

Dumping aftermath

Seafood sales fall in South Korea due to Japan's discharge of tainted water

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China, other nations urged to join hands to boost global travel

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Historical blockbuster

Christopher Nolan's highly anticipated Oppenheimer tops Chinese box office

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Premier Li Qiang (sixth from right) joins hands on Wednesday with other leaders at the 26th ASEAN-China, Japan and ROK leaders' meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia. TATAN SYUFLANA / REUTERS

WORLD WATCH
By Imran Khalid

Mutual understanding is way forward for Sino-US relationship

"I am leaving with some optimism," United States Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said after completing her recent visit to China.

During the visit, which exemplified the potential for constructive diplomacy, Raimondo engaged in crucial talks with her Chinese counterpart, heralding a new chapter of cooperation between the two global economic powerhouses.

The bilateral discussions, without yielding any significant breakthrough, resulted in the establishment of a robust framework for enhanced communication and dispute resolution.

Amid an atmosphere of goodwill, the establishment of fresh communication channels and a dedicated working group to address trade disputes signals a mutual commitment to trade stability. Furthermore, the introduction of an export control information exchange mechanism demonstrates that Raimondo reciprocated Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao's advocacy of transparency and trust-building in bilateral economic relations.

Crucially, the commitment to regular high-level meetings reflects a sincere intention to bridge divides and foster long-term collaboration.

Raimondo's visit to China transcended mere economic discussions, highlighting the broader scope of cooperation between the two nations. Her meetings with high-ranking Chinese officials, who in addition to Commerce Minister Wang included Premier Li Qiang, Vice-Premier He Lifeng, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Culture and Tourism Minister Hu Heping, underscored the comprehensive nature of discussions that extended beyond economic considerations. This diplomatic engagement signified a mutual understanding that actions must align with words.

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Li urges Asia to focus on peaceful development

Premier stresses vital role of ASEAN Plus Three mechanism in promoting regional prosperity

By CAO DESHENG in Jakarta
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Premier Li Qiang on Wednesday called for Asian countries, including members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, to focus on the overall interests of Asia's peaceful development and jointly address various risks and challenges in a bid to promote regional prosperity and stability.

Li made the remarks when addressing the 26th ASEAN-China, Japan and ROK (10+3) leaders' meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The premier said that the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation mechanism has undergone numerous crises and tests in the past 20 years, but it

has played an important role in promoting regional development and prosperity. "The more difficult it is, the more we need to seek solidarity and cooperation."

As the world is entering a new period of turbulence and changes and global development endeavors face tremendous challenges, Li emphasized the need to prioritize development in regional cooperation, eliminate all kinds of interference, tap into cooperation potential and strive to explore a more stable, vibrant and inclusive development path.

China is willing to work with all parties to take the implementation of the new ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan as an opportunity to promote regional economic integration and connectivity, enhance partnership in innovation and the digital economy, and strengthen

sustainable development and poverty reduction efforts, Li said.

He called for further releasing the dividends of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and promoting the free flow of factors of production to expand and upgrade trade and investment.

"We hope that all parties will support Hong Kong's accession to the RCEP as one of the first new members," he added.

The premier also emphasized the need to leverage the strengths of geographical proximity and economic complementarity to optimize and upgrade industrial and supply chains in the region.

"China is willing to deepen cooperation with all parties in areas such as the digital economy, clean energy and new energy vehicles to promote the development of emerging industries and cultivate more new economic growth points together."

During the meeting, Li reiterated China's position on the issue of

Japan's discharging of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant, urging Japan to faithfully fulfill its international obligations and engage in full consultations with neighboring countries and other stakeholders to handle the issue in a responsible manner.

While attending the 26th China-ASEAN leaders' meeting earlier on Wednesday, Li commended the development of ties between China and ASEAN, and said that over the past decade, China and ASEAN have maintained a relationship characterized by sincerity, mutual assistance, mutual benefit, mutual coordination and inclusiveness.

They have worked together to forge a path of long-term good neighborliness, friendship and shared development and prosperity amid the evolving global landscape, he added.

Li underlined the need for China and ASEAN to promote cooperation in emerging industries, such as new energy vehicles, photovoltaics and

artificial intelligence, expand people-to-people exchanges and enhance cooperation in fields such as culture, tourism, training and youth.

The premier emphasized the importance of maintaining regional peace and stability by actively advancing consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and cooperating in combating telecommunications and cyber fraud.

The leaders of ASEAN countries attending the meeting highly praised the achievements of ASEAN-China cooperation, saying that the comprehensive strategic partnership between ASEAN and China has brought great benefits to the people of the region and promoted regional peace, development and stability.

ASEAN countries welcome the progress made in formulating the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and look forward to the early conclusion of the negotiations on upgrading the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, they added.

FINDINGS SHED LIGHT ON CAPITAL'S IMPRESSIVE PAST

City dating back 800 years unearthed near new business area

By XIN WEN
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The Lize Financial Business District in southwestern Beijing is home to numerous glass-walled high-rises, which stand as proud sentinels keeping watch over this new landmark in the Chinese capital.

The district only opened at the end of 2021, but under the ground nearby lie the ancient city walls and moat of Zhongdu, which in 1153 became the capital of the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234). It was the first time that Beijing had been the capital city during a Chinese dynasty.



More than 2,900 square meters of the Zhongdu city wall ruins were unearthed in 2019 and 2020, and a section of the western wall, which is 24 meters wide at its thickest point, is the best preserved.

The old city ruins, together with the kitchen tools and ornaments used by residents in ancient times, have been preserved at the site or in museums.

See **Zhongdu**, page 2

Demand jumping for Xinjiang's snowmelt trout

By MAO WEIHUA in Urumqi and ZHAO RUIXUE

Mutton and sweet fruit ordinarily steal the culinary spotlight in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. But they will soon have to share the stage with an unlikely contender in the inland region — aquatic food.

Freshwater aquatic produce, which is cultivated in cold, clear water from melting snow, is set to evolve into newfound delicacies in Xinjiang.

Production of rainbow trout raised in rivers in Nilka county is expected to reach 6,000 metric tons this year, nearly double last year's output, according to Xinjiang Tianyun Organic Agriculture Co.

Rainbow trout, which belongs to the same family as salmon, is known for its meaty texture and few bones, making it an ideal food source.

"Demand in the market for trout is significant," said Li Chunyu, general manager of Tianyun. "Our company is currently operating at full capacity, producing fresh trout every day."

China is the world's largest market for aquatic products. Last year, the country imported 4.54 million tons of aquatic products, an increase of more than 20 percent year-on-year.

China has also become one of the world's largest salmon importers, with Norway, Canada and Chile as the main suppliers, according to the General Administration of Customs.

Because of concerns regarding seafood after discharges into the Pacific Ocean of nuclear-contaminated water from Japan's Fukushima Daiichi power plant, freshwater aquatic products will likely become more popular in the future.

There are many choices, including South American white shrimp, tilapia, abalone and lobster being raised in Xinjiang and making their way onto consumers' dining tables nationwide. Some of these products are also sold in foreign markets.

The high salinity of the ground in many parts of Xinjiang and the region's natural lakes provide a conducive environment for fish farms in the region, experts said.

Farmers in a village in Midong district of Urumqi, the region's capital, have been busy catching South American white shrimp lately. The village has 10 freshwater shrimp ponds that produce more than 50 tons annually.

The shrimp produced here are prized by consumers, according to local media reports.



Xinjiang Tianyun Organic Agriculture Co's aquaculture cages for rainbow trout breeding are seen in Nilka county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The melting snow and glaciers of the Tianshan mountain range — water known for its purity — make for superior-quality fish.

Taking advantage of the water resources, Tianyun has been developing fish farms and processing facilities since 2014 in Nilka county. It now offers a series of products, ranging from fillets to minced trout.

The company mainly sells its trout in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian and markets in Singapore and Malaysia.

"The meltwater is pure, cold and rich in dissolved oxygen, which is perfect for raising trout," said Li, the company's manager.

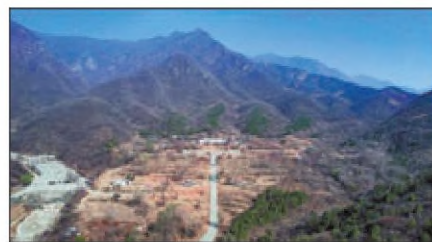
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PAGE TWO

Zhongdu: Communication, integration highlighted



Left: Ding Lina (right), a researcher at the Beijing Archaeological Research Institute, takes part in an excavation at the Zhongdu site during the winter in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY. Center: Objects from the Jin Dynasty (1115-1243) are displayed in an ongoing exhibition at the Beijing Archaeological Site Museum. Right: An aerial view of the Jin Dynasty Imperial Mausoleums in Beijing's Fangshan district. PHOTOS BY YANG ZHIGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY

From page 1

An exhibition commemorating the 870th anniversary of Beijing becoming the capital, which opened at the Beijing Archaeological Site Museum on June 10, runs until Sept. 30.

A total of 187 cultural relics from six Jin Dynasty sites are exhibited at the museum, including architectural pieces from the Jinzhongdu ruins, porcelain, gold and silverware, jade, pottery and murals reflecting daily life.

The imperial palace, lanes and hutong, or alleyways, in which residents lived, as well as city gates, moats, streets and the tombs of imperial family members, are depicted in the form of objects and other traces left by the Jurchen and Han people who lived in Zhongdu.

Well-known scenic spots in Beijing, such as Yinshan Pagoda Forest in Changping district and Lugou Bridge in Fengtai, which were built when Zhongdu was capital of the Jin Dynasty, are also highlighted at the exhibition.

Ding Lina, a researcher at the Beijing Archaeological Research Institute, who focuses on studies of the Liao (907-1125), Jin and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties, said, "We can observe the communication and integration between the Jurchen and Han people through cultural aspects of the tomb artifacts from the Jin Dynasty."

"For example, at a Han ethnic burial site, we discovered not only the Buddhist copper ornaments that Han people believe in, but also a small copper figurine, which is generally thought to represent a ritual object used in the Jurchen people's primitive shamanistic religion.

"In the tombs, we also found that ethnic cultural integration between the Han and Jurchen people was a two-way process, with the two ethnicities influencing and promoting each other."

Ding said the Jin Dynasty mausoleum system, in which imperial tombs were built on mountains near the capital, followed the shape and structure of those from the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties.

The layout of the mausoleums is also evidence of the merging of Jurchen and Han culture, Ding said.

She added that due to the relocation of the capital and imperial mausoleums, a large number of Jurchen nobles and warriors, along with people from minority groups such as the Bohai and Khitan, came to Zhongdu to promote cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups.

In the 120-year history of the Jin Dynasty, its capital city was relocated twice. When Wanyan Liang, the fourth Jin Dynasty emperor, ascended the throne, he moved the dynastic capital to Yanjing (present-

day Beijing) in 1153, from the northeastern city of Shangjing (now Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province). Zhongdu was also chosen by the emperor as the dynastic capital due to its abundant resources and well-connected transportation links.

Before the Jin Dynasty, most capitals of ancient Chinese dynasties were located in Luoyang, Henan province, or Xi'an, Shaanxi province. Earlier than this, Erlitou and Yinxiu in Henan were capitals during the Xia and Shang dynasties (c. 21st century-11th century BC).

The book *Current Affairs of Beijing*, written during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1711-99) during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) states: "Starting from ancient times, emperors have established their capitals in many places (across China). For a long time, only the plain in central Shaanxi was favored by them as a capital. Now, only Yanjing is comparable, and has been considered a capital city for an extended period."

Beijing, initially founded as Ji, capital of the Yan state during the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771BC), was only a border town in the northern region of China in the Tang Dynasty and the southern capital during the Liao Dynasty. It became known as Zhongdu in the Jin Dynasty, and acted as the nation's political and cultural center. Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty, renamed Zhongdu as Dadu ("great capital") and declared it the national capital.

In 1403, Zhu Di, also known as Emperor Yongle, the third emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), decided to relocate the capital from Nanjing to Beijing, and renamed the latter Beijing.

In 1644, Emperor Shunzhi, the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty to enter Beijing, moved the capital from Shengjing (now Shenyang in Liaoning province) to Beijing.

Turning point

Liu Naitao, deputy director of the Beijing Archaeological Site Museum and co-curator of the new exhibition, said, "The establishment of Zhongdu during the Jin Dynasty was not only a new stage in the development of the ancient dynasty, but also a new era in the history of Beijing's urban development, marking a turning point in the history of Chinese capital cities."

"The overall layout of Zhongdu is similar to that of Bianliang (present-day Kaifeng city in Henan), which was capital of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and influenced the construction of capitals in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties."

"After Zhongdu was built and became capital in the Jin Dynas-



TIMELINE

1952: Architectural remains and Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) tombs are discovered near Taoranting Park in Xicheng district, Beijing.

1958: Archaeologists survey the remains of the Zhongdu city wall and conduct a comprehensive survey of the site. They also draw a preliminary sketch of the Zhongdu city restoration.

1990: The Zhongdu water gate is discovered at a community in Fengtai district, Beijing. The remains consist of north-south wooden and stone structures, with the gate built across the city wall. Water flowed north to south through a tunnel, entering the southern moat in Zhongdu.

1990: The Zhongdu palace area ruins are discovered, with specific locations of the main palace and other buildings identified.

- XINWEN



South axis, which stretched out from the imperial palace.

As the political, economic and cultural center of the Jin Dynasty, the ruling class and people from different social strata and ethnic backgrounds gathered in Zhongdu. It also attracted a huge number of businesses and artisans.

The mix of residents and businesses helped Zhongdu absorb and integrate the characteristics of Han culture with nomadic traditions — promoting the city's prosperity and development.

One such example is the living quarters. Liu said the enclosed communities of the Liao Dynasty were replaced by a system in which neighborhoods were open during the day, along with commercial streets and alleyways.

"During the early Tang Dynasty and the Liao Dynasty, living quarters in Beijing were enclosed on all four sides, with a square in the center of the neighborhood," Liu said. "The living quarters resembled modern communities and were surrounded by four walls and one gate for each main direction. The gates opened in the morning and closed at night."

The new residential quarters established in Zhongdu were different from the earlier ones, he said, adding that archaeological excavations revealed the demolition of walls and the disappearance of gates. Open streets and alleys were integrated with residential communities. As a result, the city's economy and businesses flourished.

Records show that during its most prosperous period, Zhongdu had 62 enclosed residential communities, each occupying about 500 square meters. These communities opened at about 4 am or 5 am and closed at 6 pm or 7 pm.

Defensive system

Jin Dynasty Emperor Wanyan Liang, who decided to relocate the capital, set up a complete defensive system around Zhongdu to prevent potential attacks from northern Mongolian tribes. The Jin Dynasty was one of the few established by an ethnic minority.

Ding, from the Beijing Archaeological Research Institute, said that before the Tang Dynasty, emphasis on the defensive capabilities of the capital was placed on high walls and deep moats. However, over time, as more artillery was used in military battles, the city wall needed to be improved.

"The city wall was about 16 to 18 meters high and the moat was 66 meters wide. The wall, the moat and other facilities such as a fortified tower shaped like a horse's head constituted the defensive works of Zhongdu," she said.

At the start of the Jurchen regime, the rulers faced resistance and suppression from the nomadic Khitan people. Without sturdy city

walls, the Jurchen population could have been wiped out by this strong northern tribe.

Later, the Jurchen people faced threats from the Mongols.

"Outer defense is of paramount importance to an ancient city. Once the outer city walls are breached, defense of the inner city is basically rendered useless," Ding said.

She added that at various periods, all Jin Dynasty rulers introduced policies to encourage farming.

"The emphasis they placed on land and agriculture brought stability, and the Jurchen people, who relied on fishing and hunting for a living, started to settle down, which deepened their dependence on cities," she said.

Although the Zhongdu city gates have not yet been discovered, finding the moat and tower shaped like a horse's head are strong evidence that Zhongdu possessed a complete defensive system as a capital city, Ding said.

Past and present

Zhongdu, which covered 25 sq km, was the capital for 62 years in the Jin Dynasty. The earliest central axis of Beijing was also that of Zhongdu, even though it is located in the southwest of present-day Beijing.

"When Wanyan Liang first moved the capital to Zhongdu, the city's population was relatively small," Ding said. To increase the population and promote the city's development, a 10-year labor tax exemption policy was introduced to attract more residents to settle in Zhongdu, she added.

"Zhongdu was a city full of mystery, so when I knew that I had the opportunity to excavate the ancient ruins at the end of 2019, I felt privileged and excited," she said.

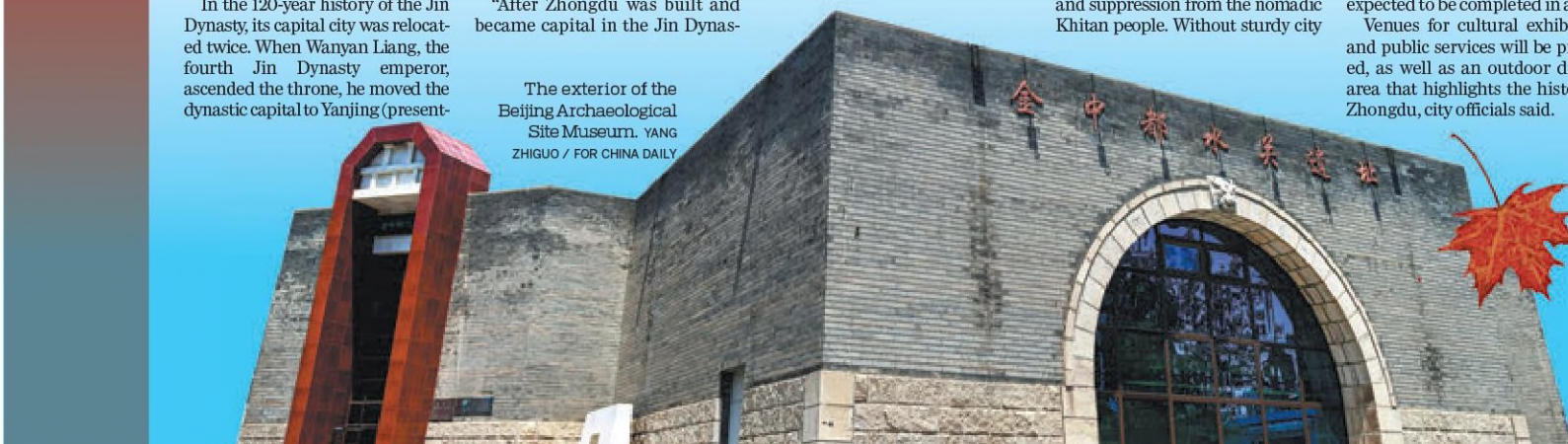
"Under our feet is a capital city with a history of more than 800 years. Being one of the first to discover how these buildings were constructed made me realize I had a great responsibility and obligation to conduct archaeological work for the public."

In winter 2020, the archaeological excavation team led by Ding discovered a Jin Dynasty crossroads under the Lize Soho building. Ding said that by coincidence, there is an interchange between the Beijing Subway Line 14 and Line 16 at the location where the crossroads was found.

The Beijing municipal government said bidding to construct a themed city park archaeological site — Zhongdu of Jin Dynasty — opened in April. Covering 150,000 sq m, the park will be located in and around the Lize commercial area in Fengtai. Construction is expected to be completed in a year.

Venues for cultural exhibitions and public services will be provided, as well as an outdoor display area that highlights the history of Zhongdu, city officials said.

