheng Ning, head of the law department at the Communication University of China's Cultural Industries Management School, welcomed the measures, adding that

“We cannot rely solely on strict management and punishment. We also need to educate and call on all netizens to regulate their own behavior on the internet.”

Zheng Ning, head of the law department at the Communication University of China's Cultural Industries Management School

many types of online misconduct, such as cyberbullying, have to be curbed through joint efforts.

Zhao Zhanling, a lawyer from Beijing Yunjia Law Firm, agreed. He said the measures indicate that China is paying greater attention to online disorderliness and has realized that joint efforts will be more effective than individual departments launching campaigns alone.

“Cyberspace governance in the new era demands a comprehensive remedy because many online problems, such as rumors and bullying, involve more than one management department, covering technical and legal issues as well,” he said.

“Therefore, internet platforms should keep optimizing information technologies to identify the problems as quickly as they can to prevent netizens from being further harmed. Meanwhile, depending on the severity of the problems, government and judicial agencies should specify through guidelines

and interpretations what punishments violators would receive to ensure the convergence of administrative and legal measures.

“Only when systematic regulations are made at the same time will improper cyberspace behavior be effectively prevented.”

The two experts expressed their high hopes about the series of measures being taken against online misconduct, but they still called on netizens to curb their own misconduct so that people can surf the internet in a civil manner.

“Regarding those who misbehave in cyberspace, such as bullies or rumormongers, we cannot rely solely on strict management and punishment. We also need to educate and call on all netizens to regulate their own behavior on the internet,” Zheng said.

“Such education should be provided from an early age so that everyone understands that cyberspace is not a lawless domain and can recognize what constitutes inappropriate content among the abundant information.”

Cyberbullying and spreading false information have often made headlines over the years. China's steps to fight such misconduct have accelerated in recent years, as these acts not only disturb the order of cyberspace but also seriously affect people's sense of security.

In addition to the measures, the Cyberspace Administration of China has conducted campaigns to address different online problems every year. The Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate have also issued judicial interpretations on infringements on personal information and on fighting rumors.

Woman cyberbullied ex-classmate, court rules

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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A woman harmed the reputation of a former classmate when she posted fabricated stories online about the person, a district court in Shanghai ruled on Thursday.

The case drew public attention and triggered discussions among experts amid the Cyberspace Administration of China's release of a draft regulation about the governance of online violence to solicit public opinions on July 7, showing the country's stronger determination to crack down on cyberbullying.

The Shanghai Yangpu District People's Court ruled on Thursday that the woman — who falsely stated in various online posts, pictures and livestreams that her former classmate was a criminal who refused to obey legal rulings made against her and takes drugs to manage mental illness — must delete the posts immediately.

The livestreams alone were viewed by thousands of people, according to the court.

It also ordered the woman, who was born in the 1990s, to write a letter of apology to the victim and post it on her Weibo account and WeChat Moments. She is also responsible for the victim's legal fees, the court said.

“Anybody's reputation, or social evaluation, is protected by law. The woman's behavior has harmed the defendant's social evaluation to a certain extent, and put her under heavy psychological stress. It constitutes cyberbullying and harassment,” said Qian Juan, who served as chief judge of the case.

“Online bullying involves little effort, but the information spreads fast and wide. It may not only damage someone's reputation but also cause serious consequences, including leading the person to suffer from depression and affect their physical and mental health,” she said.

The draft regulation ordered online information service providers to improve content management. Once they discover information related to online violence, such as defamation, insults, the spread of rumors and privacy violations against specific individuals or subjects, they should take action to prevent such behavior from continuing.

Such providers should also keep an eye on online comments to screen for cyberbullying, according to the draft regulation.

Ge Mengting, a judge at the Yangpu court, said the providers should also establish compliant reporting systems.

“Moreover, reported content should be archived properly to serve as evidence for possible future infringement disputes that may involve litigation,” she said.

Legal insiders said that netizens need to be careful about what they say in cyberspace, not publish

unconfirmed statements and not share false information provided by others.

Some also suggested that an individual's online behavior should be taken into consideration when applying for jobs or loans.

Zhang Wenlong, a professor specializing in legal affairs in cyberspace at the East China University of Political Science and Law, suggested establishing specific charges for those who commit online violence.

Sheng Feng, a partner of the law firm Dentons in Shanghai, suggested that compensation for mental anguish caused by online violence should be increased.

“Traditionally, people all believe that Chinese people can endure hardships, and because of that, it's never notable to endure hardships mentally. However, as mental health becomes a bigger part of people's lives in modern societies, such compensation should be increased accordingly,” he said.

Gansu media tour leaves Taiwan journalists in awe

By ZHANG YI and SHI XUEFAN
in Lanzhou

Reporters from Taiwan who participated in a just-concluded media tour of Gansu province said they were impressed by both its ancient culture and socioeconomic development.

Some 40 reporters from 23 media outlets from the Chinese mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong participated in an annual tour organized by the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council and the All-China Journalists Association to report on Gansu's latest developments and boost mutual understanding. Ten of the media outlets were from Taiwan.

During the eight-day trip, which ended on Sunday, the participants visited various sites ranging from natural landscapes such as the Danxia landform, to historical sites such as the Gansu Provincial Museum in Lanzhou and Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang.

“Many things that I read in poetry about ancient China, I am now seeing them in person,” said Tsai Su-chuan, from Taiwan Reports. “It feels amazing and profound.”

Tsai said that when she was a student, she learned about the Hexi Corridor in her history and geography classes, and she could recall the names of the cities along the route in order.

“Being in the midst of these historical sites, it is easy to connect them with the knowledge I learned,” she said, adding that she hopes that more people from Taiwan will come and see Gansu for themselves.

Lan Xiaowei, a journalist from the Taiwan newspaper China Times, said that when he was a student, Chinese history and geography were featured more in his classes than they are today.

He said that due to the influence of the island's “desinicization” policy promoted by the Democratic Progressive Party authorities, Chinese history has been reduced to only a few chapters in school textbooks, leaving Taiwan youth with a meager understanding of it.

Lan said in Taiwan there are many roads named after Gansu's cit-

ies, including Dunhuang Road and Lanzhou Road, so people in Taiwan are familiar with these cities and are curious about Gansu.

“Historical books can be changed, but the names of roads in Taiwan help us remember the connection between the mainland and Taiwan,” he said.

Historical knowledge of these places is what Taiwan people, especially young people, lack. If they can visit the mainland through traveling, trading and learning, they will deepen their understanding of mainland cultures, he added.

Lin Wei-kang, a young vlogger from Taiwan, said that he would share the beauty of Gansu with people across the Taiwan Strait in his videos.

Visiting the Yellow River for the first time and reciting a poem about it that he learned, he said: “It is the mother river of all Chinese people. It is a must-visit place when you come to the mainland.”

He said he also enjoyed going to the desert and seeing camels, something he could not do in Taiwan.

Chen Binhua, the deputy head of the information bureau of the Taiwan Affairs Office who led the trip, said that it was a great opportunity to help journalists delve into the culture and traditions of a region on the Chinese mainland and learn about its vibrant socioeconomic development.

Amid the interviews and visits, there was an exchange event held between media workers on both sides of the Strait, which helped to improve overall journalism standards, Chen said.

He said that he participated in the exchange twice in the past as a journalist for Xinhua News Agency before he joined the Taiwan Affairs Office, and he had made good friends with journalists from Taiwan.

“I hope that the journalists will deliver lively and vivid reports that allow Taiwan compatriots to see the real Gansu and the real mainland, contributing more positive energy to the peaceful development of cross-strait relations,” he said.

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Parkour player



A player strikes a pose during a parkour competition in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, on Saturday. About 80 people participated in the event, which took place on the steep, narrow “heavenly stairs” at the scenic spot. GUO LILIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

China's first flexible solar array satellite launched

By ZHAO LEI
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China launched on Sunday the country's first satellite equipped with a flexible solar array.

Developed by GalaxySpace, a private satellite maker in Beijing, the Lingxi 03 is a plate-shaped communications satellite. It is equipped with a millimeter-wave multibeam digital payload, which has a transmission capacity of tens of gigabits per second.

Together with three remote-sensing satellites, the Lingxi 03 was carried into space by a Long March 2D rocket that lifted off at 10:50 am from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi province.

The satellite is designed to verify a next-generation low-Earth-orbit broadband communication system and other satellite technologies, including an ultra-large energy system and active thermal control, GalaxySpace said in a news release.

Its launch also marked the first in-orbit verification of China's multi-satellite stack deployment method, which will be used when a rocket needs to put a number of plate-shaped satellites into orbit. The

method will play a major role in the rapid deployment of multiple communication satellites in low orbit, the company said.

Zhu Zhengxian, chief technology officer of GalaxySpace, said the Lingxi 03 is the first satellite in China to use a flexible solar wing.

“Its flexible solar wing is extremely thin — each layer on it is only about 1 millimeter thick, and when the wing is folded inside the rocket (before the launch), its overall thickness is only 5 centimeters,” he said.

“When fully unfolded in space, the array stretches to about 9 meters in length and above 2.5 meters in width. It is characterized by its small folded size, light weight and modular design.”

Zhu said that his company will continue to develop new types of mobile phone-connected phased array antennas, massive satellite-mounted power systems and data processors and will apply them to its next plate-shaped satellites to speed up the development of China's space-based internet.

Sunday's space mission was China's 30th rocket launch this year and the 479th flight of the Long March rocket family.

CHINA



Left: Yu Jianhua (left), a forest ranger at the Baima Snow Mountain National Nature Reserve in Yunnan province, is joined by Lai Jiandong (middle), head of the wildlife protection station at the reserve, and French travel writer Yannick Benichou as they check the feces of Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys to monitor the animals' health in March. **Middle:** Long Yongcheng (left), a primatologist, discusses the monkeys with Benichou in Xiangguqing village, Yunnan, in March. **Right:** Long and Yu teach Benichou about the monkeys in Xiangguqing. PHOTOS BY CHINA DAILY

Reserve ensures survival of rare monkeys

Modern & Me
China

Dedicated rangers are helping to ensure that one of China's most endangered species is flourishing. **Zhang Wenfang** and **Li Yingqing** report from Kunming.

The number of endangered Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys is rising, thanks to growing public awareness and concrete action, according to experts at a nature reserve.

"On Jan 29, Xiangguqing village welcomed its first Yunnan snub-nosed monkey baby born in the Year of the Rabbit," announced Lai Jiandong, head of the wildlife protection station at the Baima Snow Mountain National Nature Reserve in northwestern Yunnan province, in a WeChat post earlier this year.

The post was accompanied by a video clip showing the mother in the woods, holding her newborn with one hand as she picked up peanuts with the other.

"This marks an auspicious start (to the breeding season)," Lai wrote.

When the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey breeding season ended in late May, Lai was pleased to see that the monkeys in the village had given birth to 12 infants, bringing their total population to about 80.

"It is also a good sign for the reproductive activities of many other monkey troops who live deeper in the mountain's forests," Lai said.

Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys inhabit the mountainous forests of the southwestern province and the neighboring Tibet autonomous region, with most of them being found in the Baima reserve. Xiangguqing, in Yunnan's Dechen Tibetan autonomous prefecture, is the only place where people can observe the monkeys in close proximity.

Over the decades, the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey, one of world's most endangered primates, has been saved from extinction. According to a survey conducted in 2017-18, the population had risen to more than 3,800, while in the 1980s the monkey was rarely seen.

A decadelong journey

In the 1980s, when the Baima reserve was established to protect the precious species, no one knew exactly how many of the monkeys remained or where they were, because they had disappeared from human sight for about 100 years.

The mystery surrounding the primate intrigued Long Yongcheng, then a researcher at the Kunming Institute of Zoology. He first visited the reserve in 1985 on a trip that led to a lifelong bond with the animals.

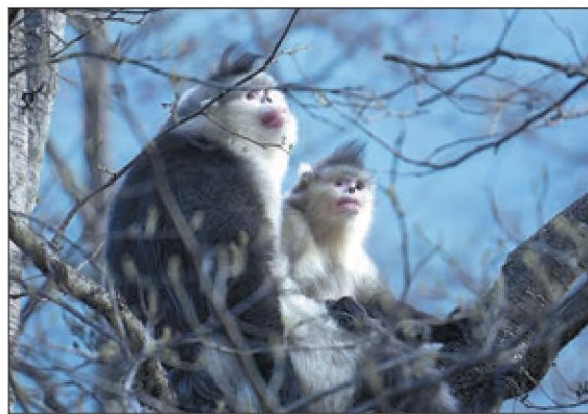
"Even the reserve's staff members didn't know what the monkeys looked like. They didn't have a single clear photo of the primate. They once even mistook some macaque monkeys for the Yunnan monkey," he recalled.

Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys have a distinctive appearance: black-and-white fur, pink pouting lips, a punky "mohawk" hairstyle and a tail that's roughly as long as the body.

"How can we protect a species without even knowing any basic information about it?" said Long, who was determined to find the monkeys.



Clockwise from left: Yu and his companions patrol the Baima reserve as they look for traces of Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys in March. Two monkeys sit high in a tree at the reserve. Parents nurse their infant at the reserve. PHOTOS BY CHINA DAILY



on high cliffs about 100 meters away. Later, his team found 20 groups of the monkeys — 1,000 to 1,500 in total — living in the primary forests, often known as "old growth forests," in the border area between Yunnan and Tibet.

Growing awareness

Long's expeditions were also often joined by special guides — hunters from local villages.

"Wherever I went, the first thing I did was find the best local hunters. They were excellent climbers and had detailed knowledge of the area's geography and fauna," Long said.

The local residents used to live off the mountains. They chopped down trees for firewood and building materials, and hunted wild animals, including the snub-nosed monkeys, for their meat and fur.

Large-scale commercial logging led to the shrinking and fragmentation of the monkeys' habitat, while hunting added to the challenges they faced.

"The hunters were not absolute villains. A lack of environmental and wildlife protection awareness meant that most of them were unaware that their way of life was destructive to nature," Long said.

"Once, I told a hunter that Yunnan snub-nosed monkeys only lived in his home area, and he was super surprised."

Over the years, Long made the

acquaintance of 30 to 40 hunters, and they are all now employed as forest protectors.

Yu Jianhua, a 70-year-old former hunter in Xiangguqing, has worked at the reserve for 26 years. His hunting career, which began in his teens, ended in 1997 after the local government persuaded him to use his skills and knowledge to protect the endangered monkeys.

"Although I was a hunter, I actually quite like animals and nature. When I learned that the monkeys were an endangered species, I became their protector," he said.

"The deteriorating natural environment had already affected my hunting business. I was worried that one day all the trees would be gone and the monkeys and other animals would no longer exist in the village."

After he turned in his shotgun, Yu started tracking and protecting the monkeys. "At first, they ran away at the sight of me and kept a watchful eye on me from very far away," he said, adding that as time passed, the animals came to recognize his voice and appearance so they stayed where they were when he approached, eating and resting as usual.

Many other hunters followed Yu's example, so the village's guardian team has grown to 25 people.

They hand out food, monitor the monkeys' health and daily activities and offer assistance when needed.

Other tasks include preventing poaching and illegal logging, and clearing hidden dangers such as traps.

In 2008, to raise public awareness of the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey, a national park was built around Xiangguqing, which lies within the Baima reserve, and opened to visitors, thus allowing people to observe the monkeys at elevations of 2,400 to 3,100 meters.

The monkeys usually live at the highest altitudes, but some have been guided by Yu and other rangers to settle in areas more accessible to people. However, it would not be possible for the monkeys to move to lower ground without the trust and bonds forged between them and their protectors.

"I see them as my own kids. I miss them when I leave the village, even if it's only for a few days. I'll continue my ranger work until the day I can no longer walk," Yu said.

Since the park opened, he has had an extra duty: managing the tourists and introducing them to the monkeys' world. By the end of last year, the facility had received about 250,000 visits, becoming a significant window to popularizing the treasured species.

Deeper understanding

"I like the shutter sounds made by visitors' cameras and phones because

that means their images and videos will be spread online and all over the world, making more people fans of this unique species," said Long, now a 68-year-old retiree and honorary chairman of the Chinese Primatological Society.

"More attention brings better protection. Keeping the monkeys alive is still a matter of urgency. Only while they are a living species can we maintain the opportunity to deepen our understanding of them."

The monkeys, dubbed "elves of the snow mountain" by the locals, live at the highest altitudes at which all primates (with the exception of humans) can survive, according to Long.

"High altitude often means extreme conditions and low temperatures. The monkeys don't have much fat, so how they survive is a good question to explore. It also sheds light on how nature's recycling system works," he said.