The exterior of the Beijing Archaeological Site Museum. YANG ZHIGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY



TOP NEWS

Premier visits landmark rail project in Indonesia

By CAO DESHENG in Jakarta
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Premier Li Qiang visited a section of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway in Java, Indonesia, on Wednesday and learned about the progress of the landmark project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative.

Accompanied by Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, Indonesia's coordinator for cooperation with China and coordinating minister for maritime affairs and investment, Li, who is on an official visit to Indonesia,

boarded the express train from Halim station in Jakarta.

With a design speed of 350 kilometers per hour, the rail route covering 142.3 km will cut the journey time between Jakarta and Bandung from over three hours to around 40 minutes. It is the first high-speed railway in Southeast Asia. The current fastest railway in Southeast Asia is the Laos-China Railway, with a top speed of 160 km per hour.

Li was briefed about the construction, commissioning and test runs of the project, which is expect-

ed to start operations soon. The high-speed railway is in effect the first overseas construction project that fully uses Chinese railway systems, technologies and industrial components.

As Li traveled from Halim to Karawang station, the train traveled at its peak speed of 329 km per hour.

Incremental speed tests have been conducted since the start of joint commissioning and testing on May 22. Based on the test results so far, these systems have met the design requirements, which provide strong support for subsequent oper-

ation trials and opening for service.

Ferri Limputra, president director of Pura Mayungan Group of Companies in Jakarta, told China Daily that he is happy to note that the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway will start operations soon. "I am certain about its impact on the economic growth of our country."

He said that he hoped this will be a start for Indonesia to be connected efficiently and effectively, and to "get connected like in China."

Leonardus Jegho, a freelancer, contributed to this story.

China retains its appeal for foreign firms

There's been a quantity-to-quality shift in inflow of investments, analysts say

By ZHONG NAN
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China's wide appeal for multinational corporations will continue due to its robust domestic market and its unwavering dedication to opening up its economy, despite a globally subdued investment sentiment, said analysts and heads of foreign chambers of commerce in China.

Participating in various events during the 2023 China International Fair for Trade in Services, which concluded on Wednesday in Beijing, they noted that there has been a quantity-to-quality shift in the inflow of foreign investment into the country. This transformation, they said, is aligned with China's pursuit of high-quality development that aims to generate more growth opportunities in sectors such as trade in services and high-end manufacturing.

Jens Hildebrandt, executive director of the German Chamber of Commerce in China (North China), said that despite the impact of geopolitical tensions on global business confidence, foreign investors will continue to have confidence in China's economic growth in the long run.

The previous cooperation model is changing, he said, referring to the fact that German companies provided technology to China in the past and tremendously benefited from the Chinese market, but now, China has strong brands and high-end technologies, which are successfully penetrating both the German and European markets, especially in the decarbonization and healthcare sectors.

Highlighting that German investments in China are currently concentrated in the industrial sector, Hildebrandt said that with China gradually opening up its services industry, German companies will have more access to the Chinese market in the coming years.

As the global economy is dealing with a sluggish recovery and cross-border investments remain lackluster, China has intensified efforts to boost its foreign investment inflow, unveiling 24 targeted policy measures in mid-August.

The authorities pledged to ensure that foreign businesses receive the same treatment as their Chinese counterparts and enjoy stronger fiscal support and tax incentives.

The policy rollout will boost the confidence of multinational corporations in conducting long-term operations in China and, therefore, play a pivotal role in revitalizing global cross-border investments, said Loh Wee Keng, chairman of the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China.

As China's traditional advantage of low labor and rental costs diminishes, some foreign manufacturers, especially those from low value-added industries, have chosen to exit the market. Concurrently, many high-tech companies are eagerly entering

the Chinese market to capitalize on opportunities associated with industrial upgrading, said Nie Pingxiang, a research fellow with the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Even though foreign direct investment in the Chinese mainland in terms of actual use dropped 4 percent year-on-year to 766.71 billion yuan (\$105 billion) in the first seven months of this year, China saw the number of newly established foreign-invested enterprises in its market reach 28,406 during the period, up 34 percent year-on-year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

Meanwhile, FDI in the high-tech industry grew 3.8 percent year-on-year, while the same in high-end manufacturing soared 25.3 percent.

Roberta Lipson, vice-chair of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said she believes the recent high-level interactions between senior government officials from China and the United States will instill greater confidence among US companies in China.

For a majority of AmCham China members, China remains the most critical investment destination, and they will continue conducting business here as they are enthusiastic about China's growth, Lipson said.

She added that China's recent 24-point policy to support the growth of foreign companies, the reforms in its pilot free trade zones and other opening-up measures are practical moves to shore up the nation's economy.

Geraldine McCafferty, deputy head of mission, the British Embassy in Beijing, said the United Kingdom does not believe in the "decoupling" narrative. "We think that international trade is a good thing. The more we reform and open up our economies, the better it is for global prosperity."

McCafferty said that with closer business ties, Chinese and British economies will further benefit from the services sector.

Zhao Ping, dean of the Academy of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said a well-developed business environment can effectively upgrade China's innovation climate and offer concrete opportunities for multinational firms to take part in the country's opening-up and innovation drive.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony for a new research building in Shanghai on Wednesday, Ilham Kadri, CEO of Belgian chemical manufacturer Solvay SA, said the Chinese market is strategically important in the group's global strategy, and it is willing to increase investment to address the demands in the country.

"This research and development facility will be an innovation hub, which will usher in breakthroughs in critical sectors in China, especially hydrogen, electronics and semiconductors," Kadri said, adding that the company has invested more than 4 billion yuan in innovation activities across China since 2005.

Rain fury

Members of a rescue team carry a girl to safety on Tuesday after heavy rains caused flooding in Demirkoy district of Kırklareli, Türkiye. Search and rescue operations continue in the area. Five people were killed in flash floods on Tuesday after torrential rains turned the streets of Istanbul and parts of northwestern Türkiye into rushing rivers, officials said.

OZGUN TIRAN / ANADOLU AGENCY VIA GETTY IMAGES



Ties: Nation's ascent benefits the global community

From page 1

Raimondo's visit, following a series of similar engagements by senior US officials, rekindled hope for a more harmonious and productive future. The momentous occasion also demonstrated the potential for cooperation and set the stage for improved diplomatic ties.

Her call for a fair regulatory environment for US businesses in China resonated with the need for equity, while China's commerce minister emphasized the importance of ending discriminatory subsidies and sanctions against Chinese enterprises.

The recent visits to China by senior officials of the administration of US President Joe Biden signify a palpable shift in the US approach. They also demonstrate a growing awareness in Washington that actions targeting China can inadvertently harm US interests. This acknowledgment underscores the importance of a more balanced and constructive approach to fostering stability and growth in the global arena.

As the dialogue continues, hope grows for a future marked by cooperation and mutual benefit between the two nations.

China's ascent as the world's leading manufacturing hub is an undeniable reality, challenging the notion of swift relocation for US businesses. The US must recognize that China's ascent benefits the global community by reducing poverty, fostering interdependence and promoting global peace and prosperity. In this interconnected world, cooperation and understanding between the world's two largest economies can lead to shared progress and a brighter future for all.

Characterizing China as a "strategic competitor" and imposing a slew of sanctions is a counterproductive approach, both economically and strategically. From an international trade standpoint, such a stance neither serves US employment interests nor benefits its consumers. Furthermore, the interwoven nature of the global economy

makes decoupling from China a lofty and unrealistic goal.

A more strategic approach would involve recognizing the complexities of global trade and seeking avenues of cooperation and engagement rather than isolation and confrontation.

Raimondo's visit to China may not have yielded immediate breakthroughs on pressing issues concerning US corporations, but it has set a constructive tone for future engagements between the two global giants, with an emphasis on patience and pragmatism. Her candid acknowledgment that immediate breakthroughs were not anticipated on major contentious issues demonstrated a commitment to productive dialogue over quick fixes.

It is noteworthy that both sides are actively working to create a conducive atmosphere for a potential meeting between the leaders of the US and China at the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in November in the US. This effort underscores the

urgency of easing tensions and pursuing pragmatic cooperation for the greater global good. For a lasting improvement in relations, however, the US must demonstrate that its measures, ostensibly designed to safeguard national security interests, do not unfairly target China with the intent to stifle its development.

Raimondo's remarks imply a mutual desire for transparency and fairness, essential elements in building trust between nations. It is clear that patience, diplomacy and mutual understanding must guide the path forward, for the benefit of both nations and the broader international community. A genuine commitment to addressing shared concerns and fostering mutually beneficial cooperation is essential for long-term stability and prosperity.

The author is an international affairs commentator and freelancer based in Karachi, Pakistan. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Tadic: BRI has much to offer Europe

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Europe should overcome its prejudices against the Belt and Road Initiative, as the China-proposed vision has a positive role to play in tackling the dire economic challenges facing the continent, including simmering inflation, said Boris Tadic, former Serbian president.

Tadic, who served as Serbia's head of state from 2004 to 2012, said that the BRI helps to spur trade and economic cooperation, which plays a useful role in tackling inflation, something that remains very grave in Western economies.

A Reuters report on Wednesday noted that although inflation in the eurozone has halved from the 10.6 percent peak it reached in October, prices are still rising at more than twice the European Central Bank's 2 percent target.

"I'm sure that the BRI didn't trigger inflation in Europe. This is for sure," added Tadic.

Tadic warned that if economies in

the European Union continue to face problems such as inflation and the impact of the Ukraine crisis, then "small countries like Serbia and western Balkan countries are going to pay an extremely high price."

"This is something that is happening in history, which is very, very awful," he said. "This is why I think that we have to take into consideration seriously the benefits coming from the BRI in terms of decreasing inflation nowadays."

Currently, China and the EU are each other's second-largest trading partner, and their bilateral trade reached an all-time high of \$847.3 billion last year, registering a year-on-year increase of 2.4 percent, according to China's Ministry of Commerce.

The former Serbian head of state also highlighted the BRI's role in helping both China and Europe cope with turbulence in the global economy.

"We are living in a very difficult time in the history of mankind. A lot of challenges are stalking every country, and a lot of problems are coming in our lives," Tadic said. "And this is why I think that we have to work more on empathy and solidarity, and the sharing economy," he said.

Tadic said that over that past decade since the BRI was proposed by President Xi Jinping, it has

proved to be a "game changer in the global arena" that has strengthened the cause of multilateralism and improved the overall situation for participating countries. He added that the BRI "is a really significant contributor to connectivity and peaceful solutions."

He also said that the criticism of the BRI from some European politicians and scholars was based on a prejudiced and stereotyped viewpoint.

"I think that we have to escape from the prejudices, from the stereotypes," stressed Tadic, adding that those who harbor such views with regard to the BRI are demonstrating their failure to adapt to new circumstances.

"In the history of mankind, new initiatives create new circumstances. Not everyone is able to accommodate himself to the new circumstances."

"When we are going to have a game changer in some markets, then countries, especially Western countries, the most developed countries, have to accommodate to the new situation," he said.

Tadic also highlighted the connection between Europe and China, which he said "is going to be mutually beneficial for both sides."

Speaking on the BRI's essence, Tadic said it is in nature about "the very fast development of China, and the contribution of China and the Chinese economy to the global economy."

Trout: Steps taken to keep river healthy

From page 1

The water must be deep enough to accommodate environmentally friendly net cages, which have a diameter of 51 meters and a depth of 25 meters, ensuring optimal fish growth.

To maintain a clean and healthy river, the company uses automatic machines to clean fish droppings, leftover bait and silt from the riverbed.

Li said the company is developing more projects to raise trout in Xinjiang's high-quality water to meet the growing demand.

The trout business has brought benefits to local farmers in the region. "We provide jobs for more than 100 local farmers, with 39 percent belonging to ethnic minorities," Li said.

The average monthly salary for breeding and processing jobs reached 6,800 yuan (\$935) last year, a local media outlet reported.

Tianyun aims to build a world-class cold-water fish industry base in Xinjiang. It also hopes to develop high value-added products such as fish oil for healthcare.

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

Despite being one of the places with the lowest amount of sunshine in the country per year, Chongqing is exploring innovative ways of using solar power.

Now, large spaces on the roofs of local factories are providing green solutions for the sustainable development of the city, an industrial powerhouse in south-western China.

In April, Changan Auto, one of the country's leading carmakers, began operating the largest rooftop photovoltaic project in the city, with a total installed capacity of 37 megawatts.

The project, covering 300,000 square meters, makes use of spare roofs and carports to house PV modules in the factory area.

Over a 25-year operational period, the project's total power generation capacity is expected to reach 667 million kilowatt-hours, reducing the use of standard coal by 240,000 metric tons and lowering carbon dioxide emissions by 670,000 tons, according to the carmaker.

In recent decades, China has made concerted efforts to achieve the goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. In September 2020, the country pledged to realize the goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060.

Raft of measures

As such, the authorities have rolled out a raft of measures to significantly move China's installed capacity of wind and solar power toward a low-carbon, secure and efficient energy mix.

In a national action plan, the government pledged to accelerate construction of large wind power and photovoltaic bases in deserts. In the meantime, it will encourage distributed PV power generation in villages and industrial parks, and on the roofs of buildings.

By 2025, half of all new public buildings will have solar power facilities on their roofs, it said.

To promote the development of distributed PV power generation, central and local governments have issued a series of supporting policies and plans.

The 14th Five-Year Plan for Energy Development in Chongqing (2021-25) said the city government will promote the construction of rooftop PV systems across the entire municipality. It will also accelerate the promotion and utilization of distributed PV systems on rooftops in industrial parks, economic development zones and public buildings.

By 2025, the proportion of installed capacity of clean energy in Chongqing is set to reach 50 percent of the city's total.

"Many people think that Chongqing is not an ideal place to develop photovoltaic energy due to its foggy weather," said Shen Zhenghua, president of Chongqing Hiten Energy, a leading manufacturer of PV equipment. "However, I believe that Chongqing has a huge potential to make use of solar power."

Huge potential

Surrounded by the Yangtze and Jialing rivers, the mountainous city lies in a high humidity zone, with annual average relative humidity of 70 to 80 percent.



A crane is used to lift solar panels onto the roof of a building at the No 1 Middle School in Shuangfeng county, Hunan province, on Aug 18. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Green energy project helps boost nation's carbon pledge

A photovoltaic plant installed on a rooftop is helping to secure the success of China's climate change goals. **Tan Yingzi** reports from Chongqing.



Clockwise from top left: An aerial photo shows an "Energy Cube" that was built with solar panels on top to provide convenience for residents of Nanjing, Jiangsu province. JI CHUNPENG / XINHUA Workers install solar panels on the cube's roof. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Workers are seen setting up solar panels on the roof of a factory in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, on Dec 19. YANG SHIYAO / XINHUA Engineers check the status of solar panels installed on the roofs of houses in Litui village, Shandong province, on Nov 15. FAN CHANGGUO / XINHUA



It only sees sunshine once every three or four days all year around, making it one of the areas in China with the lowest amount of sunshine annually, especially in spring and winter.

Despite this, Shen said that the suitability of a PV power generation project in Chongqing cannot be determined solely by the two indicators of sunlight hours and light intensity. Instead, such a project must be considered in combination with the price of electricity generated via PV power, PV system costs and several other factors, he said.

Founded in 2005, Shen's company was one of the first in the country to develop PV systems in low-sunshine areas. So far, it has built 1,885 PV power stations.

As a key manufacturing base in China, Chongqing has a large amount of suitable space on factory rooftops, which can be used for installing PV systems, Shen said.

In January, Chongqing Longwen Industrial, a steel company that uses a large amount of energy, installed a PV system on its factory roof.

"Our rooftop-distributed PV power generation project has already generated more than 160,000 kWh of electricity in less than three months, and the benefits have completely exceeded expectations," said Chen Hao, the company's deputy property manager. "It is expected to save us 600,000 yuan (\$82,000) a year."

During public holidays, the power generated by the PV system can be sold to the local power grid to make extra money for the company, he added.

The environmental benefits are more significant. Over 25 years, Longwen's PV project could reduce the use of standard coal by about 5,270 tons, lower carbon dioxide emissions by about 16,000 tons and see dust emissions decline by about 4,370 tons. It could also lower the company's electricity consumption and carbon emissions for more than 35 years.

Shen said Chongqing's PV power generation projects have formed a virtuous cycle with the local environment.

"According to our solar power monitoring system, the number of effective sunshine hours annually has risen from about 600 to 730 in recent years," he said.

"That's because the use of clean energy has improved the air quality and made the skies much clearer."

Rising capacity

By the end of last year, the country's annual power generation from wind and solar energy accounted for 13.8 percent of total electricity consumption, data from the National Energy Administration show.

Meanwhile, China saw a steady rise in the newly installed capacity of clean energy in the first four months of the year, with wind and photovoltaic power reaching a combined 62.51 million kilowatts from January to April.

By the end of April, China's total installed capacity of wind power had reached 380 million kW, while the total installed capacity of photovoltaic power was 440 million kW. When combined, the two accounted for 30.9 percent of the country's installed power generation capacity.

Contact the writer at tanyingzi@chinadaily.com.cn

Tianjin facility powers new approach to electricity generation

By **QUANZHANFU**

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In addition to the rooftop photovoltaic network in Chongqing, another Chinese PV project is attracting great attention.

A vast array of solar panels shining in the fields of the Changlu Salt Farm in Tianjin feeds the Huadian Tianjin Haijing 1 million-kilowatt power plant. As the world's largest combined solar power station and salt farm project, the facility was connected to the national power grid and officially put into operation on July 8, according to reports on China Central Television.

It combines salt production with photovoltaic power generation as PV panels have been installed at a specific height above the salt field.

The project aims to improve North China's power supply capability, while exploring a comprehensive industrial model that combines photovoltaic power generation and salt production with aquaculture.

Located at the farm in Binhai New Area in Tianjin, the plant covers 1,333.3 hectares, equivalent to 1,868 standard soccer fields. It can generate 1.5 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year, which is enough to meet the annual electricity consumption of 650,000 households.

Moreover, it is estimated that the project will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 1.25 million metric tons a year, according to Tianjin Daily. Unlike traditional photovoltaic

power plants, the space between the rows of solar panels can be as much as 14 meters, and instead of the usual angle of 30 to 40 degrees, the panels are tilted at a fixed angle of 17 degrees.

That angle maximizes the amount of sunlight reaching the surface of the water by minimizing shadows throughout the year in accordance with the trajectory of the sun's movement.

It also lessens the sun's influence on the salt farm and aquaculture, such as the shrimps being raised in the water of the salt fields below the panels.

Both sides of the PV panels can generate electricity. In addition to absorbing sunlight directly on the tops, the backs of the panels can capture sunlight reflected off the

water, resulting in a 5 to 7 percent rise in power generation efficiency.

Statistics provided by the National Energy Administration show that by the end of May, China's installed capacity of photovoltaic power generation had reached 450 million kilowatts, maintaining the country's eight-year-long ranking as the global number one in that field.

With the continuous improvement of PV technology and the tightening of land policy regulations, as at the Tianjin project, such "photovoltaic plus" programs have gained in popularity in recent years.

Driven by China's dual carbon goals — the pledge to peak the country's carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060 —

the country's installed capacity of wind and solar power has risen rapidly in recent years, reported Changjiang Daily in Wuhan, Hubei province, on July 6.

Zhang Jingjie, deputy director of the Department of Planning and Development at the China Electricity Council, told the newspaper that by the end of March, the nation's total grid-connected installed capacity of wind, solar and hydroelectric power had reached 376 million kW, 430 million kW and 420 million kW, respectively.

Moreover, the total installed capacity of nonfossil energy power generation had reached 1.33 billion kW, accounting for 50.5 percent of the country's total installed capacity and surpassing 50 per-

cent for the first time. The milestone indicates that the role of coal-fired power generation in China's energy supply is diminishing, while green energy, represented by wind and solar power, is playing a bigger part in the energy supply nationwide.

China not only leads the world in installed capacity of hydro, wind, solar and biomass power, but has been the global leader in the generation of new energy for several years, Changjiang Daily reported.

The country has already developed a relatively comprehensive power technology industry system.

With photovoltaic power technology rapidly developing and continuously setting records in conversion efficiency, the independently developed silicon heterojunction solar cell has reached a power-conversion efficiency rate of approximately 27 percent.

WORLD

Media marvel



Members of the press photograph ancient swords displayed at an event in Jerusalem on Wednesday. The swords, believed by the Israel Antiquities Authority to be from the Roman era dating back 1,900 years, were found in a cave in an Israeli desert. ROMEN ZVULUN / REUTERS

Briefly

UNITED NATIONS General Assembly's 78th session opens

The 78th session of the UN General Assembly was declared open on Tuesday by new General Assembly President Dennis Francis. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his opening remarks read on his behalf by his deputy, Amina Mohammed, warned of a world of deep challenge and division that is testing the United Nations. The 77th UNGA officially concluded after Francis, permanent representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, took the gavel from Csaba Korosi, a senior diplomat from Hungary. After the conclusion of the closing plenary meeting of the 77th session, a ceremony of "Changing of Flags" took place.

FRANCE Schools refuse girls wearing religious robe

French schools sent dozens of girls home for refusing to remove their abayas on the first day of the school year, a minister said on Tuesday. Defying a ban on the Muslim robe, nearly 300 girls showed up on Monday morning wearing abayas, Education Minister Gabriel Attal told the BFM broadcaster. Most agreed to change out of the robe, but 67 refused and were sent home, he said. The government announced last month it was banning the abaya in schools. President Emmanuel Macron said late on Monday that there was a "minority" in France who "hijack a religion and challenge the republic and secularism", leading to the "worst consequences".

ITALY Venice to begin trial on ticketing system

Venice will start a trial on a long-debated ticketing system for tourists next year, officials said on Tuesday, with day-trippers charged 5 euros (\$5.30) to enter the city's historic center in an attempt to cut tourist numbers. The council executive backed the move just weeks after UN cultural agency UNESCO recommended Venice be added to its list of world heritage sites in danger, in part because of the impact of mass tourism. The plan, which has long been mooted, must still be approved by the wider city council, which meets on Tuesday. Many details are still unclear, notably on how many tickets will be available.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

UK's 2nd largest city declares bankruptcy

Fears grow over fate of more councils after Birmingham files for insolvency

By EARLE GALE in London
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Local governments in the United Kingdom went into panic mode on Wednesday after Birmingham City Council effectively declared itself bankrupt. Authorities warned that more councils across the UK could declare themselves in financial dire straits.

Birmingham City Council, one of Europe's largest, declared itself effectively bankrupt on Tuesday. The council, which looks after services in the city, made the move after saying it could no longer fund its 3.2 billion pound (\$4 billion) annual budget.

With a population of about 1.15 million people, Birmingham is the second-largest city in the UK.

Complaining about an annual shortfall of 87 million pounds, the government that provides services in the central English city issued a Section 114 Notice under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, which effectively meant it admitted it was insolvent.

Organizations representing local governments throughout the UK said other municipalities will have noted what had happened in Birmingham and may do likewise, thanks to a perfect storm of fast-rising expenses and an inability to generate enough income to offset them.

Jonathan Carr-West, chief executive of the Local Government Information Unit, said Birmingham City Council's bankruptcy was "a sobering moment" triggered by high inflation and fast-rising fuel costs, as well as falling investment from the central government, and will likely be mirrored elsewhere.

"Central government has kept councils living from hand to mouth and from year to year for far too long," he was quoted by Agence France-Presse as saying. "Birmingham is the biggest council to fail so far, but unless something changes, it won't be the last."

The Institute for Government think tank said the risk of other local governments declaring bankruptcy has been exacerbated by business failures and a corresponding fall in the income councils get from business taxes. The organization said local authorities in the UK saw their incomes fall by 17.5 percent between 2009 and 2020.

Similar announcements

Birmingham City Council's declaration of bankruptcy followed similar announcements by smaller local governments, including the southern London borough of Croydon, which declared itself bankrupt in November after complaining of a 130-million-pound hole in its budget. Thurrock Council in Essex did likewise in December. And Woking Borough Council declared itself bankrupt in June.

The flurry of failures has prompted SIGOMA, a group of 47 urban councils within the Local Government Association, to warn that around 1 in 10 local governments in the UK could declare bankruptcy in the coming months, threatening services such as cultural programs, education, libraries, local authority housing, trash collection, social care and transport.

"The government needs to recognize the significant inflationary pressures that local authorities

have had to deal with in the last 12 months," Stephen Houghton, chairman of SIGOMA, told The Associated Press. "The funding system is completely broken. Councils have worked miracles for the past 13 years, but there is nothing left."

Sky News quoted Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's official spokesman as saying that additional central government money, beyond what has already been announced, will not be forthcoming.

"The government, for its part, has stepped in to provide support, an additional 5.1 billion pounds, to councils in 2023-24, which is more than a 9 percent increase for Birmingham City Council," he said.

But he said local governments simply have to "manage their own budgets" so that they make ends meet.

"I know (the central government) has been engaging regularly with them to that end and has expressed concern about their governance arrangements and has requested assurances from the leader of the council about the best use of taxpayers' money," the spokesman added.

The BBC reported on Wednesday that urgent talks had begun, with Birmingham City Council, the central government and union leaders seeking the best way forward. The broadcaster said the talks would focus on a court-ordered 760 million pound bill the local government was handed for equal pay claims and the over-budget rollout of a new computer system that could end up costing the city 100 million pounds.

Birmingham City Council is also seeking to cut its spending and has contacted 10,000 employees to see if any would be willing to voluntarily leave their jobs.

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Developer of innovative water solutions is a huge fan of CIIE



By YUAN SHENGAO

Xylem is a notable player in developing innovative water solutions through smart technology. From a first-time participant at the second edition of the China International Import Expo to a returning visitor of subsequent CIEs, Xylem deserves the title of "enthusiastic fan of the CIE". As a globally notable water technology company and as a witness and beneficiary of China's reform and opening-up, Xylem has participated in the construction and transformation of infrastructure and iconic buildings in many large and medium-sized cities.

Debuting new products

This transnational company has made efforts to ensure the completion of a number of major projects, including the rapids for the Roaring Rapids ride at the Shanghai Disneyland Resort; the drainage system for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge; the water supply for the tallest building in China, the high-rise Shanghai Tower; the drainage system for Beijing Daxing International Airport; and the water quality and flow monitoring system for the South-to-North Water Diversion Project.

Xylem entered China in 1994, and set up its national headquarters in Shanghai in 2007. In 2019, after learning about the CIE through the media, Xylem expressed its will-



Clockwise from top: The National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai) serves as the venue of the CIE. FANG ZHE / XINHUA
Xylem's exhibits at the fifth CIIE in November 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Xylem's booth at the fifth CIIE showcases an array of signature water solution products. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



establish a joint laboratory aimed at easing cities' drainage pain points. In 2022, they officially released the first new product, AquaTalk, after the development by the two parties. It can effectively respond to three major problems: unfulfilled monitoring of city drainage systems, cities' waterlogging and sewage overflow.

In July 2022, Xylem rented a 2,000-square-meter office space in Shanghai's Changning district, aiming to build it into an innovation center as part of efforts to strengthen its local technological capabilities.

"We can feel that China's needs for smart water management systems are obvious, especially with the use of big data and artificial intelligence. Digital technology has promising application scenarios. It is of vital importance to build a research center that is localized and closely related to specific needs," said Lyu Shuping, president of Xylem China and Asia region.

On March 6, Xylem's China Innovation Space was put into operation. It is the company's largest research center in the Asian region. At present, there are 75 engineers working there.

This research center will focus on the development of intelligent water management and comprehensive water management solution plans. This will provide real communication and cooperation opportunities for the transnational company and Chinese partners, and contribute to building an innovative water management industry in China.

Xylem has benefited a great deal from China's reform and opening-up policy and the enhanced business environment.

Lyu said: "Since China has become the second-largest market for Xylem, China's market has become vitally important to Xylem's global business layout. The sixth CIE is coming soon. With this national-level platform empowering the company's brand and market expansion, we are fully confident in deeper cultivation in China's market."

ADVERTORIAL

WORLD

In Toronto, Dragon Festival provides cultural treats for all

By **RENA LI** in Toronto
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Featuring a dynamic story of the legendary dragon's descendants, the 2023 Dragon Festival returned to Toronto with culture, food and new lion dance competitions.

The three-day festival from Sept 1 to Sept 3 in Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square featured a range of activities. Those included dragon and lion dances, acrobatic performers, Chinese folk music, waist-drum dances, modern youth dance, a fashion show, tai chi and martial arts on water, ethnic music and entertainment by local Canadian and Chinese artists.

Recognized internationally as a sport, lion dance was featured in a competition, bringing the rhythmic beat of drums along with spectacular stunts and synchronized agility, said Shan Attaoui, the festival's communications director.

"This is our way to show Toronto and the world about the essence of Chinese culture for more than 5,000 years," Attaoui said.

Hosted by the Canadian Association of Chinese Performing Arts (CACPA), the annual festival began in 2018 but paused for two years due to the pandemic.

Since its return to Toronto in 2022, when it attracted as many as 85,000 visitors, the festival has swiftly become a staple in the Greater Toronto area.

Zhang Jian, chairman of the CACPA, told China Daily that the festival is an important celebration for the inheritance of Chinese culture overseas.

"We hope the festival is expected to further demonstrate the pivotal position of Chinese culture in Canada's multiculturalism," Zhang said.

As an important cultural symbol of traditional Chinese culture, the dragon symbolizes happiness and auspiciousness and reflects the creative talents, wisdom and perseverance of Chinese descendants.

The festival also provided calligraphy and painting stations that taught people how to write traditional Chinese characters and try ink and wash painting.

Visitors from all walks of life tasted the delicious Chinese and Asian street food while watching an improvised reflection water show presented by Chinese Canadian communities.

Hanfu, the traditional Han Chinese clothing, attracted visitors who got to try on the garments and join a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony.

The martial arts demonstrations won continuous applause.

"The performing and shows provided by the Chinese communities are amazing; I am impressed with the splendid 5,000 years history of China," James Taylor told China Daily.

"From diverse cultural presentations to delicious food, my families and I can find all our favorites here," said Annie Kelly, accompanied by two children and her husband. She said the event has become a yearly tradition for her family before the end of summer.

When Sun Wukong (Monkey King), Zhu Bajie (Eight-Precept Pig) and Sha Wujing (Friar Sand), the main characters of *Journey to the West*, performed on the square, an Indian Canadian man who dressed as Sha Wujing told the media that he had done a lot of research on Chinese mythology.

"This vivid and interesting picture highlights the cross-cultural value of the festival beyond national borders, encourages people to deeply explore the connections between different countries and cultures, and promotes mutual friendship and mutual understanding," said Zhang.

The executive director, David Zhang, told China Daily that the festival provides Torontonians of all backgrounds a wonderful opportunity to learn about Chinese Canadians' beautiful, millenary cultural traditions.

"While Chinese culture is the focus, the festival will also feature performances from Inuit throat singers, Caribbean drummers and Filipino folk dancers," he said. "We wanted to include representation from other cultures this year because Canada is a base of multiculturalism."

About 100,000 visitors attended the festival over the long weekend, according to the City of Toronto.



Lion and dragon dances performed at the Toronto Dragon Festival.
RENA LI / CHINA DAILY

Cluster bombs cause steep rise in casualties

By **EARLE GALE** in London
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The Russia-Ukraine conflict contributed to a rise last year in the number of casualties around the world attributed to cluster bombs, according to a report from the Cluster Munition Coalition.

The group of NGOs said in its Cluster Munition Monitor 2023 report released on Tuesday that at least 1,172 casualties in eight countries were caused by the controversial bombs.

The casualties, people who were either killed or maimed, include 890 in Ukraine, 84 in Syria and 13 in Myanmar. There were also casualties in Azerbaijan, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon and Yemen.

About 95 percent of the victims were civilians, the report added, and many were children who had handled old, unexploded bombs left over from past conflicts.

The international watchdog said the number of casualties caused by the ordnance was the largest since it began its annual report in 2010.

Cluster bombs, which fall in large numbers close together, creating a

carpet of apparently indiscriminate destruction, have been controversial for decades.

In 2008, 107 countries and territories signed the United Nations' Convention on Cluster Munitions, through which they agreed to no longer stockpile, distribute or use the weapons. The number of signatories has since grown to 124.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine is a party to the ban, nor is the United States, which began supplying cluster munitions to Ukraine this year.

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Kyiv in a rare gesture of support as Ukraine's so-called counteroffensive against Russian forces grinds into its fourth month with only small gains.

During his two-day visit, Blinken is likely to announce a new package of US assistance worth more than \$1 billion, a senior State Department official told reporters on the trip.

Oponents of cluster bombs believe the US decision to supply the weapons to Ukraine could dilute rules aimed at limiting their proliferation. The Associated Press reported.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Crash probe



An investigation team is at the scene of a fatal crash involving a Los Angeles County fire truck and a sedan at the intersection of South Avalon Boulevard and East Compton Boulevard in West Ranch Dominguez, California, on Tuesday. Two people were killed in the accident. IRFAN KHAN VIA GETTY IMAGES

Iran and Saudi Arabia exchange ambassadors

Milestone will enable direct interaction between major Mideast nations: Experts

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong
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With the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia and Iran starting their highly anticipated mission in their respective capitals on Tuesday, this milestone in their bilateral ties will enable deeper engagements that will be conducive to regional peace and development, analysts say.

Abdullah bin Saud Al-Anzi, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Iran, arrived in Teheran on Tuesday, the same day Iranian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Alireza Enayati, arrived in Riyadh.

Upon arrival, Al-Anzi emphasized the need to enhance relations and intensify communication and meetings between the kingdom and Iran, and to expand bilateral relations toward broader horizons, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

"Both the kingdom and Iran are neighboring countries with abundant economic resources, natural resources and advantages that contribute to enhancing development, prosperity, stability, and security in the region," the ambassador was quoted by the SPA as saying.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 was also on top of the Saudi envoy's agenda, which he said represents "a road map that encompasses all aspects upon which both countries can build their cooperation".

Jasim Husain, a Gulf analyst and former member of Bahrain's parliament, told China Daily that the exchange of the ambassadors is "a translation of the China-brokered deal between the two countries".

He said it was "a very positive development between two important countries in the region", making the region "a better place for living and doing business" with tensions going down between the two neighbors.

In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran restored relations through Chinese diplomacy after a seven-year break.

The two countries agreed to reopen their embassies and missions within two months, and announced in April the resumption of diplomatic relations with immediate effect.

"Certainly, there will be issues of exchange between the two countries," Husain said. "The presence of ambassadors allows the two countries to engage directly face-to-face without going through intermediaries. I'm certain there will be issues and developments requiring coordination and exchange of views between Saudi Arabia and Iran."

Engagement required

He cited matters regarding socioeconomic and sociopolitical developments, such as the prices of oil and the markets, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Israel. So, he said, there are "always issues that will require the two countries to engage".

Dina Yulianti Sulaeman, director of the Indonesia Center for Middle East Studies, said the latest development was "good news".

"The commencement of the diplomatic mission of the two countries also needs to be seen as part of the world's geopolitical shift, in which the United States is increasingly

being left behind," Sulaeman said.

In addition, Iran and Saudi Arabia have been invited to join BRICS, strengthening an alternative line in the face of collective Western domination.

Jawaid Iqbal, chairman of the Department of West Asian and North African Studies at Aligarh Muslim University in India, told China Daily that the envoys' assumption into their respective offices "marks a significant shift in the geopolitical landscape of the Arab world", recalling a "turbulent history of Iran-Saudi relations" that he traced back to 1988.

It was when Saudi Arabia supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, resulting in the severing of diplomatic ties. This conflict, Iqbal said, was a devastating one "that drained the resources of the Middle East", primarily serving the interests of the imperialist military-industrial complex.

"While the US has often operated by creating chaos, the new post-unipolar order is actively seeking nonmilitarist solutions. This shift is exemplified by the Saudi-Iranian de-escalation efforts in Yemen and the reestablishment of ties with Syria," Iqbal said.

On Monday, the Asian Football Club announced all matches between the national teams and clubs of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation and the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran will take place on a home-and-away basis.

"The AFC welcomes the historic move," a statement read. "Passionate fans across Saudi Arabia, IR Iran and the whole of Asia can now look forward to a thrilling new chapter in club and national team football as teams from SAFF and FFIRI compete in the spirit of competition and camaraderie."

3M settles earplugs suit, will pay \$6b

By **MAY ZHOU** in Houston
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3M has announced that it will pay \$6 billion to settle almost 260,000 lawsuits against its Combat Arms earplugs between 2023 and 2029.

The agreement will include \$5 billion in cash and \$1 billion in common stock of the Minnesota-based conglomerate.

The earplugs were made by Aearo Technologies, a company that 3M acquired in 2008. The US military used the earplugs in training and in combat from 2003 to 2015, including in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Plaintiffs for military members in the lawsuits claimed the company hid design flaws, tweaked test results and failed to provide instructions for proper use of the earplugs, leading to hearing damage.

In a statement, 3M said the settlement is intended to resolve all claims associated with the Combat Arms earplug products as well as potential future claims.

The company also faces thousands of other lawsuits related to the forever chemicals PFAS.

Earlier this year, 3M agreed to a \$12.5 billion settlement with multiple public water systems in the United States to resolve water pollution claims that the forever chemicals contaminated soil, groundwater and other public water systems.

In early June, DuPont, Chemours and Corteva agreed to pay \$1.185 billion for PFAS-related drinking water claims with 300 local water systems that had sued the three companies for the costs of cleaning and filtering their wells and aquifers.

Tainted tap water

A recent study by the US Geological Survey showed at least 45 percent of the country's tap water is estimated to have one or more types of forever chemicals.

PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are widely used in everyday products. They can build up in the human body and pass from mothers to newborns because of their slow breakdown.

The US Environmental Protection Agency listed health risks posed by PFAS, including negatively affecting reproductivity, children's development, immune systems and the body's natural hormones, and an increased risk of prostate, kidney and testicular cancers.

3M's proposed deal would provide funds over 13 years to cities, towns and other public water systems to test and treat contamination of PFAS.

However, the agreement does not stop people from filing individual cases against 3M for personal injury claims.

The legal woes have dropped 3M's stock price by 50 percent in the past five years, while the stock market went up by 50 percent. The Wall Street Journal reported.

Japan's dumping triggers fall in S. Korean seafood sales

YEOSU, South Korea — Fishers in South Korea have suffered a sharp fall in the sale of aquatic products after Japan's dumping of nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean.

"Fishermen are now really on the brink of death," Kim Young-chul, a fisherman and executive director of the National Fisheries Federation in South Korea, told Xinhua New Agency on Tuesday.

"They are on the brink of bankruptcy. There are many fishermen in such situations."

Kim said the consumption of fishery products fell sharply before and after Japan's dumping of toxic water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific Ocean, which started on Aug 24.