"The monkeys mainly eat usnea, a type of lichen that contains a substance called chitin, which is also found in the shells of crabs and shrimps. We humans and many other animals can't digest it, but the monkeys can. Usnea (aka "old man's beard") often grows in the woods, so it's eaten and digested by the monkeys, whose feces is broken down by natural processes. The ecosystem doesn't produce waste. Everything is recyclable. Maybe we can learn from it to improve human society."

Comparing the maps of habitats of humans and other primates in China, Long noticed an overlap between many of the regions favored by primates and by humans.

"The monkeys share many similarities with us humans. To protect them is to protect ourselves. A lot of questions remain about them and their interaction with nature. We should make more efforts to save biodiversity before it's too late," Long said.

According to Lai Jiandong, from the wildlife protection station at the Baima reserve, five nature reserves, including Baima, have been set up over recent decades, providing more effective protection of the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey.

In 2019, a protection network consisting of the local government and NGOs was established, and the number of member organizations has risen from 13 to 28. Over the past three years, ecological corridors totaling more than 400 hectares have been built or restored, with 630,000 trees planted, which has facilitated gene exchanges among different groups of monkeys.

"The conservation of the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey is on the right track and my dream of saving the species has been realized. Now, as a retiree, I just hope that one day this black-and-white monkey will be as popular as the black-and-white giant panda," Long said.

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Online
See more by scanning the code

Popular primate still a major figure in tales told by local people

By ZHANG WENFANG

A Yunnan snub-nosed monkey named *Bailian*, or White Face, was a superstar within his troop in Xiangguqing village, Dechen Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province. Local people have many

appealing anecdotes about him that they tell time and time again.

The primate lived for 30 years, which is almost equivalent to 90 human years. However, in October, *Bailian* was found dead in the wild.

In his prime as a commanding alpha male, he had a large family

with four wives and three offspring. However, in 2012, he was challenged and defeated by a younger, stronger monkey.

He was replaced as one of the troop leaders, and all his children and wives left him, with one exception. A female monkey, who was 10

years older than *Bailian*, stayed with him, and the male monkey took good care of her until she died in 2016.

Overwhelmed by grief, *Bailian* groomed her fur as usual and carried her body with him when he moved with the other monkeys in the troop.

When forest rangers removed the decaying body, *Bailian* tried to stop them — baring his teeth and howling as if in great pain.

Male monkeys must fight to win mates. In 2014 and 2016, *Bailian* helped two peers to win their chance to establish family groups.

In 2019, after three more years of nomadic life, he formed his second family, this time with a 6-year-old female, and fathered an infant the following year.

However, his happiness was short-lived. In October 2020, *Bailian* broke his legs in a fight and lost his family once again.

Rescued by forest rangers, he resumed his nomadic lifestyle until his death.

CHINA

Farmer gets community service in lieu of fine

Illegal use of sticky net led to deaths of 12 birds, 11 of which were protected

By CHEN MEILING in Beijing and LIU KUN in Wuhan

A farmer who was fined \$14,000 for trapping protected wild birds in a net he put up to protect his crops has been allowed to make the payment in the form of environment-related labor, according to the court that tried his case.

The recent case in Chibi, a county-level city in Hubei province, raised a discussion about illegal behavior that impacts the protection of wild animals, and reminded the area's large rural population of the risk involved, experts said.

The defendant, a 67-year-old man surnamed Liu, was relieved when the verdict was announced by the mobile court on a visit to his community in June, as he was unable to afford the penalty.

In December 2020, Liu erected a sticky, U-shaped net, 70 meters long and 3 meters high, around three sides of his plot to prevent his vegetables from being damaged by birds. About ten days later, 12 dead birds were found stuck to the net.

Six of the 12 were under second-class national protection and five were nationally protected terrestrial wildlife of important ecological, scientific and social value. The twelfth bird had been dead for too long to identify. The total estimated loss was about 100,000 yuan (\$14,000), according to the investigation undertaken by the Chibi



The court session for a farmer surnamed Liu charged with trapping protected wild birds is held at his community in Chibi, Hubei province, to raise awareness of wildlife protection among villagers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Forest Public Security Bureau. The People's Procuratorate of Xianning, the city that administers Chibi, reviewed the case and initiated civil public interest litigation. Liu was required to cover the loss, as he had "hunted wild birds using prohibited methods, in areas and during periods when hunting was banned", according to Zhang Tao, deputy chief judge of the No 3 civil adjudication tribu-

nal of intermediate people's court of Xianning. "Many people feel that putting up nets is legal. Their goal is to protect their crops, not to trap birds," Zhang said, adding that the court session was held at the community level to disseminate legal information and raise the awareness of the protection of wild animals among villagers. Zhang explained that Liu's farm-

land was located between the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, and its lush surroundings are an important bird habitat. The net Liu erected obstructed migration and space for feeding, seriously hindering the survival and reproduction of wild animals, finally leading to the death of the birds. Though the farmer's aim had been to prevent his crops from being eaten, the height of his net

was greater than needed to protect his rights. He knew that birds could die after getting caught in the net, but did nothing to prevent this, so there was the subjective existence of fault. The behavior caused harm to wild animals, society and the national public interest, according to the court. The judge stated that Liu should apologize to the public via city-level media and be responsible for the

loss, which could also be repaid in the form of labor to protect wild animals and environmental governance.

Zhang said that as Liu was old and sickly, and his family could not afford to pay the penalty, compensation would be a heavy burden and so payment in the form of labor would not only serve as an education and fulfill Liu's social duty, it would also have a positive social effect by encouraging more residents to protect wild animals.

The deputy chief judge added that compensation in the form of labor is common legal practice when it comes to repairing environmental damage in China.

Liu signed an agreement with the community and will spend 290 days patrolling the forests, protecting wild animals, clearing illegal hunting equipment and promoting environmental protection. The community will supervise and the court and procuratorate will make return visits to ensure that Liu does his work properly.

Liu accepted the judgment and expressed his remorse, saying that he thanked the court for giving him the chance to make amends through good deeds as compensation for damaging the environment.

Zhang said that ecology is closely linked to the interests of all, and that farmers need to consider the impact on the environment when seeking to protect their rights. "It's all right to build barriers, but illegal sticky hunting nets should not be used," he said, suggesting that villagers adopt more suitable methods such as installing scarecrows or bird repellers.

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Foreign visitors volunteer at Sichuan panda center

By YAN DONGJIE
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Last month, Ellis Ralson and her family flew from Chicago to Chengdu to volunteer at the Wolong Giant Panda Base at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda.

Ellis, her sister Clarke, and their parents helped clean the enclosures and make panda snacks.

"I love giant pandas, as well as red pandas. Especially when I see them in cartoons and movies, they are so adorable," the five-year-old said, adding that pandas are precious, protected species, and she was happy to see both kinds during her visit to China.

Jiang Weidong, their tour guide, said that he has welcomed visitors from many different countries, with those from the United States making up a large proportion, especially during the summer birthing season.

"Volunteer activities are open to all visitors and can be booked online. We are usually very busy, as there are a lot of foreigners who participate in volunteer activities," he said.

There is a long history of official and nongovernmental giant panda exchanges and cooperation between China and the United States.

In 1972, during then-US President Nixon's visit to China, China gave Xing Xing and Ling Ling from Baoxing, Sichuan as gifts and the year was designated "Giant Panda Year" in the United States. Then in 1996, Bai Yun

and Shi Shi were sent to San Diego Zoo as part of a research program. They were the first pair sent abroad on such a scheme.

On Dec 6, 2000, Mei Xiang and Tian Tian were sent to the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, D.C., where they gave birth to Tai Shan in 2005. Tai Shan is the most popular panda, with the most fans worldwide.

According to the agreement, giant pandas born abroad must return to China when they reach the age of two. In 2007, due to strong demand from the US public, the Chinese government agreed to extend Tai Shan's stay in the United States for an additional two years. To celebrate, Mayor Adrian Fenty announced that April 24th would be designated "Panda Day" in the city.

In February 2010, Tai Shan, who was already a nearly 4-year-old adult, returned to Sichuan before the Chinese Lunar New Year.

The giant panda is unique to China and one of the oldest surviving species on Earth. It is a rare species in the conservation of biodiversity worldwide. In 1869, the French naturalist and missionary Armand David, introduced the unique animal which has been living in China for 8 million years, to the Western world. Since then, the giant panda has won the love of people around the world.

According to the Fourth National Giant Panda Survey, there are currently 1,864 wild giant pandas in Chi-



Clarke Ralson, a volunteer from the United States, cleans the unit a giant panda lives in at the Wolong Giant Panda Base in Sichuan province.

YAN DONGJIE / CHINA DAILY

na and at the end of last year, there were an additional 698 in captivity.

According to figures from the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda, between 1957 and 1982, China gifted 24 giant pandas to 9 countries.

Since the 1980s, due to the deterioration of their environment, and the sharp decline in numbers, in accordance with the spirit of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, China has stopped gifting giant pandas to other countries. Instead, it engages with them in international cooperation and research. As of June, China had cooperation relationships with 22 zoos in 19 countries, with 64 giant pandas and their cubs residing overseas.



Online
Watch the video
by scanning
the code.

Drive to become China's NEV capital

HEFEI — As he usually does at 3 pm, Hu Chaozhong drove his taxi to a multifunctional new energy vehicle charging station in Hefei, capital of Anhui province.

After scanning a code to charge his car, he went to the waiting room to relax and "recharge" himself. Operational since late May, the station has five floors above ground and one below, with 185 charging piles for family cars, and 12 for trucks.

The station runs a "charging + business" model, and has a resting area with eateries and convenience stores offering meals and a reading area for drivers, according to Chen Jingjing, deputy director of Hefei's NEV charging facilities investment and operation company. "We aim to offer more services such as car washing, auto repairs, and insurance for drivers in the near future," Chen added.

Compared with outdoor charging stations, this multifunctional station not only protects cars from the wind and rain, but also makes the charging process safer, and drivers don't usually need to wait in line.

"I come to the charging station twice a day to charge my vehicle, and there is also hot water and a bathroom, which is very convenient," Hu said.

In recent years, China's NEV industry has grown rapidly, and charging stations have become important public facilities, helping to guarantee the development and promotion of NEVs.

As the world's largest single market for electric vehicles, China has launched a series of policies to bolster the development of its booming NEV sector, which includes building a complete charging infrastructure network.

In May, the country released a guideline to encourage and support rural dwellers wishing to purchase NEVs, with a focus on boosting the construction of charging infrastructure. By the end of May, more than 6.35 million charging units had been installed nationwide. In addition to building a complete charging network, governments at all levels have also rolled out a raft of policy incentives to spur NEV production and marketing.

In June, Anhui introduced a slew of measures to encourage the formation of an NEV industrial agglomeration. The province plans

to boost automobile production to more than 3 million units, some 40 percent of which would be NEVs.

According to official statistics, the output value of Hefei's NEV industrial chain was in excess of 100 billion yuan (\$14.02 billion) last year. The city has attracted a number of NEV makers and aims to turn itself into the "capital of NEVs".

"This multifunctional station serves as a model for the construction of charging infrastructure in Hefei," Chen said.

The project has also alleviated the difficulty of charging and parking NEVs in Hefei's economic and technological development zone, where an average daily charging capacity of about 30,000 kWh is able to meet the charging needs of more than 1,000 NEVs, Chen added.

XINHUA



A driver charges his car at a multifunctional new energy vehicle charging station in Hefei, Anhui province, on July 4.

LIU FANGQIANG / XINHUA

Increasingly, disabled finding ways to earn a living

GUIYANG — Dressed in a white uniform, 35-year-old chef Li Yuanyun skillfully maneuvered a pan with one hand while deftly stirring ingredients using a spatula in the other. Despite occasional moments of clumsiness, he confidently livestreamed his culinary skills on social media.

Hailing from Bijie city, Guizhou province, Li was born with cerebral palsy. However, he refused to let his condition hinder his aspirations. Through perseverance and dedication, he honed his cooking skills and eventually opened a successful restaurant specializing in delectable fried chicken.

As a child, Li faced challenges when it came to feeding himself and relied on his parents for assistance, but he remained undeterred. He

was always encouraged to engage in physical activities and explore a variety of interests.

"I remember breaking five tricycles while learning to ride and smashing many plates and bowls when I was trying to learn how to wash the dishes," he recalled fondly.

While growing up, he developed a genuine passion for cooking.

"Whenever friends and relatives praised me for the dishes I cooked, I was thrilled," he said.

Although he never received professional training, he perfected his culinary skills through practice. In 2016, he opened his first restaurant specializing in takeaway fried chicken.

As his chicken gained popularity, Li decided to expand his reach by livestreaming on social media and

began earning nearly 7,000 to 8,000 yuan (\$968 to \$1,106) a month.

An increasing number of disabled people like Li are managing to realize their dreams in various sectors.

In China, there are about 85 million people with disabilities. During the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), more than 50,000 disabled students enrolled in institutions of higher learning, and an additional 1.81 million disabled people found jobs, according to official data.

Last year, a three-year action plan promoting the employment of the disabled was issued by the State Council, China's Cabinet, setting the goal of creating 1 million new jobs for disabled people by the end of next year.

Significant efforts are being

undertaken to promote employment opportunities for people belonging to specific groups.

The seventh National Vocational Skills Competition for Disabled People took place in Jinan, capital of Shandong province, last week. The event attracted 950 competitors from across the country.

Among them was Lan Yuanhua, a skilled 38-year-old barista hailing from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

"My physical disability doesn't prevent me from making good coffee," she said.

Despite being diagnosed with brittle bone disease, a congenital condition that makes bones prone to fractures, Sun Shengru from Shandong has defied all odds. Over

the course of a decade, she dedicated herself to mastering the art of carving and established her own studio specializing in crafting exquisite purple-clay teapots.

"I am selling my works across China," she said.

"I hope that more people like me can find their way, and lead fulfilling lives filled with happiness and confidence."

During the three-day competition, a job fair specifically for people with disabilities was also held in Jinan, with nearly 2,500 job positions available for interested candidates.

The rise of livestreaming e-commerce in China has also created more job opportunities.

Currently, about 2.4 million people with disabilities are working in online stores or are engaged in livestreaming sales in the country.

Wang Ting, from the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, spent eight

years working in the internet industry before becoming a livestreamer in 2016.

With six friends, she began selling handicrafts made by people with disabilities in the region. Their offerings include exquisite works of embroidery and intricate paper-cutting.

Similarly, chef Li had a strong desire to help others. On China's national day of assisting people with disabilities, which is observed on the third Sunday of May every year, he prepares meals for other disabled people in his community.

"Before reaching where I am today, I received tremendous help and encouragement. So, I am determined to pay it forward, to assist and inspire others. Only in this way can my life acquire true meaning," he said.

XINHUA

WORLD

Voicing dissent

Thousands of Israelis in Jerusalem on Saturday marching in protest against the government's plan to overhaul the judicial system. The Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was in hospital after being fitted with a pacemaker on Sunday, just hours before lawmakers began debate on the judicial overhaul bill.

OHAD ZWIGENBERG / AP



Sino-UK ties bring mutual benefits

Northern England business insiders favor stronger economic, investment relations

By XING YI in Leeds, England
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Despite recent talk in the West of "de-risking" of relations with China, businesspeople in Northern England have made a case for stronger trade links, voicing optimism about the benefits of forging long-term partnerships.

About 50 business representatives of companies across sectors based in Yorkshire attended the China-Northern England Cooperation Forum, themed "Partnership for a Prosperous Future", in Leeds on July 17.

The forum was organized by the China-Britain Business Council, or CBBC, and the China Chamber of Commerce in the UK. Zheng Zeguang, China's ambassador to the United Kingdom, made the keynote speech at the forum.

"The world economy is facing multiple headwinds. Major developed economies are not performing so well, and the recovery of developing countries is also facing difficulties," Zheng said. "This highlights the need for even closer cooperation between China and the UK."

According to the UK Department for Business and Trade, the total trade in goods and services between China and Britain was 111 billion pounds (\$143.3 billion) last year, up by 18.3 percent compared with 2021.

"Exports to China will certainly help to generate growth in this country, and investments from China in the UK will help to create more jobs and tax revenues," Zheng said, adding that foreign direct investment stocks exceeded \$50 billion.

"We welcome British businesses into the Chinese market, as China has been striving to build an open, fair, and law-based business environment. We hope the UK government will do the same," Zheng said. "That is why we have voiced our

concerns on certain measures that people have put in place in this country, for example, overstretching the concept of national security."

Claire Urry, chief commercial officer of the CBBC, said there have been more challenges to business relations this year, but the CBBC and its 500 member companies remain committed to long-term development in China.

"Economic and trade and investment ties are the foundations of our wider relationship. So we believe it's really imperative that the world's second and sixth-largest economies continue to engage and work together," said Urry in her opening remarks.

"We remain optimistic about the market in China and we will continue to work with all of you and your teams to increase bilateral engagement in order to achieve those mutual benefits," she added.

Building partnership

For Keith Jackson, CEO of Brandon Medical, a good partnership is crucial for doing business in China. As a designer and manufacturer of medical equipment for operating theaters and intensive care units, the company needs to navigate different systems when exporting its highly specialized equipment.

Jackson said the company has forged a strong strategic partnership with a Chinese company in Beijing over the past two years.

"We've been working through our regulatory approvals ... and we should have our approvals in September," he said, adding that because of the aging population, China will become its biggest international market with "no question".

As a country with more than 400 million people in the middle-income group, China is also seen as a dynamic consumer goods market,

where people with various tastes seek all kinds of high-quality goods to improve their lives.

John Gyngell, the co-founder of North Brewing, recalled that when the company opened a brewery in 2015, he looked to export, and attended an expo in Shanghai, which began the company's long-time partnership with Chinese distributors.

"China quickly became our No 1 export country," Gyngell said. The company, which pioneered the craft beer trend in Britain two decades ago, now exports to 27 countries.

"We love working with local brewers and distributors in China," he said. "Setting up things the first time around to export was tricky, but once you navigated that, it's been relatively plain sailing."

Chris Black, managing director of Sound Leisure, a family business making classic jukeboxes, said the company started looking at exports to China in 2019 and has since shipped jukeboxes worth 500,000 pounds to the Chinese market.

"We see China over the next 12 months as becoming our largest export, so that's above America, which has traditionally been our largest partner," Black said, adding that he hopes to visit China later this year.

Apart from local exporters, representatives of Chinese companies' UK branches in Northern England also attended the forum to share their stories of doing business in Britain, which they said brings mutual benefits and understanding.

Fang Wenjian, chairman of the China Chamber of Commerce in the UK, said he has witnessed phenomenal growth in the past 20 years. In total, the number of Chinese companies registered in the UK has exceeded 10,000, he noted.

Fang said among Chinese companies that have operations outside London, 44 percent are operating in Yorkshire and the Humber area.

"There are more companies expressing intentions to expand and invest further in this area. So this really indicates the growing appeal of this area for Chinese companies," he said.

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange-listed Minth Group established its UK branch in Sunderland in 2018, and Xiong Weibo, general manager of Minth Automotive (UK), said the branch is running successfully with only two Chinese employees and 70 local staff.

"In the future, Minth will be looking forward to increasing the investment in the UK," said Xiong. "We also want to bring more high-tech and good solutions to the UK from China to help reduce carbon emissions in the auto industry."

For Chinese home appliance giant Midea, integrating with the local community and culture was the first step to doing business abroad. Liu Tao, general manager of Midea Home Appliances UK, said the company sponsored the Manchester City soccer team in 2020 before opening its UK headquarters office in the city this year.

"Although our team now in the UK is still very small, we are creating a long-term recruitment plan for many positions, as we want to be a player in the UK for many years to come," said Liu.

Ian Zhu, China consultant at Grant Thornton UK LLP, a global leading professional services network of independent accounting and consulting firms, said the organization has been providing services to assist many Chinese companies, such as Hisense and CISDI, to forge strong growth in the UK.

"We are positive that it's beneficial to Chinese companies coming to the UK market as they create local jobs and provide more choices for British consumers," said Zhu. "And we are dedicated to helping them to have a better understanding of local compliance and get accustomed to the UK business environment."

Ruling party tipped to win as Cambodians vote

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong
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Cambodians cast their ballots on Sunday to decide who will lead the country for the next five years, with the ruling party looking strong, thanks to the impressive progress the country has made.

The country's 7th general election was held from 7 am to 3 pm in 23,789 polling stations across 25 provinces and the capital, according to the country's state media outlet Agence Kampuchea Presse.

"We want a party that can continue to maintain peace and political stability and bring more development to Cambodia," Svay Sareth, a retired teacher, said after casting his ballot.

The voter turnout rate of this year's general election is 84.21 percent, said Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen in a voice message on Sunday evening, citing preliminary figures from the National Election Committee.

Though official results had yet to be announced, which are expected to be announced on Aug 8, a CPP spokesman said they've won a landslide victory, saying that this marked another great success for the CPP.

"We've won in a landslide ... but we can't calculate the number of seats yet," said Sok Eysan, spokesperson for the CPP.

Eighteen political parties competed in the election for 125 seats in the National Assembly, with more than 9.7 million people, out of the country's 16 million population, eligible to cast their ballots.

More than 600 international observers from some 60 institutions, including ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hour, have been

overseeing the election, according to the National Election Committee.

Malaysia's Parliamentary Speaker Johari Abdul, Guinea-Bissau Prime Minister Nuno Gomes Nabiam, and many former heads of state, heads of government, former presidents and vice-presidents, were among those invited.

Kao, with other observers, paid a courtesy call on Hun Sen on Saturday, and wished Cambodia a peaceful and orderly general election.

If the election process goes smoothly, Hun Sen said in June that a new government would be formed by the end of August.

Among the parties in the race are the ruling Cambodian People's Party, or CPP, led by Hun Sen and the Funcinpec party, headed by Prince Norodom Chakravuth.

Hun Sen and his wife voted at a polling station near his mansion in Kandal Province, about 15 kilometers south of the capital. Prince Chakravuth cast his ballot in the capital Phnom Penh.

In the last general election in 2018, the CPP won all 125 seats in the National Assembly. Many analysts believe the party will score a landslide victory again this time.

Joseph Matthews, a senior professor at the BELTEI International University in Phnom Penh, said the CPP would be unbeatable, given that the party has strong leadership and human and financial resources.

"Cambodia's economy had grown at an average annual rate of 7.7 percent between 1998 and 2019, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world," he said.

Xinhua and agencies contributed to this story.

Iraqis continue protests against Quran desecration

BAGHDAD — Thousands of Iraqis demonstrated in Baghdad on Saturday over the burning or damaging of the Quran during anti-Islam protests in Sweden and Denmark.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said those desecrating the Quran should face the "most severe punishment" and that by defending perpetrators Sweden was gearing up for "war" against Muslims.

Many Muslim states protested against insults to the Quran last week in protests in Sweden and Denmark, which both allow the book's burning under legal protections for freedom of speech.

Protesters gathered in Baghdad amid heavy security measures, with bridges leading to the Green Zone that houses many foreign embassies shut after an attempt by demonstrators to get to the Danish embassy early on Saturday.

That attempt, repelled by Iraqi security forces who fired tear gas according to a government source, came 48 hours after the Swedish embassy was set alight in protest at a planned burning of the Quran in Stockholm.

Iraq condemned the attack on the Swedish embassy but also expelled the Swedish ambassador in protest at the planned burning of the Quran, the central text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be a revelation from God.

On Friday in Denmark, a man set fire to a book purported to be the Quran on a square across from the Iraqi embassy in Copenhagen.

The event was livestreamed on the Facebook platform of a group

that calls itself "Danish Patriots". The video shows the book burning in a tin foil tray next to the Iraqi flag on the ground, with two onlookers standing and talking next to it.

Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen condemned it as an act of "stupidity" by a few individuals, telling national broadcaster DR: "It is a disgraceful act to insult the religion of others."

Envoy summoned

Iran's Foreign Ministry said it had summoned the Danish ambassador on Friday to voice its protest.

During Thursday's anti-Islam demonstration in Stockholm, protesters kicked and partially destroyed a book they said was the Quran but left the area without setting it alight.

Khamenei demanded that Sweden hand over perpetrators to Islamic nations' judiciaries.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday condemned the desecration of the Quran.

Such "sacrilegious" acts contradict human dignity and rights, Iran's Foreign Ministry said.

Zardari, for his part, pointed to his participation in a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council earlier this month, during which the council adopted a resolution that condemned and strongly rejected any advocacy of religious hatred, including desecration of the Quran.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

S. Koreans call for peace as armistice anniversary nears

SEOUL — South Korean civic activists on Saturday called for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the world as the 70th anniversary of the armistice agreement that ended the Korean War (1950-53) approached.

Peace activists and others marched hundreds of meters from a plaza to Gwanghwamun Square in central Seoul to demand the easing of tensions on the peninsula and settlement of peninsula issues through dialogue.

The participants chanted slogans and held placards saying "Stop hostilities and go for peace now", "Let's open the door to dialogue by stopping combined South Korea-US military exercises" and "Oppose South Korea-US-Japan military cooperation".

The march opened a peace rally organized by the Korea Peace Appeal, composed of hundreds of civic and religious groups in South Korea as well as tens of overseas anti-war groups.

The organization was set up to call for peace as the 70th anniversary of the armistice treaty falls on Thursday.

The festive demonstration continued with performances by traditional and contemporary music bands.



Participants stage a rally for peace in the Korean Peninsula in Seoul, on Saturday. AHN YOUNG-JOON / AP

Between the performances, politicians and activists made pro-peace remarks.

The Korea Peace Appeal said the participants marched and shouted slogans to remove the specter of war shrouding the peninsula and create a new history of peace in the world.

The organization urged every party concerned to stop hostilities, which it said only produces a cycle of endless arms races and military

threats, and said unilateral sanctions and military pressure lead to a new level of military crisis.

The South Korea-US military exercises, which it said are an aggressive war game, should be stopped for the resumption of dialogue, emphasizing its stern opposition to South Korea-US-Japan military collaboration triggering a possible confrontation with other neighboring countries.

Separately, civic activists in South Korea and Japan held a joint media conference in central Seoul calling for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the region.

South Korea and the US had recently conducted the maximum scale of combined military drills by mobilizing nuclear-capable strategic bombers and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, the activists said.

A US strategic nuclear submarine docked last week at the South Korean port of Busan for the first time in more than 40 years, it said, and the military escalation was made routine around the peninsula.

Another factor threatening peace in the region was Japan's push for more military power, such as a plan to raise the proportion of its defense budget to GDP from 1 percent to 2 percent, the activists said.

South Korea should immediately end its policy of integrating with US nuclear policy, they said, and Japan should stop its arms buildup to defend article 9 of its constitution, central to Japan's peace policy since World War II.

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WORLD



People walk inside the Odesa Transfiguration Cathedral, damaged in a missile attack, on Sunday. AP

Crimea bridge traffic halted after attack

Russian and Belarusian leaders meet as Ukraine accused of firing cluster bombs

By REN QI in Moscow
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A drone attack on an ammunition depot in Crimea prompted authorities to evacuate an area within a radius of 5 kilometers and briefly suspend road traffic on the bridge linking the peninsula to Russia on Saturday, a day after Russian officials accused Ukraine of firing cluster munitions at a village near the border.

Ukraine said its army had destroyed an oil depot and Russian army warehouses in central Crimea. The attack caused an ammunition depot to explode, said Governor Sergey Aksyonov, adding that there was no reported damage or casualties.

In a video shown by state media, a thick cloud of gray smoke could be seen at the site. Aksyonov ordered people living within 5 kilometers of the zone to be evacuated.

"To minimize risks, it was also decided to halt rail traffic on Crimean railways," Aksyonov said.

The brief halt to traffic on the Crimea bridge, about 180 km to the east of the drone attack, came five days after explosions there killed two people and damaged a section of roadway, the second major attack on the bridge since the start of the special military operation.

"The goal is to return Crimea," Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, according to a transcript published by his office on Saturday of a speech addressing the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado on Friday.

Kyiv considers the Crimea bridge, opened by Russia's President Vladimir Putin in 2018, as an "enemy object" and says it wants it to be "neutralized".

Russia said on Sunday it hit all intended targets in Ukraine's port city Odesa, claiming the sites were being used to prepare "terrorist acts" against Russia.

"At night the armed forces of the Russian Federation carried out a strike ... on facilities where terrorist acts against the Russian Federation using unmanned boats were prepared," the Russian army said.

The historic Transfiguration Cathedral, a landmark Orthodox cathedral in the city, was damaged, media reported.

Zelenskyy promised to strike back. It came as Putin met Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Sunday, for the first time since the latter helped broker a deal to end a mutiny by Wagner fighters last month.

'Strategic partnership'

Lukashenko paid a working visit to Russia and will talk to Putin about further development of the countries' "strategic partnership", the Kremlin said.

A video posted on Sunday by Lukashenko's press service showed the two leaders arriving at Saint Petersburg's Konstantinovsky palace together before scheduled talks.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region Vyacheslav Gladkov has said Ukraine fired cluster munitions at a

village near the Ukrainian border on Friday, but that there were no casualties or damage.

"In Belgorod district, 21 artillery shells and three cluster munitions from a multiple-launch rocket system were fired at the village of Zhuravlevka," Gladkov said on Saturday.

Ukraine received cluster bombs from the US this month, but it has said it will use them only to dislodge concentrations of enemy soldiers.

Belgorod, bordering Ukraine, has been repeatedly targeted by what Russia says is indiscriminate shelling by Ukraine's armed forces.

It was the first time Russia had reported the weapons being used on its territory. Putin has said Moscow has enough cluster munitions to respond if Ukraine uses the weapons.

Ukraine does not claim responsibility for attacks inside Russian territory and denied it was involved in the cross-border raids.

Russia also alleged that Kyiv had used cluster munitions on settlements in the Zaporizhzhia region and that they had killed one of its journalists and injured three.

Russia's Defense Ministry said a reporter, Rostislav Zhuravlev, "died from his wounds that resulted from the cluster munitions exploding" during the evacuation.

"Other reporters' conditions are medium, stable," the ministry said.

The death of a Russian journalist in Ukraine was "a heinous, premeditated crime" committed by Western powers and Kyiv, Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday, and it said there would be a "response" against those responsible.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Efforts to isolate China put technology leaps at risk, academic says

By KE RONGYI, MENG ZHE and XU-PAN YIRU

A Chinese political scholar has raised concerns over the implications of the United States' policy of so-called de-risking for China's technological advancements and international collaboration.

This approach seeks to restrict technology exchanges to exclude China from critical supply chains, obstruct it from moving up the industrial value chain and suppress the country's development, Yan Xuetong, a professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing said.

The "small yard and high fence" strategy is also geared toward disrupting global collaboration in technological research and development, he said.

Even though the US has said it will not "decouple" from China but instead "de-risk," its efforts to hold China back have accelerated.

Comparing US President Joe Biden's approach to China with that of his predecessor Donald Trump, Yan highlighted a distinct shift toward a more multilateral strategy.

Biden seeks to forge a parallel system to shut China out through "decoupling and severing supply chains" and building "small yards with high fences", departing from the Trump administration's unilateral approach, Yan said.

One observation by Yan pertains to the US' vision of a prosperous China. Such prosperity is oriented more toward improving living standards than bolstering China's national power, he said.

Such a desire for a "compliant" China, prosperous economically but weak militarily, will harm China's autonomy and sovereignty, he said.

This policy resembles a US-style strategy of "seclusion", he said, and



Yan Xuetong

instead of engaging in comprehensive competition, the US appears more intent on gaining an edge through targeted blockades.

Nevertheless, Yan said, the US approach is likely to steer China's development toward greater determination in fostering high technology and furthering investments in cutting-edge industries.

Tariff barriers

Amid US transitions from a trade war to a technology war, it is clear that tariff barriers did not succeed in dismantling "Made in China", he said.

China remains resolute in pursuing high technology, unwavering in its commitment to progress, irrespective of efforts to stifle its growth through either a "large yard" approach or a "small yard" approach, he said.

Looking to the future of China-US relations, Yan emphasized the significance of China's focus on internal matters.

He advocates boosting domestic consumption, enhancing investment conditions and accelerating scientific and technological research and development.

True national strength lies in effective domestic policies rather than in foreign maneuvers, he said.

Contact the writers at
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Online
See more by scanning the code.

Briefly

SPAIN Ballots cast in general elections

Voters were casting ballots in general elections in Spain on Sunday. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called the early election after his Spanish Socialist Workers Party and its left-wing partner, Unidas Podemos, took a severe beating in local and regional elections in May. Sanchez has been prime minister since 2018. Most opinion polls for Sunday's voting put the right-wing Popular Party, which won the elections in May, ahead of the Socialists. The elections came as Spain holds the EU's rotating presidency.