"Fishermen suffered much even before the dumping. Consumption (of aquatic products)



A wholesale market for seafood in Daejeon, South Korea, looks deserted with no customers in sight on Aug 30. PHOTO BY YONHAP

shrank sharply as people say they will not eat (aquatic products) as much as they can after the dump-

ing of radioactive water," he said. According to the Gallup Korea poll of 1,602 adults in July, 82.4

percent of respondents said the consumption of fishery products would reduce after the discharge of contaminated water.

The panic-buying of dried fish emerged in the market as they can be stored for years, while prices of raw fish were cut by half because of weaker demand, Kim said.

"Wholesalers (of aquatic products) tell (fishermen) to stop fishing as they cannot sell, and even if (fishermen) go out for fishing, they should reduce their catch," he added.

Struck by a massive earthquake and a subsequent tsunami in March 2011, the Fukushima nuclear plant suffered core meltdowns and generated a massive amount of water tainted with radioactive substances from cooling down the nuclear fuel.

XINHUA

WORLD US

Summer of '23 hottest on record, data show

By MINGMEI LI in New York
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The Earth has experienced its most scorching summer in the Northern Hemisphere, especially parts of the US, Europe and Japan, with record-breaking high temperatures, resulting in high sea surface temperatures and low Antarctic sea ice extent, data have shown.

Temperatures have consistently risen this summer. From June to August, the planet had its hottest three consecutive months since records began in the 1940s, according to the European Union-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S). The latest month ranked the hottest August by a large margin, but also the second-hottest month, right after July 2023.

The entire month of August is estimated to have been around 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) warmer than the preindustrial average from 1850-1900. The year 2023 so far is the second warmest on record behind 2016, when there was a powerful warming El Niño event, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), an agency of the United Nations.

A report in May from the WMO and the UK's Met Office predicted that there is a 98 percent likelihood that at least one of the next five years will be the warmest on record and a 66 percent chance of temporarily exceeding 1.5 C above the 1850-1900 average for at least one of the five years.

"What we are observing, not only new extremes but the persistence of these record-breaking conditions, and the impacts these have on both people and planet, are a clear consequence of the warming of the climate system," C3S Director Carlo Buontempo said.

The rise of temperatures has now



Women walk toward a fountain in the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in Washington on Wednesday. KEVIN LAMARQUE / AP

exceeded the threshold set by the Paris Agreement, an international treaty on climate change and reducing carbon emissions, to which 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference accepted.

"The dog days of summer are not just barking, they are biting," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement. "Climate breakdown has begun." He urged that states' leaders should take action on climate change issues and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which accumulate in the atmosphere and hold in heat.

Also, countries in the Southern Hemisphere are experiencing gradually warmer winters.

"It's time for global leaders to start telling the truth," Andrew Weaver, a professor at the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Victoria in Canada told The Associated Press. "We will not limit warming to 1.5 C; we will not limit warming to 2.0 C. It's all hands on deck now to prevent 3.0 C global warming — a level of warming that will wreak havoc worldwide."

Greenhouse gas concentrations, global sea levels and ocean heat content reached record highs in 2022, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. But it seems that the data in 2023 are getting worse.

The world's oceans — more than 70

percent of the Earth's surface — were the hottest ever recorded, nearly 21 C (69.8 F), and have set high-temperature marks for three consecutive months, the WMO and Copernicus said.

The sea-surface temperatures in Florida hit over 37 C (100 F), which would threaten ecosystems and marine life. Higher temperatures have the potential to strengthen hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean.

Also, Antarctic sea ice extent has continued to hover at a historically low level for this time of the year, with a monthly measurement that stands 12 percent below the typical average, by far the largest negative anomaly for August since satellite observations began in the late 1970s, according to the report. Arctic sea ice extent was 10 percent below average, but well above the record minimum of August 2012, according to the report.

"Antarctic sea ice extent was literally off the charts, and the global sea surface temperature was once again at a new record," WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

The El Niño effect, a natural climate fluctuation that brings warmer than average sea-surface temperatures and influences weather, continued to develop.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Some US exclusions on China tariffs extended

But Chinese embassy says many remaining duties should be lifted 'as soon as possible'

By ZHAO HUANXIN in Washington
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As the United States on Wednesday further extended tariff exclusions on some Chinese imports until the end of 2023, China's embassy spokesperson and analysts said that all the remaining additional duties should be removed altogether.

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced the further extension of China "Section 301" tariff exclusions on 352 Chinese import and 77 COVID-19-related categories that were set to expire on Sept 30.

The extension until Dec 31 will "allow for further consideration under the statutory four-year review", the office said in a statement.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in the US, said China always believes that the unilateral tariff increases by the US are not good for China, the United States and the world.

"As currently inflation continues to rise, and the global economic recovery is facing challenges, we hope that the US will, in the fundamental interests of consumers and producers in both countries, remove all the tariffs on China as soon as possible, and push the bilateral trade relations back to the normal track at an early date," Liu told China Daily.

This would be the third time that the 352 exclusions have been extended out of 549 exclusions that expired at the end of 2020, meaning the practice of granting tariff exclusions to select industries has been in effect through the administrations of former president Donald Trump and

President Joe Biden.

John G. Murphy, senior vice-president for international policy at the US Chamber of Commerce, noted that the USTR in 2018-19 imposed Section 301 tariffs on about 10,000 categories of goods from China.

"Today it is extending those exclusions through the end of the year, but the great bulk of the tariffs remain," Murphy said in a message posted on X, the social media site formerly known as Twitter.

Inu Manak, a fellow for trade policy at the Council on Foreign Relations, said the announcement was good news, but Washington needs to take further steps.

"The next step is to permanently remove 301 tariffs at the end of the review period and put an end to this failed trade war," Manak wrote on social media on Wednesday.

The Trump administration, invoking the Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, first launched the China tariffs in 2018.

The US is currently imposing a 25 percent tariff on approximately \$250 billion of imports from China and a 7.5 percent tariff on approximately \$112 billion worth.

The Section 301 tariffs remain in place under the Biden administration.

On Tuesday, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, a member of Biden's Cabinet, said she does not expect any revisions to the China tariffs until an ongoing review is completed by the USTR office.

"I don't think the (Biden) administration will make any changes until that review is completed," Raimondo told CNBC.

"We didn't put those tariffs in place. We don't think they make a

whole lot of sense in many cases," she said. "I think the Trump tariffs could have been much more strategic, and that's why we are doing this four-year review."

In October last year, the USTR announced that it would seek public comments on the effectiveness of the tariff actions, other actions that could be taken, and the effects of such actions on the US economy, including consumers.

It received 1,497 submissions from "all interested parties" when the comment period ended in January.

In research published on April 18, Manak and two other researchers found that 286 of those submissions were essentially duplicates, and an analysis into the remaining 1,181 comments found that 917, or more than two-thirds of the submissions favored removal of the tariffs.

In their article titled "The Cost of Trump's Trade War with China Is Still Adding Up", they urged the USTR to listen to the "overwhelming majority" of comments calling for an end to what many described as a failed trade war.

They noted that several studies have examined the cost of the Section 301 tariffs on the US economy.

For example, research by the American Action Forum published in January found that US consumers largely bore the brunt of the tariffs, paying a total of \$48 billion — with half of the figure paid by US firms that rely on intermediate inputs from China.

Removing the tariffs would increase the competitiveness of US companies by lowering their costs, and in turn spur additional economic output and growth by the US goods-producing sector, according to trade analysts Tom Lee and Tori Smith, who authored the research.



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HIGHER GROUND

China battery firms lead mkt

Domestic player CATL continues to be king of the hill, followed by BYD

By CHENG YU

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Chinese companies continued to dominate the global power battery market in the first seven months, responsible for over three-fifths of battery installations worldwide, said a report by South Korean market consultancy SNE Research on Wednesday.

According to the latest report, six Chinese battery companies were among the Top 10 such firms globally in terms of battery installations, with a total market share of 62.9 percent, from January to July. South Korea followed with three firms and Japan with one.

Specifically, Chinese battery giant Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd maintained its leading position with total installed capacity of 132.9 gigawatt hours, up 54.3 percent year-on-year. Its global market share stood at an impressive 36.6 percent.

Chinese EV maker BYD ranked second worldwide at 58.1 GWh, up a whopping 94.1 percent year-on-year. South Korea's LG Energy Solution followed with 51.4 GWh. China's CALB, EVE, Gotion High-Tech and Sunwoda were also among the Top 10.

SNE Research said BYD has shown a noteworthy performance in the first seven months and has achieved broad popularity based on its price competitiveness in aspects such as in-house battery supply chains and vehicle manufacturing.



Battery products on display at Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd in Ningde, Fujian province. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said: "The notable performance of Chinese battery companies can be attributed to rising demand for major overseas consumer countries for renewable energy and new energy vehicles. Also, local companies have made great technological advancements in lithium battery manufacturing."

Similar views were shared by Pan Helin, co-director of the Digital Economy and Financial Innovation Research Center at Zhejiang University's International Business School.

Chinese battery firms have exhibited increasing strength in overseas markets, he said.

Currently, more than 10 Chinese power battery companies have announced plans for overseas investments.

"For local battery firms and related companies in the industry chain, the global battery market still has the potential to grow manifold in terms of scale," Pan said.

Over the past few years, CATL, for instance, has tried to penetrate overseas markets, and has been enjoying rapid growth in Europe and North America.

At the IAA Munich Car Show on

Monday, CATL's principal engineer Gao Pengfei said the company plans to manufacture its ultra high-speed charging Shenxing battery not only in China, but also at its facilities in Germany and Hungary.

Shenxing, made with lithium iron phosphate (LFP), is able to deliver a driving range of 400 kilometers with a 10-minute charging time. It was unveiled in August with the company saying it is the world's first super-fast charging LFP battery.

LFP chemistry offers cost advantages compared to nickel-cobalt-manganese batteries used in cylindrical cells by automakers such as BMW and Tesla, Gao said.

Competition from Chinese carmakers 'good' for German auto

By CHEN WEIHUA

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German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has dismissed concerns that growing Chinese competition is a threat to the local automotive industry, while welcoming Chinese carmakers to Europe's largest auto show, IAA Mobility 2023, in Munich.

The six-day event officially opened on Tuesday.

Scholz said increased competition from China was good for the German auto industry.

"Fair competition stimulates business. It is in the interest of consumers," he said, as Chinese electric vehicle companies showcased several new fully electric models, outshining some German automotive giants. "Competition should spur us on, not scare us."

"The countries that have achieved great prosperity in the course of globalization, the workers there, have no less right and no less claim to the opportunities of modernity than we do," Scholz said in China.

"In the 1980s, it was said (that) Japanese cars would overrun the market. Twenty years later, it was cars made in South Korea and now supposedly Chinese electric cars," Scholz, who wore a black eye patch due to an injury from a jogging accident on Saturday, said.

The German chancellor also expressed confidence in his country's strengths.

"There is no question about the international competitiveness of Germany as a car country," he said, adding that "Germany is still the linchpin of the auto industry and will remain so."

Jun Jin, an auto industry expert at PwC, said the international market provides great opportunities for Chinese EV makers, given their strength in technology and costs.

"But this does not simply mean replicating their China success story; they need to succeed by adopting local practices," Jun told China Daily.

Chinese companies, he said, still count on exports and have a long way to go before manufacturing vehicles overseas, arranging global supply chains and improving services for local customers.

Scholz, who toured several German booths on Tuesday, also stopped by Chinese car battery giant CATL, which had built its first plant outside China in Erfurt, Germany.

CATL said two days ago that it planned to make its latest fast-charging Shenxing lithium iron phosphate battery at the Erfurt factory.

On Tuesday, Scholz also announced Germany's ambition to advance the EV roadmap in Germany.

He said Germany will stick to its target of putting 15 million electric cars on the roads by 2030 and appealed to automakers to provide more affordable EVs, in a reference to Chinese competitors that have an edge on pricing compared to several German companies.

Germany had 1.2 million fully electric vehicles on the streets by the end of April, according to its federal motor authority KBA.

Scholz has promised to make charging "as easy or even easier" than refueling petrol cars.

He said the coming weeks will see Germany become "the first country in Europe to introduce a law requiring operators of 80 percent of all service stations to provide fast-charging options with at least 150 kilowatts for electric cars."

"This will soon make range anxiety a thing of the past," he said.

Germany is targeting to put in place 1 million public charging points by 2030, from 90,000 at present.

Some 750 exhibitors from 38 countries are participating in IAA Mobility 2023, which includes 300 world premieres and innovations and 500 speakers at the IAA Conference. More than 3,500 journalists from 81 countries have been accredited for the show.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Experts: Nation, rest of world can boost global tourism

By ZHENG YIRAN

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Travel demand is seeing a robust recovery globally, and China and the rest of the world should collaborate more to further develop the global tourism market, officials and experts said during a conference at the five-day 2023 China International Fair for Trade in Services, which concluded in Beijing on Wednesday.

Yin Yong, Beijing's mayor, said: "In the first half of this year, the city welcomed 150 million person-times of travelers, and tourism sales revenue surpassed 270 billion yuan (\$37 billion), both double the respective levels seen in 2021 and basically back to the level before the (COVID-19) pandemic."

During CIFTIS, participating countries and regions showcased their tourism potential. For instance, the Irish Pavilion put on display a wide range of commercial, educational, and tourism exhibits,

including whiskey and dairy products. In addition, a band performance spiced up the proceedings.

"We are promoting Ireland as a tourist destination. Not only because it boasts beautiful beaches and incredible cliffs, but also because it's a good base for travel to the rest of Europe," said Derek Lambe, economic counselor of the Embassy of Ireland in China.

Data from the Central Statistics Office of Ireland showed that in April, the number of visitors to Ireland surged nearly 21 percent year-on-year, and those arriving in Ireland via overseas routes surpassed 1.7 million, up more than 4 percent from the level seen before the pandemic.

"This summer vacation, we saw an increasing number of Chinese visitors traveling to Ireland. Our feedback from Chinese tourists is overwhelmingly positive. Besides, we see huge potential for further growth," Lambe said.

At Malaysia's Sarawak Pavilion, Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, Sarawak's minister for tourism, cre-

ative industry and performing arts, introduced local specialties to visitors, including pastries, black pepper, tuak (a Sarawak wine), bird's nest and Laksa or a noodle dish with broth made of herbs, spices, and coconut milk.

"Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, is a UNESCO city of gastronomy. Unspoiled jungles, clean river and Mulu, which is a national park and a UNESCO world heritage site ... we have so many (attractions) to offer."

Between January and July, 178,000 tourists from China visited Malaysia. Among them, 22,149 visited Sarawak in east Malaysia, which shares borders with Indonesia and Brunei. By the end of the year, the number is expected to swell to 40,000.

He said that boosted by the Belt and Road Initiative, the Sarawak region of Malaysia is ramping up efforts to enhance its connectivity with China.

"This year marks the 10th anniversary of the BRI. Under the initiative, there are lots of collaborations that we can do," the minister said.

Croatia's former president Kolinda

Grabar-Kitarovic said the world should work together and tread a win-win path to promote global tourism.

Jose Luis Sanz, mayor of Seville, a southern city in Spain, suggested that countries should explore new consumption groups and offer diversified services to realize the sustainable development of the tourism market.

The 2023 World Conference on Tourism Cooperation and Development noted that in recent years, novel business modes of tourism consumption are stimulating new vitality, and the global tourism market is entering a fresh phase of development.

According to a report released during the CIFTIS conference, thanks to the gradual relaxation of COVID-related travel restrictions by countries around the globe, global demand for travel has rebounded strongly. In 2022, global tourism sales revenue reached \$4.6 trillion, or nearly 80 percent of the level seen in 2019, with 9.57 billion travel person-times, or 66 percent of the 2019 level.

Ikea to increase stores, improve assets in country

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

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Global home furnishing giant Ikea will invest 6.3 billion yuan (\$862 million) in China over the next three years to add physical stores and improve its existing logistics, digitalization and sustainability processes, in order to attract more consumers, its top executive said in Beijing on Wednesday.

Ikea, which entered the China market 25 years ago and has invested 43 billion yuan in the country so far, plans to open another store in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, doubling its stores in the city to two.

It also plans to open a mall in Shanghai in 2024 besides launching a distribution center in Tianjin to expand its footprint and diversify the functions of its offline stores.

In China, Ikea runs 34 stores, two experience centers and eight Ikea Livat Complex centers.

Part of Ikea's overall goal is to

grow with its furnishing suppliers so as to serve its global market better, said Jesper Brodin, chief executive officer of Ingka Group, the largest Ikea retailer that represents about 90 percent of Ikea retail sales.

Brodin, who is on a visit to Beijing, said Ikea believes in investing in China for the long term. "We believe the Chinese government is taking very strong measures to stimulate consumption, which will be very important to bring trust to consumers. Ikea has offered to be part of it and will support the journey."

"We in Ikea always believe the entrepreneurship in China is fantastic, and so is the speed of the digital development and sustainability. We truly believe that China will be at the forefront of becoming a sustainable society."

In the China market, Ikea has most of its capabilities and assets like retail, distribution, production, design, digital development and real estate, he said.

"All the things we have in China are partly to serve the development in China, and partly to help us become better globally," Brodin said.

On the shift in emphasis of the group's investment strategy in China, Brodin said: "In the years to come, you will still see some of the big centers, more touch points in the city, and more money going to solar and wind power."

"We will see more money go to digital development and maybe even investing in local companies to encourage entrepreneurs to be part of our multichannel network."

To better cope with mounting competition from domestic one-stop furnishing solution providers, Ikea has plans to explore its "New Retail" format, by opening the first batch of stores that offer planning and ordering services in Beijing and Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

These centers provide home furnishing solutions to people who are refurbishing or remodeling their homes.

Ikea will also invest in sustaina-

ble solutions to benefit consumers in China, helping them live in more energy-efficient smart homes, both in terms of costs and support for climate change solutions, Brodin said.

In China's home furnishing sector, where Ikea is ranked third behind two Chinese companies, the company's retail sales have seen fluctuations in recent years, declining in 2020 to 760 billion yuan from 806 billion yuan in 2019, and recovering a bit in 2021 to 784 billion yuan, only to drop again to 731 billion last year, according to Euro-monitor International.

Over the years, the retailer has sought to open more smaller-sized stores as they are considered more convenient and accessible to local consumers. It has also put in place a digital team to develop its digital ecosystem for the local market.

In 2018, Ikea launched its website and delivery services as well as its stores on Tmall, Alibaba's business-to-consumer or B2C e-commerce platform.

Smart way to fish



A view of a smart fishing cage in Yantai, a coastal city in East China's Shandong province, on Tuesday. The Jinghai No 007 smart cage, which serves as a smart platform for breeding deep-sea aquatic animals, is part of a project to build 100 deep-sea cages in the sea near Changdao Island. LU ZHONGQIU / CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Auto production, sales post steady growth

China's auto production and sales rose 7.4 percent and 7.9 percent year-on-year, respectively, in the first seven months, said an official from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. Addressing a news conference on Tuesday, Wang Weiming said China is striving to increase its annual automobile sales by 3 percent to 27 million units this year. Wang added that it is necessary to strengthen departmental coordination and create policy synergy to stabilize and expand the consumption of both new energy vehicles and gasoline-powered vehicles.

Region to strengthen biz cooperation

Commerce authorities of the Yangtze River Delta region have signed a cooperation deal in Beijing aiming to advance regional market integration and facilitate the building of a unified national market. The authorities in Shanghai as well as the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui will deepen cooperation in six aspects, including promoting common market rules and systems and sharing trade logistics systems, according to the deal.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

Closer global ties urged for green transition

Experts call for stronger international efforts to advance decarbonization

By LIU YUKUN in Suzhou, Jiangsu
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The global community should deepen international cooperation to advance the global green energy transition focusing on decarbonization and digitalization, officials and experts said at a forum on Wednesday.