AFGHANISTAN Monsoon rain causes floods, kills 30: Official

At least 30 people have been killed in Afghanistan after floods caused by a heavy monsoon rain spell washed away homes, Reuters quoted a disaster ministry official as saying on Sunday. Mohammad Shafi Rahimi, the ministry spokesman, said 26 of the deaths occurred in Jalrez district, 46 km east of Kabul, after the rain washed away hundreds of houses. Four more people died in Kabul, and over 70 were injured in both districts, he said, adding at least 40 others were missing.

UNITED STATES Twitter logo ready for last chirp, says Musk

Elon Musk said on Sunday he was looking to change Twitter's logo, tweeting: "And soon we shall bid adieu to the Twitter brand and, gradually, all the birds." Musk posted an image of a flickering "X", and later in a Twitter Spaces audio chat replied, "Yes" when asked if the Twitter logo will change, adding that "it should have been done a long time ago." The company has changed its name to X Corp.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Florida board approves standards for black history classes amid criticism

By AI HEPING in New York
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One rule requires instruction for middle school students to include "how slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit".

Another rule requires that when high school students learn about race massacres, such as the 1920 massacre in Ocoee, Florida, that instruction must include acts of violence perpetrated by African Americans.

Both rules are part of a new set of standards approved last week by the Florida Board of Education at a meeting in Orlando for how black history should be taught in the state's public schools.

The standards were created by a 13-member group of 13 educators and academics, with input from the African American history task force, according to the state's Education Department, and were the result of a "rigorous process", describing them as "in-depth and comprehensive".

"They incorporate all components of African American history: the good, the bad and the ugly," said Alex Lanfranconi, the department's director of communications.

While some of the new standards seem to emphasize the positive contributions of black Americans throughout history, they have drawn criticism from education advocates who said students should be allowed to learn the "full truth" of American history. Civil rights advocates have called them "a sanitized and dishonest telling of the history of slavery in America".

One standard has especially drawn criticism — that "slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit".

On Friday afternoon in Jacksonville, Florida, Vice-President Kamala Harris criticized the standards and singled out that standard.

"How is it that anyone could suggest that in the midst of these atrocities that there was any benefit to being subjected to this level of dehumanization?" Harris, the first African American and first Asian American to serve as

vice-president, said in a speech.

Ahead of Harris' speech, Governor Ron DeSantis, who is seeking the Republican nomination for president, released a statement accusing the Biden administration of mischaracterizing the new standards and being "obsessed with Florida".

Two members of the group who created the standards, William Allen and Frances Presley Rice, released a statement responding to criticism of the standard depicting enslaved African Americans as personally benefiting from their skills.

"The intent of this particular benchmark clarification is to show that some slaves developed highly specialized trades from which they benefited," they said, citing blacksmithing, shoemaking and fishing as examples.

"Any attempt to reduce slaves to just victims of oppression fails to recognize their strength, courage and resiliency during a difficult time in American history," they said. "Florida students deserve to learn how slaves took advantage of whatever circumstances they were in to benefit themselves and the community of African descendants."

Education Commissioner Manny Diaz rejected assertions by groups such as the Florida Education Association teachers' union and the NAACP Florida State Conference that the standards "omit or rewrite key historical facts about the black experience" and ignore state law about required instruction.

"They incorporate all components of African American history: the good, the bad and the ugly. These standards will further cement Florida as a national leader in education, as we continue to provide true and accurate instruction in African American history," he said.

Paul Burns, chancellor of the Department of Education's Division of K-12 Public Schools, also rebuffed the criticism.

"For the folks in the media and in the teachers' union who are watching, we want you to please pay close attention because you've been peddling really a false narrative," Burns said.

Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP, condemned the new standards.

"Our children deserve nothing less than truth, justice, and the equity our ancestors shed blood, sweat, and tears for," he said in a statement. "It is imperative that we understand that the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow were a violation of human rights and represent the darkest period in American history."

The new standards are latest the development in the state's debate over African American history, including the education Department's rejection of a preliminary version of an Advanced Placement African American Studies course for high school students, which it claimed lacked educational value.

The standards come in response to a 2022 law signed by DeSantis, known as the "Stop W.O.K.E. Act," which prohibits instruction that could prompt students to feel discomfort about a historical event because of their race, sex or national origin.

DeSantis has centered his presidential campaign on cultural issues in his so-called battle against woke-ness, declaring that Florida "is where woke goes to die".

The standards are designed to guide lessons from kindergarten through high school.

The kindergarten standards focus on teaching students about important black American historical figures.

Some of the standards single out accomplishment by black Americans.

Fifth graders are expected to learn about the "resiliency" of African Americans, including how the formerly enslaved helped others escape as part of the Underground Railroad, and about the contributions of African Americans during the country's westward expansion.

One part of the high school standards directs students to describe "the contributions of Africans to society, science, poetry, politics, oratory, literature, music, dance, Christianity and exploration in the United States from 1776-1865".

Agencies contributed to this story.

Thousands evacuated as Greek island burns

ATHENS — About 30,000 people were moved to safety on the Greek island of Rhodes where a wildfire burned on Saturday, while people in the southern United States struggled under a record-breaking heat wave.

Tens of millions of people have been suffering through intense heat this summer, and the world looks set for its hottest July on record.

As temperature records tumble, experts have pointed to climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels, arguing that global warming is playing a key role in the devastating heat.

On the Mediterranean island of Rhodes, where a wildfire has been blazing for days, boats carried 2,000 people to safety from beaches in the east of the popular tourist island.

Greek fire service spokesman Vasilis Varthakogiannis told Skai TV: "This is not a fire that will be over tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. It'll be troubling us for days."

Three coastguard ships led more than 30 private vessels in the evacuation, and a Greek navy boat was heading to the area.

Island officials arranged for dozens of buses to take people to safety, but where fires had cut off road access, others had to walk.

Authorities have opened up gyms, schools and hotel conference centers to serve as makeshift



Tourists are evacuated as wildfire burns near Lindos, on the island of Rhodes, Greece, on Saturday. REUTERS

accommodations while firefighters battle the blaze.

In Athens, the foreign ministry said it had activated its crisis management unit to facilitate the evacuation of foreign citizens due to the forest fires.

Greece is fighting dozens of forest fires 11 days into a heat wave. Temperatures have soared above 40 C. Meteorologists have warned it could be the longest hot spell the country has ever seen.

Across the southern United States, about 80 million people were

expected to swelter in temperatures of 41 C and above the weekend, the National Weather Service said.

Tourists have been flocking to Death Valley National Park, which straddles California and Nevada, to post selfies with a temperature display outside the visitor center.

Many are hoping to see it break a world record of 56.7 C, which was set in July 1913 but was probably the result of a faulty measurement, according to several meteorologists.

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BUSINESS

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Time for policy boost to restore realty health

Experts urge cautious approach to avoid sudden overheating, abrupt downturn

By WANG YING in Shanghai
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With the rise in China's new home prices slowing and investment in property contracting, industry experts have issued calls for stronger supportive measures to restore real estate to healthy development.

As one of the nation's pillar industries, real estate accounts for about 7 percent of the nation's GDP and about 60 percent of urban households' assets, according to the Office of Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs.

The industry's performance is closely associated with the nation's overall economic recovery. With that as the backdrop, two views have formed of late. Some people have underlined immediate bailout measures; while others worry that extravagant policies might cause the housing market to overheat in some cities.

Lou Jiwei, former finance minister, said he believes supportive measures are urgently needed. He suggested restrictions on home purchases and home loans should be scrapped, and caps on housing prices lifted, ensuring a soft landing for the country's property market.

Lou also called for plans to levy property tax in due course, with a clear threshold of tax exemption based on the property area owned by a household.

China's property market saw new home prices in major Chinese cities either stay flat or decline in June, while pre-owned home prices fell month-on-month, according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

NBS data also showed China's investment in property development fell nearly 8 percent year-on-year to 5.86 trillion yuan (\$816.5 billion) in the first half of this year. The residential segment accounted for 4.44 trillion yuan of it, down more than 7 percent year-on-year.

"As various measures took effect, nationwide home transaction volume started to stabilize with first- and second-tier cities taking the lead in recovery," said Sheng Xiuxiu, research director for the residential sector at JLL China, a real estate consultancy.

However, with major indicators of the housing market, including residential investment and new construction, still in a downturn, property developers should be wary of revitalizing stock assets and cautious about opening new projects, Sheng said.

A slew of measures were launched in the first half. In early January, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, and the former China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, then the industry regulator, jointly announced that cities where new home prices dropped both month-on-month and year-on-year for three months, can decide if they would like to retain, reduce or remove lower limits for interest rates on first-home loans in phases.

In June, the PBOC made the first adjustment in 10 months to



An employee (left) from a real estate sales department introduces a residential project to a potential homebuyer in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, on May 12. WEI LIANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Visitors gather information on pre-owned homes during the 2023 Fuzhou Spring Housing Fair in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on April 2. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



A real estate project is under construction near the Bund area in Shanghai on June 4. WANG GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

loan prime rates by cutting the over-five-year loan prime rate, on which many lenders base their mortgage rates.

"These measures mainly focus on lowering the cost of buying homes as well as improving the balance sheet of quality property developers, as part of efforts to defuse financial risks of the real estate sector and assist the property market to form a virtuous cycle," said Chen Wenjing, director of research with the China Index Academy.

"At the local government level, policies related to property had been adjusted in over 130 Chinese cities as of June 25. These policies included easing home mortgage measures, lowering down payment, and reducing home purchase restrictions. The policy adjustments are playing a bigger role in supporting the home market," said Chen Xiao, senior analyst with the Zhuge Real Estate Data Research Center.

Although industry experts agree that policies need more fine-tuning to back the property market recovery, many of them urge striking a fine balance to stop the sector from either getting overheated or taking a drastic downturn.

"Any policy related to the regula-

tion of real estate needs to be implemented under the premise 'housing is for living in, not for speculation,'" said Shaun Brodie, head of research content for China with Cushman & Wakefield, an industry consultancy.

"Additionally, it is necessary to take into account the specific situations of each city and then carefully make customized policy tweaks to ensure sustainable growth within the housing market of a particular city in question," Brodie said.

Earlier this year, with the full relaxation of the COVID-19 pandemic control policies, and given the long-standing backlog of demand for housing, the new homes market recovered, especially in cities that have long been hot spots for homebuyers. However, after the sales boost, demand gradually cooled, Brodie said.

Chen Sheng, president of the China Real Estate Data Academy, said the lifting of home purchase and mortgage restrictions in first-tier cities will likely pull buyers away from neighboring areas, affecting the housing market in smaller places.

Market insiders said the new homes market in China's first-tier

cities — Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province — showed strong resilience in the first half.

Brodie said China Real Estate Index System data showed the four first-tier cities recorded sales of 1.55 million new homes in the first half, up nearly 22 percent year-on-year.

Meanwhile, key second- and third-tier cities, with the exception of a few hot spot cities, witnessed a relatively sluggish new homes market, with transactions in the second quarter showing a mild downturn compared to the first quarter.

With calls for eliminating homebuying restrictions growing nationwide, the market should be wary of certain risks, said Chen Xiao from the Zhuge Real Estate Data Research Center.

"On the one hand, lifting of restrictions may attract speculators back to the housing market, and drive up home prices. On the other hand, any changes without more scientific and reasonable policies related to home purchases or mortgage requirements, may disturb the current market order," Chen said.

But Chen also noted that consider-

ing in (rather than speculative investment).

Yu Yifan, 31, a white-collar worker at a startup in Shanghai's Lingang Special Area, recently bought a 120-square-meter apartment in the area, after a house hunt that stretched for more than six months. "I have been working at Lingang for about eight years and always wanted to own a home here."

Yu typifies China's urban homebuyers, a group that accounts for inelastic demand. "Many people said Lingang is too far away from the city center of Shanghai, but I think differently. Over the past few years, I have seen the area's infrastructure improve rapidly, and both business and living environments are becoming better and better. I see Lingang as a place with great potential and bright future."

Brodie said so far this year, hundreds of policies have been introduced in the residential market. Many of these policies are city-specific, but the common goal is to stabilize the overall market.

"Any future policies should be a combination of consistent short-term and long-term policies that are city-specific, in order to avoid overheating or its opposite, but at the same time guide the market toward high-quality and healthy development coupled with sustainable market growth," said Brodie.

What is needed for the healthy development of the real estate market is neither overheating nor an abrupt downturn, industry experts agreed. Excessive relaxation of restrictions, they said, will lead to disorderly inflows of capital, while excessive tightening will cause a sudden downturn. What is needed is consistency in policies to promote sustainable market growth, they said.

During a news conference of the State Council Information Office on July 14, Zou Lan, head of the monetary policy department at the PBOC, made it clear that there is still room for optimizing the existing local property policies that vary from city to city.

Zou's remarks sent a positive signal that more policy adjustments that are more accurate and precise than those of the past may be expected, said Chen with the China Index Academy.

However, Zou's remarks also suggested that the policy alterations will be based on existing measures; therefore, all the parties concerned in the real estate industry should keep their expectations reasonable, Chen said.

Sheng at JLL China emphasized prevention of financial risks, including improvement to the balance sheets of good-quality property developers, thus guiding the sector's capital flows, investment, mergers and acquisitions back on to the right track.

"Improvement of property developers' financing and investment conditions will depend on the consistent and accelerated recovery of property sales, so as to bring about a virtuous cycle in the sector's development," said Sheng.

Brodie with Cushman & Wakefield said the recovery in the residential market will depend highly on government policies and the continued recovery of the overall economy in the second half. If policies are executed well and economic growth remains steady, then steady property demand would deliver sustainable growth of the residential market.

Some bright sparks in Shanghai create hopes of property recovery

REPORTER'S LOG

By Wang Ying

While a broad recovery of the residential property sector is still awaited, Shanghai, one of the most-sought-after destinations of commercial property buyers on the Chinese mainland, has seen a steady recovery of its commercial property market, the latest data indicated.

Thanks to the Shanghai government's supportive policies, the retail sector saw effective recovery, which

then rippled over the commercial property segment that houses retail stores.

During the fourth edition of the Double Five shopping festival, which was held in Shanghai from April 29 through the end of June, 7.13 billion yuan (\$993.5 million) was spent daily on average at brick-and-mortar stores across the city, up more than 16 percent year-on-year, according to Consumer Market Big Data Laboratory (Shanghai).

In the first half of this year, 53,000 square meters of retail space was absorbed in the market. In the second quarter, the average rent of shopping malls' first floor stabilized at around 34 yuan per square meter

per day, according to data compiled by CBRE, a commercial real estate services and investment firm.

Footfalls in the retail sector as well as actual consumption remained on a modest recovery trajectory. Tenants of commercial properties housing food and beverage businesses led the recovery, with commodity retail sales gaining some momentum.

"In addition to continued expansion by food and beverage tenants, the second quarter also saw fashion and lifestyle retailers regaining confidence," said Huang Zhen, head of retail agency leasing at JLL East China.

The city's logistics property sector saw a record supply of 787,000 sq m in the first half, with its net absorp-

tion hitting a seven-year high at 314,000 sq m, according to CBRE.

Sun Jie, head of industrial and logistics at CBRE China, said she believes the short-term large supply won't affect the long-term stable development of warehouse logistics.

"Shanghai's strong manufacturing and dynamic consumption industries' development will continuously drive active demand," said Sun.

In the office sector, 529,000 sq m of new supply became available in the first half, soaring nearly 265 percent year-on-year, and absorption declined about 32 percent year-on-year to 219,000 sq m, according to CBRE.

Owing to the large amount of new

supply and existing stocks, office rents slid 1.1 percent from the end of last year to 272.6 yuan per sq m per month in the first half, it said.

Zhang Yue, head of office with transaction services for CBRE eastern China, said challenges and opportunities coexist as some 953,000 sq m of new office supply will come into the market in the second half, reaching a decade high.

"Shanghai's economic strengths will constantly create momentum for the city's medium- to long-term development. Factoring in the integrated effect of various policies, we expect market confidence to gradually improve, market dynamics to

keep strengthening, and office demand to rise at an accelerated pace," said Zhang.

The first half of this year saw Shanghai's investment activity moderate with transaction volume reaching 36.5 billion yuan, down 13.5 percent year-on-year.

Transactions slowed in the second quarter compared with the first quarter. Among second-quarter transactions, office and multi-family assets accounted for 43 percent and 36 percent, respectively, followed by business parks (16 percent) and retail assets (5 percent).

"In terms of buyers, domestic funds remained the main driver of investments in the second quarter, while foreign investors maintained a more cautious attitude," said Sun Ling, head of JLL capital markets for East China.

BUSINESSINSIGHT

Export dip calls for demand, spending boost

EAGLE EYE

By Guo Lei

China's exports, measured in terms of dollar value, plunged 12.4 percent in June from a year ago, data from the General Administration of Customs showed on July 13.

The reading came in weaker than expected despite a high base during May-July last year.

According to the consensus estimate from Wind Information Co Ltd, a Shanghai-headquartered financial data provider, China's exports were expected to fall by 10.2 percent year-on-year in June, while growing 0.65 percent from the previous month.

Overall, the reading stood at 7.7 percent in the first quarter. It was 6 percent in April, 3.8 percent in May and 0.9 percent in June.

Due to regional flare-ups of COVID-19 cases in China last year, exports in April 2022 edged up some 3.5 percent compared with the same period in 2021, retreating from a 15.4 percent surge in the first quarter. The export growth quickly bounced back to 16.4 percent, 17 percent and 18.1 percent, respectively, in the following three months.

This explains the high base effect for exports in June, which tumbled deeper than expected this year.

Due to such a sharp decrease, exports in the first half of 2023 were down 3.2 percent, compared to a 0.3 percent increase in the Jan-May period.

To be sure, exports from South Korea and Vietnam also dropped 6 percent and 10.3 percent, respectively. As a major manufacturing country, China shares an external environment similar to that in those two nations, highlighted by sluggish demand.

The export structure of South Korea is relatively concentrated, as evidenced by robust automobile shipments and modest semiconductor exports. Relatively speaking, China's industrial chain is broader with stronger resilience, which enabled it to perform better than the other two economies initially.

In the first half, exports from China, South Korea and Vietnam declined by 3.2 percent, 12.3 percent and 12.1 percent, respectively. However, they witnessed a similar level of export drop in June.

Trade structure

The shifting dynamics in China's export growth are also attributable to a changing trade structure.

In March, labor-intensive products such as bags, clothing and toys registered significantly higher export growth rates, while exports of electronic goods remained subdued. This helped China log better export performance than South



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

With the export number in June remaining weak, there is increased urgency to expand domestic demand and boost consumer spending. Policy steps to sustain the sound momentum of economic activity should be implemented to good effect.

Korea and Vietnam.

During May and June, exports of Chinese labor-intensive products contracted strikingly from a year ago as exporters had already fulfilled a backlog of orders that had

been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline showed the fundamentals of destocking in major overseas economies.

Electronic products, another major category of exports, saw marginal fluctuations over the past months. For instance, exports of cell phones plummeted 23.3 percent year-on-year in June, close to the decline of 25 percent in May and of 23.2 percent during the March-April period.

Sales of semiconductors around the globe remained lackluster. The downward trend began since early 2022, and sales plunged around 21 percent from March to May. It's still unclear as to when sales would pick up.

Shipments of electronic products, such as cell phones and automatic data processing equipment, accounted for 13 percent of China's total exports by the end of 2020, but tumbled to 8.9 percent in the first half of this year.

Automobile exports, a major highlight of China's foreign trade this year, are still growing rapidly. In June, car exports, including chassis, surged 109.9 percent year-on-year. In the first half, car exports rose 108 percent, accounting for 2.8 percent of overall exports.

The "new three" — namely electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar cells — witnessed a 61.6 percent year-on-year growth in exports in the first half, driving up overall export growth by 1.8 percentage points, data from the GAC showed.

The Reuters Commodity Research Bureau commodity index could serve as an important gauge to predict the export trend. Based on past experience, the year-on-year growth of exports rises in tandem with the year-on-year fluctuation of the CRB index.

Export volume is closely related

to prices, which are in step with the CRB index.

In addition, export volume runs in tune with the CRB index since the index, which points to destocking or restocking, has a direct bearing on China's exports.

The CRB index fell 14.2 percent year-on-year in May and 11.3 percent in June. In the first half of July, the figure only dipped 4.7 percent from a year ago.

At the same time, manufacturers' inventories in the United States have moved downward for six quarters since peaking in the first quarter of 2022. The latest data showed that all manufacturing inventories, excluding defense-related items, have hit a historical low.

China's imports, meanwhile, fell by 6.8 percent in June from a year earlier to \$214.7 billion, which indicates that domestic demand has not yet improved substantially.

In June, imports of crude oil grew 45.3 percent year-on-year, while iron ore imports climbed 7.4 percent year-on-year. Imports of steel, copper, machine tools and integrated circuits posted negative growth.

With the export number in June remaining weak, there is increased urgency to expand domestic demand and boost consumer spending. Policy steps to sustain the sound momentum of economic activity should be implemented to good effect.

Loan prime rate cuts, policy-backed and development-oriented financial instruments and local debt risk mitigation should be leveraged on priority. Such policy approaches can enable the benefits of the earlier deposit rate cuts to trickle down to the real economy.

The writer is chief economist at GF Securities.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

In 'slowbalization' era, what benefits US hurts Global South

MAIN STREET

By Wang Jinbin

In order to safeguard its global competitiveness and the dominant role of the US dollar, the United States faces two major challenges: maintaining its global technological supremacy and reducing external imbalances. Resolving these two issues forms the foundational logic of its economic and financial policy orientation in an era of "slowbalization" — a slowing down of the pace of global integration.

Neoliberalism had progressively assumed dominance in US foreign economic policies since the 1980s, captivating the world with a harmonious blend of trade liberalization and financial deregulation. The concept had not only shaped the trajectory of global economic and financial research, but also ushered in an era of unprecedented pace in global trade liberalization. Drawing on research conducted by the International Monetary Fund, the contribution of global trade to the global gross domestic product had ascended from approximately 30 percent in the early 1980s to nearly 55 per-

cent right before the US subprime mortgage crisis in 2008.

Globalization, no doubt, serves as a pivotal engine for economic growth, helping enhance worldwide competitive efficiency and aid multinational corporations in seeking optimal cost benefits worldwide. As a result, the entire world can benefit from the dividends of incremental growth, effectively concealing the inherent contradictions of global external imbalances.

However, the outbreak of the subprime mortgage crisis greatly reminded the US of the immense financial and economic risks associated with extreme global external imbalances. Consequently, a slew of anti-globalization measures ensued, plunging the world into the era of "slowbalization", whereby the emphasis of the world's economy has shifted from economic division of labor to redistribution of existing benefits. Notably, the influence of political factors on economic competition has progressively widened during the process.

The trend of "slowbalization" has led the US to an inevitable challenge: the diminishing influence of its political and economic role on the global stage, epitomized by the waning influence of the US dollar-centered monetary system.

To temper the pace at which

influence of the monetary system recedes, US economic and financial policies have showcased two pivotal orientations — maintaining its global technological supremacy and reducing external imbalances — in order to fortify the competitive edge and creditworthiness of the greenback worldwide.

The former helps ensure the country's supremacy in the global economic and financial realm, while the latter serves dual purposes — it mitigates predicaments arising from excessive trade deficits, which can erode the credibility of the US dollar, and it alleviates pressure associated with the currency's "exorbitant privilege", ensuring a smoother trajectory for its enduring efficacy.

Technological supremacy

The US has carried out a series of policies to prevent the spread of advanced technologies. In 2018, its Department of Commerce introduced export control measures for high-tech trade in 14 sectors. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in moves restricting cutting-edge technologies, including entity lists, controls on advanced chips and their manufacturing equipment, as well as investment restrictions.

Under the guise of national security, the country has adopted a "de-risking" strategy to suppress competitors. The emergence of

"nearshoring" and "friendshoring" — shorthand for the practice of relocating supply chains to countries only aligned with US interests — has become a new form of outsourcing in the restructuring of industrial and supply chains. The goal is to establish alliances within the chains, prioritizing geopolitical preferences and leaving behind principles of the global economic division of labor.

Easing deficits

Due to aforementioned technology restrictions, the role of the trade surplus in the tech services sector in offsetting the trade deficit in goods has significantly diminished, which is a departure from the situation in the 1990s. Faced with an expanding trade deficit, the US has primarily adopted the following two measures.

First, the Obama administration pursued a strategy of "manufacturing reshoring", while the Trump administration engaged in a trade war by imposing tariffs. The Biden administration, on the other hand, has embraced an approach involving government intervention in economic restructuring and development. It has encouraged foreign investment through substantial fiscal subsidies to establish local plants, thereby promoting significant growth in the manufacturing sector and enhancing domestic

supply capacity.

Furthermore, the US continues to rely on the US dollar monetary system to leverage its financial advantages, despite the fact that the credit of the international reserve currency's exorbitant privilege has almost been depleted. Its net international investment position — the difference in the external financial assets and liabilities of a country — reached -\$3.99 trillion by the end of 2008 during the subprime crisis, rising from -\$1.66 trillion at the end of 2007 and, therefore, indicating increased borrowing of \$2.34 trillion. Then its NIIP gradually expanded and even reached a record high of -\$18.12 trillion at the end of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the first quarter of 2023, it contracted to approximately -\$16.75 trillion, suggesting the increasingly limited operating space for the exorbitant privilege to offset trade deficits and generate positive returns.

In the future, the figure is still unlikely to witness significant and sustained shrinkage as the US will continue to increase fiscal deficits and utilize the exorbitant privilege to generate investment returns and mitigate the damage to the US dollar's creditworthiness caused by excessive trade deficits.

As for how the US will leverage its

currency privilege, the answer probably lies in financial liberalization. Encouraging more emerging economies to fully open their capital accounts and allowing the free flow of capital provide it with opportunities to gain more investment returns. However, this often comes with the unpredictability of exchange rate fluctuations, financial vulnerabilities and currency shocks caused by the rapid movement of capital, as it had happened during capital account liberalization.

In summary, in the context of "slowbalization", the policy combination of maintaining global technological supremacy and reducing external imbalances is most beneficial for the US, but not necessarily for developing economies. Upholding cross-border capital controls and promoting orderly capital flows still remain crucial measures to address the adverse spillover effects of US foreign currency and financial policies.

The writer is a research fellow of the National Academy of Development and Strategy at the Renmin University of China. The article is a translation of his op-ed, first published on the official WeChat account of the China Macroeconomy Forum, a think tank.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

COMMENT

Editorials

Washington bringing ruin to US tech, deceived by false promise of advantage

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has vocally denied any attempt on the part of the United States to “decouple” from China, and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has touted Washington’s aspiration for a “stable” relationship with China when speaking at the Aspen Security Forum on Friday.

In practice, however, Washington is doing everything in its capacity to impede the technological progress of China, turning a deaf ear to Beijing’s calls for bilateral ties to “return to a healthy track”.

Although, rhetorically, “de-risking” sounds less confrontational than “decoupling”, there seems to be no way to dissuade Washington from continuing its ongoing tech offensive against Beijing, despite its efforts so far having proved both the impossibility and self-defeating nature of the tactic.

Belying all the claims about US sincerity for a normal, stable relationship with China based on international rules and fair competition, Washington has since the days of the Donald Trump administration identified China as its foremost rival and acted accordingly.

In addition to all the previous sanctions and export control measures, the Joe Biden administration is proposing to significantly upgrade these endeavors with new rules being considered to restrict US investments in Chinese tech companies, and further tighten the restrictions on exports of advanced chips to China. The US House of Representatives is targeting venture capital companies GGV Capital, GSR Ventures, Walden International and Qualcomm Ventures for their investments in China.

Beijing has consistently said that the attempts to sever the economic and trade ties between the world’s two largest economies are painful for both sides and will not benefit the US in the long run. And that is what the US business community is telling the country’s policymakers.

If that message fails to convince when it comes from Beijing, perhaps the CEOs of the largest US chipmakers, who have found themselves at the forefront of the chip war with China, can be more persuasive in getting it across. During a meeting on July 17 with officials in Washington, they asked the government to study the impact of export controls and pause before implementing new ones, because they undermine US leadership in the industry.

Rather than slow down Chinese technology progress, such restrictions weaken US companies in the Chinese market, which in turn will negatively impact their R&D funding, they argued. The obvious truth is many major US companies have developed a heavy dependence on China. Qualcomm, for one, gets more than 60 percent of its revenue from the China region. Just as the chipmaker CEOs conceded, access to the Chinese market is not only indispensable to the company’s overall business, but also to its return to the US as well as its global competitiveness.

As Beijing embraces what it defines as “higher-level of opening-up”, and strives to retain and attract more international investments, it is indeed of critical importance for the US, as well as China, that Washington reconsider its witch-hunt targeting China’s tech companies.

Canberra should discard its tainted prism

The current Australian government under Prime Minister Anthony Albanese won credit for quickly moving to improve ties with China after taking office. And as a result of the efforts by both sides, there has been an upturn in China-Australia ties this year.

Yet Canberra’s anxieties about China clearly run deep, as shown by a decision on a lithium acquisition case last week.

After receiving advice from Australia’s Foreign Investment Review Board, Australia Treasurer Jim Chalmers issued a prohibition order on Friday, stopping Austroid Australia from acquiring an additional stake in the financially stricken lithium miner Alita Resources.

Alita collapsed into insolvency in 2019 amid a slump in lithium prices and its Bald Hill mine in the Eastern Goldfields region was shut down. The mine has estimated reserves of 11.3 million metric tons of lithium ore and 2 million metric tons of tantalum ore.

The proposed deal would have given the local subsidiary of US-based Austroid Corporation a 100 percent stake in Alita. It was apparently nixed, because Austroid Australia has a Chinese national as a director, who is also a director of the Chinese company, Liatam Mining, which tried to buy Alita’s assets in 2020 but was unable to get FIRB approval.

The latest decision is disheartening as both sides have everything to gain from maintaining the posi-

tive momentum that has revived the ties.

Bilateral ties stopped plummeting and instead demonstrated an upward tendency: Statistics show China-Australia trade reached 800 billion yuan (\$111.7 billion), up 16.4 percent year-on-year in the first six months of this year, indicating a steady improvement in economic relations.

It is especially disappointing as the decision came just a week after Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong pledged Canberra would promote greater progress in the Australia-China comprehensive strategic partnership when speaking with China’s senior diplomat Wang Yi in Jakarta, Indonesia, on July 14.

Canberra should view China through an impartial and objective lens and not blindly follow Washington’s “Indo-Pacific” line.

Even if the United States keeps slipping deeper into an anti-China hysteria, it does not necessarily mean Australia cannot take a different path that better serves its own interests. To maintain its global hegemony and revive its waning clout in the world arena, the US is stoking geopolitical tensions and bloc confrontation, even at the expense of using its own allies as pawns.

Australia should be clear-eyed and be wise enough to recognize that its national interests are not always in line with those of the US. Keeping its policymaking autonomous would best benefit the country rather than the US.

Justified countermeasures to ‘coercive’ practices

Some US lawmakers have recently accused Beijing of using “coercive economic practices” to achieve worldwide dominance over the United States.

These accusations were reiterated at a hearing of the US House of Representatives days after US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen wrapped up her trip to Beijing to discuss the nations’ economic relations. Witnesses testified the environment in China is becoming increasingly “restrictive” for US entities.

It is these US lawmakers that have played key roles over the past few years in getting more than 1,300 Chinese entities on various US blacklists. Yet despite such attempts, US investment in and trade with China has maintained stable growth. The affected US companies have never ceased trying to persuade Washington to weigh the country’s losses against the gains, and expressed their confidence in the Chinese market by continuing to expand their operations and increase their investment in China.

However, the US politicians, who are gripped with an anti-China frenzy, continue to regard the long-term systematic attack on Chinese enterprises in the high-tech sector as necessary. They continue to ignore the fact that, while the US government and legislature are trying to demarcate more and more fields as forbidden zones for Chinese companies’ operations in the US and dramatically increase the bureaucratic hurdles for them and

their US partners, China is doing the opposite, welcoming companies from around the world to the country and granting them equal treatment.

As a matter of fact, most examples the US lawmakers provided in the recent hearing on China’s alleged “coercive economic practices” are nothing but countermeasures the Chinese side has been forced to take to safeguard its core interests against the US’ provocations, ranging from sanctioning the few US companies selling weapons to secessionists on the Taiwan island to its latest anti-dumping investigation into imported propionic acid originating in the US announced on Friday.

The anti-dumping probe into the US propionic acid that was launched on the same day was in response to the US House of Representatives’ Thursday banning of releases of oil from the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve from being exported to China.

China’s welcome to foreign companies and investment is heartfelt and that should be evident to the whole world. Foreign direct investment in China increased 5 percent year-on-year to a record \$189.1 billion in 2022. From January to June this year, 24,000 new foreign-invested enterprises were established nationwide, an increase of 35.7 percent year-on-year, and investment in high-tech industries increased by 7.9 percent.