Speaking at the 2023 International Forum on Energy Transition in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, Zhang Jianhua, head of the National Energy Administration, said, "Further efforts are called for to strengthen global collaboration in clean and efficient energy use, with a focus on promoting clean, low-carbon transformations in energy-intensive industries like manufacturing, construction and transportation, while propelling the digitalization and decarbonization of energy systems."

\$1.6 trillion

global investment in clean energy in 2022

Zhang said: "China will further improve the investment and financing environment, ensuring the security, stability and sustainability of supply chains in the clean energy industry. This involves expanding the scale of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power and driving continuous cost reductions in renewable energy."

He said China's overseas investments in non-fossil energy have surpassed those in fossil fuels. Zhang emphasized that China's pursuit of clean, low-carbon, secure and efficient energy systems has injected great momentum into global energy transformation and security.

Data from the NEA showed that the share of non-fossil energy consumption increased from 9.7 percent in 2012 to 17.5 percent in China last year. Zhang said China has led the world in energy efficiency growth, with a consumption growth rate of less than 3 percent annually, contributing to over 6 percent in economic growth on average.

To date, China has established the world's largest electricity supply system and clean power generation system, with hydropower, wind power, photovoltaics, biomass power and under-construction nuclear power all ranking first globally, according to the NEA.

As of June, the cumulative installed power capacity stood at 2.71

billion kilowatts, with the installed capacity of renewable energy reaching 1.32 billion kW, surpassing coal power and growing approximately threefold in a decade.

"China has made unwavering efforts to develop new energies and reduce the use of fossil fuels. The country has made great contributions to the world's green transition in the way that its energy companies continue to work to reduce the cost of solar, wind and hydropower, allowing more global users to buy solar panels and other facilities at a very low cost, giving more people access to affordable electricity," said Francesco La Camera, director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

Borge Brende, president of the World Economic Forum, said China was among the major economies to have made positive progress in transitioning energy systems.

According to Brende, global investment in clean energy reached a record \$1.6 trillion in 2022, up 15 percent from the year before. The global renewable capacity additions are set to soar this year by 107 gigawatts — the largest increase ever.

Shawn Qu, chairman and CEO of Canadian Solar headquartered in Suzhou, said that 10 years from now, photovoltaic battery efficiency is likely to rise from over 25 percent to 35 percent, supported by technological advancement, and the industry will contribute more to the global green energy transition with lower material consumption and less land use.

"Closer ties are expected on a global scale to battle risks brought up by climate change. Canadian Solar has provided around 102 GW of solar modules for over 160 countries and regions, and has PV and power storage station projects across more than 20 countries and regions, with the number of reserved projects ranking tops globally," Qu said.

"China's development of green energy is on a fast track and Covestro has been buying large amounts of green power in the country. We were the number one buyer of green power in Shanghai in 2022. Now we are interested in seeking more partners and suppliers in the fields of solar, wind and hydropower," said Ferdinand Rammrath, chief procurement officer of Covestro AG.

"China has been a major market for Covestro and will continue to be extremely important for the company in the future. Our largest production site is located in Shanghai," Rammrath said.



Visitors walk past Midea Group's booth during a home appliance expo in Berlin on Friday.
REN PENGFEI / XINHUA

Midea banks on energy innovation for edge in overseas home appliance sector

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou
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Building a global research and development network would help Midea Group, a leading Chinese home appliance manufacturer, better promote the development of innovative energy-saving solutions with a user-centric approach in the overseas market, according to the company's technical chief for its air conditioning business.

"By integrating local resources, we have strengthened technical research and launched a series of innovative products and solutions for air conditioning in the overseas market," said Li Jinbo, director of Midea's innovation research institute for household air conditioners.

In its latest development, the company launched a brand new R290 green refrigerant series during the IFA Berlin 2023 Consumer Tech Fair, a prestigious industry exhibition that was held Sept 1-5 in Berlin.

As part of the R290 series, the company's EffiClima split unit has passed the highest level of the European new energy efficiency certification, using environmentally friendly refrigerant and achieving a carbon reduction of 447 kilograms.

Definition of the entire R290 series' functions, risk assessment and market compliance were supported by the company's German research team, after over 10 years of research of the product's core technology in Shunde, Guangdong province, where Midea is headquartered, Li said.

Midea's German research and development center, which was put into operation in Stuttgart in 2019, has engaged in technical cooperation with the company's household air conditioning and other business units in terms of European energy efficiency label-

ing, product energy-saving and environmental protection design.

"Working closely with our international technological research teams would greatly promote the development of more green and efficient products that will meet the local market's needs," said Li.

During IFA Berlin 2023, the company's groundbreaking product, the PortaSplit, won the Room Comfort Technology Innovation Gold Award presented by IDG, Europe Digital Group and Asia Digital Group, showing its ongoing pursuit of new technologies and improvements in user-centric solutions.

PortaSplit, a smart air conditioner that combines cutting-edge cooling technology with unprecedented flexibility, is set to make its market debut in 2024. Unlike conventional AC units, PortaSplit seamlessly merges the convenience of a portable AC with the superior cooling capacity and efficiency of a split AC.

At the tech fair, Midea also showcased 16 green and energy-saving dishwasher models, which are certified by TÜV Rheinland, a leading global testing and certification service provider.

TÜV Rheinland's certification for Midea's dishwasher encompasses a comprehensive evaluation across six dimensions — corporate social responsibility, environment management, climate resilience, recycled material content, hazardous substances and product life span.

"This rigorous assessment ensures that our products adhere to the high standards of environmental responsibility and performance," said Meteor Liu, general manager of Midea KWHA Oversea Sales Company.

Citing the company's G-X platform, which boasts an impressive

A-20 percent energy savings rating, Liu said Midea would ensure every aspect of its dishwashers' life cycle, from design and manufacturing to packaging, transportation and recycling, operate in accordance with eco-friendly principles.

Midea's laundry division also won a number of technical certifications at the fair from VDE, a professional certification institute, for its energy-efficient, anti-bacterial and low-temperature drying technologies.

Founded in 1920, VDE is directly involved in the development of German national standards and is one of Europe's most experienced and globally recognized safety testing and certification organizations for electrical and electronic appliances and their components.

Midea's growing presence in energy-saving technologies and products in the overseas market has resulted in increased business revenues, the company said in its half-year financial report in early August.

The company's overseas revenue accounted for 40.88 percent of its total in the first half, with its gross profit margin of overseas business increasing by 3.3 percent.

Midea's total operating revenue reached 197.8 billion yuan (\$27.07 billion) in the first half, with its innovative businesses growing rapidly.

In addition to optimizing its R&D teams in overseas markets, Midea will continue to promote the construction of production bases in Brazil and Mexico.

The company's new washing machine production lines in Egypt and household air conditioning factories in Thailand have already been put into operation, helping further enhance its competitiveness in overseas markets.

Tech firms double down on LLMs

By FAN FEIFEI
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Large language models powered by artificial intelligence will speed up the integration of a wide range of industries with application scenarios, as major Chinese technology companies step up efforts to develop industry-specific LLMs and promote the large-scale commercial use of such models, experts said.

LLMs refer to computer algorithms that are trained with huge amounts of data and are capable of generating content such as images, text, audio and video.

Chinese tech heavyweight Baidu Inc has updated its enterprise-level LLM platform Qianfan, which covers more than 400 application scenarios across sectors including finance, manufacturing, energy, government affairs, and transportation. Baidu aims to build the fundamental capabilities of LLMs, and support the development of AI-native applications, said Robin Li, co-founder and CEO of Baidu, at the 2023 Baidu Cloud Intelligence Conference held in Beijing on Tuesday.

Li said the company will launch the latest version of its LLM, Ernie 4.0, soon.

Last week, Baidu opened its ChatGPT-like LLM Ernie Bot to the public after receiving approval from the authorities.

Shen Dou, executive vice-president of Baidu, said the Qianfan platform will greatly lower the threshold for the use of LLMs, and allow enterprises to use AI more efficiently.

LLMs necessitate a higher demand for data and knowledge in professional fields, and for talent that can fine-tune specialized models based on diverse industrial demands, said Lu Yanxia, research director at market consultancy IDC China.

They have triggered a new AI wave and brought fresh business opportunities for domestic AI servers, cloud computing and chip companies, Lu said.

According to a report from global consultancy McKinsey & Co, generative AI will add between \$2.6 trillion and \$4.4 trillion in annual value to the global economy, and have a significant impact across industrial sectors.

Banking, high technology and life sciences are among the industries that could see the biggest impact — in terms of the percentage of their revenues — from generative AI.

Other Chinese tech giants such as JD and SenseTime have also launched industry-specific AI models in recent months.

JD unveiled its large language model ChatRhino in July, which can be used in a wide range of fields, including retail, logistics, finance and health, as the company aims to bolster digital transformation and upgrade various industries using AI.

The model will be deployed within JD's core business areas in the second half of this year, the company said.

JD has accumulated huge amounts of data and knowledge from extensive industrial scenarios, and it will strengthen cooperation with industry partners to promote technological innovation, said Xu Ran, CEO of JD.

SenseTime has developed a Chinese-language medical LLM built on a vast amount of medical knowledge and clinical data. This model can provide multi-round conversation capabilities for health consultation and guidance services, and help doctors improve diagnosis and treatment efficiency.

To gain a competitive edge in the global AI chatbot race, Chinese AI companies should devote more resources to improving computing power, algorithms and data quality, and step up investment in basic scientific research, said Pan Helin, co-director of the Digital Economy and Financial Innovation Research Center at Zhejiang University's International Business School.

MSD boosts localization of pharma R&D

By ZHENG YIRAN
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With a long-term commitment to the Chinese market, United States-based global pharmaceutical company MSD plans to introduce over 50 innovative drugs, vaccines, new indications and companion diagnostics to China in the next five years.

As part of its constant efforts to enhance its local research and development capabilities, MSD conducted 140 clinical research projects in China in 2022, witnessing the country's progress in the sector and applauding the innovative results achieved by the nation so far.

Li Zhengqing, senior vice-president of MSD and president of MSD China R&D (research and development), said: "In the past years, the progress we have made in building our R&D capabilities was impressive. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our R&D team in China more than tripled and the number of clinical research projects completed surged by nearly 300 percent."

Currently, MSD China R&D has established headquarters in Beijing and branch centers in Shanghai;



Li Zhengqing

Chengdu, Sichuan province; Wuhan, Hubei province; and Guangzhou, Guangdong province. With strong local R&D capability, innovative drugs go through

the R&D and approval process simultaneously in China and the global markets.

"China is now our second-largest market, just behind the US. It is always an integral part of our global business strategy," Li said.

He made the remarks at an award ceremony for MSD's R&D center in Beijing. On Aug 28, the fourth floor of the center was awarded the WELL Platinum Certification — the highest WELL Certification, which evaluates how a building's environment influences human behaviors related to health and well-being.

John Bunten, executive director of engineering of global workplace and enterprise services at MSD, said, "We are dedicated to a healthy, comfortable working environment for our employees, aiming at 30 more workplaces to be awarded

green certificates in the coming one to two years."

Li said: "We firmly believe that employees can only maximize their value when they feel physically and mentally healthy and safe. As Beijing boasts a lot of first-in-class universities where numerous talents are cultivated, we want to attract and leverage the strength of local talents. This is why we renovated our Beijing R&D center. As part of the company's business growth strategy, we continue upgrading the capacity of this building, to bring a healthier and more sustainable workplace for our R&D talents in China."

During the ceremony, the company acknowledged the efforts that the Chinese government has made in optimizing its business environment for pharmaceutical multinational corporations.

In August, the State Council, the nation's Cabinet, issued a 24-measure guideline to attract more global capital and further optimize the country's business environment for MNCs, with measures including ensuring equal treatment of foreign and domestic companies.

Specifically, the measures encour-



MSD's booth is seen during an expo in Shanghai in November.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

age pharmaceutical MNCs to establish R&D centers in the country, join efforts with local enterprises in R&D and industrialized applications, and undertake major scientific research projects with their local R&D centers. In addition, guidelines were launched to accelerate the landing of foreign-invested pharmaceutical projects and to optimize the drug review and approval process for MNCs in the country.

Shan Jizhong, senior director of MSD China R&D, said: "The Beijing R&D center was established in 2011. We are witnesses of the local govern-

ment's efforts in supporting R&D and innovative drug reviews and approvals. Working with the local healthcare community, we are able to bring our first-in-class and best-in-class drugs to the Chinese market."

Lu Dingliang, a senior partner at Beijing Jingshi Law Firm, said: "By offering more precise support to MNCs, China has been attracting foreign investment with higher 'gold content'. The development in key sectors, represented by the pharmaceutical industry, is expected to further raise the quality of China's foreign investment."

BUSINESSFOCUS

Overseas tourism for holidays flying high

With upcoming days off, rising demand for trips abroad meets with favorable policies

By ZHU WENQIAN

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The upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holiday are expected to witness a surge in the number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad, fueled by continuously rising demand and favorable policies, industry observers said.

The holidays, which fall together this year, form an eight-day period that runs from Sept 29 to Oct 6. In mid-August, the number of Chinese consumers who booked international flights for the National Day holiday jumped more than 30 percent over the previous week, domestic online travel agencies found.

On Aug 10, China announced the resumption of group tours to an additional 78 countries and regions, bringing the total number to 138. The latest list includes popular destinations such as South Korea, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

"The release of the latest list indicates that China's outbound tourism market is on track of full recovery, and signals that we are about to embrace a peak of outbound tourism during the Mid-Autumn Festival and the National Day holiday," said Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy.

"This also means that while boosting consumer confidence, it is expected to help significantly promote the recovery and growth of the Chinese economy, and global tourism and economic development," Dai said.

Before the pandemic, China had become the world's largest outbound tourism market for many years, according to the World Tourism Organization. Chinese tourists played a crucial role in boosting the development of the tourism markets in overseas countries and regions and promoting global economic recovery.

Since China optimized its COVID-19 response measures and began quarantine-free international travel in January, Chinese consumers have shown great enthusiasm for international travel. In July, the number of outbound travel orders Trip.com Group received jumped 44 percent over June, according to the company, China's leading online travel agency based in Shanghai.

"The expansion of the list will directly promote travel enterprises to accelerate research and development and launch more related group tour products, further enriching options for travelers, thus promoting the accelerated recovery of both supply and demand. The National Day holiday will become a key observation period of travel market performance," said Xie Xiaoping, a senior researcher at Trip.com's research institute.

Tuniu Corp, a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency, said it has witnessed a significant increase in the search volumes of those newly listed overseas destinations. Particularly, the search volume growth of Germany, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Turkey has been more apparent.



Above: Chinese tourists visit lavender fields on the Valensole plateau in France in July.

STEPHANE DUCLET / MAXPPP

Left: Passengers of China Southern Airlines' first flight from Beijing Daxing International Airport to London's Heathrow Airport arrive in London in June since a resumption of international air travel.

LI YING / XINHUA

The company said it is actively preparing group tour products for those newly listed countries and will launch the products continuously. With Chinese consumers' eager demand for traveling abroad, Tuniu will focus on upgrading its supply chain and products to help accelerate the rapid recovery of the outbound travel market to relevant destinations.

"We will actively seek cooperation with overseas hotels and local travel agencies to enrich our product portfolio. We will first resume some classic group tour products, such as trips to Australia and New Zealand, and group tours to Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic," said Li Peng, director of long-haul outbound tourism at Tuniu.

For short-haul group tours, Tuniu said it would first develop products to popular destinations and launch small premium group tours to cater to consumers' high-quality demand. Also, with rising demand for parent-child research trips, Tuniu plans to

launch more in-depth and experiential study trips to destinations such as the UK.

Meanwhile, Norwegian cruise line operator Viking Cruises said as Chinese consumers show rising demand for outbound travel, it became the first cruise company in China to announce the resumption of China's outbound European river cruise tours.

Viking Cruises announced earlier this year the re-launch of its European river cruise operations targeting the Chinese market. This year, it took the lead by introducing an 11-day itinerary on the Rhine River. The cruise tour goes by 10 cities in four European countries and began operating in June. Multiple voyages have been or are nearly sold out.

"We are delighted to once again welcome Chinese guests aboard as we set sail after three years. This journey holds great significance for us," said Brendan Tansey, managing director of Viking Cruises China.

"Since this year's deployment, we

have heard the eager voices of many Viking guests who can't wait to revisit Europe with us. This demonstrates that the demand for European outbound travel from Chinese guests remains strong," Tansey said.

With sustained and stable positive signals continuing for China's outbound tourism market, Tansey said Viking Cruises is full of confidence in the growth prospect of China's tourism market.

The company announced in mid-August the return of its voyage on the Danube River that crosses Central and Eastern European countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The itinerary will start in 2024 to cater to the growing demand of Chinese travelers.

In the meantime, Qunar, a Beijing-based online travel agency, found that Chinese tourists' booking volumes for traveling abroad have resumed to more than 50 percent of the pre-pandemic level. Some hot destinations include Bangkok, Thailand; Seoul, South Korea; Tokyo and Osaka, Japan; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Singapore.

The availability of international flights has a certain impact on the popularity and prices of traveling abroad. This summer, the number of flights from China to Southeast Asian countries, South Korea and Japan has been abundant, Qunar said.

"Some carriers have launched special prices for flights to Southeast Asian countries, and prices of flights this summer have been lower than the same period of 2019, before the pandemic," said Xiao Peng, a researcher at the big data research institute of Qunar.

In late August, with the approaching new semester, the number of people who took trips dropped compared with earlier this summer and the prices of flights also declined. Those who still want to travel should take the opportunity to set out, Qunar said.

For the upcoming Golden Week holiday, driven by strong travel demand, the average price of an international flight is expected to exceed the prices over the summer.

For international flights that depart on Sept 29, the average price of a one-way flight stands at 6,696 yuan (\$916), excluding tax — 72 percent higher than the average price in summer. Starting from Sept 25, international flight fares will increase significantly, according to Tongcheng Travel, a Suzhou, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency.

"The recovery of the outbound tourism market following COVID-19 is expected to embrace its first milestone during this year's National Day holiday," said Cheng Chaogang, a senior researcher with the research institute of Tongcheng Travel.

"Short-distance destinations such as South Korea are likely to witness strong travel demand. Long-distance trips to Europe and the US will also see good performances and drive local demand for accommodations," Cheng said.

He added that the domestic long-distance travel market is expected to continue its heat and some popular destinations are set to welcome higher passenger traffic compared with the same period before the pandemic.

“We are delighted to once again welcome Chinese guests aboard as we set sail after three years.”

Brendan Tansey,
managing director of
Viking Cruises China

138
number of countries and
regions to which China
has resumed outbound
group travel so far

By ZHU WENQIAN

Domestic travel sees busiest summer in five years

The domestic travel market has embraced the busiest summer of the past five years, boosted by continuously growing demand from Chinese consumers, said major travel agencies.

Since July, booking volumes of flight tickets to some of the hottest domestic destinations jumped 40 percent compared with the same period in 2019, before the pandemic, and booking volumes of domestic hotels grew by 140 percent over 2019, according to Beijing-based online travel agency Qunar.

The most popular routes for high-speed train travel include from Beijing to Qingdao, Shandong province, and from Shanghai to Ningbo, Zhejiang province. For those routes, train tickets for some time slots sold out one week in advance, according to the company.

Meanwhile, with scorching temperatures, many tourists chose to avoid the summer heat by visiting indoor skiing venues. Between July 1 and Aug 13, sales of indoor skiing and ice skating admission tickets nationwide surged 187 percent over

the previous month. Particularly, residents from provinces, such as Guangdong, Zhejiang and Jiangsu, preferred off-season skiing activities, Qunar found.

Other tourists chose to visit smaller niche destinations to avoid crowds. This summer, the booking volumes of hotels in smaller cities jumped 120 percent compared with the summer of 2019, and the bookings of high-end hotels rose significantly. Some popular smaller cities include Xianning, Hubei province; Dongying, Shandong province; and Lincang, Yunnan province, Qunar said.

"Avoiding crowds and choosing some lesser-known tourist towns has become a new way for Chinese consumers to take trips. Many tourists prefer to vacation in quiet places instead of going on sightseeing tours," said Xiao Peng, a researcher at the big data research institute of Qunar.

In addition, urbanites have been increasingly keen on taking vaca-



Tourists enjoy leisure time at a rural tea-themed homestay venue in Taizhou, Zhejiang province, in July. WANG HUABIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

tions in the countryside, and booking volumes of bed-and-breakfast stays in suburban and rural areas have been popular.

So far this year, the total booking volumes of B&B stays nationwide have exceeded the total volumes recorded in the same period of 2019,

according to Trip.com Group, China's leading online travel agency.

From the beginning of July to mid-August, booking volumes of B&B stays nationwide grew for six weekends consecutively. Consumers from Chengde, Sichuan province; Chongqing; Hangzhou, Zhejiang province; and Wuhan, Hubei province, have shown the highest enthusiasm for rural trips.

By 2025, Trip.com plans to build 100 high-end village resorts in the country to attract more urban tourists. This summer, more than 10 of its village resorts located in different areas across the country have seen rooms sold out multiple times, the company said.

Rural tourism resources account for 70 percent of tourism resources nationwide, yet the number of tourists who have taken rural trips only accounts for 30 percent of total domestic tourists. Tourism consumption related to rural trips is less than 20 percent of total domestic tourism consumption, according

to a report by industry research company ChinaIRN.com.

In late July, the National Development and Reform Commission, the country's top economic regulator, released a guidance to boost domestic consumption. The statement suggests that the country vigorously develop rural tourism and build a beautiful countryside suitable for living in.

China should revitalize rural development by inheriting rural cultures and tapping more rural tourism resources. For instance, the government can help promote the implementation of rural homestay service certifications and cultivate a group of graded tourism homestays.

The government will also support business entities to develop rural tourism products such as forest homes and trails, camps and motels. Additionally, companies could create a number of new tourism formats tailored to local conditions, including landscape agriculture, farming experiences, wilderness exploration, outdoor sports and research trips, according to the document.

COMMENT

Editorials

US must heed call to turn South China Sea into sea of peace, friendship and cooperation

The United States conducted a joint naval sail with the Philippines in the South China Sea on Monday, an obvious provocative move considering the tensions between China and the Philippines over the Ren'ai Reef dispute.

A Reuters report citing the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Command said it was the first time Manila and Washington have carried out a joint sail in the waters west of Palawan island. Perhaps the joint sail, apart from underscoring the Philippines' military alliance with the US, was also meant to assert its baseless claims over the disputed waters.

The reckless act to hype the maritime dispute coincides with this week's series of meetings in Jakarta, Indonesia, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations taking center stage. The US, which has for years used the maritime disputes in the South China Sea to interfere in regional affairs, apparently intends to heighten tensions again so it can fish in troubled waters to fulfill its strategic goals.

The farce the US staged with the Philippines is yet another proof of Washington posing the biggest threat to peace and stability in the South China Sea. To cater to its own strategic needs and maintain its global hegemony, the US is turning the sea into a playground for major power competition,

totally disregarding the regional countries' quest for peace, stability and development.

In order to address issues of common concern, ASEAN has tried to play down geopolitics in the meetings in Jakarta. Many of the bloc's members have either refused or are reluctant to take sides in the China-US disputes, because they know that doing so would sow the seeds of division in the region.

China and ASEAN are in the middle of negotiations to finalize a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, which is aimed at maintaining lasting peace and stability in the waters. And the two sides have the wisdom and capacity to resolve their maritime differences and disputes.

The South China Sea is one of the world's busiest waterways with some 100,000 merchant vessels sailing through its waters every year. Any disturbance in the waters will disrupt the free and smooth flow of goods and global supply chains, slowing down the region's development.

Hence, instead of indulging in selfish calculations and stirring up trouble in the South China Sea, the US should play a constructive role in the region, because peace and stability serves its own interest too. It should heed the call of the countries in the region and respect their efforts to turn the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation.

Taiwan separatists pursuing illusory goal

The so-called "four appeals" the Taiwan authorities recently made for the island's participation in the United Nations are nothing but their latest ploy to get UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 overturned.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution on Oct 25, 1971, by an overwhelming majority, which not only restored the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the UN but also recognized the representatives of its government as the sole legitimate representatives of China, necessitating the ouster of the representatives of the Chinese island from the UN and all its organizations.

The separatists in support of the Tsai Ing-wen authorities are holding protests in New York during the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, which began on Tuesday. They are calling on the UN to stop "misinterpreting" Resolution 2758 and allow Taiwan to "meaningfully participate" in the UN and its organizations. In the process they have become a laughingstock.

The separatists on the island seem to believe that a legally binding UN resolution, passed by the General Assembly, can be annulled by holding such farcical events. They have promised to indulge in similar playacting during the General Debate from Sept 19 to 26. The pro-independence forces know full well Resolution 2758 cannot be annulled, and yet they continue their mindless exercise perhaps because they believe Washington will help them achieve their illegal, illusory goal.

Resolution 2758 resolved, politically, legally and procedurally, the issue of the representation of China, which includes Taiwan, in the UN and other international institutions.

The one-China principle has been acknowledged and accepted by the international community, thus eliminating any room for anyone, any country or any force to create or talk about "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan". And on the basis of the one-China principle, 182 countries have established diplomatic relations with China.

Resolution 2758 makes it unequivocally clear the Taiwan island has no basis whatsoever to participate in the UN or any other international organization as a separate country. Therefore, any issue regarding the Taiwan island's participation in the activities of international organizations must be addressed under the framework of the one-China principle.

Moreover, the Taiwan question is purely China's internal affair and its resolution a matter for the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to pursue.

Some politicians in the United States started distorting Resolution 2758 in October last year, which emboldened the Tsai authorities to try to hijack the UN General Assembly agenda and challenge the UN-centered international order.

Such attempts by US politicians to confuse the global public by hollowing out the one-China principle and turn back the wheel of history will only meet opposition from the international community, and are doomed to failure.

Immunity law better defends nation's interest

The legislative work of a country should always meet its developmental and diplomatic demands. The drafting and passing of the Law on Foreign State Immunity at a session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee — after more than three years of preparation during which public opinions were widely solicited — is one such case.

The reason the country's top legislature passed the law last week was the nefarious efforts of certain entities in the United States three years ago to smear China and its government by filing lawsuits against China in US courts in 2020 for "mishandling" the COVID-19 pandemic and seek legal redress. That their action violated the universally accepted legal principle of sovereign immunity, which basically means a national government or its agencies cannot be sued in the courts of another country, hardly made any difference to the US administration.

Those US entities hoped the courts would rule in their favor based on the interpretation of "exceptional circumstances", as stated in the US sovereign immunity law, holding China legally accountable for the "huge human and economic losses". The artifice was possible because the US has adopted the principle of "restrictive immunity", which allows lawsuits to be filed against a foreign government in "exceptional circumstances".

The legal drama was aimed at humiliating China

and shifting the blame for their own government's abject failure to respond to the pandemic and provide medical care to the American people — the US accounted for the highest numbers of COVID-19 infections and deaths.

Yet the legal sham highlighted the need for enacting China's own immunity law that would suit the changing international situation and help better protect the country's sovereignty and interests. The Law on Foreign State Immunity, to take effect on Jan 1, 2024, has 23 provisions and stipulates that China, like many other countries, will follow the principle of restrictive immunity instead of absolute sovereign immunity.

More important, the principle of reciprocity in state immunity has been adopted, which means when a foreign country abolishes, restricts or downgrades the sovereign immunity it has granted China, China can take necessary countermeasures in accordance with the principle of reciprocity.

The days when the Chinese government and its agencies were made a scapegoat to stand trial only as defendants in foreign courts without any legal weapon to fight back are history. While the law marks an end to China's previous practice of granting "absolute sovereign immunity" to foreign states, foreign states and their property in China will continue to enjoy normal sovereign immunity as before.

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Counterfeit parts in aircrafts call for full vigilance of market

Europe's aviation regulator recently exposed a huge scandal over a British company supplying fake or unsourced engine repair parts for Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 aircraft.

A statement issued by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency said that the London-based AOG Technics sold many aircraft parts with forged authorization certificates and the suppliers who were supposed to supply the parts did not issue relevant certificates.

At the center of this scandal are CFM56 engines, made by CFM International. These are the world's best-selling jet engines installed on thousands of narrow-body aircraft by airlines around the world. Aircraft engine components are checked every 8,000-20,000 sorties, thrust inverters every 8-10 years, and engine life-limited parts, which have mandatory replacement requirements,

are replaced every 10,000-30,000 sorties. That all aircraft parts can be traced to source is the norm. It is thus inconceivable that unlicensed or counterfeit parts entered the supply chain of Airbus and Boeing.

EASA has now asked aircraft owners, operators, maintenance organizations and parts dealers to check their records for aircraft parts obtained directly or indirectly from AOG Technics and to replace those.

Given that the CFM56 engine is mainly used to repair older Boeing 737 and Airbus 320 passenger aircraft, the entry of fake parts into its maintenance system makes one wonder if it is to blame for recent flight accidents. They included the Ethiopian Airlines flight ET302 that crashed in 2019, killing all 149 passengers and eight crew members, and the system failure of a SpiceJet plane in India before landing on May 1, in which at least 17 people on

board were injured. It is not known if AOG Technics supplied parts for these aircraft, but it is important to probe when AOG Technics entered the Airbus and Boeing supply chains and how it forged airworthiness proof certificates.

As Airbus and Boeing account for 99 percent of the global market share of large civil aviation aircraft, the entry of fake parts into their supply chains has a bearing on global flight safety. This reminds us that the existing safety procedures though strict are still not enough.

One wonders how parts made by AOG Technics could find their way into Airbus and Boeing's supply chains bypassing strict scrutiny procedures. Has the pursuit of maximum profits led some to let down their guard? The scandal should be investigated until all the facts are uncovered.

— BEIJING NEWS

Punishment not enough to protect Great Wall

There's bad news for relic lovers. In a shocking incident, two suspects dug through a part of the Great Wall in Youyu county, Shanxi province, with an excavator. The reason? They were "taking a shortcut to their construction site".

Dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), this stretch of the Great Wall in Youyu has survived warfare since it was built. However, one excavator is all it took to wipe it out. Reports say the two suspects have been detained and await criminal charges.

This rings the alarm bells for the protection of the Great Wall. Unlike small relic items, the Great Wall is

spread across thousands of kilometers in the wild, making it vulnerable. A company in Baoding, Hebei province, was ordered to pay more than 1.7 million yuan (\$232,648) in compensation for damaging part of the Great Wall in 2021, while another company in Kelan county, Shanxi, damaged hundreds of meters of the wall in 2022.

The historic and research value of the Great Wall in the wild is not inferior to that of any relic. The structures carry important information about ancient dynasties that gets lost for posterity when destroyed.

Until a bulletproof glass big enough to secure the Great Wall is

invented, it might be worth applying technology to the hilt for its protection.

For example, more cameras can be installed in various parts of the Great Wall so that each part is monitored. Cultural relic protection departments can fly more drones for surveillance; residents living near the Great Wall can be recruited as volunteers to inspect it.

All these efforts will help minimize damage to China's landmark offering to the world. After all, neither compensation nor punishing the culprits can bring back heritage once it is lost.

— ZHANG ZHOXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

ROK should first do its bit for regional peace

Talking about ROK-China-Japan relations in an interview to local media outlets before leaving for Indonesia on Tuesday, Republic of Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol said Seoul will make every effort to revitalize the trilateral cooperation.

Also, in a recent written interview with The AP, Yoon urged Beijing to use its leverage over Pyongyang to persuade the latter to give up its nuclear and missile projects. He stressed that China, which has a responsibility to maintain international peace and stability as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, should make constructive efforts to demilitarize the Korean Peninsula.

It is good to see Yong talk of resuming trilateral communication and cooperation. It is also good to see that he hopes the Korean Peninsula issue can be resolved amicably at an early date.

However, apart from paying lip service, has the ROK government

made any contribution to fulfill these goals?

On the one hand, Seoul's one-sided pro-Washington strategy is to blame for the souring of Sino-ROK relations, which used to be a ballast for regional stability in East Asia. If the Yoon government really wants to mend trilateral ties, it must take concrete action to prevent the Sino-ROK ties from slipping to a record low first.

On the other hand, the worsening of conditions in the Korean Peninsula should mainly be attributed to the fact that Seoul gave up the ROK's long-term strategic autonomy in handling the issue, and chose to become a pawn of the United States in geopolitical games. It is ridiculous that Seoul is trying to put the onus on Beijing for its own strategic misjudgment.

As Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning pointed out, the current situation on the Korean Peninsula does not serve anyone's interest, nor is it to China's liking.

The process started in 2018 to address the Korean Peninsula issues came to a standstill because the US refused to respond to the denuclearization measures taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Neither has the US taken the DPRK's legitimate concerns seriously or shown readiness to address these concerns. The US needs to draw lessons, correct course, step up to its responsibility, stop heightening the pressure and sanctions, stop military deterrence, and take effective steps to resume meaningful dialogue.

It is becoming increasingly clear that, like Washington's two-sided China policy, Seoul is also taking a carrot-and-stick approach to deal with relations with Beijing. The ROK's lack of sincerity means it will neither be able to broker reconciliation in trilateral ties, nor can it facilitate a peaceful resolution of the Korean Peninsula problem.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | Japan Dumping Radioactive Wastewater

Editor's note: Japan's dumping of nuclear-contaminated wastewater into the ocean put the safety of people around the world in danger. The radionuclides that Japan has discharged with the wastewater into the ocean will contaminate the marine ecosystem, and eventually their impact will move from marine species to humans and affect the entire global environment. Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Mario Cavolo

Duplicity equally risky on nuclear issues

Like many across the world, I also had thought the issue of the nuclear-contaminated water from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant had been settled. But when I recently read in a Channel News Asia report that Japanese government officials had said the radioactive water had to be discharged into the sea to avoid accidental leaks and create space for storing more wastewater that was accumulating in the destroyed nuclear reactor of the Fukushima plant, I realized something was seriously wrong.

That the Japanese government is concerned about any accidental leaks means the radioactive water is obviously not safe. And if that is the case, why is Japan dumping it into the sea?

The Japanese government then told the world that the radioactive water would be treated before being discharged into the sea, and there is nothing to worry about because the treatment will remove all the nuclides from the water. But this assurance came from Tokyo Electric Power Company, which owns the damaged Fukushima plant, and has lied about the radioactive water and the nuclear reactors countless times before.

Then I learned that Japan had invited the International Atomic Energy Agency to study the situation. This should have made me believe the decision of the Japanese government and TEPCO to dump the radioactive water into the sea was based on foolproof scientific studies. But the IAEA's core statement on the Fukushima crisis explicitly states that it does not endorse or

recommend the discharge plan, which raises two very important questions.

First, why do recent headlines in The New York Times suggest it is treating Japan with kid gloves? Why is the West's approach to Japan very different from the way it dealt with Russia in 1993 when the latter faced an international uproar after announcing it was planning to release nuclear-contaminated water into the sea? Russia was forced to abandon its plan, heeding the call of the international community.

And second, why doesn't Japan treat the radioactive water from the Fukushima facility and use it domestically if it is safe to drink after treatment, as TEPCO claimed? Wouldn't that be better than Japan dumping the radioactive water into the sea and contaminating the marine environment and ecology and threatening the health of people around the world? If China did the same, the United States and its allies would have launched a scathing attack.

To put it simply, Japan is being irrespon-



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sible, because it wants to save money and make the rest of the world, especially its neighboring countries, deal with the threat the nuclear-contaminated water will pose.

Some people have been trying to confuse people by focusing only on the existence of tritium in the radioactive water, claiming the cooling water China releases from its nuclear plants has the same radioactive element. This comparison is misplaced, because nuclear plants not only in China but also in the rest of the world, including those in the US, France and many other countries, release cooling water with the same contents into the sea. Cooling water is not the same as the nuclear-contaminated water from damaged nuclear power plants such as Chernobyl and Fukushima.

Japan's discharge plan will cost about \$100 billion in lost seafood exports because most of the people around the world have said they will no longer consume seafood from Japan because of health concerns, but also because they want to punish Japan for releasing the radioactive water into the sea without consulting other countries.

Also, if you accuse only China of badgering Japan by banning the import of Japanese agricultural products and seafood, be

aware that over the past year, US imports of Japanese seafood have plummeted. So while US politicians are suspiciously silent, US consumers are not.

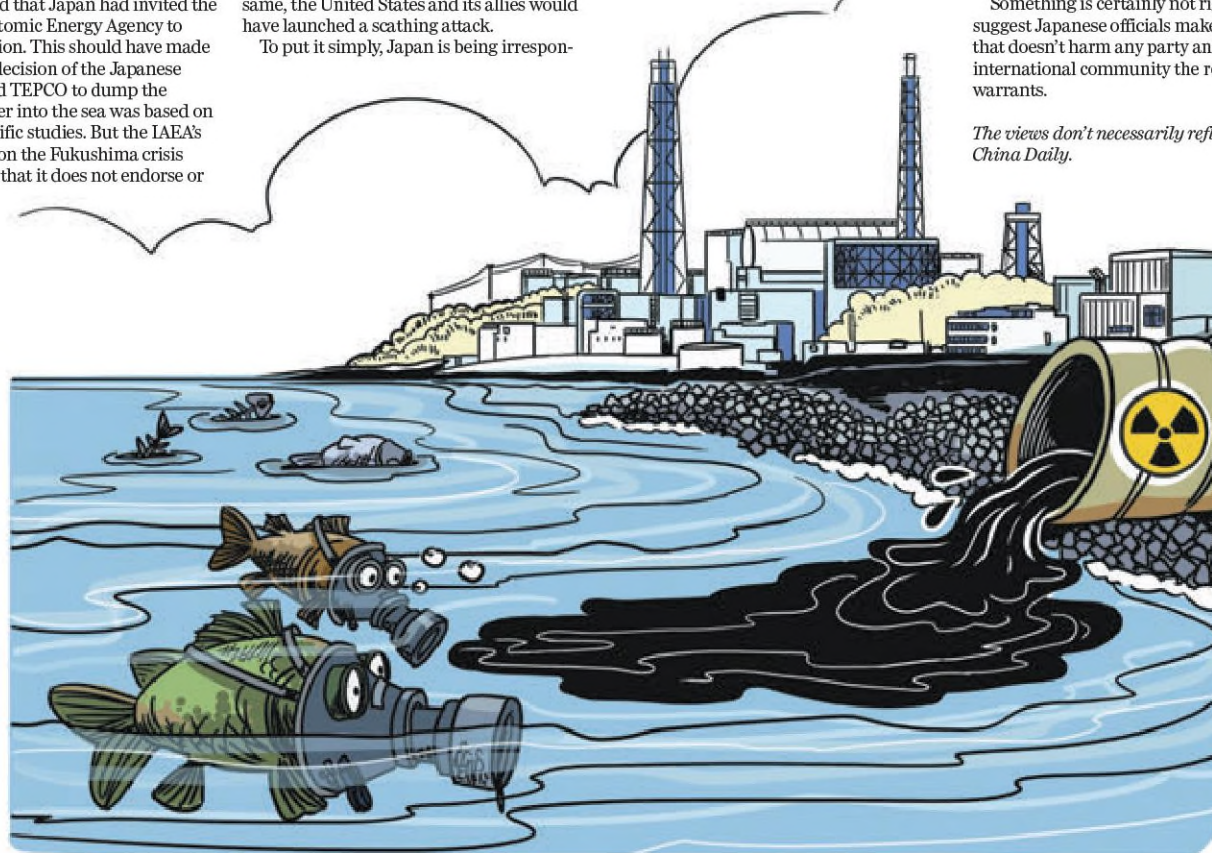
The US military, back in 2011, filed a case seeking compensation to cover the cost of the catastrophic damage servicemen on the USS *Reagan* had suffered due to radiation from the Fukushima plant. According to a complaint lawyers filed in court, "At all times relevant herein, the Japanese government (TEPCO) kept representing that there was no danger of radiation contamination to the USS *Reagan* (CVN-76) and/or its crew, that 'everything is under control,' 'all is OK, you can trust us,' and there is 'no immediate danger' or threat to human life, all the while lying through their teeth about the reactor meltdowns at FNPP."

In fact, in October 2012, TEPCO acknowledged that it had played down the safety risks at the Fukushima facility out of fear that they would lead to the shutdown of the plant.

Worse, reports revealed that before the 2011 earthquake catastrophe Japan's nuclear regulators lodged accusations of mass negligence against TEPCO, and TEPCO had failed to inspect 33 pieces of equipment at the Fukushima-Daiichi plant.

Something is certainly not right here. I suggest Japanese officials make a decision that doesn't harm any party and shows the international community the respect it warrants.

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



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Xu Man

Japan's WTO complaint against China most ridiculous

Ignoring the strong opposition from the international community, local fishers and civil society organizations, the Japanese government began discharging the radioactive water from the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea on Aug 24. The radioactive water will first contaminate the marine environment around Japan and later spread across the oceans, threatening the whole marine ecosystem.

Japan's action is tantamount to violating its obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (the London Convention for short), which prohibits the disposal of radioactive waste in the ocean.

Japan's detrimental action has drawn condemnation from people both at home and abroad, and prompted many countries and regions, including China, to take some preventive measures, such as banning the import of Japanese products, seafood in particular, to protect their citizens against the consumption of nuclear-contaminated food.

Since Japan started dumping the nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, anti-Japan protests in the Republic of Korea have escalated. And Malaysia has asserted that it is not importing live seafood from

Japan now. It also has vowed to put any "high-risk" food products from Japan to rigorous level-four food safety tests to screen for radioactive elements. Many other Asia-Pacific countries also take emergency measures.

Right from the day Japan announced it was mulling dumping the radioactive water into the sea China has been opposing the plan. And when Japan began executing the discharge plan, China, in accordance with the Food Safety Law of China, and the provisions of the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, took emergency measures to prevent contaminated seafood from Japan from entering the domestic market by suspending their imports.

According to statistics from Japan's Fisheries Agency, in 2022, Japan's seafood export volume was 387.3 billion yen (\$2.62 billion), with the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong being the largest and second-largest markets for Japanese seafood, accounting for 87.1 billion yen (22.5 percent) and 75.5 billion yen (19.5 percent)



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worth of Japan's seafood exports. The discharge of the radioactive water into the sea will certainly have a detrimental impact on Japan's seafood exports, causing significant harm to its fishing industry.

Amid all this, it is shocking to see some Japanese government officials, without considering the legitimate demands of other countries, attributing the losses of the Japanese fishing industry to China. In fact, they are demanding that China immediately lift its import ban on Japanese seafood, and have even threatened to file a complaint with the WTO against China.

Such demands and threats will not compensate the Japanese fishing industry for its losses; instead, they will escalate trade tensions between China and Japan, further exacerbating the already strained trade relations between the two countries.

Interestingly, the countries verbally supporting Japan's action are the ones that have seen the steepest decline in the import of Japanese seafood and agricultural products. Japan's data showed the United States saw the steepest drop in the import of Japanese agricultural and seafood products in the first half of this year. Sake, fish paste and scallops imports have declined the most. Fish paste and scallops are primarily produced in areas affected by the discharge of the radioactive water into the sea.

Tokyo's noxious action is not only hurt-

ing its fishing industry but also has strained Japan's relations with other countries, which in turn will severely affect its tourism industry, as fewer people from those countries, including China, would choose to travel to Japan. This will hinder Japan's efforts to revive its tourism industry and promote economic growth.

The dumping of the radioactive water into the sea is not a matter that concerns one country alone. Rather it is a serious global issue, because it concerns the health of the marine environment and ecology and, by extension, humans. The Japanese government's irresponsible decision has heightened the concerns of consumers in and outside Japan over food safety. It has also harmed the interests of the fishing industries of other countries and regions, and exacerbated geopolitical tensions.

Japan should take into account the concerns of its neighbors and the international community and immediately stop polluting the oceans and further harming the Japanese people, particularly those involved in the fishing industry. Engaging in open and sincere dialogue with the concerned parties and international organizations is necessary to find a responsible and relatively harmless solution to the radioactive water problem.

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Harald Brüning

Tokyo has sadly thrown caution to the wind

Japan has thrown caution to the wind by starting to dump the nuclear-contaminated water from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea on Aug 24.

It is always better to err on the side of caution, particularly when it comes to something like nuclear-contamination and global food supply chains. What is at stake here is also the potential threat to public health on the global level — which calls for extra caution.

"Caution is the eldest child of wisdom," French novelist, poet and playwright Victor Hugo (1802-1885) famously said.

China has been vociferously opposing Japan's decision to discharge radioactive water from the Fukushima facility and responded to Japan releasing the radioactive water into the ocean by imposing a ban on a range of foodstuffs, seafood in particular, from Japan. The Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions took similar measures.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin has been repeatedly voicing Beijing's opposition to Japan's radioactive water discharge plan. Wang said that had Fukushima's nuclear-contaminated water been truly safe — after being "treated" using the Advanced Liquid Processing System — Japan wouldn't need to dump it into the sea, "and certainly shouldn't if it's not".

The decision of the Japanese government and the Tokyo Electric Power Company has been condemned by many sectors of civil society in Japan, such as fishers and ecologists. Greenpeace Japan has said the Japanese government's "decision disregards scientific evidence, violates the human rights of communities in Japan and the Pacific region, and is non-compliant with international maritime law".

Greenpeace Japan has also said the discharge plan has failed to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment, as required by its international legal obligations, given that there is a risk of significant transboundary harm to neighboring countries, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, China, and the Philippines.

All this shows China is not alone in its principled opposition to Japan's selfish action of releasing the radioactive water into the ocean. I find the Japanese decision especially puzzling for two reasons.

First, as the world's only country that has suffered the horrible consequences of nuclear weapons used in armed conflict, I expected Japanese politicians to be much more cautious in tackling the aftermath of the destruction the earthquake-triggered tsunami caused to the Fukushima nuclear power plant in 2011.

Second, as an island nation with a long history of fisheries and a globally appreciated culinary tradition based on seafood in particular, I expected Japan's political elite to address the radioactive water issue much more seriously and judiciously. They have failed miserably on both fronts.

I take pity on the hard-working fisher folks in Fukushima and hope their legal action against the Japanese government's move will put an end to it.

Reportedly, the alternative vapor release disposal plan proposed by some was rejected by Tokyo for not just technical but also financial reasons, as the ocean discharge plan requires only one-tenth of the cost of disposing of the radioactive water through the vapor release method.

I don't know much about physics and chemistry, but I am a strong believer in common sense, people-first policies and cautiousness in public affairs.

As a die-hard optimist, I would not rule out the possibility of common sense prevailing on Japanese leaders and prompting them to eventually withdraw their 30-year-long plan to discharge the radioactive water into the ocean and replace it with something which would not harm the marine ecology and human health.

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GLOBAL VIEWS

CHEN JI

Seizing green opportunities

Leveraging China's capacity in clean energy manufacturing to help BRI countries seize opportunities in the global green value chain

The global green transition creates both opportunities and constraints for countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative to grow their economies.

Environmental and climate policies are becoming increasingly stringent in many countries due to an increase in ecological and environmental awareness. According to the OECD, the Environmental Policy Stringency of Belt and Road countries such as Türkiye, Indonesia and South Africa rose rapidly after the 1990s. This means that many developing countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative face more stringent policy and regulatory constraints than advanced economies did in the early stages of their development.

There are two main forces behind the tightening of green constraints in Belt and Road countries. The first is increased international efforts to address environmental problems such as climate change and biodiversity destruction. The second is increased public awareness of environmental protection in these countries.

There is an inverted U-shaped relationship between a country's economic development and green environmental indicators, known as the Environmental Kuznets Curve described by classical environmental economics. According to the EKC, as a country's per capita GDP grows, the level of environmental pollution first rises, then falls, a phenomenon sometimes described as "pollute first, clean up later".

However, in this era of tightening green constraints, more and more economists have observed a flattening of the EKC in developing countries, meaning developing countries are responsible for less pollution and emissions despite being at the same level of development as developed countries. The flattening of the EKC implies a change in the relationship between the environment and development. The Belt and Road countries will not follow a path of greater pollution during their initial economic development, followed by an environmental clean-up as the economy advances. Instead, they will take a new green path of development which can be described as "cleaning up while developing".

The main challenge of "cleaning up while developing" path, compared with the traditional "pollute first, clean up later" approach, is that the Belt and Road countries will face rising costs for technology, energy, capital and land. And it could lead to a slowdown in economic development.

Meanwhile, the green transition has already created new industries, such as renewable energy, electric

vehicle and batteries, which are expected to be scaled up and become mainstream in the global economy. These new industries should create opportunities for Belt and Road countries to grow.

The history of economic development suggests that seizing the opportunities brought by global trends, allocating a country's factors of production on a larger scale, and participating in global production and division of labor are the key ways for developing countries to achieve economic development. The green transition is one of the most prominent development trends in the world today, and this trend has accelerated in recent years thanks to the development of new energy industries and the implementation of national policies.

Although Belt and Road countries face rising costs because of the green constraints, the green transition also gives rise to new comparative advantages with resource endowments including new energy metals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, platinum, copper and manganese, wind energy and solar energy, while global green industry chains allow the large labor forces of many Belt and Road countries to participate in global production. Therefore, the green transition can allow many Belt and Road countries' emerging resources and large labor forces to participate more in global industry chains, and green industries may emerge as the new economic growth drivers.

China proposes that the Belt and Road Initiative should be green. The key to building a green Belt and Road Initiative is to help these countries maximize green benefits and minimize green costs.

China is able to leverage its own advantages to help Belt and Road countries seize opportunities for development related to participation in the green value chain. China could help the countries that are rich in new energy metal resources break the so-called resource curse, for example, through the construction of infrastructures such as roads and ports, and the development of midstream and downstream manufacturing industries related to new energy metals. Relying on cost-effective photovoltaic products and globally competitive power equipment, China can achieve mutually beneficial cooperation with Belt and Road countries rich in solar and wind resources by offering investment in and construction of solar and wind power plants, as well as by trade in machinery and components.

Environmental costs can be reduced by strengthening environmental assessment, raising emission standards, improving

people's welfare, and enhancing environmental responsibility. China can encourage companies to actively reduce emissions and bear the cost by improving emission standards when implementing overseas projects, in order to minimize the damage to the local environment. In the guidelines for ecological and environmental protection of foreign investment cooperation and construction projects, jointly issued by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and the Ministry of Commerce in 2022, it is explicitly stated that if the host country does not have relevant ecological and environmental policy standards or has low standard requirements, it is encouraged to adopt international practices or China's stricter standards to better address the risks and challenges of green development under the Belt and Road Initiative. The government could also strengthen cooperation with Belt and Road countries in green technology, as well as green investment and financing, and reduce the transaction costs of domestic companies going global.

If we consider the principles of cost-benefit equivalence, the benefits of environmental governance in Belt and Road countries have global or regional attributes in terms of climate change, biodiversity conservation and transnational pollution control. Since the environmental benefits are shared globally, the governance costs should not solely be borne by the Belt and Road countries, but should be shared at the global level. For example, from a historical perspective, developed countries have accumulated much greater emissions and environmental damage than developing countries. The ecological conservation efforts of developing countries have a significant impact on global climate and environment. However, developed countries have so far failed to reasonably compensate for the environmental benefits.

Therefore, China could call for global actions for benefit compensation, actively participate in and lead the international environmental protection and sustainable development, and explore the establishment of an international environmental compensation mechanism, in order to strive for legitimate and reasonable development space for Belt and Road countries.

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MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

LI XINLEI AND SHENG XUEMIN

Toward a low-carbon future

China and ASEAN should deepen and expand pragmatic cooperation in clean energy

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the proposal to build a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future, and also the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. Over the past few years, China-ASEAN cooperation on clean energy, by virtue of the platform provided by green connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative, has not only made fruitful achievements in industrial, economic and trade cooperation, but also advanced mechanism construction and the sharing of green development concepts, clean energy technologies and green management models.

In recent years, China-ASEAN trade cooperation has made notable progress against the headwind of sluggish global trade, becoming each other's biggest trading partner for three consecutive years. In the meantime, their common pursuit of green growth, featuring transition to low-carbon and clean energy, has advanced bilateral cooperation in green development.

The clean energy development strategies put forth by China and ASEAN respectively have sent a positive political signal as well. Since 2020, China's investment in renewable energy projects in Belt and Road countries has remained at more than \$2 billion annually. Between 2000 and 2020, China's total public investment allocated to renewable energy projects in the ASEAN members accounted for 60 percent of total foreign public investment in the region over that period. The Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2021-25), jointly formulated and released by the two sides in 2022, has further highlighted the importance of promoting knowledge sharing in renewable energy technologies and industrial cooperation. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement, which entered into force in January 2022, has also provided a critical opportunity for the two sides to bolster cooperation on new types of low-carbon energy industries.

Meanwhile, fueled by energy security concerns and greater competitiveness of green industries, China and ASEAN countries' complementary advantages in the clean energy industry have provided immense opportunities for bilateral cooperation in this field. According to forecasts by the International Energy Agency, ASEAN members' installed power capacity of solar photovoltaic and hydro power will surpass that of natural gas by 2035 and over 75 percent of electricity will be generated from renewables by 2040. The ASEAN members have a promising future in sustainable infrastructure, green hydrogen, etc., but are constrained by a lack of funding, underdeveloped technologies and imperfect laws and regulations.

China, as an electricity-transition pioneer among developing countries, can be a booster for the transition in ASEAN by providing green investment, green energy equip-

ment and low-carbon technologies for the ASEAN members.

Over the past decade, China-ASEAN interactions on clean energy agenda have become more institutionalized via three major regional cooperation platforms — the East Asia Summit, China-ASEAN (10+1) leaders' meeting and the meeting of ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (10+3). China has not only strengthened dialogue and exchanges with the ASEAN members as a whole, but also advanced green partnerships with each ASEAN member state in accordance with their respective resource endowments and policy priorities, such as advancing a number of major hydro power projects with Myanmar and Laos under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism, developing offshore wind power projects in collaboration with Vietnam and the Philippines, and attaching great importance to cooperation with Malaysia in the solar photovoltaic industry.

Such priorities have greatly enhanced the two sides' resource utilization rate and the efficiency of bilateral cooperation. Aside from institutional improvements, China has also strengthened soft connectivity with the ASEAN members with regard to standard specification and technical management, among others. China's standard specification and green management models have gradually gone global through integrated technical and management support — such as planning and design, equipment manufacturing, engineering construction and operating maintenance in clean energy cooperation projects — becoming the name card of bilateral green connectivity.

Currently, against the backdrop of climate change and environmental problems, energy security concerns have further heightened the importance and necessity of bilateral strategic cooperation. In light of this, China and ASEAN should further cement the foundation for clean energy cooperation and combine the government-led green cooperation platforms (from top to bottom) with the diversified project cooperation mechanisms (from bottom to top) involving relevant companies, financial institutions and think tanks. By doing so, the two sides can further optimize their practice approach and cooperation pattern, so as to better build a regional community with a shared future for green energy.

To start with, China and ASEAN should integrate existing governance mechanisms and advance bilateral cooperation under a comprehensive framework.

The existing governance mechanisms, although very diversified, are relatively fragmented. Hence, the two sides should cultivate comprehensive cooperation platforms that are more professional, long-term and branded. They should further advance the construction of the China-ASEAN Clean Energy Cooperation Center and turn it into an institution that plays a central

role in institutional guarantee, strategic planning and project implementation. In the meantime, the two sides should innovate cooperation in such areas as green finance to meet their cooperation needs, by both taking into account the whole situation and having an emphasis.

Second, China and ASEAN should seize the opportunities brought by the implementation of the RCEP to facilitate the establishment of regional technical standards and the building of green industrial chains in East Asia.

China should make full use of the principles and norms enshrined in the RCEP agreement, such as market access, economic and technological cooperation, and intellectual property rights, to align with ASEAN's green development strategies and digital master plan. The two sides should expand positive spillovers of green technologies and industry standard application during bilateral pragmatic cooperation and promote the coordination of regional clean energy industry standards and technical specifications. They should strengthen political mutual trust and lower the risks associated with cooperation, and at the same time, advance the building of a regional clean energy industry chain.

Finally, they should advance new third-party cooperation mechanisms with ASEAN playing a central role.

Green competition and cooperation models that many parties participate in could provide more diversified interest options, which helps break the absolute power structure among countries and their fixed benefit predilection and creates broader space for the coordination of interests. China can collaborate with developed nations such as the United States, Japan and European countries on green projects, align with such initiatives as the Blue Dot Network, Build Back Better World and Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, and create a sound external environment for cooperation. It can also introduce third parties such as international organizations into cooperation to enhance the transparency of China-ASEAN cooperation and dispel some ASEAN countries' concerns over Chinese investments.

In the meantime, China should attach greater significance to global publicity of great cooperation examples to improve China's image as a green investor, so as to enhance local residents' favorability and strengthen "heart-to-heart connections" in green development.

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WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

Zhou Liya and Han Zhen, the women behind hit dance dramas like *Poetic Dance: The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting* and *The Eternal Wave*, have just celebrated the 10th anniversary of *Dragon Boat Racing*, the first joint project the duo choreographed and directed.

Two performances of the production were restaged in late August at the Guangzhou Opera House in Guangdong province, where it was premiered a decade ago.

The drama, created in June 2013 and sponsored by the China National Arts Fund in 2014, follows the fortunes of the He clan of Shawan ancient town in Guangzhou's Panyu district in the 1930s — their love stories, inheritance and development of local musical styles, and the perseverance they presented during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

Over the past decade, the drama has toured 60 domestic and overseas cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macao, as well as Washington and New York, with around 300 performances, and won several national and provincial honors.

Since *Dragon Boat Racing*, the duo has created more works with the support of the fund, including the aforementioned pair of hit dramas and *Du Fu* and *Wing Chun*.

In 2016 and 2018, Zhou was supported by the fund to create some separate, smaller dance works.

At a news conference held by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism on Aug 31, Zhou said that the past decade saw remarkable progress and development in Chinese dance dramas, and the fund, with its all-around support and guidance, has helped the endeavors of many young art creators.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the China National Arts Fund.

Launched in December 2013, the fund supports creation and promotion of, and talent cultivation for, stage arts and fine arts that represent the nation's artistic benchmark, either with sponsorship or awards. The funds mainly come from the central government and public donations.

The anniversary celebration includes a tour of 15 performing arts productions it sponsored from Sept 7 to Nov 14 in Beijing, Jiangsu and Sichuan provinces.

It will also host an exhibition at the China National Arts and Crafts Museum and China Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum in Beijing in December, introducing its achievements over the past decade with physical exhibits, archives, photos and videos.

Seminars will be held to discuss the fund's sponsoring mechanism — its emphasis, operation and output — and future prospects. Related publications to review the fund's decade-long development will be released, while around 150 stage works and 400 art pieces will be displayed online.

"The fund places an emphasis on supporting the development of traditional music, opera and Chinese orchestras, as well as Chinese

Creative accounting

China National Arts Fund celebrates landmark anniversary of successful financing, **Fang Aiqing** reports.



Clockwise from top: Some works sponsored by the China National Arts Fund, *The Eternal Wave*, *Poetic Dance: The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting*, *Battle of Shanghai*, and *The Writer Lu Yao*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“The fund places an emphasis on supporting the development of traditional music, opera and Chinese orchestras, as well as Chinese painting, calligraphy and seal carving.”

Wang Mingliang, director of the fund's management center

painting, calligraphy and seal carving, while promoting the localization of theater, opera, dance drama, musical and oil painting,” says Wang Mingliang, director of the fund's management center.

Wang adds that they are keen on integrating the ideals, conviction and humanistic spirit of fine traditional culture with new artistic expression, and combining traditional Chinese aesthetics with that of modern generations.

According to Wang, since its establishment, the fund has sponsored more than 7,000 projects, including the creation of 1,234 major stage works, 484 fine arts projects, and 1,161 domestic and overseas exhibition and performance projects, as well as around 3,000 talent training and support projects.

Since 2021, it has accepted proposals from Hong Kong and Macao, subsidizing 38 projects by art institutions and individuals in the two special administrative regions, and has also been supporting young talent from Taiwan who work and study in the Chinese mainland.

Zhu Jinhui, dean of Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts in the Shaanxi provincial capital, said at the news conference that the school has benefited from the fund, particularly in supporting their representative study into the art and culture of the Zhou (c. 11th century-256 BC), Qin (221-206 BC), Han (206 BC-AD 220) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, the revolutionary art of Yan'an, western China folk arts and the Chang'an (today's Xi'an) and Loess Plateau schools of painting.

He says that the school has had 76 programs subsidized by the fund in recent years, from which 140 projects have been derived, and have generated an output value of around 270 million yuan (\$37 million).

Among them, a program set up in 2017 recruited 20 hearing-impaired students with knowledge in arts and crafts creation from around the country, who created 55 wheat straw paintings.

Li Li, director of the Inner Mongolia Art Theatre, says that 187 programs from the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, mainly featuring ethnic and nomadic culture and arts, have been supported by the fund over the past decade, covering all levels of art troupes, institutions — either State-owned or private — and individual artists. Some of them have won national awards.

Notably, it has supported the creation and talent training of grassroots Ulan Muqir troupes that travel around to perform for rural herdsmen.

According to Wang, in the future, the China National Arts Fund will promote the establishment of provincial arts funds, introduce public funds to broaden the source of capital, explore ways to spend the funds more wisely and share the artistic output to a wider audience, in order to maximize the fund's guiding role in domestic artistic creation.

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ifaw 国际爱护动物基金会

CWCV 中国野生动物保护协会

AD

雪豹 Snow leopard

Between heaven and earth, together with other sentient beings, I live.

—Zhuangzi, philosopher, late fourth century BC

天地与我并生，而万物与我为一

——《庄子·齐物论》

CULTURE



Imperial sacrifices reveal intriguing facts

Remains of rare animals, including pandas, found at Han Dynasty tomb hint at changes to climate, environment, **Wang Ru** reports.

Early in August, a hashtag about panda remains found in Xi'an, Shaanxi province in one of the sacrificial pits dug for Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) went viral on Sina Weibo, China's popular micro-blogging platform. A lot of people expressed surprise that pandas existed 2,000 years ago.

"It seems that people are viewing the find from a modern perspective," says Hu Songmei, a researcher with the Shaanxi Academy of Archaeology, who studies animal archaeology.

"The panda is now considered a national treasure, with only a small number existing in the world, and it attracts a lot of attention.

"But in the past, the climate and environment were more suitable. As a result, there would have been more pandas, and they were probably not as valued as they are today," she adds.

There are actually more important findings from the sacrificial pits dug for Emperor Wen and his mother Empress Dowager Bo, which were excavated in 2021-22 and 2020-22, respectively, including the bones of 40 high-value animals, pottery and figurines.

Hu says that although it is not permissible to actively excavate imperial tombs in China, researchers can examine their sacrificial pits to find out more about them.

In 2021, the National Cultural Heritage Administration announced that the Jiangcun Grand Tomb in Xi'an, a large mausoleum found many decades ago, but whose occupant had yet to be identified, was the resting place of Emperor Wen. The tomb is referred to as "Baling" in historical records.

The announcement came as a surprise, as ancient sources seemed to suggest that Baling was in a different location, about two kilometers away from the tomb.

Emperor Wen's mother and wife are also buried nearby. So far, researchers have found over 100 sacrificial pits for the emperor, and around 380 for his mother. The mother's tomb is referred to historically as "Nanling".

Hu says the pits that have already been excavated contain the remains of animals, and that those dug for the emperor seem to be larger than those for his mother. While there is no clear reason why this should be the case, it is possible that larger pits were deemed more commensurate with the emperor's elevated status.

This is not the first time that panda remains have been found in a sacrificial pit. In 1975, excavations of one of the Empress Dowager Bo's pits also revealed traces of the animal, but as it had been broken into by grave robbers previously, only part of a single skeleton was intact.

The newly discovered panda remains are complete and show that it was placed on its side in a rectangular brick enclosure, with



Top: An aerial photo of the area where the tomb of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty and those of his mother and wife are located. **Above:** The excavation site of the Jiangcun Grand Tomb in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, which has been identified as the tomb of Emperor Wen. **Left:** Remains of a tortoise found in a sacrificial pit at the tomb of Empress Dowager Bo. **Below:** Remains of an Asian tapir, an animal now extinct in China, found in a sacrificial pit at the tomb of Emperor Wen. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

its head facing toward the emperor.

For Hu, the remains of an Asian tapir, an animal now extinct in China, is a much more important discovery. She vividly remembers the first time she saw its bones.

"It was an afternoon, and a member of the archaeological team asked me to take a look at some remains they had just discovered, thinking they might have belonged to a camel. But the moment I saw them, I realized they belonged to a tapir, as I had studied tapir fossils and recognized the shape."

Hu was surprised by the finding and quickly realized its value.

"Tapir remains have been found before in other sites around China, like the skull and jawbone unearthed at the Yinxu Ruins in Anyang, Henan province, but this is the best-preserved example found so far.

"The tapir has died out in China, but its presence here in the past shows that the climate and environment has changed a lot since then," says Hu.

After preliminary morphological comparisons, data analysis and ancient DNA identification, the bones of 40 kinds of animals, including red cranes, green peacocks, tortoises, golden monkeys, tigers, mainland serows, Indian bison, yaks and antelopes, have been found, and are believed to have lived in the royal gardens.

Western Han (206 BC-AD 24) poet and musician Sima Xiangru, who lived during the 2nd century BC, described the Shanglin Gardens, a large royal garden, and many of the animals he mentioned were also found in the sacrificial pits, Hu says.

"The discovery of a large number of such valuable animals, each buried in their own sacrificial pit, is groundbreaking in China," she says, adding that many animal sacrifices found at tombs elsewhere were buried in one large pit, instead of individually.

"Through the discovery of these animals, we can get a better picture of the environment and climate around the site during the time of the Western Han Dynasty. Some of the animals now living in southern China were able to live in northwestern China during the reign of Emperor Wen. This means the local climate was hotter and more humid at the time.

"Moreover, the existence of macaques, golden monkeys, tigers, pandas and deer suggests that multiple forms of landscaping were present in the Shanglin Garden, including forests, bamboo groves, grassland, rivers, lakes and swamps ... so this early royal garden was host to a wide variety of flora and fauna," she adds.

As the area's environment and climate changed, and human activity increased, some of the animals gradually disappeared from what is now central Shaanxi.

Hu adds that while some of the animals sacrificed had likely been trapped locally, others had probably been sent as tributes from vassal states of the Western Han Dynasty.

Historically, the custom of burying animals to accompany the dead was seen as a demonstration of wealth. Hu says that it was common for the wealthy to be buried with ordinary livestock, like pigs, sheep and cows, but for royalty, being buried with high-value animals was a symbol of social status.

According to Cao Long, a researcher at the Shaanxi Academy of Archaeology who was part of the Baling excavation, there is a long history of taking animals from royal gardens for use as sacrifices.

He adds that while historical literature suggests that Emperor Wen was frugal, and cut back on many of the decorations for his tomb, it still conformed to the expectations for an emperor's tomb, and the large number of animal sacrifices is proof of this.

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Heavy ion therapy shines hope on cancer patients

"I never thought that I would beat the tumor," says a cancer patient in Lanzhou in Northwest China's Gansu province.

The man adds that he is particularly grateful for heavy ion therapy he received, at a follow-up visit following several rounds of treatment revealed that his cancer cells had disappeared.

A research team from the Institute of Modern Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has developed the country's first medical heavy ion accelerator with independent intellectual property rights, and put it into clinical application.

The successful operation of the medical equipment blazed a trail of independent innovation from the initial basic research to its final industrialization and promotion, according to the China Science Daily.

In 1993, researchers proposed to carry out basic research on heavy ion cancer treatment during an academic conference held in Tianshui, Gansu.

Cancer treatments employing heavy ion accelerators can bombard a target with high-energy electrons to kill cancer cells.

Compared to traditional therapy such as radiation, heavy ion treatment is considered to be more balanced, exposing healthy cells to less radiation. The treatment period is shorter and the therapy can more effectively control cancer cells.

In 2006, China followed the United States, Japan and Germany to become the fourth country to successfully carry out heavy ion clinical treatment, when four cancer patients participated in preliminary clinical trials for heavy ion therapy.

Between 2006 and 2009, the research team cooperated with local hospitals to conduct preliminary clinical trial studies among 103 patients with superficial tumors and witnessed satisfactory curative effects.

The ultimate goal of heavy ion cancer therapy is to inject heavy ions into the body to treat deep tumors. Thus, the researchers began the preliminary clinical trial study on deep tumors in 2009.

From 2009 to 2013, there were 110 patients with deep tumors who took part in the preliminary clinical trial study, says Xiao Guoqing, former head of the IMP.

Meanwhile, the researchers were planning to develop a real medical heavy ion accelerator.

In 2015, China's first such accelerator, with independent intellectual property rights, rolled off the production line in Wuwei, in Gansu.

The price of the device is about one-third of similar imported ones, without any high maintenance costs.

On March 26, 2020, the accelerator was put into operation, and by the end of June this year, more than 750 patients completed their therapy at Wuwei's heavy ion treatment center, with remarkable curative effects.

The follow-up statistics showed that the three-year local tumor control rate reached 84 percent among 46 clinical trial participants.

Similar medical heavy ion accelerators are being developed in Fujian, Zhejiang, Hubei, Jiangsu and Jilin provinces.

The researchers disclosed that they are currently working on the development of a second-generation accelerator with lower power consumption.

Heavy ion therapy is highly effective in treating a wide range of solid tumors and can be used in cases where surgery is not possible or unsuitable, when a patient is sensitive to conventional radiation therapy, or prone to relapse following such therapy. This includes tumors located in the central nervous system, head, neck, skull base, chest and abdomen.

The range of indications is expected to broaden through further research and the maturation of the technology.

XINHUA

LIFE



From left: A still image from the movie *Oppenheimer* shows American theoretical physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer and his wife; director Christopher Nolan (left) receives a scroll bearing the Chinese characters for his film, *Oppenheimer*, during its Beijing premiere on Aug 22; a scene from the movie featuring Robert Downey Jr, portraying Lewis Strauss, a founding commissioner of the Atomic Energy Commission in the late 1940s. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A blast from the past

Christopher Nolan's eagerly awaited historical blockbuster *Oppenheimer* blows the competition away, topping the national box office on its opening weekend, **Xu Fan** reports.

On the penultimate day of this year's bumper summer movie season, iconic director Christopher Nolan's highly anticipated movie *Oppenheimer* made its mainland debut, becoming the latest blockbuster to contribute to the recovery of the domestic film market.

Thanks to a string of critically acclaimed and commercially successful blockbusters like *Interstellar* and *Inception*, Nolan has accumulated a lot of fans in the country.

During his visit last month, marking a six-year hiatus since his 2017 tour to promote his war epic *Dunkirk*, eager Chinese fans flocked to the two preview screenings in Beijing and Shanghai, respectively. Despite the scorching noon heat during the Beijing event, which was partly held outside Universal CityWalk Cinema, a huge crowd greeted the director, with hundreds vying for his autograph.

As of Tuesday, the three-hour-long film has grossed more than 240 million yuan (\$32.9 million), replacing the Chinese blockbuster *No More Bets* over the weekend as the country's latest box-office champion.

Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, the movie skillfully intertwines multiple narrative threads to portray the life of its titular character, the famous American theoretical physicist, and explores his journey to become the director of the Los Alamos Laboratory during World War II, where he led the development of the world's first atomic bomb.

Recalling his inspiration to write the script for the movie, Nolan revealed that he is acquainted with the story of Oppenheimer, who is often referred to as "the father of the atomic bomb".

However, what captivated him the most was a historical moment filled with drama. Even before Oppenheimer and his team of scientists prepared to press the button, detonating the world's first nuclear explosion in July 1945, they couldn't entirely eliminate the possibility that there was a slim chance of triggering a chain reaction capable of destroying the planet.

"So, I want to bring the audience into that room (where the facilities were installed to launch the deto-



nation), to be there for those decisions, to witness the moment when the button was pushed," he explained during an interview with Chinese journalists.

For the 53-year-old director, known for his complex storytelling, the key challenge in presenting the tale lay in striking a delicate balance between staying faithful to the historical events and ensuring audience engagement.

"I felt incredibly fortunate to have had access to such a comprehensive account of Oppenheimer's life in the book that I adapted. This book, which took 25 years of research, covers all aspects of his

life and is filled with an abundance of valuable information," he said.

For the young generation of Chinese theatergoers who may have limited knowledge of the history, or of the 1940s, the movie will acquaint them with some of the most influential scientists from that era. Such figures include scientific giant Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, a Nobel Prize laureate in Physics, and Edward Teller, known as "the father of the hydrogen bomb".

Contrary to the common perception that scientists are serious individuals leading strictly intellectual lives, the movie delves into a lesser-

known side of these scholars. It not only depicts Oppenheimer's emotional struggles, but also anecdotes from the lives of other notable scientists, revealing a more human and multifaceted aspect to their characters.

Nolan explained that, since the movie portrays real individuals, he aimed to incorporate a certain degree of warmth and comedy into the story, allowing for a natural representation of reality.

The movie, which was shot over 50 days, and marks the longest of all Nolan's films to date, involved a complete reconstruction of Los Alamos, the town in New Mexico where the Manhattan Project was conducted, within a tight schedule, despite harsh weather conditions.

Although Nolan initially considered filming on location at Los Alamos, where some structures from the Manhattan Project still stand, he discovered that the present-day location no longer accurately resembles the Los Alamos of the 1940s era. This is primarily due to the presence of modern buildings and businesses, including a branch of the ubiquitous coffee chain, Starbucks.

Therefore, the crew built exteriors resembling 1940s Los Alamos at Ghost Ranch, a sprawling 8,498-hectare retreat in northern New Mexico. Meanwhile, they filmed most of the interiors on location at Los Alamos.

Currently, *Oppenheimer* holds an impressive score of 8.9 out of 10 on China's popular review aggregator Douban, making it one of the top-rated blockbusters of China's summer season.

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"I want to bring the audience into that room (where the facilities were installed to launch the detonation), to be there for those decisions, to witness the moment when the button was pushed."

Christopher Nolan, director

Clockwise from top left: Actor Cillian Murphy as Oppenheimer delivers a speech in a scene; the movie's Chinese poster; Nolan shares behind-the-scenes stories during the Beijing event; actress Emily Blunt (center) portrays Katherine "Kitty" Oppenheimer in the movie.

The power of dreams can brighten up nights

I've met some who say they simply don't dream. When the lids are shuttered, and alpha state arrives, they claim that they simply

"check out". Mind devoid of distractions, free of frivolous fanciful figments of imagination, and their wits' whiteboard wiped clean of the previous day's disappointments and diversions — they simply sleep for eight hours or so each night.

What dreary drudgery these dreamless dolts defend. I think that not to take advantage of Nature's

no-fee nightly Technicolor motion picture show, sans popcorn — feature films in which the dreamer is often the STAR of the show — is to sacrifice a gift from the subconscious that keeps on giving.

Freud would say it's an end-of-day survival mechanism by the mind to discard the day's dilemmas, and allow your head to sort out the three-ring circus which is the daily dialogue between one's id, ego and superego. The Bard also had a thing or 100 to say about nocturnal reveries. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, after Bottom and Titania's heads hit the pillow and they enter the land of Nod, all bets are definitely off on what might happen in the deep forest.

And of course, a Danish noble contemplating ending it all, famously asks, if after the deed, one can expect: "To sleep, perchance to dream." Thus, Hamlet wisely opted to take Pascal's wager and live to dream another day.

And what do the Chinese ancients have to say about dreams? (Not young waking boyhood dreams of hoping to be the next Yao Ming, of course.)

Li Yu (937-978) was the third ruler of the Southern Tang state, and also happened to be quite the wordsmith. *My Idle Dreams Roam Far* is a wonderful look through poetry into the mind's eye when the eyes are closed.

I love how this short piece man-

ages to engage all the senses, save touch and taste. Eyes, ears and nose are busy behind the poet's fluttering lids.

My idle dreams roam far, to the southern land where spring is fragrant.

Wind and strings play on a boat on the river's clear surface, city full of catkins flying like light dust.

People are occupied admiring the flowers.

My idle dreams roam far, to the southern land where autumn is clear.

For a thousand li over rivers and hills, cold colors stretch far, deep in flowering reeds, a solitary boat is moored.

Beneath the bright moon, a flute

plays in the tower.

And of course, Li Bai (701-762) had a thing or two to say about the otherworldly world of dreams. His *Traveling to Tianmu in a Dream* is a classic exposition of the surreal nature of escapist reveries.

The people of Yue speak of Tianmu; its red clouds in bright light or darkness might be seen.

Tianmu pierces the sky and stretches to the horizon, its power surpasses the Five Peaks and eclipses Chicheng Mountain. (Giving the reader a sense of the famous Wordsworthian "mind's eye" wandering above a field of daffodils.)

Because of this I wish to dream of Wu and Yue, and in one night fly over the moon in Mirror Lake. (Pos-

sibly referring to place names or desired individuals.)

The immortals line up like hemp (I won't go there, as I know you're aware that he's a wine connoisseur).

Suddenly one's spirit palpitates and one's soul shakes; startled one wakes and takes a deep breath.

There is only the pillow and mat when I am awake; gone are the mist and red clouds from before.

All earthly pleasures are like this; since ancient times, the myriad things all like water flowing east.

Why should I lower my face and bow for the influential and the rich, and take away my joyous smile?

Surely, this statesman-slash-poet understood the value of the escapist pleasures of dreams to make the earthly grind more tolerable.

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