It is suggested that the US politicians stop dismantling the foundations of Sino-US relations, and accept that the US has to co-exist with China.

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Private enterprises need to adapt to law-based market environment

In the basket of policy measures the central authorities released last week, the private sector is seen as not only a vital and vigorous power in the national economy, but also an important force boosting the country’s modernization through high-quality development.

To promote high-quality development, China is establishing a higher-level market economy system, creating a market-oriented, law-based business environment, and building a unified national market that is open, fair, efficient and well-regulated. In this process, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of the property rights of private enterprises and the rights and interests of entrepreneurs in accordance with the law, so that market entities of all types of ownership have equal access to production factors, fair participation in market competition and equal legal protection, so as to spur them to achieve higher

efficiency and higher quality growth through fair competition based on rules.

To that end, the government must establish a corresponding institutional and regulatory framework based on the principle of letting the market determine the allocation of resources. Regulatory law enforcement should strengthen the standardization of regulatory behaviors, so as to be fair, transparent, stable and predictable. A mechanism should be established to help enterprises effectively protect their rights at a low cost and avoid retaliation.

At the same time, private companies need to adapt to the new market regulatory environment and competitive environment through their own reform and strictly follow the law. Private companies face challenges from both market volatility and their own capacity building. That requires that they adapt to the higher standards of the market economy system.

As the focus of the economy is diverting from infrastructure to consumption, a large proportion of private enterprises that are dependent on infrastructure and real estate may be affected. And some of them will be eliminated in the process.

The public needs to correctly understand their disappearance, which is not a result of “ownership” discrimination or selective suppression.

Whether it is a country or an enterprise, it can only rely on reform and innovation to adapt to the new development and market environment. The country should provide a good business environment for private enterprises, while private enterprises need to carry forward the entrepreneurial spirit, enhance their awareness of innovation and competition, and make the private economy bigger, better and stronger in order to boost the high-quality development of the economy.

—21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

ROK’s NEV power dream ever more distant

The Republic of Korea imported nearly 5,000 cars in the first half of this year, among which one-third of the imports were from China. In contrast, ROK vehicles only account for about 2 percent of the auto market in China today.

Thanks to the upgrading of China’s manufacturing industry, China’s new energy vehicle production and sales scale has ranked first in the world for eight consecutive years. In the first quarter of 2023, China’s NEV exports almost doubled. It is set to overtake Japan as the world’s largest car exporter this year when its auto exports are expected to exceed 4 million. Against this backdrop, it is natural that Chinese vehicles are taking

an increasingly larger share in the ROK market, which has long been regarded as one that values the country’s own brands. The ROK companies have global marketing networks, strong manufacturing, advanced chips, developed software and information technologies as well as reliable battery technology. And Seoul has the ambition to make the country a leading NEV manufacturer in the world by providing large amounts of subsidies and tax cuts.

However, the ROK’s NEV industry has not yet integrated the country’s advantages in the aforementioned aspects as a whole. And the appreciation of the US dollar and the depreciation of the ROK

won also affect its trade.

More importantly, the Yoon Suk-yeol government’s one-sided pro-US diplomacy has unavoidably destabilized the industry and supply chains related to the ROK’s export industries, including its auto and NEV sectors.

That means the Chinese NEV industry should never underestimate the competitiveness and potential of its ROK counterpart, as it will only be a matter of time for the ROK companies to catch up with it after it integrates the country’s strengths in different fields and adapts to the new normal of its development environment.

—BEIJING NEWS

What They Say

Meetings with Kissinger show willingness to talk

Editor’s Note: The following are excerpts of a recent interview posted on the Xiakedao WeChat account with Zheng Yongnian, a professor of politics with the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), on former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger’s visit to China last week:

Kissinger worries that Sino-US relations, if they continue on the current trend, may slide toward war in five to 10 years. Of course we don’t think so, but this is true from the Western experience. The visits senior US officials paid to China recently are all important. But these visits and the issues they touched upon do not change the key factor of the relations between China and the United States.

In the past, the key factor for the US and the Soviet Union to really sit down to negotiate was nuclear weapons, and mutual nuclear deterrence built a “cold peace”. The basis for real negotiations between China and the US now, Kissinger believes, is artificial intelligence technology.

Neither China nor the US can

afford a war with each other, as that would be a disaster to not only themselves but also the whole world. So both find it necessary to keep the communication channels open at this moment. The high-level meetings between the Chinese leadership and Kissinger were to send a positive signal that China is willing to engage in dialogue and restore stability to the world order, and China will continue to play its role in peaceful development.

Beijing should have a correct understanding of the US. The domestic and foreign affairs of the US are holistic. The US is now almost engaged in a “witch hunt” when it comes to China. How can there be any rational cognition, or correct understanding of China, something

Beijing urges Washington to have, when it has this state of mind?

As the US regards China as an adversary, the major think tanks in the country are focusing their research power on China. This has caused many people who do not understand China to study China relying on so-called big data, and those who really understand China are labeled as “pro-China” and excluded from the key circle.

As such, China must display strategic composure, and it should not become the Soviet Union or the US, but pursue a path of rise with Chinese characteristics. The three global initiatives on security, development and civilization it put forward are very good and should be adhered to accordingly.

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COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | Global Development Initiative

Editor's note: The Global Development Initiative aims to steer global development toward a new stage of balanced, coordinated and inclusive development. China has been seeking to renew global focus on development issues and explore pathways for practical cooperation in an era when the world is beset with daunting challenges and great uncertainties. Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Zhu Xufeng

Initiatives can help realize 2030 Agenda

The United Nations development agenda is a series of goals and plans aimed at promoting sustainable development globally. The agenda was first developed in the 1990s and includes the UN Agenda 21, adopted in 1992, and the Millennium Development Goals, adopted in 2000.

Starting with the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, and through multilateral and multiparty negotiations and consultations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was eventually adopted in 2015.

The 2030 Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals across economic, social and environmental domains, and serves as an important document guiding global development. It specifically highlights the principle of "leaving no one behind" and concerns itself with the poverty alleviation and transformation of least developed countries.



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Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, countries across the world have made significant progress in implementing the sustainable development goals. Some goals have already been achieved. Notably, China has met the goal of poverty reduction 10 years ahead of schedule, and made remarkable achievements in universal primary education and reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates.

Countries are also actively working to realize other SDGs in such areas as climate change, environmental protection and sustainable urban development. And the international community is strengthening cooperation and coordination to jointly address global challenges.

However, in the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda, there are also some difficulties and challenges. Some developing countries lack the economic, technological and human resources to realize the SDGs on schedule, while others still face internal and external imbalances in political, economic and social spheres, which hinder the realization of the SDGs.

In addition, global challenges such as climate change, environmental pollution and natural disasters also pose a threat to sustainable development. And the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, in particular, have worsened the uneven development of coun-

tries around the world.

Some of the least-developed countries that had just lifted themselves out of poverty have rapidly slipped back into poverty again due to factors such as stagnation of key industries, rising commodity prices, currency devaluation and soaring foreign debt. These issues have raised concerns among the international community about whether the world will be able to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Against this backdrop, President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021. The GDI aims to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and calls on the international community to address the urgent issues faced by developing countries, in order to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and realize global common development.

Apart from making major achievements in development at home, China is also ready to cooperate with all parties to promote the implementation of the GDI across the world. The initiative proposes that developing countries strengthen their capabilities to achieve economic, social and environmental development and eliminate poverty in a coordinated manner.

The GDI is of great significance for promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda globally. It provides important support and guidance for the least-developed countries to achieve sustainable development, and emphasizes the importance of eradicating poverty, promoting economic growth, improving education and health standards and protecting the environment, while proposing specific action plans and goals.

Besides, the GDI has received extensive support from the international community, including governments, international organizations, such

as the UN, as well as nongovernmental organizations. The establishment of the "Group of Friends of the GDI" in 2022 and the convening of various ministerial-level meetings show that governments are willing to work with China to strengthen partnerships in areas such as poverty reduction, clean energy, food security, industrialization, digital education and sustainable development data sharing in a bid to realize the 2030 Agenda globally.

Yet the implementation of the GDI requires joint efforts and cooperation of all parties, bridging the differences among countries and further promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

First, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation and coordination to achieve the SDGs, so governments, international organizations and NGOs need to enhance cooperation and coordination to jointly promote sustainable development.

Second, developed countries need to provide more support and assistance to help the least-developed countries

achieve sustainable development.

Third, countries should cooperate to enhance environmental protection, address climate change and continue climate change negotiations on the UN platform, so as to better protect global ecosystems and promote sustainable development.

And fourth, there is a need to improve the global governance system. For that, however, countries need to follow the principles of equality and mutual benefit in international affairs, and promote global development, while governments should strengthen the implementation and capacity building of the SDGs.

In summary, the GDI provides important support and assistance for the least-developed countries to realize the 2030 Agenda. And we hope the international community will continue to step up cooperation and promote the GDI, and work unitedly to realize the SDGs across the world.

The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Saroj Gautam

Beijing offers source of hope for Nepal's growth

Nepal and China, as neighbors, have for years been engaging in cordial cooperation and enjoying trouble-free friendship.

Ever since becoming the world's second-largest economy, China has been supporting Nepal to boost its socioeconomic development with no political conditions attached. In this regard, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative have become a source of hope for Nepal. The country now believes that with China's help, it can transform itself from a land-locked Himalayan country to a "land-linked" economy between two giant economies, China and India.

Since the time when Beijing pledged to help Nepal achieve its development goals, Nepalese officials have realized that China's initiatives are best suited to improving connectivity, boosting trade and meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. China's initiatives have also paved the way for collaboration in non-traditional security areas such as climate action.

China proposed the GDI to help meet the special needs of least-developed countries such as Nepal. But even before proposing the initiative, China had been providing material and medical assistance for Nepal. For instance, China supplied much-needed medicines, including COVID-19 vaccines, and medical equipment for Nepal during the COVID-19

pandemic, helping save many lives. No wonder Nepal has already become a part of the GDI. In fact, the "Nepal Smiling Children" project and the "Support to Schools and Communities in Remote Areas for Pandemic Prevention and Green Recovery" project are already progressing under the framework of the GDI.

Through the Nepal Smiling Children project, the China Foundation for Rural Development provides food for 3,600 children from poor communities in Kathmandu whereas the second project, as its name suggests, helps schools and communities in remote areas combat diseases and epidemics, and promotes eco-friendly economic recovery. The collaboration between the China Foundation for Rural Development Nepal Office and the Nepal Country Office of the UN Development Programme speaks volumes about the multi-lateral nature of the GDI.

As an all-weather friend, China's continuous support is helping Nepal boost development in multiple fields, including infrastructure, healthcare and people's livelihoods. The measures taken for upgrading and restoration of projects such as the Civil Service Hospital in Kathmandu and B.P. Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital in Chitwan have greatly improved healthcare services in Nepal.

China is Nepal's second-largest trading partner and the largest source of foreign direct investment. And Nepal expects the bilateral trade and investment relationship to further strengthen in the coming years.

In keeping with its GDI promise, China has exempted more than 8,000 Nepali goods from tariff, which will benefit Nepalese businesses and balance, to some extent, bilateral trade.

The Belt and Road Initiative, too, has raised hopes in Nepal, as it can play a critical role in expanding cooperation in different fields, including infrastructure connectivity, trade and investment, and tourism. The famous tourist site of Pokhara in Nepal saw an example of bilateral public diplomacy under the Belt and Road framework in the shape of the "Nepal-China Friendship Dragon Boat Race" on the occasion of Dragon Boat Festival last month.

The event also saw the commencement of civil aviation services at the Chinese-made Pokhara International Airport. While reviving tourism in the post-pandemic period, the airport will also improve connectivity in the region as well as boost trade, because it can operate flights to and from regional economic and trade hubs such as Xi'an, Lhasa, Chengdu, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore and New Delhi.

Given China's impressive record of eradicating absolute poverty, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative are expected to also help the Nepalese government to alleviate poverty in the country and meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

As both the initiatives promote green development, Nepal must use them to deepen climate cooperation with China. Nepal is one of the worst climate change-affected countries in the world and suffers from funding gaps to mitigate the impacts of climate change. So cooperation with China in this field can help it promote green development and adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate.

True development is when countries develop together. So Nepal and China should better use the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative to develop together and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Zhai Kun

Building community with a shared future with GDI

The world today faces two main problems: intertwined deficits and insufficient public goods.

While changes in the international situation are unfolding in ways like never before, the growing global deficits of peace, development, governance, security and trust are creating new, daunting challenges for the world. On the other hand, the willingness and ability of developing countries to address these challenges are declining.

It is in this context that China proposed the Global Development Initiative as a global public good. The aim of the initiative is to help the world better tackle development problems.

However, China needs to find suitable ways to implement a "budget-friendly" GDI, which is in its early stages of development, and adapt to the changing global developments and improve the well-being of humankind as a whole.

The impacts of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have increased the need for global public goods, in order to meet the demands of development and solve the structural problems.

Both the developed and developing countries are facing difficulties in pursuing sustainable development because of their unbalanced development structures. Almost all countries are under

pressure to deepen reforms, and cannot find ways to take their development agenda forward, for instance, even by integrating new energy with digital technology.

Besides, the industrialized countries' development models no longer appear feasible to developing countries, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, so they cannot and do not want to follow those models to boost their own development. More important, developing countries such as China are exploring their own paths to modernization despite difficulties.

Many countries, regional and international organizations believe the situation in the third decade of the 21st century may be worse than the earlier decades. Obviously, it is a huge challenge to provide the world with new public goods in such a situation. But at the same time, providing public goods would be a great contribution to global development.

China has been exploring ways to provide new global public goods since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, and the GDI proves it has the capability of offering new, more global public goods.

First, the GDI provides new ways for addressing global development problems, because it aims to promote common development and establish



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harmony between nature and humans by adopting a people-centered approach.

Second, the GDI has the potential to boost global development. Reform and opening-up have helped China develop a "can-do" attitude, which keeps instilling in it material and spiritual energy to promote common prosperity not only within the country but also across the world.

For example, China has never been short of confidence even in the face of the biggest challenge or crisis, be it the 2008 global financial crisis, the China-US strategic rivalry, the three-year COVID-19 pandemic or the Russia-Ukraine conflict. More important, helping the world overcome challenges has always been a part of China's development agenda.

As such, China is a "problem solver", rather than a "troublemaker" which some Western countries accuse it to be. In fact, China has helped address big global issues, which even the most

advanced countries could not resolve, and boost global confidence.

And third, China provides two kinds of public goods for global development. The first are material goods, which include helping build infrastructure, and the other are knowledge goods including improving global connectivity that accelerated after the Belt and Road Initiative's implementation.

The GDI therefore should be seen as a means to not only boost global development but also help build a community with a shared future for mankind. However, China needs to cautiously decide the direction of the GDI, so as to optimize its development.

This means China needs to reduce the costs of providing global development public goods and prioritize "small but beautiful" global projects and foreign aid projects. It also needs to learn lessons from its experiences to plan a better future for related industries, while encouraging more and more civil society organizations, NGOs and private enterprises to provide public goods, and deepening cooperation with developed as well as developing countries to provide assistance to least-developed countries and vulnerable groups across the world.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS



YE HAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

JIANG XUEYUAN AND XU JIAYI

Nature-based solution for sustainability

Conserving, restoring and increasing investment in mangroves would produce multiple benefits

The upcoming International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem on July 26 reminds us of the purposes of its designation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2015: to raise awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems and promote best practices for their conservation, restoration, and sustainable use.

As one of the most productive ecosystems, mangroves are widely valued for their biodiversity, and for their contribution to climate mitigation and adaptation, as well as community development. Meanwhile, conservation efforts on mangroves continue to progress around the globe. According to The State of the World's Mangroves 2022, the global loss of mangroves has largely stabilized, and gains have occurred in and around many of the world's large rivers, estuaries and deltas.

Conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of mangroves can serve as nature-based solutions to address multiple social challenges, especially to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Mangrove ecosystems are highly effective carbon sinks. One hectare of mangroves can store 3,754 tons of carbon. However, if destroyed, degraded or lost, mangroves become sources of carbon dioxide. It is estimated that a total of 8,183 square kilometers of mangroves globally are restorable, securing future storage of an estimated 1.27 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent. Mangroves also act as a natural coastal defense against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels and erosion, preventing more than \$65 billion in property damages and reducing flood risk to around 15 million people every year.

In recent years, spectacular and prolific mangrove ecosystems are highly recognized on the world stage. In November 2022, the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP 14) adopted the Wuhan Declaration, explicitly encouraging priority conservation and management of vulnerable ecosystems, including mangroves. The meeting also adopted a resolution on the estab-

lishment of the International Mangrove Center.

In addition, mangroves are included in the "30x30" target under the Convention of Biological Diversity, and are increasingly mentioned in the Nationally Determined Contributions submitted by parties to the Paris Agreement.

While actively promoting mangrove conservation on the world stage, China is also steadily advancing mangrove conservation domestically. As of November 2022, more than 55 percent of mangroves in China fell within protected areas, making it one of the few countries with a net gain of mangroves. There are five Ramsar sites in China that focus on mangrove conservation. In terms of progress in policymaking and legislation, China has launched an action plan for conservation and restoration of mangroves until 2025, and has integrated mangrove conservation and restoration in relevant laws and regulations, such as the Wetland Conservation Law and the Marine Conservation Law of the People's Republic of China. In addition, China and Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding on conservation of wetlands and mangroves in April this year, making mangroves a bridge for international cooperation.

Numerous good practices are being explored and implemented globally to address local environmental and development challenges through conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of mangroves. To address the increasing risk of storm surges due to climate change and the resulting salinization of farmland, the government of Bangladesh, with support from the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Program, followed the "Forest, Fish, Fruit" model, reforesting the coastline with various species of mangroves in four coastal districts, interspersed with timber and fruit trees, while integrating fish nursery ponds between the trees in the area.

Under the project, around 9,650 hectares of new mangrove plantations made up of 10 key mangrove species were established and estimated to be able to absorb 965,000 tons of CO₂ annually and

reduce the impact of cyclones, flooding, coastal erosion, saline intrusion and sea-level rise. The project also supported innovative land management and livelihood diversification strategies for local stakeholders.

China is actively exploring the conservation, restoration, and wise use of mangroves to balance development and conservation. The Zhanjiang Mangrove Afforestation project, launched in 2015, planted four local mangroves on 380.4 hectares to restore the degraded mangrove ecosystem, and developed the first mangrove carbon trading project in China that complies with the Verified Carbon Standard and Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards in 2019.

The following funding from blue carbon trading will be used for the management of mangrove restoration and community engagement.

Despite the progress made, long-term and consistent policy and financial support, as well as contribution and efforts from all sectors, are still required for mangrove conservation, restoration, and sustainable management. In addition to traditional public and philanthropic fundings, carbon markets, blue bonds, insurance-based investments, and blended financing models are emerging. Innovative conservation practices are also necessary, exploring paths and methods to realize the value of natural assets and providing alternative livelihoods for local communities to ensure sustainability of conservation and restoration projects.

Other effective area-based conservation measures which combine the wisdom of local communities can achieve long-term and positive conservation results and other benefits. Finally, social organizations and other sectors can play an important role in mangrove conservation, restoration, and sustainable management, as well as promoting international exchanges.

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HANS FRIEDERICH

Greener giant grass

Will COP 28 finally recognize the importance of bamboo for climate change?

In November this year, government representatives will gather in the United Arab Emirates to discuss ways to make progress with action to halt global warming. This 28th Conference of Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP 28) will take stock of the progress, and look for ways that governments can effectively deal with climate change.

It would be a fitting occasion for bamboo to finally be recognized as an important catalyst for climate action.

Natural bamboo forests are, contrary to general perceptions, rich in biodiversity. The International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) and the International Centre for Bamboo and Rattan (ICBR) in China, together with the Kew Royal Botanical Gardens in England, determined in 2016 that there are more than 1,600 varieties of bamboo. In a natural forest, bamboo will typically only comprise a certain percentage of the actual "tree" cover, and therefore a natural bamboo forest is a rich mixture of vegetation. Natural bamboo forests are also home to key species such as the giant panda in southern China, the red panda in the wider Himalayan Mountain Region and the mountain gorillas in Central Africa. Many other animals depend on bamboo and, especially in South America, bamboo forests host a wide selection of birds.

Like all living plants, bamboo survives through photosynthesis, which means absorbing carbon dioxide from the air, binding it with water that is absorbed from the soil to create O₂ as the basis for growth. Healthy bamboo forests therefore contribute to absorbing CO₂ as natural carbon sinks, but maybe what is more important is the role that natural bamboo forests play for local communities to respond to the effects of climate change. Climate change may cause extended periods of drought or floods, and bamboo plants are so resilient that they will survive when other crops may die. Bamboo forests in southern China provide a certain security for local households in uncertain times, with food from the harvesting of bamboo shoots, fodder for livestock from the leaves of young poles, raw material to manufacture a variety of household items and a reliable source of income.

As a means to reduce carbon dioxide in the air, planted bam-

In conclusion, bamboo forests, whether they are natural woodlots or planted stands have an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the manufacturing of products from bamboo makes bamboo even more relevant to sustainable development.

boo could be very effective and there is no country in the world that has planted more bamboo than China, with estimates that there is at least 4 million hectares of planted bamboo in the country. In these forests the bamboo culms are cut at regular intervals to provide the raw material for a wide range of products. The China Bamboo Industry Association says that the total output value of the bamboo industry in China has reached 300 billion yuan (\$41.85 billion), and this is expected to grow to 1 trillion yuan by 2035.

Bamboo plantations are very important in the fight against climate change, because bamboo can be planted on degraded, unproductive land. The added absorption capacity of new bamboo forests is an important environmental carbon sink. China has been in the forefront to calculate the carbon sequestration ability and the storage capacity of carbon related to bamboo, and Chinese scientists have determined annual figures of 170 tonnes of carbon per hectare (tC/ha) for a well-managed Moso bamboo plantation, which compares well with other planted vegetation. While there is criticism in some quarters about the promotion of mono-crop plantations, and natural forests should not be cleared to provide land to plant bamboo, the giant grass has environmental advantages over more traditional species, such as eucalyptus, used for plantation.

The carbon offsets created by planting bamboo can be sold as carbon credits, and these can be used to provide finance for the

plantation before the first harvest can take place, and as such provide bridge funding for local farmers.

Bamboo culms reach maturity after five to seven years, depending on the species, and at that time they can be harvested. When bamboo culms are used to make dwellings, or to manufacture furniture or interior design panels and building materials, the carbon is locked up in a product that will have a long life span. Vernacular houses of various ethnic communities in southern China have survived many years, and modern engineered bamboo flooring is guaranteed for decades. When calculating the efficiency of bamboo fields with regards to the absorption of CO₂ and storage of carbon, this locked-up carbon is an additional contribution.

Modern architects and designers are getting more and more excited by bamboo as a material that is low carbon and renewable, and that can be used to produce beautiful interior construction solutions, so this aspect of locked-in carbon is becoming more relevant by the day. China has been leading the way in producing bamboo products for interior design, but architects in other parts of the world are following the trend, with some amazing bamboo constructions produced in other Asian countries and even in Europe and the Americas.

At the end of the life cycle, the bamboo will most likely be burned, and although this will create greenhouse gases, it is considered to be green energy, as the fuel source is renewable. Burning bamboo is much better than burning fossil fuels.

In conclusion, bamboo forests, whether they are natural woodlots or planted stands have an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the manufacturing of products from bamboo makes bamboo even more relevant to sustainable development. Let's hope that the delegations at COP 28 will recognize the benefits of bamboo!

The author is global ambassador of the World Bamboo Organization and former director-general of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization. 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.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

Ceramic artist brings new approach to tradition



Decadeslong experimentation sees master craftsman evolve techniques to give his work another dimension, **Lin Qi** reports.

Being raised in a celebrated ceramic-making hub like Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, allowed Zhu Legeng to be nurtured, since childhood, by the diversity and dynamics of the city's long-standing handicraft traditions.

A synonym for the "porcelain capital" of the country, Jingdezhen is known for its sophisticated use of locally produced fine clay — molding and firing it into a variety of shapes — which has continued over the centuries.

The essence of this craftsmanship has been decorating interior and exterior environments, at home and around the world, with objects of supreme excellence, even catering to the imperial court in ancient times.

College-trained to be a ceramic artist, Zhu, a scholar of the Chinese National Academy of Arts, stands at the crossroads of the past and present. "He himself is an encyclopedia of the techniques of ancient Chinese ceramics," says Fan Di'an, the chairman of China Artists Association.

While facing the changing aesthetics brought by urbanization, Zhu has been tasked with turning his expertise in traditional techniques to serving the needs of modern society, "a common foundational issue for all Chinese artists living in a time of reforms", Fan says.

Over four decades Zhu has experimented, and is now sharing what he has accomplished at *Creating in Inheritance*, his one-man show, which is running at the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum until Aug 8. It explores the 71-year-old's career evolution — implanting his artistic roots deeply in classic aesthetics and being manifest in ceramic vases, paintings and sculptures on show, while forging a contemporary form of expression.

Zhu says that, since the 1990s, he has focused his work on enriching the presentation of ceramics — not just as a



Top: *Wind*, Zhu Legeng's work on display at his one-man exhibition, *Creating in Inheritance*, at the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum in Beijing. **Middle:** Dancers perform in *Box of Life*, one of Zhu's installations, at the exhibition opening. **Above:** *Heavenly Horse*, by Zhu. **Right:** His installation, *Triple Reflections of Flowers*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



material for making decorative objects, but as a manifestation of clay and fire, of beautiful textures and to dominate a space. He calls his approach the art of environment ceramics.

The ongoing exhibition displays the most recent output of this style: three installations that provide the audience with an immersive experience and extend their understanding of ceramics as an art form of infinite possibilities.

Triple Reflections of Flowers, for example, is a work on display in which dozens of *qinghua* cobalt blue ceramic tiles are hung in midair and reflected in mirrors that form three walls and the floor.

Zhu says the work is drawn on his study of the *qinghua* (patterns in cobalt blue on a white ground) porcelain, produced during the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). He says that *qinghua* porcelain presents the chemistry between graceful outlines and patterns, and he wants to transfer that from a semitranslucent flat surface to a three-dimensional space.

The installation not only allows people to enter just to take photos. It also became a stage, where dances and traditional Chinese music were performed during the exhibition opening.

"The new concept and artistry of ceramics, which is whatever an artist dares to create, is what I'm longing to convey at the exhibition, to the audience, the art circle and also the wider ceramics industry," Zhu says.

"Opening our eyes and mind to embrace international trends, and trying to implement a cross-disciplinary approach, that is how we can keep enlivening ceramic art and pushing it forward to the forefront of contemporary art."

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

What's on



Into the blue

Not everyone will be aware of Yves Klein (1928-62), the French artist who, in his short-lived life, pioneered the art movement in Europe after World War II. However, many will have seen the unique shade of blue he invented. With the help of a chemist, Klein created a formula, consisting of dry pigment and resin, which was known as International Klein Blue, or IKB for short. Klein used IKB to produce dozens of monochromatic works to show not only his love of the color, but also of the sky, the sea and their emptiness,

depth and vastness, as well as any other forms of space he wanted to experiment with. What even fewer people will know is how he evolved from a judo practitioner to a member of the art vanguard, an avid explorer of singular color and a painter of infinite space. For the curious, the journey is laid out at *Yves Klein — Painter of Space*, an exhibition set to run until Oct 3 and co-mounted by the Guardian Art Center in Beijing and the Yves Klein Archives in Paris. Over 60 paintings, drawings, sculptures, images and videos are on show to take visitors into the mind of a great artist, who left behind him a rich oeuvre and archive, encouraging people to continue his exploration of the relations between the visible and invisible, and bodily movement and spiritual world. The exhibition is part of this year's Festival Croisements, an event of cultural exchanges between China and France.

10 am-6 pm, closed on Mondays. 1 Wangfujing Street, Dongcheng district, Beijing.

Princely treasures

The Esterhazy family was one of historical importance, producing a string of influential figures in Hungarian politics, religion, military circles and artistic patronage. Its glory sparked from the 16th century to well into the 20th, and the family castle, Esterhaza, was of such Renaissance grandeur, it was called the Versailles of Hungary. Now, 34 pieces of art and crafts, which were once owned by prominent members of the Esterhazy family, are being displayed in China for the first time at the ongoing exhibition *Silk Robes from Princes*, held at the China National Silk Museum in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. It displays the diversity and abundance of the family's treasury and its predominance

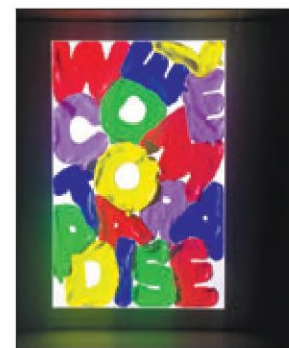


in the 16th and 17th centuries. The displays include 13 silk and velvet robes once worn by male family members, as well as household objects and ceremonial accessories laced with silk patterns. It reveals the luxuriant lifestyle led by the aristocracy of the time, especially an enthusiasm for silk and jewelry, through which one can glimpse the exchanges between the East and West via the ancient Silk Road. The exhibits are from the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, and are on show until Aug 21.

12 am-5 pm, Monday; 9 am-5 pm, Tuesday to Sunday. 73-1 Yuhuangshan Road, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. 0571-8703-5150.

Art of motion

The arrival of digital technology has greatly redefined the arena of graphic design and how it is presented. No longer is it confined to paper, but is instead mostly seen on the glowing screen of a portable gadget, like that of a phone, laptop or wearable electronics. The situation has prompted the development of "Motion Graphics", through which animated or digital footage is incorporated into the graphic design to generate a sense of motion. This global trend is being addressed at *View in Motion*, at the Art Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Running until Aug 20, the exhibition gathers top-notch designers from across the world. It provides visitors with a



dazzling visual treat, while aiming to inspire a discussion about the implementation of Motion Graphics in the home, where it is still in its early phase. 9:30 am-5:30 pm, closed on Mondays. 8 Huajiyadi Nanhu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-6477-1575.

CHINA DAILY

LIFE



Plotting the next chapter

Forum addresses the latest challenges facing the publishing industry, from changing reading habits to the rise of AI, **Yang Yang** reports.

With fast economic development around the world, internet users have been increasing over the years, witnessing the prosperity of social media and the popularity of online reading. As a result, digital publishing businesses are growing quickly and the market size of electronic books is also expanding, with digital library programs and online educational products increasing constantly.

In recently years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, book lovers have found new ways to read, access content and disseminate it, which has posed challenges for the traditional publishing industry, but has also brought new opportunities.

Launched in 2016, the International Publishing Forum has attracted industry insiders from many different countries and regions to gather and explore new paths for international publishing cooperation.

This year, under a theme of "innovative publishing and win-win cooperation", the forum, held in Beijing in June, focused on the integration of digital technologies and publishing.

Wu Shulin, head of the Publishers Association of China, said at the forum that, in international communications and exchanges within the publishing industry, what matters most is that all countries need to use new ideas and methods to spread knowledge, deliver innovation, and push forward with technological advancement.

Wu said that, over the past four decades, the publishing industry has met a crisis every seven or eight years, and now, "confronted with changes unseen in 100 years, with ChatGPT, AI, a shrinking market, a global economic downturn and so on ... how can we continue the glory of the publishing industry?"

Chinese publishers need to think about how to apply new technologies faster and better so that their publishing ideas and methods can catch up with global publishing trends, he said.

Mao Yuansheng, deputy general manager of China Publishing and Media Co, said that, when studying how to promote high-quality development of the publishing industry, he realized that it lacks a strong enough innovation drive. Compared with the previous years, new publications that can satisfy the changing needs of people are reducing, which is partially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is also because of a decline in original works, which is, in turn, worsened by the impact of new information technology and new media.

"Applying new technologies to publishing requires the joint effort of publishers," he said.

For Karine Pansa, president of the International Publishing Association, the core of the publishing business has always been to look for fresh stories, create new formats using the latest technologies and find innovative ways to reach new readers.

To better apply this core innovative spirit to publishing, she said, publishers around the world should cooperate to find ways to make up for the weakness in data collection (about companies and consumers) for the publishing industry, work harder to protect copyrights around the world, especially with challenges posed by fast-developing AI technology, and spread knowledge to protect our planet from the global climate crisis.

Li Yongqiang, president of China Renmin



Top: Under a theme of "innovative publishing and win-win cooperation", the International Publishing Forum, held in Beijing in June, focused on the integration of digital technologies and publishing. **Above:** The 2023 forum attracted industry insiders from many different countries and regions to gather and explore new paths for international cooperation. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



“Confronted with changes unseen in 100 years, with ChatGPT, AI, a shrinking market ... how can we continue the glory of the publishing industry?”

Wu Shulin, head of the Publishers Association of China

University Press, said that AI can improve publishing efficiency and working methods. With the advancement of AI, intelligent translation can help Chinese publications reach overseas readers more quickly, so as to further promote the communication and exchanges between different cultures around the world.

As more readers develop a preference for online reading, a trend fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, international publishing cooperation has had to turn toward new modes of copyright cooperation, especially in digital products, such as databases and digital books, he said.

The trend toward international publishing cooperation in digitalization continues to deepen with innovative methods being developed. For example, China Renmin University Press cooperated with Italian university Luiss to build a China center at Koc University in Turkey, which integrates the exhibition of Chinese books, academic communications and exchanges, cultural communications and exchanges and publishing cooperation, he said.

Niels Peter Thomas, president of Springer Nature China and managing director of



“Applying new technologies to publishing requires the joint effort of publishers.”

Mao Yuansheng, deputy general manager of China Publishing and Media Co

books for the corporation, presented a book at the forum that was independently created by AI in 2019. AI has obvious advantages in delivering quantity, quality, efficiency, and so on, but there are many passive consequences, he said.

For example, if a machine generates too much content in a short time, it will be very difficult for publishers to process the content. For academic works, editors need to check whether they are really written by the claimed authors, he said.

He added that there are a lot of challenges the publishing industry has to deal with in the era of AI. How to improve the existing technologies in AI text generation to be bias-free and inclusive? Which copyright is applicable? Who takes responsibility? How to control quality by peer review of machine-generated content?

Before any of these queries are really settled, the industry needs to conduct a lot of experiments, determining answers through trial and error, which requires the participation of the whole publishing community, he said.

Contact the writer at yangyang@chinadaily.com.cn

British Sinologist admires China's 'enduring' civilization

LONDON — Chinese civilization is one of the most fascinating and enduring in the world, Frances Wood, a well-known British Sinologist, has said.

Not only does China have a rich, ancient history, but the country is also dynamic in terms of changing over time, Wood says.

"The continuity (of Chinese civilization) is fantastically important," Wood emphasizes.

Some rules used by the Chinese today originate from as far back as the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), she says, taking the example of the measurement rule at the entrance of metro stations in China, which decides whether a child should buy a ticket or not according to his or her height.

Wood studied Chinese at Cambridge University in the 1970s, before traveling extensively in China while studying at Peking University in the Chinese capital of Beijing. After graduating from London University with a master's degree in Chinese architecture, she joined the British Library in 1977 and served as the curator of the Chinese collections for more than 30 years, until retiring in 2013.

One of her main duties in the role of curator was to purchase books in Chinese about China, covering various subjects including humanities and literature.

"It was a wonderful and rewarding job," she says. "It was fascinating watching China's expanding number of publications from the 1970s onward."

Wood wrote several books related to China, including on Qinshihuang, the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, Marco Polo and the Silk Road. Last month, Wood received a golden trophy from the 16th Special Book Award of China in Beijing for her contributions to promoting Chinese culture.

"It's certainly the first award that I have ever received in China. ... It was extraordinary to go to a proper ceremony where we were handed our trophy," she says.

Wood has been interested in Chinese history ever since she studied at Peking University. She has a particular interest in the history of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), which she says is "quite well-known to historians of China".

"People in the West know the name (of the Ming Dynasty). But that's it," she adds. In her view, mutual understanding and learning among civilizations are becoming more and more important.

"Chinese culture is so rich and, in a



“There are so many things that affect people all over the world equally, and we really do have to work together.”

Frances Wood, well-known British Sinologist

sense, different. ... I think it's terribly good for us to look at things (differently)," she says. "There are so many things that affect people all over the world equally, and we really do have to work together."

"To me, it has been so fascinating learning about China and continuing to learn about Chinese culture."

Wood's love for Chinese culture is reflected in her daily life. The front yard of her house is full of bamboo, and her bookshelf is loaded with Chinese and English books related to China. She keeps numerous gifts given to her by Chinese friends, such as small Peking Opera masks, inkstones, Chinese calligraphy works and paintings.

Referring to her recent role as a judge in the "Chinese Bridge" language contest held in London for British university students, she says she was amazed by their great enthusiasm in learning Mandarin.

They were not only fluent Mandarin speakers but also excellent performers, with talents ranging from musical instruments to martial arts, she says.

"People now have such a good opportunity to go to China, to visit and learn from people (in China). The opportunities are much greater than they were when I started learning," she says.

She says that one of her favorite Chinese words is the one for owl, *maotouying* (literally meaning "cat-head eagle"). She explains: "I love it because it immediately gives you a picture of an owl. ... It looks like a cat because it stares straight at you. And it has little ears, but it has the beak of an eagle."

Such a "wonderful combination" of Chinese characters offers her much pleasure, she says. For Wood, learning Chinese is an "endless process", which is still "endlessly fascinating".

XINHUA

Experts scour the globe in search of rare, ancient texts

JINAN — Chen Xiaoshan vividly recalls his rendezvous with a block-printed edition of the Confucian classic *Xunzi*, dating back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279), while abroad a few years ago.

"The moment I touched it, I could almost feel the pulse of Chinese culture," recalls 32-year-old Chen, a member of an ongoing project called Integration of Chinese Ancient Books.

In a small building on the main campus of Shandong University in East China, Chen and his colleagues have spent the past six years bringing many ancient Chinese classics that were dispersed overseas "back home".

The project is a comprehensive cultural undertaking that encompasses several aspects, such as surveying and cataloging overseas Chinese ancient texts, copying and digitalizing some selected works, conducting research on them and building a database, says Zheng Jiewen, the chief expert on the project.

Their final objective is to complete the copying or digital scanning of approximately 9,000 kinds of rare and valuable Chinese classics and other ancient documents found abroad. Around 2,000 of them will be photocopied and published.

Undoubtedly, the entire project is an exceptionally challenging endeavor.

The survey and cataloging team comprises over 420 people, including university teachers, international students and overseas Chinese, according to the team leader Shan Chengbin.

Every day, they endure hours of commuting to gain access to a mere handful of Chinese classics, as some overseas agencies responsible for storing these invaluable books have daily borrowing limits, Shan says.

Once the arduous task of cataloging the books is complete, a meticulous screening process will ensue, aiming to discern whether they possess sufficient value to warrant the "return" to their place of origin. This intricate process involves delving into an expansive sea of books and searching for those elusive "hidden gems" that lie within.

One such discovery, made through a collaboration between St. Petersburg State

University in Russia and Shandong University, is the *Records of Iron Forging*, which documents 16th-century metallurgical techniques in China. It is considered a rare surviving edition. In June 2019, a replica of this book was presented as a gift by Russia to China.

Tang Ziheng, a 68-year-old retired literature professor from Shandong University, dedicated himself to the proofreading and publication of overseas ancient books.

"I wake up at around 5 in the morning almost every day and spend six to seven hours going through manuscripts," says Tang, who is engaging in five rounds of proofreading to minimize potential errors and ensure the reliability of the replicated books brought back from abroad for academic research.

The first batch of 14 kinds of proofread books will be published in the second half of this year.

The Integration of Chinese Ancient Books project was officially launched in April 2017 and is set to span a period of 10 years.

To date, the project has successfully surveyed 1,988 book archive agencies overseas, leading to the identification and cataloging of 360,000 ancient Chinese books. Among this collection, approximately 1,600 unique books have "returned home" through copying or scanning.

"Paper has a life span of 1,000 years, and some ancient books from the Song and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties are nearing their limit. If we don't find them in time and replicate them, they may vanish in the river of history," Chen says.

Chinese scholars are also bringing their expertise in ancient books to library institutions overseas. In 2018, the project started sending experts to help a Sinology institute and a municipal library in France compile comprehensive catalogs of ancient Chinese books there. The work is expected to be completed by 2024.

Chen says the significance of the project lies not only in the revival of rare ancient books, but also in opening up a new space for cultural exchange between the East and the West.

XINHUA

CULTURE

Opening minds, changing lives

10,000
students (2023)How Mandarin lessons are making a big difference
for students in English state schools

Map: All 79 schools in England delivering the Mandarin Excellence Program (MEP) as of 2022. SOURCE: UCL IOE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOLS

Curve chart: The number of students in the MEP has grown from 382 in 2016 to 10,000 in 2023. SOURCES: RESEARCH STORIES; BRITISH COUNCIL

382
students (2016)

For the past five years, Thomas Sharma, a Year 12 student at Queen Mary's Grammar School in Walsall in the West Midlands of England, has been late home from school one day a week because, as a student who enrolled in the Mandarin Excellence Program (MEP), he needs to stay on for after-school Mandarin lessons.

Starting in 2016, MEP is a language program funded by the United Kingdom's Department for Education and delivered through state secondary schools in England.

Students on the MEP are required to acclimatize themselves to the intensive nature of the project, with an average of eight hours of work per

week, which could consist of in-classroom lessons, after-school teaching, self-study, and more.

At first, Sharma found almost everything about Chinese difficult, as he had no previous experience of the language. The characters, grammar, writing, and tones were a whole new world until he got used to the strangeness and began taking pleasure in their novelty. "The absolute enjoyment keeps me motivated," he said.

Interest can be the best teacher, and Sharma has grown to become a prominent Chinese speaker among his peers. In May, he won first prize in the advanced category of the 2023 "Chinese Bridge" Mandarin Proficiency Competition for UK secondary school students.

After the awards ceremony, people flocked around him, congratulating him in Chinese as if he were a native speaker, with his teacher proudly telling China Daily that Sharma could understand all the conversations.

The boy who, at the age of 12, chose to join MEP out of curiosity is now considering taking Chinese at degree level. "Regardless of what I end up doing, I would really love to have some kind of Chinese elements in there," he added.

Sharma's achievements echo the original aim of MEP to create a cohort of pupils on the path to fluency in Mandarin, and he is by no means the only one.

As of 2021, the first phase of the program has seen a total enrollment of around 6,500 students from 75 schools across England, growing from a presence with fewer than 400 participants in 14 schools when it was set up, according to an independent evaluation report on the program's first five years.

In 2021, MEP was awarded a further three years of funding, and from August 2021 to May 2023, has welcomed around 3,500 new par-

ticipants, according to Confucius Institute for Schools at the University College London Institute of Education (UCL IOE CI), the program's lead delivery partner.

Pupils who chose to give up some of their free time for MEP are aware of the benefits brought by Mandarin. "Learning Chinese, especially in the finance world, will open many new doors for me because, obviously, the Chinese market is somewhat new to the European and the Western world," said Hojiakbar Sadullaev, a Year 12 student at Dartford Grammar School in Kent. "So, personally, having a good knowledge of Chinese allows me to access more opportunities."

A better future also motivated Pijus Okunevicius, a Year 8 pupil at Kingsford Community School in Newham, East London, as he said the business world is definitely related to China, and with Chinese, he can be more recognizable. The learning journey has not always been smooth but the goal of success drives him forwards.

"You can never succeed at something when the end is not hard to get. If it's easy, you can give up. If it's hard,

you always keep trying, and I always have a future," he said.

For Sharma, he said he had never viewed the language as a functional thing, but learning Chinese had broadened his horizons. "One of the big things about a language is when you learn it, you often start to look at the world. And Chinese did invite you to consider things from a different perspective," he explained.

These advantages have long been recognized by Joan Deslandes, the head teacher of Kingsford, who has been dedicated to promoting Chinese learning in her school since 2000, when Kingsford became the first school in the UK to introduce compulsory lessons of Mandarin into the curriculum.

Looking to the future

"In the year 2000, China was about to join the World Trade Organization. It was very clear to me that engaging with China is going to bring our young people benefits that we had not anticipated, given that China was the most populated country in the world," she said.

"The opportunities have been phenomenal, not just in terms of their employability, but in terms of the friendships and the understanding that they have in terms of their lives as global citizens who are learning about making an effective contribution in a harmonious world where there is mutual respect," she added.



Joan Deslandes, head teacher of Kingsford Community School



It was very clear to me that engaging with China is going to bring our young people benefits that we had not anticipated."



From Left: Year 7 students at Dartford Grammar School join MEP lessons on April 25. Thomas Sharma, a MEP student at Queen Mary's Grammar School, receives first prize for the Midlands region of England in a Mandarin translation contest held by the University of Oxford.



From Left: Year 7 students at Dartford Grammar School join MEP lessons on April 25. Thomas Sharma, a MEP student at Queen Mary's Grammar School, receives first prize for the Midlands region of England in a Mandarin translation contest held by the University of Oxford.

Chinese immersion program promotes biculturalism

By CHINA DAILY

Students at Kensington Wade school in England speak English for half of their school days and Chinese for the other half; whether they are doing a language lesson or not.

On Chinese-speaking days, classes, including mathematics, science, art and humanities, are taught in Chinese by native Chinese-speaking teachers.

The "Half English, Half Chinese" formula makes Kensington Wade the first and only bilingual English-Chinese prep school in Europe.

Located in the Hammersmith district of West London, the school has attracted more than 100 students, aged between 3 and 11. They come from Chinese, British, French, Russian, German and Indian backgrounds.

The school has grown from humble origins. When it first opened in 2017, there were just 15 children on its books.

"The decision to start the first-ever English-Chinese bilingual prep school, not just in the UK but in Europe, was taken because we felt there was a huge need to give children of this country the ability to speak, live, and work in a world where China was a hugely, hugely important presence," said Jo Wallace, the school's principal and founding head teacher.

While Chinese is taught widely in the UK, mostly in secondary schools through the Mandarin Excellence Program, what makes Kensington Wade unique is its foreign language teaching method, immersion education,

which is a "new, pioneering, and progressing" model, the school's Deputy Head and Head of Chinese Program Wang Jing said.

To immerse someone in Chinese learning is to apply the language to instruction in a variety of subjects, which converts Chinese into a "by-product of content teaching," said Wang.

"Sometimes, a child is not really interested in learning how would I use Chinese characters to make a sentence, but they really want to figure out how would this science project go, or what's going to be the results. And if that lesson is delivered in Chinese, they will be learning the language without realizing, oh, I am actually learning a language."

An early immersion enables students to develop greater language comprehension and production abili-

ties with a very natural accent, which count as a linguistically competent advantage, said Wang, while at the same time, biculturalism is embraced by the children at tender ages, as teachers use China as a context to teach history, geography, art, and so on.

In humanities classrooms, to illustrate the gender stereotyping ascribed to females and to talk about how some of them have broken the bias, Wang's English-teaching partner cites the world-renowned Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, and Wang talks about Hua Mulan, the Chinese folk heroine who took her aged father's place in the conscription for the army by disguising herself as a man.

In the geography unit, the Yangtze River, China's longest river, is compared with the Nile in Africa, which explains how rivers can be seen as the

cradles of human civilization.

"Children are always comparing. So, they do know the world is not a one-man story, they do know there are people who do things differently, and they will use that kind of skill to come to their own decisions. They have greater critical thinking skills to help them make good decisions," Wang said.

And students are taught to appreciate the beauty behind the differences, by learning the two languages that represent the East and the West, said Xiang Yang, assistant head of Chinese and coordinator of the art, design and technology department.

"For example, dragons in our Chinese culture signify auspiciousness, but in the West, are perceived as vicious and scary monsters. Our children are exposed to totally different cultural backgrounds, and they sweep

those changes very quickly on a daily basis. In the end, they show more empathy toward different situations," Xiang said.

For Xiang, being exposed to differences at an age when students are far from realizing how the world runs, is a privilege, because accepting diversity is needed to foster global citizenship.

Wallace said she wants her school to keep sending out the message that empathy and understanding should be nurtured, and for people to increasingly realize that having a school like Kensington Wade, which nurtures students with bilingual and bicultural brains, is vital.

"Hopefully, one day, we won't be the only one," she said.

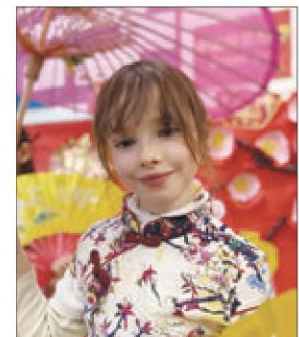
Zheng Wanyin in London contributed to this story.



Jo Wallace, principal and founding head teacher of Kensington Wade



The decision to start the first-ever English-Chinese bilingual prep school, not just in the UK but in Europe, was taken because we felt there was a huge need to give children of this country the ability to speak, live, and work in a world where China was a hugely, hugely important presence."



From left: A student from Kensington Wade receives the second prize in the Key Stage 1 category of 2022 "Chinese Bridge" Mandarin Proficiency Competition for UK primary school students. Students at Kensington Wade celebrate the Year of the Rabbit. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY