

Brewing romance

Couple pour their heart and soul into coffee shop in Kashgar, Xinjiang

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Experts applaud BRI in spurring trade, investment

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CHINA DAILY

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President Xi Jinping (center) and his wife, Peng Liyuan, pose for a group photo with other heads of state and their spouses attending the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday. Xi hosted a welcoming banquet for the foreign guests. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi: Joint building of Belt and Road full of vitality

President calls for embarking on new journey toward another golden decade

By XU WEI
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President Xi Jinping emphasized on Tuesday the importance of upholding the original aspiration of cooperation and staying true to the mission of development, so that Belt and Road high-quality cooperation can “reflect the spirit of the times”.

Xi made the remark while addressing a welcoming banquet for international dignitaries, including heads of state and government and leaders of international organi-

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zations, who are attending the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing.

“Belt and Road cooperation, robust and fruitful in its first decade, is now full of dynamism and vitality,” he said. “We must embark with drive and enthusiasm on the new journey toward another golden decade.”

The president told the gathering, “Let us take this opportunity to salute all those who have participated in and contributed to Belt and Road cooperation.”

He also said: “The world today is far from tranquil. The world economy is under growing downward pressure. Global development is confronted with multiple challenges. That said, we remain unwavering in our belief that the historical trend of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit is unstoppable, our people’s aspiration for a better life remains strong as

ever, and the desire of all countries to achieve common development and prosperity is overwhelming.”

Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, welcomed the leaders and their spouses at the Great Hall of the People before taking a group photo on Tuesday evening. The banquet was held at the Golden Hall of the majestic building.

The president started his speech by saying: “Spring is a season of blossoming, and autumn is a time of harvest. Over the past decade since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed, China and BRI partners have

worked hand in hand and exemplified the Silk Road spirit, which is characterized by peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit.

“Together we have contributed to global connectivity and created platforms for international economic cooperation. Together we have been a driving force for global growth.

“Together we have carried out thousands of cooperation projects with solid deliverables. Together we have written a magnificent chapter in promoting a connected world and charting a path for all to prosper individually and collectively,” he added.

“None of these achievements sim-

ply fell into our laps, or were granted by anyone. They have been made possible by the governments, businesses and people of BRI partners through hard work, wisdom and courage,” he said.

The BRI pursues development, promotes win-win outcomes, and inspires hope, he said.

Human history shows that a bumper harvest would not be possible without an untiring spirit and unremitting efforts, and the same is true of sustainable achievements that benefit our posterity, Xi said.

“This is the responsibility that we, political leaders of this generation, must fulfill toward the people of today and future generations.”

Initiative offers global community a better way

The third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, for which leaders, representatives and businesspeople from around the world have gathered in Beijing to discuss the Belt and Road Initiative’s shared goals of common development, integration and prosperity, comes at a sharp turning point in the world’s history.

The event, held on Tuesday and Wednesday, also marks 10 years since the grand project was proposed by President Xi Jinping.

The BRI has funded infrastructure and contributed to common economic growth and people-to-people exchanges all over the world. Primarily tailored toward countries of the developing Global South, the initiative endeavours to address global inequalities in development through its projects, which create new opportunities to expand trade and more readily integrate countries for a “community of a shared future”.

WORLD WATCH
By Tom Fowdy

Although commonly associated with infrastructure, the BRI is increasingly an umbrella term that refers to many forms of cooperation, ranging from education and science to the environment.

Contrary to misleading Western media reports, the BRI is not a zero-sum game in which some countries “win” at the expense or exploitation of others. Instead, it places an onus on commonality and globalization as the primary means to achieving growth.

For example, the China-Laos Railway, which opened in late 2021, has given landlocked Laos a railway that allows it to access the Chinese market, massively expanding its exports and overcoming geographic obstacles. Or consider the new Padma Bridge in Bangladesh, which has fully connected the country by spanning its widest river. The BRI thus creates new openings for countries.

The Belt and Road Forum comes at a pivotal juncture in world history. The BRI aims for cooperation on shared economic challenges to achieve mutual gains.

See *Solution*, page 2

BRI to bear more fruit worldwide, executives say

By ZHONG NAN and ZHENG XIN

The Belt and Road Initiative, as it advances, will consistently yield substantial cooperation, investment and growth opportunities for businesses on a global scale, said senior government officials and business executives on Tuesday.

Speaking at the Belt and Road CEO Conference of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, they said that through such collaboration, Chinese and foreign companies can enhance their research capabilities, embrace cutting-edge technology and refine their application expertise. These activities can potentially reshape their growth trajectory and play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable economic development.

Addressing the conference, Vice-Premier He Lifeng said that China is willing to expand mutual market access with countries involved in the BRI, create more trade cooperation platforms, build up a diversified financing system, deepen production capacity cooperation and expand two-way investment.

The vice-premier stressed that China encourages businesses from all participating countries to actively promote cooperation in areas such as big data, artificial intelligence and new energy. This will drive the development of BRI toward a greener, healthier and more intelligent direction, said He, who is also a member of the

Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

At the conference, nearly 300 delegates from Chinese and foreign companies signed cooperation agreements, which encompass projects in various fields, including infrastructure, clean energy, artificial intelligence, financial services, modern agriculture and rail transportation, according to the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, one of the event’s organizers.

For instance, the Beijing-headquartered China Energy Engineering Corp signed eight project contracts with countries participating in the BRI, including Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates, during the conference. The total value of these new agreements exceeds \$4.1 billion, covering a range of projects, including building photovoltaic power plants and energy storage facilities.

The number of projects, countries and regions involved, and the value of deals have notably surpassed those of the previous CEO conference, which was held in Beijing in 2019, said the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Two-way investment between China and other economies involved in the BRI totaled more than \$380 billion between 2013 and 2022, according to a white paper recently released by the State Council Information Office.

“Looking ahead, we see tremendous potential for further collaboration under the BRI. The



Business executives interact during the Belt and Road CEO Conference of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at the National Convention Center in Beijing on Tuesday. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

initiative presents us with unique opportunities to enhance connectivity, foster economic growth, and create long-term prosperity,” said Mohammad A. Abunayyan, chairman of ACWA Power, a power project developer and operator based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The BRI, which emphasizes high-quality cooperation, aligns perfectly with the company’s shared vision of common development and prosperity, he said.

Aron Harilela, chairman and CEO of Harilela Hotels Group and former chairman of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, said that at a time when protectionism would tear the world apart, the BRI speaks to a vision of a shared future — a

vision where countries and businesses can work together not just to make people’s lives better, but a framework they can use to tackle the economic, social and environmental challenges the world faces.

The BRI is a growth concept, a cooperative platform and a market network built for the common development without a unilateral dominant plan, said Wang Wen, executive dean of Renmin University of China’s Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies. It emphasizes action and develops rules through practical and equal cooperation, Wang said.

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TOP NEWS

Africa sees new hope in malaria fight

Latest medicine developed in China is more effective, easier to administer

By XING YI in London and WANG XIAODONG in Nairobi

The prevention and control of malaria in Africa is set to get a major boost from a new drug that is not only more effective, but also easier to administer than previous medicines, with the number of deaths attributed to the infectious disease expected to fall sharply as a result.

In case studies conducted in Kenya, second-generation artesunate for injection, developed by Chinese pharmaceutical company Fosun Pharma, has proved highly effective in treating severe malaria in children, Kenyan health experts said.

In addition, the new drug — produced under the brand name Argesun — can be easier and faster to prepare, and safer to inject, than its predecessor, which was produced under the name Artesun, and which was widely used in dozens of countries for more than 10 years.

Unlike Artesun, which requires a two-step reconstitution before use, Argesun only requires a one-step dilution before injection, which makes it more user-friendly for doctors and nurses and improves its accessibility, said Walter Otieno, a pediatrician and researcher with the Kenya Medical Research Institute.

"We think that this is a very good development. It is really going to cut our rate of deaths and also the complications caused by malaria," Otieno said.

In Kenya, the malaria transmission rate can be as high as 30 to 50 percent during the rainy season in some places near Lake Victoria, he said, adding that children under 5 face the highest risk of malaria in the country.

Through use of the drug and other methods, including malaria vaccines and mosquito prevention and control, the transmission of malaria in Kenya is likely to be significantly reduced, Otieno said.

Argesun was pre-qualified by



Local doctors learn about malaria control and guidance on medication in Africa. The training aims to help them know more about malaria. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Members of a Chinese medical team teach baduanjin, a traditional Chinese health exercise, to employees in the Acadia mine zone in Zimbabwe on April 25. ZHANG BAOPING / XINHUA

the World Health Organization in June and has been registered in 18 African countries, according to Fosun Pharma.

Both Artesun and Argesun are innovative antimalarial drugs based on artemisinin, which was discovered by Nobel laureate Tu Youyou in the 1970s, and which has made significant contributions to global malaria control and prevention during the past two decades.

Wu Yifang, chairman of Fosun Pharma, said the company recognized the strategic value of antimalarial drugs based on artemisinin and restructured its subsidiary Guilin Pharmaceutical in 2004, to start introducing the drugs to the global market. Its first antimalarial drug

entered Africa in 2007, and the company launched a training program for front-line medical workers in Africa in 2014.

"Through continuous innovation, Fosun Pharma has become a global leader in antimalarial drugs and one of the most influential Chinese brands in Africa," he said.

Malaria is prevalent in many African countries, and around 95 percent of all new malaria cases globally were reported in Africa, resulting in more than 600,000 deaths, according to the World Health Organization.

"To win the battle against malaria, we have to eliminate it globally," Wu said, adding that the company is pushing to transform its antimalari-

al drugs from "made in China and used in Africa" to "made in Africa and used in Africa", in order to increase the drugs' accessibility and affordability there.

Last year, Fosun Pharma started building a pharmaceutical production facility and distribution hub in Cote d'Ivoire, which will produce antimalarial drugs and antibacterial medicines.

The project will be developed in three phases and is expected to have a capacity of 5 billion medicine tablets annually upon completion. In addition to improving access to quality and affordable lifesaving medicines across West Africa, the project is also likely to facilitate the transfer of medical and manufacturing knowledge to Africa and create 1,000 local jobs.

On Oct 12, Fosun Pharma held a seminar on the management of malaria with the Department of Health in Kisumu, Kenya.

During the seminar, Kibor Keitany, head of the Kenya National Malaria Control Program at the Ministry of Health, emphasized Kenya's commitment to further expanding the use of injectable artesunate, alongside WHO-approved vaccines, to reduce malaria-related deaths among at-risk groups, including pregnant women and children under 5.

"The new generation of injectable artesunate is an important addition to existing interventions, like indoor spraying, vaccines and deployment of insecticide-treated nets, which the country is relying on to achieve its zero-malaria target in the near future," Keitany said.

Robert Opoka, from Kenya's Aga Khan University Medical College, said the new drug's ease of use will make it more convenient for health workers.

"Malaria is a big problem in Africa. It affects not just Africans, but affects the most vulnerable groups of Africans, including children and mothers who are pregnant," he said, adding that the new drug will play an important role in avoiding deaths and infections.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

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Nation's medical assistance to continent continues to grow

With a population of more than 1.4 billion, Africa has a disproportionately high share of global malaria cases. The continent accounted for 96 percent of the global deaths, some 593,000 cases, according to the latest world malaria report, published in 2022 by the World Health Organization.

China, whose population is similar in number to that of Africa, achieved malaria-free certification from the WHO in 2021. But some 70 years ago, China suffered 30 million cases of malaria a year.

In the seven decades of sustained effort in malaria control, China has gained valuable experience and is actively sharing it with African countries.

Here is a timeline of significant events along the road of progress:

• 1963

The Chinese government sends its first medical team to assist several nations in Africa. Since then, the country's medical support to Africa has continued to grow.

• 1972

Chinese scientists, led by Tu Youyou, extract artemisinin from sweet wormwood, and this becomes the core compound of the most effective malaria-fighting drug known so far.

• 1977

China's Guilin Pharmaceutical Factory develops Artesunate, a water-soluble derivative of artemisinin that has enhanced effectiveness against severe malaria.

• 1980s

Chinese research teams experiment with insecticide-soaked bed nets in places like Guangdong province to cull the mosquitoes that spread malaria.

Meanwhile, China starts to help African countries to build comprehensive hospitals and provides assistance in the local fight against different epidemic diseases, including malaria.

• 1990s

The number of malaria cases in China plummets, and deaths are reduced by 95 percent. At the same time, China increases the scale of its medical aid to African countries.

• 2000s

China's antimalarial model — the combination of rapid diagnostic tests, insecticide-treated nets and artemisinin-based therapies — is endorsed by the World Health Organization as the recommended malaria response.

• 2006

At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China pledges to help Africa fight malaria and to set up 30 centers to fight and prevent malaria in African countries in the next three years.

• 2007

China's Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine starts malaria elimination project with Comoros, an archipelago country in Southeast-

ern Africa, in 2007. The joint efforts pay off, as by 2017, Comoros had achieved zero malaria deaths and a 98 percent reduction in the number of malaria cases. The experience of cooperation in malaria control between China and Comoros has also been promoted in Sao Tome and Principe, Kenya, Togo and Gambia.

• 2010

Artesun, developed by China's Guilin Pharmaceutical, becomes the first injectable treatment for severe malaria prequalified by the WHO. The WHO's prequalification allows the medicine to be used by public sector healthcare outlets in Africa. This has saved millions of lives in the continent since then.

• 2015

The China-Tanzania Demonstration on Malaria Control Project, designed based on China's malaria surveillance and response model, is implemented in Tanzania and leads to a significant reduction in malaria prevalence

rates, from over 30 percent in 2015 to less than 3 percent in 2021, at the intervention sites. The evaluation of the project shows that the practical, feasible and affordable approach has potential for application in other African countries to accelerate the progress of malaria elimination on the continent.

• 2021

China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035, announced at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, states that China supports African health policies and will help Africa strengthen its prevention-and-control system for communicable diseases, improve medical research, vigorously develop traditional medicine, and improve medicine accessibility and affordability. It also supports Africa in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases.

SOURCES: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Solution: Belt and Road now flag bearer of globalization

From page 1

While, on the other hand, another group of countries are intent on emphasizing "zero-sum" gains for themselves and see global politics not as a forum for working together, but as a battle for influence and supremacy. This has led a certain party to actively seek to roll back globalization and fracture the global economy in the name of preserving its economic, military and technological dominance.

Using the rhetoric of "de-risking" and "decoupling," the United States and the president of the European Commission have essentially argued that enhanced economic integration and coordination throughout the world is inherently bad because it purportedly weakens the long-standing privileges that certain countries have had for hundreds of years.

Globalization, after all, was built on the historical legacy of Global

The BRI is an all-embracing program that seeks to impart China's developmental experience to better assist countries of the Global South.

North countries, or colonial empires to be more exact, extracting privileges and wealth from the Global South, which it militarily and economically dominated, to enrich itself. To name just one example, the British Empire engaged in aggression against China to sell opium to enrich itself, while it also colonized India to sell tea.

Thus, colonialism has created a fundamentally unequal economic order, which has kept many countries in poverty and concentrated

wealth in the hands of a few.

When the US became the leading superpower starting in 1945, it further consolidated its privileges through a financial system known as Bretton Woods, which has only served to keep non-Western countries poor.

However, the rise of China has seen the rise of a multipolar environment that has eroded the traditional dominance the US once had. This has seen the US try to roll back globalization through the aggressive application of sanctions and export controls and attempts to force supply chain shifts that undermine and disrupt global trade.

If US plans come to fruition, the status quo of wealth inequality between the Global North and Global South will be sustained, and the path of many countries to develop will be blocked.

Because of this, the BRI has become the global flag bearer of globalization throughout the

world, as it is the only means whereby countries can cooperate on economic growth without falling into a spiral of ideological competition, bloc confrontation and Western-led "decoupling".

The BRI is an all-embracing program that seeks to impart China's developmental experience to better assist countries of the Global South in their economic options, sustain their sovereignty and therefore develop on terms and conditions suited to them, as opposed to Western-led political interference. The choice could not be clearer.

The BRI is therefore championing the survival of an open free trade system and ensuring that countries do not have to choose sides, or have their development subject to alliance-related politics.

The author is a British political and international relations analyst. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Sudden snowfall



Pedestrians use umbrellas to shield themselves from snow at Nakayama Pass, which straddles Sapporo City and Kimobetsu Town, in Hokkaido prefecture, Japan, on Tuesday. Cold air caused a snowstorm on Monday, and the pass has been covered with snow since. YOMIURI SHIMBUN / AP



Mutual benefits in spotlight in Beijing

President Xi Jinping meets with leaders of eight nations, and discusses advancing ties and exploring new realms of cooperation in a wide range of fields

CHILE



Gabriel Boric

President Xi Jinping stressed on Tuesday the need for China and Chile to better align their development strategies, promote high-quality building of the Belt and Road, and foster new growth engines for bilateral cooperation in clean energy, the digital economy and sci-tech innovation.

In talks with Chilean President Gabriel Boric, Xi called for both sides to firmly support each other in pursuing develop-

ment paths that suit their national conditions and safeguard each other's core interests and major concerns.

Beijing stands ready to enhance exchanges with Santiago in national governance experience and share its successful practices in poverty alleviation, green transitioning and environmental protection, Xi said.

China welcomes more high-quality agricultural produce and specialty products from Chile into the Chinese market, he said, adding that the nation will encourage more companies to take part in the construction of major projects in Chile.

He also expressed readiness to promote Chinese language teaching and learning, bolster bilateral cooperation at the local level, facilitate people-to-people exchanges, strengthen public support for bilateral ties and promote mutual learning between civilizations.

Xi underscored China's strong emphasis regarding its ties with Latin America, saying that Beijing appreciates Santiago's positive contributions to the development of China-Latin America relations and the construction of the China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum.

Boric said he hopes his visit will be an opportunity to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas such as environmental protection, poverty reduction, energy, technology and mining.

Chile supports China's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement, he said, adding that his country hopes to become a hub for China's cooperation with Latin American countries and play an active role in promoting China-Latin America relations.

After the talks, the two leaders witnessed the signing of multiple bilateral cooperation agreements covering the Belt and Road Initiative, development cooperation, industrial investment, the digital economy, technological innovation, customs inspection and quarantine, agriculture, the Antarctic, and cooperation with small and medium-sized enterprises.

XU WEI

INDONESIA



Joko Widodo

President Xi Jinping hailed on Tuesday the tremendous benefits that cooperation between China and Indonesia has brought to the peoples of the two countries, saying that Beijing and Jakarta have set a good example for international cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Xi made the remarks when meeting in Beijing with Indonesian President Joko Widodo. Xi first proposed jointly

building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in Indonesia in 2013.

He emphasized that China, together with Indonesia, will continue to view and develop bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective, deepen all-around strategic cooperation and boost support for each other on issues of core interest and major concern, thus pursuing modernization paths suited to their respective national conditions.

Noting that the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway is a flagship project of China-Indonesia cooperation under the BRI, Xi called on the two sides to summarize their successful experiences, ensure the railway's high-quality operation and develop an economic corridor centered around it.

China supports the participation of its government bodies and enterprises in the construction of major projects such as Indonesia's building of a new capital, he said.

Xi expressed China's willingness to increase imports of high-quality agricultural and fishery products from Indonesia, strengthen cooperation in emerging industries such as the digital economy and photovoltaics, and proactively engage in exchanges and cooperation in areas such as food and agricultural technologies, poverty alleviation, healthcare and education.

China and Indonesia should closely coordinate to maintain the central position of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, promote open regionalism and fulfill the responsibility of major developing countries, in order to jointly promote reform of the global governance system and uphold international fairness and justice, Xi added.

Widodo, who is also paying a state visit to China, said his country regards China as a significant strategic partner and expects to further strengthen cooperation and mutual trust with China to develop a closer partnership.

The two heads of state jointly inaugurated the operation of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway after their talks.

MO JINGXI

KAZAKHSTAN



Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

President Xi Jinping called on China and Kazakhstan to strengthen cooperation and achieve more results in jointly building the Belt and Road in order to better benefit their peoples, while meeting with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in Beijing on Tuesday.

Xi said that a healthy, stable and dynamic China-Kazakhstan relationship is conducive to the develop-

ment and revitalization of the two countries, as well as to regional peace and stability.

Regardless of changes in the international situation, China and Kazakhstan should look out for and support each other, pass on the concept of good-neighborliness and friendship from generation to generation, and promote further development of the China-Kazakhstan permanent comprehensive strategic partnership, he said.

Xi said China is willing to continuously facilitate trade and investment with Kazakhstan, increase imports of high-quality and green agricultural products from Kazakhstan, expand green energy cooperation and strengthen connectivity with efforts such as enhancing the capacity, scale and efficiency of China-Europe freight trains.

He encouraged the two sides to strengthen cooperation, enhance strategic synergy between the Digital Silk Road and Digital Kazakhstan, and boost exchanges in digital technologies such as cross-border e-commerce and big data.

Xi also called for stronger people-to-people and cultural exchanges and closer cooperation at the local level, noting that a mutual visa exemption agreement between the two countries will take effect and that the Kazakhstan tourism year in China will be launched next year.

Tokayev said that his country has been firmly supporting and proactively participating in the Belt and Road Initiative since the day Xi first proposed the joint building of the Silk Road Economic Belt 10 years ago in Kazakhstan.

He said Kazakhstan will deepen practical cooperation and strengthen people-to-people exchanges with China to jointly build the next golden three decades of China-Kazakhstan relations.

Tokayev spoke highly of China's impartial stance and active role in international affairs, including its efforts to promote the settlement of the Ukraine crisis.

MO JINGXI

SERBIA



Aleksandar Vucic

President Xi Jinping and visiting Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic pledged on Tuesday to boost pragmatic cooperation between China and Serbia in various fields, especially in joint construction of the Belt and Road, to translate the countries' traditional friendship into concrete cooperation results.

They witnessed the signing of bilateral cooperation documents, including the mid-

term action plan for Belt and Road cooperation, a memorandum of understanding on industrial and investment cooperation and a free-trade agreement, after their meeting in Beijing.

During the meeting, Xi hailed the ironclad friendship between the two countries, saying that China-Serbia ties have withstood changes in the international situation, setting an example for friendly relations between China and European countries.

Xi emphasized that in the face of profound changes in the international landscape unseen in a century, both sides should view their relations from a strategic standpoint and long-term perspective, firmly support each other on their core interests and major concerns, and support each other in choosing their own development path.

China firmly supports Serbia in safeguarding its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and is willing to continue to strengthen alignment with Serbia on development strategies, transforming the traditional friendship between them into more practical cooperation results, he said.

Xi underlined the need for both sides to work together to build and operate the Hungary-Serbia railway project well, give full play to the economic and social benefits of projects such as the Chinese-invested Smederevo steel mill, and solidly promote cooperation in key areas such as infrastructure construction.

Both countries should actively explore new growth drivers for cooperation and comprehensively strengthen cooperation to renew their ironclad friendship in the new era, he added.

Vucic said he led a large delegation of the Serbian government to attend the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, demonstrating Serbia's respect for, friendship with and the importance it attaches to China.

China has always respected and treated Serbia as a partner on an equal footing, and provided valuable support to Serbia when it was in times of difficulty, he said.

CAO DESHENG

UZBEKISTAN



Shavkat Mirziyoyev

President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China is willing to take the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative as an opportunity for China and Uzbekistan to learn from and support each other's national modernization drive.

Xi made the remark when meeting with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Noting that China and Uzbekistan share similar goals and ideas for development, Xi said the two countries will inject more certainty and positive energy into regional peace and prosperity by jointly building a China-Uzbekistan community with a shared future.

China supports Uzbekistan in maintaining sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and firmly opposes any force's interference in Uzbekistan's internal affairs under any pretext, he said.

Xi called on the two sides to put into place their medium-to-long-term cooperation plans in the economic, trade, and investment fields, promote cooperation in key areas, and create conditions for the early construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project.

China is willing to expand its imports of high-quality products from Uzbekistan and welcomes more young people from Uzbekistan to study in China, he said, adding that China is ready to provide more scholarships to the Uzbek side.

Xi also urged the two sides to set up cultural centers in each other's country at an early date, speed up the Luban Workshop project and promote experience exchanges and cooperation in poverty reduction.

China is willing to work with Uzbekistan to earnestly implement the outcomes of the China-Central Asia Summit in Xi'an in order to contribute to the development and revitalization of the six countries, he added.

Mirziyoyev said his country regards China as a reliable partner and the Uzbekistan-China relationship has served as a model of good-neighborliness and mutual benefit for neighboring countries.

Uzbekistan hopes to learn from China's poverty reduction experience and deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields such as trade and investment, connectivity, renewable energy, agriculture and people-to-people exchanges within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, he said.

MO JINGXI

ETHIOPIA



Abiy Ahmed

President Xi Jinping called on Tuesday for China and Ethiopia to be friends who jointly promote common development and win-win cooperation as well as partners in enhancing South-South unity and cooperation and upholding international fairness and justice.

Xi made the remarks during a meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. He congratulated Ethiopia

on joining the BRICS cooperation mechanism, saying that the East African country is an important participant in joint building of the Belt and Road.

Xi underlined the need for both countries to constantly consolidate their traditional friendship and mutual trust, and deepen pragmatic cooperation to achieve more fruitful results in promoting bilateral ties.

He emphasized that China supports Ethiopia in safeguarding its sovereignty, security and development interests, and the two countries should continue to strengthen unity and cooperation and should firmly support each other on issues concerning their core interests and major concerns.

China is willing to strengthen practical cooperation with Ethiopia in various fields within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, support Ethiopia's postwar reconstruction and economic revitalization and enhance partnership in green development, he added.

Ahmed said that China is an important partner, and Chinese investment and other bilateral cooperation projects, especially those under the BRI, have effectively promoted Ethiopia's economic and social development.

Ethiopia's relationship with China is on the right path, and further strengthening bilateral relations is not only crucial for Ethiopia but also of great significance for South-South unity, he said.

Ahmed said that Ethiopia hopes to learn from China's experience in Party and State governance, and looks forward to further promoting the joint construction of the Belt and Road with China. Ethiopia welcomes more Chinese investment, he added.

The Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, all proposed by Xi, embody equality, openness and mutual respect, and they are conducive to promoting common development, said Ahmed.

The two countries issued a joint statement on the establishment of an all-weather strategic partnership.

CAO DESHENG

HUNGARY



Viktor Orban

China and Hungary should make joint efforts to ensure the on-time completion and operation of the Hungary-Serbia railway project, build up the scale of cross-border e-commerce and expand cooperation in the information technology and new-energy sectors, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

Speaking during a meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Beijing, Xi

stressed China's commitment to promoting a deep synergy of the Belt and Road Initiative with Hungary's "Opening to the East" policy, and sharing development opportunities and achievements.

China stands ready to scale up imports of high-quality agricultural products from Hungary, and the two sides should make good use of cultural centers established in each other's countries, encourage language teaching and learning, and pass down the tradition of China-Hungary friendship to future generations, he said.

He commended Hungary for pursuing a friendly policy toward China and actively supporting the BRI.

China is willing to continue being a trustworthy friend and partner of Hungary, and take the China-Hungary comprehensive strategic partnership to new levels as next year marks the 75th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations, said the president.

While noting that cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries serves the common interests of both sides, Xi said that China is willing to work with Hungary to continue guiding this cooperation in the right direction, enriching its content and enabling the stable and long-term development of China-Europe relations.

Orban, who also took part in the previous two editions of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, underlined the contribution of Chinese companies, including the construction of the Hungary-Serbia railway project in spurring Hungary's socioeconomic growth.

He expressed steadfast support for the BRI and pledged continuous participation in the initiative, which he said has led to significant positive changes in the world and promotes global economic growth.

Hungary will continue to be a trustworthy friend and partner of China within the European Union, he said, adding that his country opposes any "decoupling" or "de-risking" practices and is willing to strengthen economic, trade, investment and connectivity cooperation with China.

XU WEI

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



James Marape

China's assistance to Pacific island countries is part of South-South cooperation, and is characterized by sincerity and selflessness, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday during a meeting in Beijing with Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape.

Xi said that in conducting such assistance, China does not attach political conditions or seek exclusive rights, nor does it impose its will on others or make empty promises.

The nation fully respects the will and actual needs of Pacific island countries, and will continue to deepen cooperation with them and help them pursue long-term economic and social development, he added.

China appreciates Papua New Guinea's adherence to the one-China principle and its firm support for China on issues concerning its core interests and major concerns, he said, adding that China firmly supports Papua New Guinea in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and development interests.

Noting that Papua New Guinea was the first Pacific island country to sign a memorandum of understanding and a cooperation plan for jointly building the Belt and Road with China, Xi said that construction of projects such as the Independence Boulevard in Port Moresby and the Butaka Academy have made positive progress, playing a leading and exemplary role in promoting cooperation between China and Pacific island countries in joint construction of the Belt and Road.

China is willing to continue to develop high-quality cooperation with Papua New Guinea on the BRI, share the development opportunities brought by Chinese-style modernization, align the development strategies of the two countries, strengthen cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, clean energy, climate change and other fields, and help Papua New Guinea achieve industrialization and modernization, he said.

Marape said that Papua New Guinea firmly adheres to the one-China principle, and China's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected.

Noting that strengthening cooperation with China is not only significant for Papua New Guinea but also for the world, he said the nation will continue to work with China to deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership, and promote mutually beneficial cooperation between South Pacific island countries and China for a better future.

CAO DESHENG

Digital cooperation seen as key to world's recovery

By MA SI
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Digital cooperation between China and other countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, which has been deepening in recent years, is aiding the development of the digital economy and trade, and facilitating global economic recovery, experts said.

Noting that the BRI economies have come together in recent times to create an open, fair, equitable and nondiscriminatory environment for the development of the digital economy, the experts said these countries and regions have strengthened cooperation on rules and standards, and have also been promoting regional policy coordination in the past decade.

Cong Liang, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic regulator, said at a recent news conference that substantial progress has been made in advancing cooperation on the digital economy among BRI economies.

"More efforts will be made to encourage Chinese and foreign enterprises to engage in high-quality cooperation in areas such as e-commerce, mobile payments, smart cities, remote healthcare, digital education and industrial transformation," Cong said.

Digital technologies will be utilized to promote high-quality economic development and improve livelihoods, so that all BRI economies can help their people enjoy the dividends of the digital economy.

According to a white paper released recently by the State Council Information Office, by the end of 2022, China had signed memorandums of understanding on building the Digital Silk Road with 17 countries, on e-commerce cooperation with 30 countries, and on closer investment cooperation in the digital economy with 18 countries and regions.

China is also actively strengthening digital infrastructure connectivity and stepping up work on digital corridors. Work on laying several international submarine cables has made substantial progress, with 130 cross-border terrestrial cable systems already built.

The SEA-H2X submarine cable project is a case in point. Initiated by China Unicom, a major State-owned telecom carrier, the project has attracted many international companies.

Construction work began in May 2022 and operations are scheduled to begin in 2024. It will connect the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Hainan province of China with the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. The project may further extend to Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia.

Upon completion, the submarine cable project can effectively meet the demand for network bandwidth in Asia, accelerating the digital industrialization and digitization of industries in Asia and the world, China Unicom said.

Aye Aye Myint, an employee of China Unicom's local unit in Myanmar, has been involved in a submarine cable project that connects China and Myanmar. "This long submarine cable not only brings information and communication services to various destinations, but also strengthens ties between China and overseas Chinese like me," she said.

China Unicom's unit in Myanmar not only serves Chinese companies that expand into the Southeast Asian country, but offers better network services to local government agencies and enterprises, she added.

Besides building digital infrastructure, many Chinese companies also offer digital services worldwide. By the end of September, China had established bilateral mechanisms of e-commerce cooperation with 30 countries on five continents, according to the white paper.

Many events held to promote multilateralism, such as the Silk Road E-commerce Platform of the Brand, the Quality Online Shopping Festival and the Quality African Products Online Shopping Festival, have produced encouraging results, and virtual country pavilions online help partner economies to export their high-quality specialty products to the Chinese market.

The innovative Cloud Classroom program has provided live-streamed training sessions to more than 80 BRI economies to reinforce their digital literacy, the white paper stated.

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecommunications industry association in China, said the country's edge in digital technologies and applications can help people in other countries enjoy the fruits of technological advancements in a better way.



Containers from China are unloaded at a port in Jakarta, capital of Indonesia, on Oct 3. XU QIN / XINHUA

Initiative spurs investment, trade across BRI landscape

Experts applaud role of Belt, Road in improving business climate amid woes

By WANG KEJU
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China's trade and investment cooperation with other countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative has not only expanded in traditional areas, but also picked up pace in emerging sectors over the past decade, bringing about greater liberalization and facilitation and fostering a better global business climate, experts said.

However, the open and inclusive economic cooperation between China and other BRI economies has facilitated greater market access, reduced international trade uncertainty and expanded trade volumes, which helps enhance the resiliency and stability of global supply chains and injects much-needed momentum into global economic recovery, Zhou said.

According to a recent white paper released by the State Council Information Office, by the end of August, more than 80 countries and international organizations had subscribed to the Initiative on Promoting Unimpeded Trade Cooperation along the Belt and Road, proposed by China. The nation had also signed 21 free trade agreements with 28 countries and regions.

Furthermore, infrastructure projects, including the expansion of the China-Europe Railway Express net-

\$2.07 trillion

China's trade in goods with other BRI economies in 2022

intensifying geopolitical tensions — global trade is currently facing headwinds, said Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

However, the open and inclusive economic cooperation between China and other BRI economies has facilitated greater market access, reduced international trade uncertainty and expanded trade volumes, which helps enhance the resiliency and stability of global supply chains and injects much-needed momentum into global economic recovery, Zhou said.

According to a recent white paper released by the State Council Information Office, by the end of August, more than 80 countries and international organizations had subscribed to the Initiative on Promoting Unimpeded Trade Cooperation along the Belt and Road, proposed by China. The nation had also signed 21 free trade agreements with 28 countries and regions.

Furthermore, infrastructure projects, including the expansion of the China-Europe Railway Express net-

work, the expedited building of the New International Land-Sea Commerce Corridor and the construction of overseas warehouses, are also attributable to the trade growth, said Chen Jianwei, associate professor at the University of International Business and Economics.

In addition to the expansion of traditional trade, dedicated efforts have been made over the years to fuel BRI cooperation with digital technology and generate more deliverables in such new areas as cross-border e-commerce, digital payment and intelligent logistics, which have helped developing countries bridge the digital divide, Chen said.

Meanwhile, total two-way investment between China and other BRI economies stood at \$380 billion during the past decade, of which \$240 billion came from China, the Commerce Ministry said.

Chinese companies have invested in sectors such as energy, transportation, telecommunications, manufacturing and agriculture. These investments have not only bolstered economic growth in participating countries and regions, but created employment opportunities and contributed to technology transfers and knowledge-sharing, said Liu Xiangdong, a researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.

In particular, Chinese investment has facilitated the construction of ports, railways, roads, energy projects and other critical

infrastructure. These projects have improved transportation efficiency, reduced logistics costs and enhanced connectivity among participating economies, Liu said.

Enhanced infrastructure, which facilitates the movement of goods, services and people across borders, taps the potential to boost trade, attract foreign investment and stimulate economic growth over the long run, he added.

Going forward, more efforts should be channeled to further explore new growth drivers, such as cross-border e-commerce, and address problems facing trade settlement, so as to drive more balanced growth in imports and exports of economies involved, said Xu Hongcai, deputy director of the China Association of Policy Science's Economic Policy Committee.

It is imperative to strengthen digital infrastructure construction, encourage the safe and orderly flow of data across borders and actively explore a sound system of digital trade rules that is in line with the actual development of Belt and Road economies, Xu said.

Negotiations or upgrading of free trade agreements with BRI economies should be advanced when appropriate, Xu said, adding that localities should also be encouraged to take into account their own conditions and advantages, as well as those of BRI countries and regions, in a bid to scale up well-targeted and mutually beneficial cooperation.



A visitor checks out a VR (virtual reality) headset during an exhibition held by Chinese high-tech company Huawei in Gaborone, capital of Botswana, in March. XINHUA

Emerging market economies raise voice for global financial governance

By ZHOU LANXU
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International financial cooperation among countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative is boosting the collective voices of emerging market economies in global financial governance, thereby contributing to greater worldwide financial stability, experts said.

The observation was made as official data revealed a steady expansion in investment and financing channels among Belt and Road economies over the past decade, facilitated by the operation of regional multinational development banks.

According to a white paper recently released by the State Council

\$43.6 billion

investment that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has approved to date

Information Office, China and other economies established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which has 106 members and has approved 227 projects to date with a total investment of \$43.6 billion.

The projects span sectors such as transport, energy, public health and other fields, supporting infrastructure connectivity and sustainable economic and social development in economies involved in the BRI, the white paper said.

Also, three BRI economies, namely the United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh and Egypt, have joined the New Development Bank, founded by BRICS countries, while Uruguay has become a prospective member, according to the NDB.

Liang Haiming, dean of the Hainan University Belt and Road Research Institute, said the establishment of the AIIB, NDB and other international financial institutions, has strengthened financial connectivity and collaboration between China and other BRI economies, thus contributing to global financial stability.

Liang said such cooperation efforts are helping amplify the influence of emerging market economies in global financial governance so

that their rising role in global economic and financial activity is better represented.

He underscored the need to revamp the global financial governance system, whose deficiencies are increasingly evident in the repeated financial turbulence and crises, with traditional international financial institutions — such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — having yet to fully strengthen the representation of emerging markets and developing countries.

Pan Gongsheng, governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said during the 48th Meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee last week that China always believes that the quota reform of the IMF is

supposed to reflect members' relative positions in the global economy and strengthen the voices and representation of emerging markets and developing countries.

Looking ahead, China will encourage the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the AIIB and the NDB to channel more resources into BRI economies, the Ministry of Finance said in a reply to China Daily in July.

China will also promote the effective operation of the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance (MCDF) to better support the sustainable development of BRI economies, the ministry said.

Liu Ying, a researcher at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China,

said the MCDF has great potential to facilitate the financing of Belt and Road economies. The MCDF serves as a multilateral mechanism to promote high-quality infrastructure and connectivity investment in developing economies by promoting information sharing, capacity building and the preparation of connectivity infrastructure projects.

More broadly, Liu said further promoting financial cooperation among BRI economies may help mitigate the "Triffin Dilemma" brought by the dominant role of the US dollar in the global monetary system.

The Triffin Dilemma refers to a paradox wherein the dollar cannot survive as the world's sole reserve currency without requiring Washington to run ever-increasing deficits, which could ultimately impair the greenback's value and threaten its global status.



It's bean a fresh brew for trade opportunities

Coffee finds its way into booming Chinese market under the Belt and Road Initiative

By SHAO XINYING
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Like the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, something is definitely in the air in world trade and commerce — opportunities. Few people are more aware of it than Hebert Ely Vasquez.

Vasquez, from El Salvador, has mastered the art of coffee roasting. Not only can he sniff the rich aroma of coffee beans, but he can also sense the myriad possibilities arising from its trade.

While doing his PhD in aquaculture, Vasquez fell for a young Chinese woman, Tong Taohui. After visiting Vasquez's home country in 2018 with her parents, Tong, in turn, fell for the beans from El Salvador's six major coffee-growing regions.

"El Salvador is not a prolific coffee producer, but it does boast high-quality beans," Tong said. It was not long before she became an expert on the subject.

The couple soon came up with the idea of exporting El Salvadoran coffee to China. "We decided to show Chinese customers the very tasty flavor of our coffee from El Salvador," Vasquez said. "That was the idea when we started four years ago."

With that objective in mind, Vasquez and Tong exhibited their products along with those from many other countries at an event titled Cafe Show China in Beijing last month.

"The most important thing is the possibilities China offers for coffee and the opportunities that open up for us," Vasquez said.

El Salvador's coffee exports to China have soared in recent years, particularly after the two countries established diplomatic relations in 2018. China is now one of the biggest customers for El Salvador coffee.

Soon after diplomatic relations were established, the two countries signed a memorandum of under-

standing on together building the Belt and Road Initiative.

The initiative, proposed by China in 2013, aims to spur global growth by making it easier for countries to trade with each other through improved connectivity and infrastructure.

"The Philippines is an early supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative," said Jaime Adriano FlorCruz, ambassador of the Philippines to China. "I know in the past China only drank tea or water, never coffee. But I know it's very popular now because the young people are very open-minded."

Tea, which originated in China, has been the beverage of the masses along the Silk Road since ancient times. But now, under the BRI, coffee is gaining a strong foothold in China.

China traded 231,200 metric tons of coffee and related products valued at 9.35 billion yuan (\$1.3 billion) last year, China's customs data showed. The value of coffee trade more than doubled that of 2017, according to Beedata, an agriculture data provider.

China and the Philippines signed a memorandum of understanding on e-commerce cooperation in January, China's Ministry of Commerce said. China has signed memorandums of understanding on e-commerce cooperation with 30 countries, China's State Council Information Office said earlier this month.

"We're happy that our Philippine coffee has finally arrived in China," FlorCruz said. "We are lesser known as a coffee producer, even though we've been producing coffee for many years."

The country needs to update its coffee marketing strategy, he said.

"Digitization is the next step. We are also organizing our coffee makers into associations so we can improve our marketing and project our good products to markets like China."

With the BRI, "we are exploring practical cooperation projects", he said. "We need badly infrastructure



An exhibitor brews Ethiopian coffee during the third China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo at the Changsha International Convention and Exhibition Center in Changsha, Hunan province, on June 29. SUN RUIBO / XINHUA

projects, agricultural projects, inter-connectivity projects. And that falls into the BRI system. So we hope to be an active participant in the BRI, and we are very happy that China pioneered (the BRI) 10 years ago."

Boosting cooperation

Over the past 10 years, China has signed more than 230 cooperation documents related to the BRI with more than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations, according to official figures.

"We hope to benefit from the BRI," FlorCruz said. "We just need to identify where BRI and our needs intersect."

"We want more globalization rather than fracture, falling into factions or different kinds of fighting groups of nations. We support globalization."

El Salvador and the Philippines are not the only countries jumping on the bandwagon of promoting coffee in China.

Rwanda's Ambassador to China James Kimonyo sold more than 3,000 bags of imported coffee in just one second during a livestreaming event in China in 2020, according to media reports.

"This made me feel the huge demand in the Chinese market and the charm of e-commerce," he said.

Ethiopia's Plenipotentiary Minister Munteha Jemal Seid shares Kimonyo's enthusiasm for e-commerce as a channel for promoting coffee.

"We're trying from time to time to make Ethiopian (products) online and to send Ethiopian coffee, especially value-added coffee, roasted coffee and the grounded coffee online."

"When we talk about the relationship between Ethiopia and China, it is about more than 50 years of diplomatic relations," she said.

The ties have borne fruit, including in the form of flagship projects in Ethiopia, such as the Ethiopia-

Djibouti railway and the headquarters of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, which have the financial backing of China.

A forum held in the capital Addis Ababa in July on the corporate social responsibility of Chinese companies in Ethiopia heard that China's direct investment projects in the country reached 1,835, with an accumulative investment of about \$4.8 billion.

The many initiatives China has advanced, including the BRI, give us a broad chance for trading and doing all our activities, Munteha said.

Over the past 10 years, the value of goods traded between China and countries involved in the BRI has doubled to \$2.07 trillion last year, China's Ministry of Commerce said.

Julio Rios, a Spanish expert on China, said the BRI is widely popular among developing countries and has become a public good, contributing not only to China but

also to modernizing the world.

China's National Development and Reform Commission said last month that the China-Europe freight train had made 77,000 trips over the past 10 years, providing services for 217 cities in 25 European countries.

Over those years, the initiative has generated more than 3,000 collaborative projects involving an investment of nearly \$1 trillion, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, creating 420,000 jobs in countries involved in the initiative.

The Mombasa-Nairobi Railway in Kenya has added more than 2 percentage points to local economic growth, the ministry said.

In addition to giving an economic fillip and creating jobs, China is also playing a role in training people, an example being Luban workshops that are helping young people in more than 20 countries to acquire vocational skills.

The Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, a fruit of the China-Indonesia Belt and Road collaboration and the first high-speed railway in Southeast Asia, has reduced travel time between the two cities from three and a half hours to 40 minutes. Commercial operations began earlier this month.

"With the BRI, China promotes infrastructure development and connectivity across continents, offering a chance for countries to enhance their trade networks and expand their economic potential," said Seun Sam, a policy analyst at the Royal Academy of Cambodia in Phnom Penh.

Through its rich aroma and global appeal, coffee trade is flourishing under the BRI, which aims to boost connectivity and exchanges.

"Before, it was like a dream to start coffee business in China, but now we can see that has become true," said Vasquez from El Salvador.



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WORLD

US tightens chip exports to China as tech giants oppose move

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
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The US government on Tuesday intensified restrictions on chip exports to China, a move that the American semiconductor industry has been strongly lobbying against for fear of market uncertainty.

The new rules are an update to the export controls imposed by the US Commerce Department a year ago to stop China from acquiring advanced computer chips and the equipment to manufacture them.

Tuesday's rules broaden the controls by including slightly less powerful chips than those covered under the previous rules and expand the previous list of manufacturing equipment.

The goal is to limit China's "access to advanced semiconductors that could fuel breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and sophisticated computers", Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo told reporters on Tuesday.

The Semiconductor Industry Association, which represents 99 percent of the US semiconductor industry by revenue, criticized the rules in a statement on Tuesday.

"Overly broad, unilateral controls risk harming the U.S. semiconductor ecosystem without advancing national security as they encourage overseas customers to look elsewhere," the group said.

The US has long sought to limit the development of China's semiconductor industry by placing Chinese companies on an "entity list", which requires US companies to obtain licenses for exports of advanced technologies to China.

Last year's rules expanded the controls by including exports of crucial cutting-edge chips and equipment that are manufactured with US technology.

The revised rules further expand the US government's authority to determine what products the US companies can and can't sell in the name of national security.

Under the new rules, chip companies are required to notify the government when they export chips with performance just below the restricted threshold.

The government also expands its export restrictions to include additional countries and overseas subsidiaries of Chinese companies to prevent "circumvention of the controls".

The new rules come after US chip companies and their trade group continue to push the government to "refrain from further restrictions" when media reports said the administration was considering tightening export controls on China in July.

The CEOs of major US chip companies Nvidia, Qualcomm and Intel visited Washington in July to voice their concerns on the export controls, as China is not just the world's largest chip market but also a key link in US chip companies' supply chains.

The US-based Semiconductor Industry Association also warned of "diminished competitiveness, supply chain disruptions and significant market uncertainty".

Despite their strong opposition, President Joe Biden signed an executive order in August that restricts private investments into Chinese companies in the semiconductor, AI and quantum computing industries.

Following the announcement of the new rules, shares of leading chip companies, such as Nvidia, Advanced Micro Devices and Intel all declined on Tuesday.

Nvidia, which has previously said that 25 percent of its data-center chip revenues come from China, is expected to take the hardest hit.

The company designed new versions of chips that are under the performance threshold of the previous rules, so it has been able to sell those chips to China. But Tuesday's rules would be a blow to the company.

Nvidia Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress said in June that long-term restrictions on China "will result in a permanent loss of opportunities for the US industry to compete" and "the impact on our future business and financial results is there".



No US House speaker yet

Republican US Congressman Jim Jordan of Ohio, the top contender to be the next speaker of the House of Representatives, leaves the office of House Majority Whip Tom Emmer after meetings to try to find the necessary votes to get Jordan elected speaker, at the US Capitol in Washington on Tuesday. Jordan's bid came up short on Tuesday as 20 members of his own party did not vote for him on a first ballot. Another vote is scheduled for Wednesday.

ELIZABETH FRANTZ / REUTERS

Envoy: Don't interfere on rights issues

China's top UN ambassador cites hypocrisy of other nations' meddling

By MINLU ZHANG
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China's top envoy to the United Nations on Tuesday firmly opposed interference in the country's internal affairs under the pretext of human rights, winning support from a number of developing and friendly countries.

"China firmly opposes and rejects the continued fabrication of lies by a handful of Western countries, including the European Union, on Xinjiang- and Hong Kong-related issues, and their insistence on provoking confrontation and interfering in China's internal affairs under the pretext of human rights in total disregard of the truth," said Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN.

"I would like to point out that the lies about China's human rights situation are totally unfounded. The so-called assessment report on China's Xinjiang is full of false information and is totally illegal and invalid. I would like to point out that politicizing



Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, attends general debate on human rights issues by Third Committee of the 78th UN General Assembly in New York on Tuesday.

MINLU ZHANG / CHINA DAILY

human rights issues will lead nowhere," he said at the general debate on human rights issues held by the Third Committee of the 78th United Nations General Assembly.

"Countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have turned a blind eye to and covered up their own serious human rights violations, such as racial discrimination, while pointing fingers at and making groundless accusations against developing countries. This double

standard will find no support," said Zhang.

"I would like to point out that dialogue and cooperation represent the right way forward. A few countries undermine dialogue and cooperation at will, and they will only end up isolating themselves and bringing humiliation to themselves," he said.

In the spirit of building a community with a shared future for mankind, the international community "should strengthen solidarity and cooperation, protect

common security and promote common development, thus further advancing the international human rights cause", said Zhang.

"We must strengthen exchanges and mutual learning and leave no room for the erroneous arguments such as 'democracy versus authoritarianism.' We must uphold fairness and justice to ensure the right direction in the promotion and protection of human rights," Zhang said.

Zhang also made a joint statement on behalf of 28 countries, including Belarus, Bolivia, Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Russia, the state of Palestine, and Pakistan, criticizing unilateral coercive measures.

The joint statement stressed that unilateral coercive measures "run counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, multilateralism, and the basic norms of international relations".

Unilateral coercive measures continue to cause "devastating, sometimes even life-threatening consequences to targeted countries and their peoples and negatively affect the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health and the right to life. Therefore, the imposing states are called on to immediately and completely cease such

practices," said Zhang.

Pakistan, on behalf of 72 countries, made a joint statement and stressed that Xinjiang-, Hong Kong- and Tibet-related issues are "China's internal affairs, and we oppose the politicization of human rights, double standards and interference in states' internal affairs under the pretext of human rights".

The joint statement delivered by Pakistan called on all parties to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect the rights of people of each state to choose independently the development path suited to their own national conditions.

It further elaborated that the international community should uphold multilateralism, strengthen solidarity and cooperation, respond jointly to global challenges, and promote and protect human rights.

Venezuela, on behalf of 19 members of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, also made a joint statement appealing to the international community to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN, respect all states' sovereignty, and actively promote dialogue and cooperation in the field of human rights.

Theft rises with inflation; stores step up tactics

By HENG WEILI in New York
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The high cost of food and other goods in the US has coincided with a rise in shoplifting, which has led some retailers to increase steps to prevent theft, sometimes with unpleasant results.

One of those stores, Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, has enhanced its anti-theft technology at self-checkout counters. But the approach has led to a surge in contentious encounters between hourly workers and shoppers, according to a recent report by Business Insider.

If the technology detects an unscanned item, a light will go on, and the machine will send a text notification to nearby employees.

Walmart has trained the workers to approach customers to try to resolve the issue, but they are not allowed to accuse anyone of theft, said former and current Walmart employees who spoke to Insider.

Dozens of national retailers have reported sharp rises in shoplifting or organized retail crime.

When taken as a percentage of total retail sales in 2022, shrink, or theft, accounted for \$112.1 billion in losses, up from \$93.9 billion in 2021, according to the 2023 National Retail Security Survey released in September by the National Retail Federation (NRF).

"There is a trend of people who may have never stolen before; they are unsophisticated in how they steal," Read Hayes, criminologist at the University of Florida and director

of the Loss Prevention Research Council, told CNN in May. "They're taking necessities like bread and meat. We are seeing some of that."

The thefts are occurring against a backdrop of persistent inflation.

The Consumer Price Index released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) rose 3.7 percent for the 12 months ended in September, the same as August's annual gain.

While the pace of the increase has slowed from 2022 — when it peaked at around 9 percent — the smaller increases are piling up on top of already inflated prices.

Food prices climbed 0.2 percent in September for a third straight month.

The perception of consumers, however, is vastly different from the government data.

Consumers perceived the inflation rate for food consumed at home to be 22.6 percent as of April, according to a study by Dunhumby, a data consulting company, which surveyed more than 8,000 grocery shoppers nationwide.

That's more than triple the 7.1 percent year-over-year inflation rate for food at home estimated by the BLS in April.

The mix of higher prices and increased thefts has created a volatile situation in many American stores.

"Retailers are seeing unprecedented levels of theft coupled with rampant crime in their stores, and the situation is only becoming more dire," wrote David Johnson, vice-president of asset protection and retail operations at the NRF. "Far

beyond the financial impact of these crimes, the violence and concerns over safety continue to be the priority for all retailers, regardless of size or category."

In December, Walmart CFO John Rainey said on an earnings call that the Walmart stores with the highest shrink rates were in areas with the lowest prosecution rates for shoplifting.

Mendy, a 10-year employee of a Walmart store in Arkansas, told Insider that some customers had thrown merchandise at her when confronted at the self-checkout.

Athenia Camacho, a former Walmart employee, described the technology in a TikTok video.

"They can see everything you're purchasing and everything you're scanning, so I highly recommend not stealing from Walmart," she said.

Camacho told Insider that at her store in Florida, a special team dealt with suspected theft.

Another Walmart employee in Missouri told Insider that she was told to approach customers with the mindset of "Don't blame the customer. Blame the machine."

She said: "The policy is to take the item away from them and tell them something like, 'Oh, I think the machine didn't scan it.'"

The employee said the self-checkout technology caught many customers unaware, especially when a video played back on the machine's screen showing them scanning items.

When she approaches customers whose items have been flagged by the machines, she said they often

act defensive or confused. She said that Walmart didn't train her in "de-escalation tactics".

"As with other retailers, theft is always a challenge, and we're always looking for better ways to tackle this issue. This includes enhanced technology at our checkouts," Joe Pennington, a Walmart spokesperson, said in a statement to Insider.

Food-price inflation in the US continues to fluctuate depending on the item.

Through September, some food items have recorded major increases. Frozen fruits and vegetables jumped 8.1 percent in the first nine months of 2023, and sugar went up 7.7 percent.

Beef and veal increased 7 percent, and bread rose 6.1 percent. Ice cream prices increased 4.5 percent. Flour and apples each rose 3.9 percent, and coffee was up 1.6 percent.

But there were some major declines: Eggs dropped 14.5 percent, butter was down 4 percent, and cheese and lettuce each fell 2.8 percent. Chicken and milk each were lower by 2.1 percent, and pork declined by 1.7 percent. Fish and seafood together fell 1.5 percent.

Food prices are expected to grow more slowly in 2023 than in 2022 but still at above historical-average rates, according to the US Department of Agriculture's Food Price Outlook report. In 2023, all food prices are predicted to increase 5.8 percent.

Reuters contributed to this story.

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LIFE

A singer on a journey of discovery

Embracing innovation, Hua Chenyu takes his fans with him to exciting destinations, **Xing Wen** reports.

On a Saturday, beneath a persistent drizzle that lasted well into the night, the grandeur of the Beijing National Stadium, also known as the Bird's Nest, was undiminished by the enveloping mist and somber clouds.

A throng of nearly 90,000 spectators from across the country converged upon this iconic venue to fulfill a decade-old pledge with the Chinese singer-songwriter Hua Chenyu.

Ten years have elapsed since Hua's ascent onto China's pop music stage, propelled by his victory in the sensational talent show, *Super Boy*, in 2013.

Today, at the age of 33, he orchestrated a concert to mirror this milestone, with an impressive repertoire of 33 songs to commemorate his musical journey.

Aptly christened a "reporting performance", Hua articulated his intent. "As this marks my 10th anniversary concert, I wish for everyone to bear witness to the growth I've undergone over the passing decade," he says.

As twilight descended, the Bird's Nest underwent a transformation into a sea of luminous red light sticks. Amid the cacophony of screams and cheers from the audience, Hua graced the stage with an ethereal incantation, weaving an enigmatic and sacred ambience for the *2023 Mars Concert*.

A graduate of the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Hua's avant-garde compositions earned him the affectionate moniker of "Little Brother From Mars" during his *Super Boy* days. This epithet attested to his distinct spiritual world and artistic flair. Notably, he wowed the competition's judges with *Wordless Song*, an original composition devoid of lyrics but brimming with profound emotion.

Inextricably linked with his dedicated fan base, Hua's fans have long been called "Martians" and the title, *Mars Concert*, has been used in all of his solo events.

"The term 'Mars' is a special bond between me and my supporters," he says.

Since his debut, the youthful singer-songwriter has been on a compositional voyage of innovation and exploration, resulting in the release of five albums.

"As soon as a fresh idea takes root, whether I'm by a piano or I'm walking the bustling city streets, I am impelled to give it life," he says. "If a piano is in front of me, I play; if none is in sight, I hum the melody, recording it on my phone."

Within the crucible of creative expression, Hua poetically likened his songwriting journey to a chess match against himself. In this metaphorical arena, he grapples with his own artistry, navigating a series of strategic pivots, echoes and breakthroughs.

Recent years have borne witness to a shift in his repertoire, as his compositions increasingly delve into poignant societal themes. For instance, his performance of *I Really Want to Love This World* at the Bird's Nest concert sought to inspire those grappling with depression to emerge from the shadows.

"In my earlier years, my musical expression was a manifestation of personal fervor," he says, reflecting upon



“In my earlier years, my musical expression was a manifestation of personal fervor. But now, as I enter my 30s, I've noticed my audience spans various age ranges, even including young children.”

Hua Chenyu,
Chinese singer-songwriter

“As an adult, I often found myself in moments of solitude and anxiety. During those times, I turned to Hua's music. It wasn't just any music that made me happy, but music that made me feel understood, that someone empathized with me.”

Zhu Xiaozhu, a fan



Singer-songwriter Hua Chenyu at the *2023 Mars Concert*, which wrapped up at the Bird's Nest stadium on Sept 10, during which he performed a repertoire of 33 songs to commemorate his 10-year musical journey. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



this transformative journey. "But now, as I enter my 30s, I've noticed my audience spans various age ranges, even including young children. This expanding influence has ignited a profound sense of societal responsibility in me. I find myself pondering whether my work can serve as a source of solace, an aid to others in navigating their emotional tempests and resolving their quandaries during times of adversity."

He openly acknowledged his own experience of depression.

Zhu Xiaozhu, who was in the audience at the concert on Sept 9, says that Hua's music has been a spiritual support.

"As an adult, I often found myself in moments of solitude and anxiety. During those times, I turned to Hua's music. It wasn't just any music that made me happy, but music that made me feel understood, that someone empathized with me," she says.

The singer, who achieved fame at a young age, expressed his gratitude for the affection of his diverse fan base, and for the honors bestowed upon him. In 2020, he secured the coveted title of the singing reality show *Singer*, emerging as the competition's youngest-ever victor.

The path of musical mastery remains an unending journey of learning, marked by yearly phases of rapid growth. Whether composing songs, arranging music, or orchestrating concerts, Hua adheres to the doctrine of "crazily thinking and then crazily learning" within compressed time frames.

In addition, he also pushes the envelope of innovation in the design of his concerts. In 2021, he unveiled a creative concert format in Haikou, Hainan province, a daylong extravaganza that mirrored the vibrancy of an amusement park, running from dawn until dusk. Fans reveled not only in his melodies but also enjoyed gastronomic delights, libations, and wholesome entertainment.

This year at the Bird's Nest, Hua discarded the conventional three-sided stage in favor of a four-sided configuration, intensifying the demands placed on the performer. Every gesture, every nuance, lay exposed to the audience's gaze, unprotected by blind spots. His concert also showcased a lighting set-up anchored by a load-bearing roof capable of supporting nearly 200 metric tons.

But the insatiable artist has much still to achieve. He confesses that the concert he envisions in his mind has yet to materialize fully. "I will spare no effort to present the *Mars Concert* in my imagination. I firmly believe that there exists ample room for improvement," he says.

Yan Bingjie contributed to this story.

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Guizhou's rocky charms attract extreme sports

GUIYANG — Guizhou province, known in China as the "Kingdom of Karst Landforms" for its complicated, towering mountains, has evolved into a haven for extreme sports events and outdoor sports enthusiasts.

Frederic Moal, who has lived in China for eight years, is an enthusiast of extreme sports. Under his father's influence, he began BMX biking at a very young age, and was eager to become a professional rider.

In 1982, with plenty of racing experience, Moal founded a BMX club in France and served as its coach. He has also won medals at the BMX French Championship and the 2009 BMX European Championship.

In March this year, he took on a new role as the head coach for the Guizhou BMX team.

"This is my first time coaching in China, and it is indeed a big challenge, but our team members are

ready and confident. Even if we are starting from scratch, I firmly believe that the Guizhou BMX team will grow into a greater team," says Moal.

When discussing his reasons for coaching in China, he mentions that Guizhou has an abundance of mountain tourism and sports resources. "I'm in love with this place," Moal says.

"I think the future of mountain sports is sustainable. Sustainability is very important to protecting the

mountains and forests. I hope to give my best to help develop mountain biking in Guizhou, and I hope we will do well in competitions at home and abroad."

Jan Beranek from the Czech Republic is an extreme sports and stunt expert. While working as an IT engineer, he also became a sky diving instructor. To date, he has made over 1,000 jumps and was thrilled to sky-dive in Guizhou.

"It's a special and extraordinary opportunity to jump from the Beipanjiang bridge, the highest bridge in the world. The views, the mountains and the bridge are absolutely breathtaking. It is really high, and the landing area is far away, so jumpers have enough time to do flips and tricks in the air and still parachute and land safely," says Beranek.

Located on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, and known for its significant karst geomorphology, Guizhou once grappled with karst rocky desertification. Its vast mountains hindered development and limited

interaction with the wider world.

However, in recent decades, world-class bridges have been built. These infrastructural marvels now allow high-speed trains to connect to remote areas, making outdoor sports destinations more accessible.

Today, Guizhou's karst geography is no longer a disadvantage. Instead, it has made the province into a prime venue for outdoor sports, including mountain biking, marathons, hiking, rock climbing, sailing, caving, bungee jumping and paragliding.

XINHUA

LIFE

Editor's note:

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China laid out a blueprint for the nation's path to modernization, with the aim of guiding the development of all people in the new era and contributing positively to global progress. Throughout the year, China Daily will run a series of picture stories that highlight important waypoints on this journey. In this sixth installment, we focus on Loulan, an ancient kingdom on the Silk Road and people who work in the stations safeguarding the historical heritage.



Left: Ruins of the city of Loulan. **Middle:** Aisikeer Arken takes dogs on a regular patrol of the Loulan site. Altogether there are 20 people working in the five protection stations safeguarding the historical heritage. **Right:** Visitors at the ancient city of Miran in the Lop Nur. Miran was a vitally important oasis city on the Silk Road.



At the Loulan Museum in Ruoqiang county, Bayingolin Mongol autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Feng Jing (left), director of the museum, and Jiao Yingxin, former director of the cultural heritage administration of the county, check the "Loulan Beauty", a well-preserved female mummy.

Ancient site reveals its secrets



Wrapped in clothes made from linen, cotton and silk, the 3,800-year-old mummy is so well preserved that visitors can clearly see her hair and eyelashes.

Photos by ZOU HONG in Bayingolin Mongol autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang

Loulan, an ancient city on the Silk Road, conjures up images of mystery and romanticism even as it disappears into the mists of history.

Shiji, or Records of the Grand Historian, the foundational text of Chinese history dating back to the first century BC, records that before the 2nd century BC, Loulan was already famous in Xiyu (the western regions, a term to describe today's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Central Asia in ancient times). However, it collapsed in about the 5th century. In 1900, Swedish explorer Sven Hedin discovered the site of ancient Loulan.

Located in Lop Nur, a former salt lake which has largely dried up, in Ruoqiang county, Bayingolin Mongol autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang, the Loulan site covers an area of about 120,000 square meters.

Its extremely harsh environment ensured that few people set foot on this area.

In the 1990s, when mummies were discovered in this area, grave robbers noticed the wealth of cultural relics.

To tackle the situation, a Loulan cultural relics protection station was built in 1998. At first it was seasonal, and later became permanent in 2003.



Ma Zhuang, a guide, explains to visitors to the Loulan Museum details of the ancient city.



Heritage center workers — Gao Jinglian (left) and Memet Memetmin — wear T-shirts embossed with a winged angel, found on a mural in Miran.



Li Pengfei, head of the Loulan cultural relics protection station, monitors temperature and humidity in a tomb with frescos.

Jiao Yingxin, former director of Ruoqiang Cultural Heritage Administration, was devoted to the protection of the Loulan site for about three decades until retirement. He is also the one who found "Loulan Beauty", a well-preserved female mummy with clearly visible hair and eyelashes, in 2004.

Also in Lop Nur is a site called Miran, an ancient city on the Silk Road, which has been opened to the public.

Gao Jinglian is a member of the Miran site protection station, and has worked there for 24 years. "Although the work is tiring, it's meaningful and I have learned a lot from it. I will continue to accomplish my tasks and hope more people can get to know the history and culture of Miran," says Gao.

Over the years, five stations have been built in Lop Nur, and altogether 20 people are working there safeguarding heritage, according to Feng Jing, director of Loulan Museum in Ruoqiang.

Compiled by Wang Ru, Mao Weihua and Zhang Xiao contributed to this story.

Online: Watch the video by scanning the code.



LIFE



A scene from the original dance drama, *The Spring in Yangjialing*, performed by students of the Beijing Dance Academy.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Musical heralds capital's performing arts season

Cultural celebration will include range of entertainment to attract enthusiastic audiences, **Chen Nan** reports.

The Chinese version of the musical, *Monte Cristo*, was staged at the Tianqiao Performing Arts Center in Beijing on Sept 9, kicking off a two-month-long performing arts season in the capital.

As part of the program of the Beijing Culture Forum, which was held in the capital on Thursday and Friday, the Chinese musical attracted a large number of followers, with six performances from Sept 7 to 10.

Adapted from the Russian musical based on the well-known French novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the Chinese musical, coproduced by the Beijing Dance Drama and Opera, features Ayanga, one of the most popular musical actors in China, who plays the leading character Edmond Dantes, and Chinese actress Lou Yixiao playing the role of the heroine Mercedes.

"The musical genre is one of the most popular art forms among Chinese audiences, especially young people," says Dong Ning, deputy general manager of the Beijing Performance and Arts Group, adding that after the shows in Beijing, the musical will tour nationwide.

"The Chinese version of the musical gathers top Chinese artists and we are excited to open the performing arts season in Beijing with this musical."

Dong Ning, deputy general manager of the Beijing Performance and Arts Group

The Russian production was presented as the closing show for the Shanghai Spring International Musical Festival in 2012. The Chinese musical was premiered in Shanghai in December and toured nationwide with about 30 shows.

The ongoing performing arts season in Beijing features six parts, according to the organizers of the Beijing Culture Forum, including the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and the municipal Party committee and government of Beijing.

During the event, 30 theatrical productions by Chinese art troupes will be staged in theaters in Beijing, including dance dramas, operas, musicals, traditional Chinese operas and concerts.

A Chinese play, titled *From West to East*, was premiered in Beijing on Friday, with performances running until Wednesday. Featuring veteran scriptwriter Zhang Heping and director Lang Kun, the Chinese play follows the ups and downs of the



From top: A scene from Kunqu Opera production *Guo Feng*, by Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre, which highlights the first female poet recorded in Chinese history, Lady Xu Mu; Ayanga plays the leading role in the Chinese version of the musical *Monte Cristo*; and organizers announce the opening of the capital's performing arts season at Tianqiao Performing Arts Center.

century-old Beijing hotpot restaurant Dong Lai Shun.

Chinese actor Liu Peiqi will play the leading role, Ding Deshan, who founded the restaurant in 1903. The story of the restaurant spans from its very beginning to 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded. Established by Ding, a man from Cangzhou, Hebei province, in 1903, the restaurant starts from a small booth in Dong'an mar-

ket, a commercial area located in the bustling Wangfujing street, and becomes famous for its distinctive copper pots, thin-sliced strips of mutton and sugar garlic. In its 120-year history, the restaurant's fortunes have reflected those of Chinese society. Now, Dong Lai Shun has more than 150 branch restaurants across the country.

"Beijing has been transformed into a cosmopolitan city. With its

profound history and charming culture, the play will appeal to an audience that wants to get a taste of old Beijing," says Lang, who is known for directing China Central Television's annual Spring Festival gala — one of the most-watched TV shows in the country — five times.

"We want to bring the old Beijing back in every aspect, such as the dialect, the sounds of the street and the food," Lang adds.

Other highlights will include *Guo Feng*, an original Kunqu Opera production by the Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre that follows the story of Lady Xu Mu, who was a patriotic heroine and the first female poet recorded in Chinese history, and *Beneath the Red Banner*, a Quju Opera production by the Beijing Quju Opera Troupe, which was adapted from the novel of the same name by Chinese writer Lao She (1899-1966). While Kunqu Opera is considered the oldest traditional Chinese opera, with a history of about 600 years, and was listed as one of the masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity by the UNESCO, Quju is a traditional opera that is believed to be the only local opera in Beijing.

The performing arts season will also bring 14 smaller theaters in Beijing into the limelight, since small theaters have become a new home for artists and popular venues for audiences during the past few years. Performances will be staged to offer audiences immersive theater experiences.

Ten theatrical productions will be staged at universities in Beijing, allowing young students to enjoy art performances of various styles. Performances by university students will also be staged, such as *The Spring in Yangjialing*, a poetic dance coproduced by the National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Beijing Dance Academy. Students will also have the chance to talk to creative members behind those productions during sessions after each performance.

Apart from live shows, the performing arts season also provides online streaming, allowing more people to enjoy the theatrical productions.

According to the event organizers, ticket pricing strategies have been launched by collaborating with online ticketing platforms, such as Damai. With the government offering financial support of 14 million yuan (\$1.92 million), low ticket prices are expected to benefit about 600,000 viewers.

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Silk Road cities see tourism as route to further success

By XU HAORYU
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A series of events marking the establishment of the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities were successfully held on Sept 1 in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province.

A total of 58 cities from 26 countries, covering Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas, have joined the alliance to boost cooperation in tourism, technology, health, education and sports.

Concurrently, the International Forum on Culture and Tourism Development of Silk Road Cities 2023 also took place. The forum focused on the cooperation and development of Silk Road tourism cities through keynote speeches and discussions.

"Tourism is an ambassador of peace and a bridge of friendship," said Lu Yingchuan, the deputy minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, on the launch ceremony of the tourism alliance.

"Today, the tourism industry, endowed with both cultural and industrial attributes, is in the process of rejuvenating in the post-pandemic era and is receiving high attention from countries and cities around the world."

Wang Shaoxuan, the deputy director of the standing committee of Jiangxi Provincial People's Congress, said that, "Jiangxi has long been an important goods export destination along the Silk Road. Products like porcelain, tea, *xiaobu* (summer cloth), or handmade linen, silk cocoons, and traditional Chinese medicine, have always been 'bestsellers' that are popular in various Silk Road countries."

Looking to the future, Wang stated that Jiangxi is eager to further solidify Jingdezhen's role as the top city of the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities.

Through cultural and tourism exchanges between cities, Jiangxi aims to strengthen interaction and cooperation with countries and regions along the route. The goal is to jointly create a Silk Road tourism brand, share the Silk Road tourism market, and collectively build a Silk Road tourism industry community.

The Vice-Minister of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts departments, Ali Asghar Shalbafian Hossein-Abadi, and Vinicius Rene Lummertz Silva, Brazil's former tourism minister, each delivered a keynote speech on the theme of "the 10th Anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative: The Significant Importance and Future Prospects of Cooperation among Silk Road Tourism Cities".

Shalbafian highly praised the initiative to establish the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities. He stated that the Silk Road left a 600-kilometer-long ancient trade route in Semnan on the north side of Iran, which he considers an enduring treasure for the whole world.

He believes that by developing sensible policies centered around the Silk Road as a cultural and tourism brand, it's possible to unlock the tourism potential of member cities. This would invigorate their economies, facilitate regional synergistic development and industrial integration, and also bring positive energy to international relations.

Lummertz focused on the common developmental bottlenecks currently faced by the international tourism industry in his speech, and he claimed that collaboration could be the only solution.

Lummertz expressed genuine happiness that the city of Iguazu in Brazil, which had awarded him "honorary citizenship", had joined the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities. He believes that the alliance will facilitate regional tourism resource integration and the creation of international tourism products. Especially against the backdrop of traditional tourism destinations reaching market saturation and the increasing demand for emerging tourism destinations, the alliance will create new opportunities and pave new pathways for the recovery of the global tourism industry.

During the forum, which was held immediately after the ceremony, the discussions centered on how to better empower city construction and sustainable development through the tourism industry.

Evelyne Tchichelle, mayor of Pointe-Noire, the Republic of Congo, stated that the city is the economic capital of the country with high-quality tourism resources like coastlines, forests and cultural heritage sites. She emphasized that economic development must proceed on the premise of conservation and stressed the importance of effective marketing and promotion.

Florencio Garay, mayor of Bislig city, the Philippines, also mentioned the importance of sustaina-

bility. He highlighted that city development must pay close attention to the sustainability of the ecosystem, economic investments, and the development of tourism resources.

As the mayor of Petra in Jordan, a city that is renowned for its historical and cultural significance, Suleiman Farajat stressed that the protection of world heritage sites can help enhance cultural confidence and cultural identity, which are important elements for the sustainable development of a city.

"Before the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa received nearly 100,000 Chinese tourists annually. By 2030, the number is expected to increase to 1 million."

Styabonga Cyprian Cwele, South African ambassador to China

"Air China recently announced that direct flights between China and South Africa will be increased. This prosperous air transport route between the two countries will become an important bridge for economic, trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges and cooperation. China has always been one of South Africa's most important tourism and trade markets," he said.

The forum also witnessed the establishment of the Jingdezhen Declaration, which follows the principles of "extensive consultation, joint contributions, and shared benefits". The declaration claims, "The alliance's members are committed to making the body an inclusive international mechanism of tourism cooperation, thus contributing to the more sustainable development of the tourism industry and the implementation of the Global Civilization Initiative".

All countries who recognize "the Silk Road spirit" will be welcomed, it says.



Representatives from 58 cities in 26 countries attend activities to launch the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

LIFE



Hadiya Msham Abdulla sings as her husband, Dilxat Tursun, comforts their baby at the Dili and Diya Cafe in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Coffee shop couple know a latte about

BREWING ROMANCE



Photos by LAN HONGGUANG, LI XIANG and JIN HAOYUAN | Xinhua

Kashgar in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region is known as a trade hub on the legendary Silk Road that once connected ancient China to the West. Dilxat Tursun and his wife, Hadiya Msham Abdulla, from Tanzania own a coffee shop in the city, which is renowned not only for its tasty African coffee and treats, but also the owners' love story.

Seven years on, Dilxat can still feel his heart flutter whenever he recalls the moment that, clutching 99 roses in his hand, he confessed his feelings to her.

Although Abdulla didn't give her answer right away, the two are now happily married, running the Dili and Diya Cafe.

While brewing a good cup of coffee, they love to tell customers and online followers the story of how they found love despite being thousands of kilometers apart.

Dilxat left his home of Xinjiang in 2013 to go to college in the eastern city of Fuzhou, Fujian province, having no clue he was about to meet the love of his life three years later.

"I saw her for the first time during an open class. Later, I met her many times in various exams, so we became quite close," Dilxat recalls.

"I admire her because she's very kindhearted."

The two often met to study and have dinner together. In 2018, Abdulla returned to Tanzania for an internship, and being apart made them realize how much they wanted to stay with each other.

She came back to Fuzhou, and they started dating and got married on May 20, 2020, a date that sounds similar to "I love you" in Chinese.



Top: Hadiya Msham Abdulla sings in front of the cafe. **Above:** The couple's hospitality attracts many tourists.



From top: With their wedding photo on the desk, Hadiya Msham Abdulla and Dilxat Tursun share a tender moment. Abdulla is ready to serve coffee at the cafe. The couple enjoy a coffee break.



Abdulla decided to accompany her husband to his hometown of Kashgar last year.

"I like Kashgar very much. People here are very nice and they help us with any problems we have," says the wife.

"Kashgar has deserts and so many snowy mountains. It is so beautiful."

Shortly after, they had a baby, and a plan for the future — to open a cafe.

"Making coffee is her dream, and she's quite adept at the craft. I have also learned many skills under her tutelage," says Dilxat.

"We opened the cafe to offer our customers a brand-new coffee experience."

Starting a business is never easy. For the couple, buying the right amount of African coffee beans was a headache.

"Having too many beans in the stock room runs the risk of them spoiling, while having too few means that they will run out quickly. But we have figured out an optimal amount after months of trial and error," says Abdulla.

"Making coffee is a very enjoyable thing for me."

The couple poured their hearts and souls into creating the best coffee. The cafe has become a popular place in the old city area of Kashgar. They also share their business and daily life through livestreams on social media.

"I hope we can open a chain of stores in every city in Xinjiang, so that our fans can enjoy our coffee wherever they are," says Abdulla.

"Recent years have seen rapid development in Kashgar. The old city area is a scenic spot with huge potential. I'm very optimistic about it," says Dilxat.

"There's a century-old teahouse in Kashgar. I hope that in the future the city will have a century-old cafe — our cafe."



Top: The cafe is a popular meeting place for local residents. **Above:** Dilxat Tursun makes coffee for customers.

Alpha Mohamed Jalloh

BRI pioneers green infrastructure in Africa

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative is a vast, ambitious infrastructure and economic development project spanning across continents. As for China-Africa Belt and Road cooperation, one of its most significant and promising facets is its emphasis on green infrastructure projects, renewable energy development, and ecological conservation measures. At a time when the world is grappling with environmental challenges, Sino-African Belt and Road cooperation represents a beacon of hope for sustainable development in Africa.

If we delve into the key aspects of this cooperation, we can see its potential benefits, as well as some other aspects, which need to be further improved.

Green infrastructure is an essential component of the China-Africa Belt and Road partnership, and focuses on projects that prioritize environmental sustainability. These projects encompass a wide range of initiatives, from transportation networks to urban development.

In improving transportation and connectivity, China has played a pivotal role in helping build modern transportation infrastructure in Africa. Roads, railways and ports are being developed with an emphasis on minimizing the environmental impacts. For example, the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya, built with Chinese collaboration, uses electric locomotives, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In terms of urban planning, African cities are experiencing rapid growth. However, sustainable urban planning is essential to preventing environmental degradation. The Belt and Road Initiative encourages the development of eco-friendly cities with efficient public transportation, green spaces and waste management systems.

Access to reliable and clean energy is crucial, too, for Africa's development. That's why the Belt and Road Initiative promotes renewable energy projects as a sustainable solution to Africa's energy problems.

To be sure, solar power projects have been the focal point of China-Africa cooperation. China has invested in large-scale solar farms across Africa, including the Benban Solar Park in Egypt, which has one of the world's largest solar photovoltaic panel installations. These projects not only provide clean energy but also create job opportunities.

On the other hand, hydropower projects such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam are being developed with Chinese investment. And although these projects may have triggered controversy because of the West's indiscriminate dissemination of misguided information, they have had a positive impact on society and the environment. The projects also promise substantial clean energy generation, potentially benefiting



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

multiple African nations.

Wind energy is another area where Sino-African cooperation is flourishing. For instance, the Lake Turkana wind power project in Kenya, supported by Chinese investment, contributes significantly to the country's renewable energy capacity.

And while the ecological conservation measures taken under the framework of China-Africa Belt and Road cooperation are aimed at safeguarding Africa's unique biodiversity and natural resources, preservation of wildlife is especially important. Since poaching and habitat loss threaten Africa's iconic wildlife, joint efforts are underway to combat them by strengthening law enforcement, and better protecting the wildlife habitats, with community engagement if and when possible and necessary.

Addressing the rising concerns about desertification in many African countries, the Belt and Road Initiative has launched programs to promote reforestation and afforestation projects, so as to mitigate the adverse effects of deforestation on climate, soil erosion and local livelihoods.

Besides, sustainable management of water resources is crucial in arid regions

of Africa. As such, the Belt and Road Initiative supports projects that improve access to, and storage and distribution of, water, while minimizing waste.

So what are the benefits of China-Africa Belt and Road Cooperation in broad terms? By focusing on green infrastructure and renewable energy, the partnership promotes sustainable development in Africa, reducing the continent's carbon footprint and dependency on fossil fuels, while the development of such projects creates employment for local communities, fostering economic growth and reducing poverty.

Similarly, renewable energy projects help improve access to electricity in remote, less-developed and under-served areas, having a positive impact on education, healthcare and overall quality of life.

Moreover, the measures aimed at conserving biodiversity help better protect Africa's rich biodiversity, preserving the continent's natural heritage for future generations.

But while China-Africa Belt and Road cooperation has immense potential, it can also make more careful planning and mitigation strategies to better protect ecosystems and commu-

nities. It is equally important to make sure that local communities benefit from and have a say in Belt and Road projects, in order to get their acceptance and ensure their success.

Furthermore, since the involvement of multiple international players in development plans and projects in Africa can lead to geopolitical tensions, diplomatic efforts are required to manage to address them.

In conclusion, China-Africa Belt and Road cooperation, with its emphasis on green infrastructure, renewable energy development, and ecological conservation, represents a paradigm shift in international development. It offers a unique opportunity for African countries to leapfrog into sustainable, environmentally friendly development while addressing crucial challenges such as access to energy and biodiversity conservation.

Ultimately, the partnership holds the potential to be a beacon of sustainable development and cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world.

The author is director of China Africa Institute, University of Makeni, Sierra Leone. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Jasna Plevnik

Initiative helps narrow development gap in European nations

Today, when someone in Europe says the "Belt and Road Initiative", the first association people make is the construction of transport and energy infrastructure, and the growth of trade. But what exactly is it that the Belt and Road Initiative would like to achieve beyond those easily visible commercial goals, and how does China want to use the initiative to influence the world?

In the global policy of integration, the Belt and Road stands as a giant because of its transcendental goals, aimed at making the world better connected and development more balanced within countries and across regions. The Belt and Road Initiative's paramount value, "shared development", has earned a lot of praise from the international community, and the initiative has shown that fairer economic interdependence between regions and countries is possible.

The Belt and Road Initiative has put China at the center of global governance, and its results are substantive in Asia, Africa, and Europe, where China's economic influence is on the rise.

The Belt and Road Initiative may be just 10 years old, but its DNA is from the ancient times. Croatia and the rest of Europe have been connected in many ways with both the ancient and the modern Silk Road. Croatia-China relations have been moving forward since 2017 when Croatia joined the Belt and Road Initiative by signing a memorandum of understanding with China. Together with some other European Union member states, Croatia appreciates that the Belt and Road Initiative respects the EU's standards and has transparent relations with the European bloc.

In Croatia, there was a time of Belt and Road mania, when even football players' transfers were explained in terms of "Belt and Road diplomacy". Today, the approach toward the initiative is more complex, which reflects a deeper understanding of the initiative's broader economic benefits brought about by regional and global interconnectivity and the realization that Belt and Road projects are the responsibility of all countries involved, not China's alone.

Yet it is clear that some Western countries have been impressed and inspired by the Belt and Road Initiative to launch the IMEEEC.

In 2018, the bid for the largest infrastructure project in Croatia in recent years was won by the China Road and Bridge Corporation. The CRBC offered the lowest bid among the three bidders to build the Peljesac Bridge. The same year, Croatia's Zadar Port officially became part of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road cruise tourism.

The Belt and Road Initiative has brought the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank closer to Croatia and Southeast Europe. Croatia joined the AIIB as a non-regional prospective member at the end of 2019. The loans for building Belt and Road projects in the region and Chinese companies' financing of projects in third-party markets are in renminbi, which positively influences the world financial system and makes it more global.

Croatia expected the initiative's spill-over effects to benefit its tourism industry, but the three-year-long COVID-19 pandemic delayed that. Also, the problems affecting the global supply chains due to the pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have contributed to a global economic crisis that has created difficulties for all Belt and Road economies. Italy-China cooperation under the Belt and Road framework, too, has been affected by those factors.

The growing closeness between Croatia and China, and cooperation between China and the Central and Eastern European countries — by setting aside geopolitical issues and focusing on the digital economy and green development — would not have been possible without the initiative.

The prominent Belt and Road projects in Southeast Europe are expected to be completed by 2025. These projects include the high-speed Belgrade-Budapest Railway, which would connect Serbia with the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road via North Macedonia and Greece's Port of Piraeus that plays a pivotal role within the Balkan Silk Road corridors.

As for Hungary, China was the largest investor in the country last year. Indeed, Hungary has greatly benefited from China-CEEC cooperation and Budapest has become a globally influential academic center for China-Europe relations studies.

Yet China and its proposed initiative have been under harsh attack from some Western powers, especially the United States, which openly asks its allies to sabotage the Belt and Road Initiative.

However, Chinese investments in Europe fell by 22 percent year-on-year in 2022 not only because of the pandemic and some economic factors but also because of the EU's tendency to fit its relationship with China into the US' frame. This approach tarnishes Europe's image as a reasonable, just and anti-geopolitical power.

Irrespective of whether or not the lies about the Belt and Road Initiative stop, it will continue to progress because of its goal to pursue collaboration over confrontation, and its competitive advantage over other global powers which pursue confrontation and division.

It is paradoxical of the world's only superpower to persistently attack the Belt and Road Initiative, as was seen when the "India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor" was launched at the G20 Summit in New Delhi last month. The fact that the Belt and Road Initiative has been doing, and doing it excellently over land and sea, for the past 10 years what the IMEEEC intends to do in the future makes no difference to some Western countries.

Yet it is clear that some Western countries have been impressed and inspired by the Belt and Road Initiative to launch the IMEEEC. That's why it's a mystery why they do not talk of integrating the two initiatives for the betterment of more people.

The author is president of the Geoeconomic Forum Croatia. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Adnan Akfirat

Belt and Road a boon for Global South members

The institutions that constitute the backbone of the current, West-led international system are waning in power as multipolarity takes hold in the world.

"Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to ensure peace, prosperity, progress, and sustainability for all" was the overarching theme of the 78th UN General Assembly.

Announced in September 2015, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development comprises 17 goals and a 15-year road map to, among others, end poverty, eradicate inequality and injustice, and mitigate climate change by 2030.

Unfortunately, with just over six years to the 2030 deadline, there has been no significant progress on the road map. In fact, it was clear from the outset that the 17 goals might remain on paper, because the UN alone cannot eradicate inequality and injustice and realize the aspirations of humanity.

Also, many member states today see the UN as a "dysfunctional organization". Rebuilding the UN according to its founding charter is a task that humankind cannot postpone.

The G20 Summit, incidentally, was held just before the UN General Assembly session. The theme of the

The initiative promotes cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and shared development, making mutual use of the strengths of nation states. The Belt and Road Initiative, led by developing countries, is paving the way for a new global society based on sharing, solidarity, and harmony between humans and nature.

summit, held in New Delhi on Sept 9-10, was similar to that of the UN General Assembly.

According to data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the G20 member states together account for about 85 percent of global GDP, 75 percent of world trade, and two-thirds of the world's population.

The G20 claims to "bring advanced and emerging economies around the same table", and "its core agenda is to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced global growth and create quali-

ty jobs". But, in reality, the G7 countries, which account for 30 percent of global GDP, use the G20 platform to keep the middle-sized states of the Global South in check.

At UN meetings, speeches are made about "eradicating hunger and poverty, sustainable development". At the G20 meetings, similar announcements are made amid the crocodile tears of the G7 countries, the source of all the problems.

Amid all this, a completely different platform for international cooperation, which has proven its mettle in just 10 years, is holding the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on Tuesday and Wednesday.

From 2013 to 2022, the cumulative value of imports and exports between China and BRI partner countries reached \$19.1 trillion, with an average annual growth rate of 6.4 percent. The cumulative two-way investment between China and partner countries reached \$380 billion, including \$240 billion from China.

According to the World Bank, if all the Belt and Road transportation infrastructure projects are built and become operational by 2030, global real income could increase by between 0.7 percent and 2.9 percent, lifting 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty and 32 million out of moderate poverty.

At a time when developing coun-

tries, struggling against the destructive effects of the neoliberal globalization system, are demanding the establishment of a more just international order, the Belt and Road Initiative, accordingly, has been promoting peace, cooperation, and common development despite the imperialist policies that aggravate conflicts between countries and provoke wars.

The initiative's principle of "sharing" is new to bilateral and multilateral partnerships. The initiative promotes cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and shared development, making mutual use of the strengths of nation states. The Belt and Road Initiative, led by developing countries, is paving the way for a new global society based on sharing, solidarity, and harmony between humans and nature.

Many leaders of the Global South, including the presidents of Serbia and Argentina, are attending the forum. Given the opportunities and possibilities it offers, the Belt and Road Initiative can help Turkey to revive its slowing economy, and provide it with a unique cooperation platform to realize its interests in the international arena.

The author is chairman of the Turkish-Chinese Business Development and Friendship Association. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

COMMENT

Editorials

Belt and Road cooperation could pave new paths to common development and prosperity

That dignitaries and representatives from more than 150 countries and 30 international organizations are attending the ongoing third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing is a recognition of the initiative's role as a promoter of common development.

Since its launch a decade ago, the Belt and Road Initiative has made remarkable achievements, benefiting the countries involved. Thousands of landmark infrastructure projects have been completed across the globe, improving connectivity, making travel more convenient and creating more development opportunities for Belt and Road countries.

To be sure, the Belt and Road Initiative has ushered in a new development paradigm by overcoming severe challenges, inspiring many other countries to choose the development path that best suits their national conditions. By joining the initiative, whose goal is to improve infrastructure connectivity and provide public goods, more and more countries have realized the initiative's role as a facilitator of global peace and common prosperity.

China's external environment has not always been friendly enough to extend the pragmatic initiative across continents. Some narrow-minded, ideologically-driven Western countries' desperate efforts to spread lies and rumors about the initiative are a major factor obstructing the deepening of global cooperation under the Belt and Road framework.

Judging by the West's limited contributions to world peace and development in recent years and

the growing appeal of the Belt and Road Initiative to developing and emerging market economies, the root cause behind the West's opposition to the initiative seems to be its outdated worldview.

While the Western powers pursue narrow, selfish goals by forming small cliques and fueling geopolitical tensions, the Belt and Road Initiative has garnered the support of the international community for its inclusive nature and spirit of multilateralism.

Today's is a far less peaceful world, with the Russia-Ukraine conflict dragging on for 18 months, thanks to the policies of the US-led West, and the eruption of a new conflict in the Middle East, and formidable challenges such as climate change and foundering economic recovery not being addressed. In the Belt and Road Initiative, however, the world has a practical tool to address these challenges.

As the Chinese leadership has said, no country should be left behind on the road to development. Over the past decade, the initiative has blazed new trails and found a path on which like-minded countries can cooperate to achieve common development. From 2013 to 2022, the cumulative value of trade between China and other Belt and Road countries was \$19.1 trillion, with an average annual growth of 6.4 percent, which reflects the significance of the initiative to the global economy.

Since the initiative's core principles are "extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits", which have won global recognition, it is hoped cooperation among Belt and Road countries will pave new paths to achieve common development.

Distorted report can't sour China-Russia ties

The fuss some US media outlets have made over Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to China, during which he will also attend the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, exposes their bias against Beijing and Moscow and their proclivity for distorting facts.

"The two countries have forged an informal alliance against the United States and other democratic nations," a US media organization claimed in its report on Tuesday on Putin's two-day visit to China. That is a gross distortion of the relationship between the two neighbors. The US media sees the ghost of "alliance" in Sino-Russian relations because neither Beijing nor Moscow yields to Washington's hegemony. Instead, the two countries follow international laws, respect the United Nations-centered world order, and support multipolar global governance.

The US side has been claiming the good-neighborly and friendly relationship between China and Russia is a type of alliance because it is desperate to project them as enemies of "democratic nations". The tragedy is that the US media uses Washington's yardstick to measure Sino-Russian ties.

Sino-Russian relations are based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation; they neither target any third party nor are they at the mercy of any third party. Not to mention the two countries, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, play important roles in promoting global security and stability.

In the same report, the US media, in all its absurdity, has tried to drive a wedge between Moscow and Beijing by distorting what Putin told a Chinese media outlet about the Belt and Road Initiative on Friday.

Putin supported the initiative, saying "We don't have any contradictions here, on the contrary, there is a certain synergy" referring to the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union program. But the US media misinterpreted it to claim Moscow has downplayed the "impact of China's economic influence in a region that Russia has long considered its backyard". The report went so far as to vilify the initiative as a "debt trap" as well.

Ironically, the aforementioned US media, as well as other US media outlets, has maintained a studied silence on the Joe Biden administration's "Build Back Better World" program, floated two years ago. After the "B3W" proved to be empty talk, the Biden administration put forward the "India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor" at the G20 Summit in New Delhi last month. But it, too, lacks practicality.

The US has never lacked such "practicality" to incite "color revolutions" or launch wars around the world. But it's always short of that when it comes to promoting common development. The US media's prejudice is self-evident in such reports, and by selling the US' agenda, such media outlets are harming their own credibility.

Strategic autonomy crucial to EU interests

From Paris to Brussels to other European capitals, there have been talks about the European Union's strategic autonomy. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron famously said European nations should pursue a path of their own, rather than become "America's followers".

After trade protectionism intensified in the US, especially after former US president Donald Trump announced his notorious "America first" strategy and denied climate change, the EU reaffirmed its role as an upholder of multilateralism.

Free and fair international trade has been instrumental to Europe's prosperity. That's why even as Washington weaponizes trade to upend geopolitical competitions, Brussels has maintained a distance from the US and proposed the strategy of "de-risking" instead of "decoupling" from China. Listening to EU decision-makers talking about defending free trade, one tends to take their commitment to free market for granted.

But if European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel do reach an agreement with US President Joe Biden at their summit meeting on creating a joint tariff zone, targeting Chinese steel and aluminum imports, it will not be a matter of narrative alone.

Under the proposed "Global Arrangement on Sustainable Steel and Aluminum", which is meant to protect US and European producers, EU member states

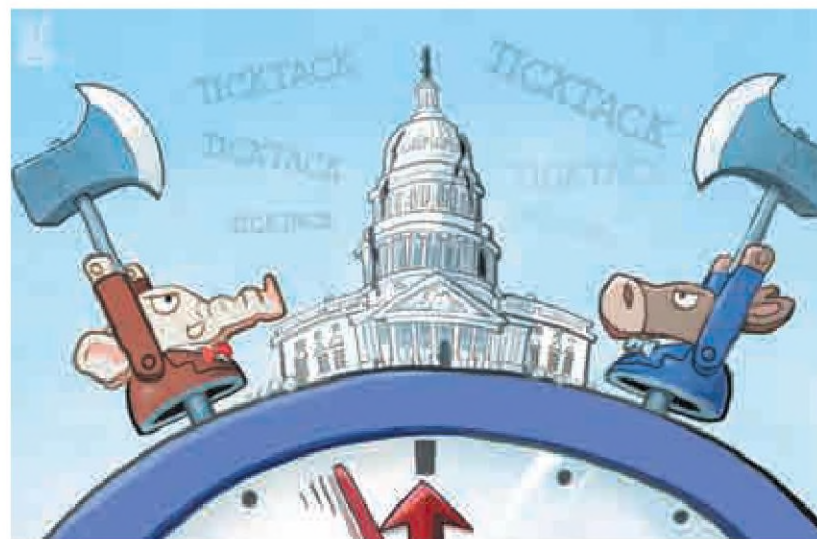
would impose higher duties on imports from allegedly "nonmarket" economies — 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum — according to US media outlet Politico. The so-called "green steel club" intends to exclude countries such as China with some of the membership criteria being explicitly targeted at China.

Designed as a solution to the EU-US dispute on steel and aluminum, the agreement will not only deal a blow to the EU's trade ties with China, but will raise serious questions about its commitment to free trade as well. Using national security as a pretext, Trump imposed punitive tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports, including those from the EU. While the compromise deal the EU and the US are expected to reach will likely exempt European imports, it will cause endless troubles for Brussels in the long run and on a wider range of issues.

To begin with, it will tarnish the EU's image as a staunch free trade advocate, undermine its pursuit of strategic autonomy, and sow discords between the EU and China, which have been mutually beneficial trade and economic partners.

As Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjarto, who is in Beijing to attend the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, China and the EU are partners, not rivals, and their common interests far outweigh their differences. What Szijjarto said in response is an apt analysis of the EU's policy: "de-risking" is exposing Europe to risks.

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Authorities must boost family life by taking corrective measures

A recent statistical bulletin released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs shows that 6.84 million couples registered for marriage in China in 2022, down 10.6 percent from 2021.

Actually, the number of people registering for marriage has been dipping for nine consecutive years after peaking in 2013 when 13.47 million couples registered for marriage. The figure dipped below 10 million in 2019, below 9 million in 2020, below 8 million in 2021, and below 7 million in 2022.

This ever-increasing single population and lowering fertility rate among married people, affecting sustainable population development deserves the attention of the authorities and society.

There is also a growing divorce

rate. Statistics show the number of registered divorces climbed from 580,000 couples in 1987 to 3.73 million couples in 2020.

A number of factors are responsible for fewer young people wanting to get married or start a family, be it people's higher education level, changed concept about marriage, accelerated pace of work and life, increasing forms of entertainment, and a more tolerant marriage and family culture, among others.

The high cost of marriage, high housing prices and the costly "betrothal gift", which is the money the groom has to pay to the bride's parents, are the main factors discouraging many young people from getting married.

The huge pressures stemming from the high cost of marriage as

well as the significant investment of time, energy and money required to raise children, have consequently increased many young people's reluctance to marry or have children.

The rate at which China is hurtling toward becoming an aging society, as revealed by the seventh national census carried out in 2020, underlines the urgent need for the authorities and society to take some corrective measures.

The authorities should introduce practical and substantial measures, such as reducing mortgage interest rates, increasing birth subsidies and expanding the coverage of low-cost kindergartens. A healthy marriage culture should also be advocated and fostered across society to reduce the cost of marriage.

— BEIJING NEWS

A third party that threatens the environment

A reporter who went undercover and infiltrated two third-party environmental monitoring agencies in Xi'an and Taiyuan found they were frequently fabricating data, altering monitoring data and producing false monitoring reports to assist polluting enterprises to go undetected.

Third-party environmental monitoring agencies that specialize in environmental monitoring, assessment, and other services are independent of both the government and private enterprises. However, as reported, the daily work of sampling personnel attached to such agencies involves sampling fraud, modifying data, making things up, and becoming the "pollution guards" of the polluting clients, further emboldening them to violate rules.

In this way, the polluting enterprises, third-party environmental

monitoring agencies and even equipment manufacturers who intentionally leave loopholes have all crossed the line, and are inviting legal punishment.

The third parties who unremotely help enterprises "meet standards" ignore public interests and create obstacles for environmental law enforcement. Effective from March 1, 2021, the 11th Amendment to the Criminal Law has included "falsification" by intermediary organizations who undertake environmental impact assessment and environmental monitoring responsibilities into the realm of crime. Those falsifying data might face the risk of imprisonment if the judiciary feels they had committed crimes.

In February 2023, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment released the 13th batch of typical cases of

ecological environment law enforcement, targeting for the first time the falsification of a few third-party environmental monitoring agencies. The aforementioned falsification cases serve as a warning to third-party environmental monitoring agencies that illegal acts will not be tolerated.

Apart from cracking down on environmental monitoring data fraud, it is also necessary to reflect on why third-party environmental monitoring agencies are willing to use their professional expertise to help entities falsify data and evade supervision.

The third-party monitoring agencies must realize that by doing so they are destroying the ecological environment, which will also affect the healthy development of the entire industry.

— BEIJING NEWS

What They Say

Peace efforts in the Middle East should never stop

Israel has been pounding the Gaza Strip with missiles and airstrikes for more than a week, and might continue to do so until domestic fury subsides. Despite some countries' efforts to broker a cease-fire and restore peace, even if temporarily, the attacks from both sides, more so from the Israeli side, might not stop now.

But the conflict cannot go on forever, and the problem can be solved only through dialogue.

In recent years, the Israeli government's ruthless restrictions on the Palestinians have made them feel humiliated. Perhaps that's the reason behind Hamas' outburst on Saturday. This is not to justify Hamas' horrific attack on the kibbutz, though.

Due to the power disparity between the two sides, the possibility of Israel's ground attack of Gaza is very high, especially because the

United States has announced that Israel has the right to "defend" itself and therefore pound the Gaza Strip with impunity.

But if the humanitarian crisis worsens, the international community's response is something Israel will have to consider. Israel's goal, this time, seems to be to destroy Hamas, so that it no longer poses a threat to Israel.

Israel has now asked people in northern Gaza to move to the south, possibly because it intends to occupy all of northern Gaza and turn it into a "safe zone". But the deeper Israel presses into Gaza, the stronger the Palestinian resistance will be. So the international community should make all-out efforts to restore peace, especially by appealing to the good senses of the Israelis.

The Joe Biden administration has responded to the tragedy

unfolding in Gaza with an eye to the 2024 presidential election, because the influence of the Jewish group on US politics is obvious.

On the other hand, Washington does not want chaos in the Middle East. The US' focus is on the Asia-Pacific, so it wants to "control" the Middle East with as little input as possible. That's why it wants to deter other parties from providing military aid to the Palestinians.

The "two-state solution" agreed by the two sides, as well as the US, has all but been forgotten, because the Western world seems squarely behind Israel. But at least in the name of humanity, the international community should find ways to implement the two-state solution and restore the land and dignity of the Palestinian people. That's the least the international community should do.

— GUANGCHA CN

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GLOBAL VIEWS

JAYA JOSIE

Ten years of inclusive multilateralism

The BRI and BRICS+ group will be important factors in the development of trade and infrastructure investment to Africa

The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed 10 years ago. To date the initiative links more than 150 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, covering two-thirds of the world's population and approximately 40 percent of the global GDP.

The initiative opens up investment opportunities for corporations in China and Belt and Road countries. Based on "China Belt and Road Initiative Investment Report 2023 H1 — the First 10 Years" by Fudan University's Green Finance & Development Center, the initial data published in the first half of 2023 on 148 countries indicate 103 projects worth \$43.3 billion. Globally, China's Belt and Road investment shows a marked increase of 130 percent in sub-Saharan countries of Africa, with a 69 percent increase in construction contracts. With this level of BRI investment, sub-Saharan Africa has become, after Southeast Asia, the second-most significant destination for BRI construction investment.

The report suggests that the initiative includes more than 900 10-year infrastructure projects valued at \$1.3 trillion across Eurasia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The funding for the projects will be backed by China's Silk Road Infrastructure Fund, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank.

There is a chorus of voices in the international media that paints China's BRI as promoting China's international economic agenda to control the flow of its resource inputs by focusing on transport access across countries and oceans. There is also the old narrative that China's loan agreements are creating a debt trap for emerging and developing economies.

In fact, China is promoting the initiative as part of its own policy of inclusive multilateralism. As one can see, many Western and Asian countries are members of the AIIB. As the BRICS+ group becomes concentrically linked with many Belt and

As the BRICS+ group becomes concentrically linked with many Belt and Road countries and as many are themselves members of the BRICS New Development Bank, they will, like the other members of the NDB, benefit from the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

Road countries and as many are themselves members of the BRICS New Development Bank, they will, like the other members of the NDB, benefit from the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

The CRA will continue to be an important mitigating mechanism to address situations of financial crises. In this sense, it will contribute toward reinforcing the global financial safety net.

At the 15th BRICS summit held in August in Johannesburg, South Africa, the BRICS heads of state invited six more countries with emerging economies to join the group in January 2024. The invitation was based on BRICS' commitment to inclusive multilateralism and a set of principles, criteria, standards and procedures agreed to by all members of the original five members. The new members of the BRICS group come from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, and many of them are beneficiaries of Belt and Road investments.

Also at the 15th BRICS summit, the leaders resolved that the BRICS+ group will promote the use of their

own currencies in financial transactions across the member states. Recently, according to the Bank of China, Brazil and China completed a transaction using their own currencies.

In the BRI and BRICS there are concerted efforts by economies to use their own currencies for financial transactions in response to the possible threat of restrictions for using the SWIFT system for cross-border payments. China has also introduced its own alternative to the SWIFT called the Cross-border Interbank Payment System. Such a move will facilitate the use of own currencies between the two countries.

In Africa, the African Continental Free Trade Area recently introduced the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System to facilitate intra-African trade in the local currency.

Within the original BRICS group, Russia has also developed its own respective financial transaction messaging system as an alternative to the use of the SWIFT system. This is called the System for Transfer of Financial Messages.

The PAPSS, CIPS and SPFS could become important platforms for the use of own currencies for cross-border payments within the BRI and BRICS frameworks.

The BRI and BRICS+ group will be important factors in the development of trade and infrastructure investment in support of the AfCFTA. To kick-start the process, the BRICS New Development Bank committed to issue bonds and finance infrastructure projects by raising funds in BRICS+ local currencies.

There could also be a similar approach within the AIIB and the SCO. Should this approach become a reality, the BRI and the BRICS+ pro-



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

grams will show the way toward global win-win inclusive multilateralism.

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KOSTAS GOULIAMOS

Fortifying relations

Belt and Road Initiative is the highway for China and the European Union toward a shared future

In addition to a strong political leadership, one of the essential keys to China's great achievements to date lies in the four interrelated global initiatives launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Explicitly, the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative contribute China's solutions for endorsing international development, engendering common security, and strengthening connectedness among civilizations. These initiatives have inserted novel incentives into the cause of political compassion and resonated well with the international community.

As 2023 marks 10 years since the announcement of the BRI, it is worth noting that China has signed more than 200 cooperation documents with over 150 countries and more than 30 international associations.

Since President Xi made the initiative China's flagship policy in September 2013, countries participating in the initiative represent one-third of the world GDP, and over 60 percent of the world's population. The World Bank estimates that from 2015 to 2030, almost 40 million people will be lifted out of poverty because of this initiative.

Markedly, the initiative promoting and sustaining growth through connectivity is a chapter the European Union's political administration could learn from. It is not accidental that in 2021, the EU proclaimed that the Global Gateway, an infrastructure program with over \$300 billion in funding, was competing with and/or opposing the BRI. However, this program, according to a majority of Western commenta-



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

tors, is a "drop in the ocean" compared to the initiative.

In any case, the relationship between the EU and China has become one of strategic importance for the global economy, particularly as China emerged from the 21st century as a protagonist geopolitical power and a manufacturing powerhouse of the glob-

al economy. Consequently, Brussels became gradually reliant on Chinese manufactured goods.

In 2022, China was the third-largest partner for EU's export of goods (9 percent) and the largest partner for EU's import of goods (20.8 percent). Among EU member states, the Netherlands was the largest importer of goods

from China and Germany was the largest exporter of goods to China in 2022.

Moreover, China is the EU's second-largest trade partner in 2022 behind the United States, with total imports and exports reaching 856.3 billion euros (\$906.7 billion), accounting for approximately 15.3 percent of the

Overall, Europe and China are significant actors in the world political system and as such they must work together in order to tackle global challenges, such as inequalities, climate change and security threats.

EU's total trade, according to Eurostat data.

Despite EU countries coming under increasing pressure from the US, the number of trains dispatched between China and Europe carrying everyday commercial goods had hit over 1,500 in a single month in July 2022.

The China-Europe freight train link under the initiative has 82 different routes so far and connects 217 cities from 25 countries. Besides, the cooperation mechanism between China and the Central and Eastern European countries is one of the innovations in diplomacy toward this region. The development of this mechanism starts as an active promotion of regional cooperation, and also as a driving force for the connectivity between China and the European Union under the BRI.

In the present period marked by geopolitical fragility, huge disparities, international uncertainty as well as digital and quantum computing and quantum sensing

revolution, EU's independence from the US is becoming increasingly necessary. The EU must act autonomously in key matters while collaborating with China. In many ways, Beijing is a comprehensive strategic partner for Brussels. This requires efficient and sustainable use of strategic assets, including the implementation of the China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation as well as assets pertinent to the essential elements of the four global initiatives. By reinforcing intergovernmental exchanges and dialogues at various levels, and by embracing thorough interactions, China and the EU can achieve mutual development in a joint effort to build a road that leads to a shared future for humanity based on peace, prosperity, innovation and civilizations' connectedness.

Overall, Europe and China are significant actors in the world political system and as such they must work together in order to tackle global challenges, such as inequalities, climate change and security threats. In view of this, the massive BRI — along with the other three interrelated global initiatives — can represent an excellent stage to fortify China-EU relations. Undoubtedly, the 10th anniversary of the BRI also provides a critical juncture to reflect on the planning and implementation prospects as well as on the future path between Beijing and Brussels.

The author is a former rector of the European University Cyprus and an ordinary member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

BUSINESS

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Up and away



Contestants fly a model plane during the finals of the 2023 China Aeromodelling Design Challenge in Changsha, Hunan province, on Monday. Around 1,500 students from 81 well-known schools such as the National University of Defense Technology and Northwestern Polytechnical University participated in the competition. YANG HUAFENG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Electric vehicle sales increase in Tibet as infrastructure expanded

By **PALDEN NYIMA** and **DAQIONG** in Lhasa

Growing charging infrastructure is making it easier to travel in the Tibet autonomous region by electric vehicle.

The latest edition is a supercharging station built in Metog county, a famous tourist destination more than 700 kilometers from the regional capital Lhasa. The station is supported by CATL, a global leader in electric power batteries, according to ThePaper.cn on Monday.

The station is a significant step toward developing the new energy vehicle market in Tibet, which lags behind China's more developed eastern coastal regions in terms of electric vehicle infrastructure and therefore adoption.

To encourage people to go electric, since April, buyers can receive a subsidy from the regional government of 3,000 yuan (\$410) when purchasing a new energy car.

In the first half of this year, revenues from new energy vehicle sales

in the region increased by 87 percent year-on-year, according to the regional statistics bureau. The second quarter saw 937 new energy vehicles registered, accounting for 2.3 percent of all newly registered vehicles.

The region has issued 3,929 license plates for new energy vehicles, it said. Meanwhile, charging infrastructure has been steadily growing, with about 550 charging poles installed in the region, including 27 in Lhasa.

Due to high transportation costs, gasoline prices are higher in Tibet than in other provinces, according to a report from ThePaper.cn, which added that gasoline-powered cars are affected by the thin air at high altitudes that causes a loss in power.

Electric vehicles circumnavigate the effects of thin air and thus perform better in Tibet, but conversely, the low temperatures would adversely affect batteries, it added.

Huang Lei, a regional general manager at Tesla, said the entire

National Highway G318 is now equipped with charging stations, with a network extending more than 2,500 kilometers, including 11 supercharging stations.

"Tesla hopes to safeguard the purity of the 'Roof of the World' via pure electric transportation and energy replenishment. Tesla car owners have accumulated 5.2 million km of driving distance on the Sichuan-Tibet Highway via the use of the Tesla recharging network in the past two years," said Huang.

He added that these trips had helped achieve a carbon reduction of 326 metric tons, equal to planting about 2,394 hectares of forest.

"In the future, we will continue to increase the layout of the region's recharging networks, further increasing recharging services at top-tier 5A scenic spots, and meet the charging demand of new energy owners traveling in the region," he added.

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Bacterium discovery a boon for research

By **ZHENG CAIXIONG** and **LI WENFANG** in Guangzhou

Chinese scientists have discovered a new bacterium in forest soil on Danxia Mountain in Shaoguan, Guangdong province, that could play a key role in restoring damaged ecosystems.

Li Wenjun, a microbiology professor at Sun Yat-sen University, said the bacterium, from the *Danxiaibacter flavus* genus, is the 41st new species discovered on Danxia Mountain and the first time this particular species has been discovered in the world.

Li led a scientific research team on a large-scale field microbial investigation and survey on the mountain earlier this year, and their discovery was published in the International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology on Oct 4.

The microbial diversity section of the biodiversity survey included a diversity assessment, collection and preservation of characteristic microbial samples in the region, and the establishment of a shared library and information database.

"The discovery is of great significance to microbiological research,"

said the microbiologist. Most of the members of Li's team come from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou.

Danxia Mountain is rich in vegetation and dense forests and is being turned into a national park. However, the park is surrounded by mines and development projects that have damaged the surrounding ecology and environment.

"The microorganism can be utilized to restore local vegetation, protect the ecology and environment, and research and develop medicines," he told China Daily.

Li said microbial research has great potential and broad prospects, as only about 1 percent of the world's microorganisms are known.

"The other 99 percent of microorganisms need scientists, researchers and postgraduate students to unveil their mysteries through their hard work," he said.

This is the first time a Chinese scientific research team has conducted a systematic survey of microbial diversity on the mountain, a national nature reserve, which will bring new ideas to the protection of species diversity in the parks and nature reserves and generally

expand the field of biological resource protection.

Previously, field investigations and surveys mainly focused on discovering new animals and plants, Li said.

The discovery will expand people's understanding of the "tree of life", and will lead to an increase in resources for genetic research, and it also has important strategic significance for the protection and development of microbial resources on Danxia Mountain, according to a statement from the Administrative Committee of Danxia Mountain.

Danxia Mountain lends its name to the Danxia landform. Covering approximately 300 square kilometers, the Danxia Basin is densely dotted with majestic Danxia landscapes. Mainly characterized by Danxia landforms, it is the largest scenic area in the province, and is a World Natural Heritage Site.

The unique landform is known as an "ecological island" that endows the subtropical evergreen broadleaf forest with rich tropical elements and creates a unique habitat for wildlife and plants.

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Performance on wheels

Acrobats perform at a temple fair in Cangzhou, Hebei province, on Tuesday. The temple fair is a traditional event that showcases the skills of Wujiao Acrobatics, a national intangible cultural heritage. LUO XUEFENG / XINHUA

BRI to develop more low-carbon projects

Officials of Belt and Road nations discuss pathways for building green Silk Road

By **HOU LIQIANG**
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Officials of countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative expressed their high expectations for the initiative to play a bigger role in driving global low-carbon development, as the impacts of the climate crisis loom ever larger.

They made the remarks at the Seminar on Building New Vision for the Green Silk Road, which was hosted by the BRI International Green Development Coalition and the Foreign Environmental Cooperation, an affiliate of China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, in Beijing on Tuesday.

The BRI has great potential to champion environmental protection and climate action, alongside economic, social and cultural development, said Amy Khor, Singapore's senior minister of state for sustainability and the environment.

"Over the course of my career, I have visited China often and participated in many bilateral activities. One thing I noticed is the astonishing progress made by China on the sustainability front," she said.

China is now a renewable energy giant and a growing environmental leader on the global stage, Khor continued.

Seven out of 10 of the world's leading photovoltaic module producers are based in China, and the country is the largest producer of renewables, including hydrogen. Chinese projects contributed to 80 percent of the global growth in

“Over the course of my career, I have visited China often... One thing I noticed is the astonishing progress made by China on the sustainability front.”

Amy Khor, Singapore's senior minister of state for sustainability and the environment

wind power in 2021, she said.

On the climate front, China's declaration to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060 will move the needle on global efforts to tackle climate change, she added.

International partnerships are crucial to addressing the adverse impacts of climate change. This will require a stable global order in which we can cooperate productively and resolve disputes peacefully, Khor stressed.

Singapore has worked closely with China to contribute to global green development, she said, citing as an example the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city, the construction of which began in Tianjin in September 2008.

The site where the city stands has been transformed from a wasteland with polluted water into a green, livable and smart township of more

than 100,000 people, she said. "No country will be able to achieve their climate ambitions by going it alone. As we push for a greener world, there is an urgent need for us to collaborate with like-minded partners and promote a regional architecture that facilitates inclusive and sustainable development," Khor stated.

"There are many opportunities ahead for all of us, governments and businesses alike, and I hope that we will take advantage of them to build a more sustainable world and a greener Silk Road together."

Highlighting a slate of actions by China to promote a green BRI, Zhao Yingmin, China's vice-minister of ecology and environment, called on countries to enhance the sharing of green development experiences, making full use of platforms established under the initiative.

"In the face of the grim challenges from global climate change, no country can be immune. The international community should forge a powerful synergy to ensure green, low-carbon and sustainable development around the globe," he said.

Making full use of the BRI International Green Development Coalition and other similar platforms, countries should deepen exchanges and build up a network for capacity-building to facilitate the sharing of philosophy and viable practices on green, low-carbon development, he said.

"Let's work together to explore low-carbon development opportunities and build a new vision for the green Silk Road by conducting more in-depth exchanges, enhancing experience sharing and building strong synergy," he said.

Educating next generation to play a role in Belt and Road Initiative

By **YUAN SHENGGAO**

Serving as an important bridge between Chinese universities and Germany, the Sino-German College at the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology is creating a better future for young talent and opening a new chapter in exchange and development in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative.

As early as the Enlightenment — defined as the period of rigorous scientific, political and philosophical discourse that characterized European society during the 18th century — from the late 17th century to the ending of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, the German people have shown curiosity and interest in China.

German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) learned and studied Chinese history from the narratives of Martino Martini, an Italian Jesuit missionary who spent time in China and published in Munich one of his four influential books about the country. Leibniz went on to propose suggestions for the comprehensive improvement of the political, social and economic conditions in Europe.

About 200 years later, German geographer Alexander von Humboldt traveled to the inland of China, conducting geographical and geological surveys and recording various aspects of Chinese people's lives. Through his in-depth study of China and Chinese stories, he profoundly influenced the German understanding of the Silk Road, one of the lesser-known but important stories of Sino-German exchanges.

The BRI, which is based on infrastructure construction, is not new to Europe as such projects had been a typical economic model for rising European countries that hoped to cross the Eurasian continent.

Professor Marcus Hernig, strategic development consultant of the Sino-German College, believes that there are at least three possibilities for Germany to participate in the BRI: participating in financing or investing in industries that are meaningful and



Former German president Christian Wulff (second from left) visits a lab of the Sino-German College at the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

have high returns within the framework of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; providing support for some projects or complete sets of infrastructure schemes, and helping German small and medium-sized enterprises find new markets in Asia and Africa; and creating a modern version of the Hanseatic League, a medieval commercial and defensive confederation of merchant guilds and market towns in Central and Northern Europe, within the eurozone.

The history of German trade predates that of Britain, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands. The formation of the Hanseatic League laid the foundation for German manufacturing in Northern Europe from the 12th to the 16th century and influenced the development of the geopolitical pattern in Western and Northern Europe.

The "H" in the Hanseatic League stands for trading cities. Similar to China's Silk Road, the Hanseatic League integrated the land transportation routes, such as the salt road through Lueneburg, Germany, or the trade route through Cologne, the largest city in the Westphalia region of Germany, into the maritime trade routes of the Baltic Sea.

The Hanseatic League connected land and sea, forming a network of belts and roads. At its peak, more than 160 cities joined the league and it made history for hundreds of years.

Today, globalization has brought about an imbalance in global development. Professor Hernig believes that the BRI is an important way to address this. If the BRI can be connected with the Hanseatic League, it would create a broad, future-oriented talent alliance involving various industries such as trade, the internet and intelligent manufacturing. Young talents with solid language and cross-cultural communication skills can promote the common prosperity of Eurasia, he said.

As a sister city of Shanghai, Hamburg provides many opportunities of business internships between China and Germany. Shanghai is also accelerating communication and exchanges between universities and the German business community.

Many German companies in Shanghai are looking for high-quality young people and hope to cooperate with partner universities to provide joint training. The Sino-German College has launched a dual-track program with enterprises, strengthening the connection between Chinese higher education and German enterprises in Shanghai and creating better career development opportunities for young people.

Marcus Hernig, Chen Qi, Xu Fang and Wang Emuo from USST contributed to this story.

ADVERTORIAL

Z WEEKLY

Uni grads face a new future

College students have more choices than ever when it comes to their careers. How will they shape their future? **Li Xinran** reports.

Every day, we make numerous choices, from selecting our breakfast to deciding on our outfit for the day and planning our weekend. These decisions, both big and small, mold our lives in different ways. As the fall college recruitment season dawns, Gen Zers find themselves standing at an important crossroads in their lives, making choices that will shape their futures.

Having majored in marketing and management in college and now pursuing a degree in integrated marketing communications, Liang Jianluo, a 22-year-old graduate student at Northwestern University, United States, faced several crucial choices. The first and most significant was whether to stay abroad or return to his homeland. Ultimately, he chose to come back to China.

His decision was rooted in a deep emotional connection to his homeland and a profound awareness of the importance of understanding cultural differences.

"Marketing is intertwined with culture," Liang said. "I watched the *Barbie* movie in a theater in the US, and there were several jokes that I couldn't understand. That was when I realized I needed to come back. If you can't understand your customers like the back of your hand, how can you sell products to them?"

Liang emphasized that his return coincided with China's rapidly evolving social media landscape, and he was afraid of being left behind. "Even though it's my home country, I need to keep up with the culture and market."

Liang's journey included participating in a job-hunting reality show. He had to go through a recruitment process before appearing on the show, submitting his resume and undergoing interviews. As he was an intern under Dong Mingzhu, the chairman and president of Gree Electric Appliances, he said the internship itself was immensely valuable and life-changing.

"Ms Dong is one of the most influential female entrepreneurs in China," Liang said. "Learning marketing strategies, business models, witnessing her personal charm and market insights in person — I was in awe every day."

Liu Rui (pseudonym), 24, made a significant shift in his academic and career path. Having majored in finance during his undergraduate years, he is now pursuing a master's degree in international journalism at Communication University of China in Beijing, a decision guided by his unyielding fascination with journalism.

"I'm a naturally curious person, and journalism allows me to explore various industries and areas," Liu explained.

His academic background led to a memorable internship experience at CGTN's Global Business channel, where he interviewed a multitude of entrepreneurs.

"It was a perfect fusion of my finance and journalism background, and also allowed me to leverage my proficiency in English."

Where to go from here?

For Liang, the completion of internships marked just the beginning. Crafting a compelling resume is key to making a strong first impression.

He meticulously tailors each resume to the specific company or industry he's applying to, showcasing his relevant experience and achievements. "If I aim for an FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) marketing position, for example, I'll highlight my successful marketing events and campaigns at Procter & Gamble. In the case of a strategic role within the new energy industry, I'll emphasize my outstanding achievements in the Oliver Wyman Case Competitions."

Liu, on the other hand, stressed the importance of thorough research. "You should delve deep into the company and, if possible, the department. Carefully read the job descriptions and align your skills with their requirements on your resume."

In the world of medicine, Zhang Liyuan, 26, now a practising ENT (ear, nose, and throat) doctor at Jiangsu Province Hospital, followed a distinctive path. For medical students, the fall recruitment process typically unfolds a year prior to graduation.

"We don't partake in internships like most other fields. My educational journey comprised five years at Peking University Third Hospital for my bachelor's degree and an additional three years at Peking University People's Hospital for my doctoral degree," she said. "However, as we embarked on rotations across different departments, we essentially operated as full-fledged staff members, even though we were still in the learning phase."

While they don't have to fill out the internship column on their resume, they have their own lists to check. "Each hospital's



“It's crucial to be honest and show an authentic version of yourself. Interviewers are seasoned and can distinguish sincerity from fabrication.”

Liu Rui (pseudonym), a student of international journalism



“In my case, I immersed myself in clinical work during almost all three years and dedicated my off-hours to research endeavors.”

Zhang Liyuan, a medical student



“I think the best way to deal with the frustration is to accept this emotion, vent it, or distract yourself with something else.”

Liang Jianluo, a student of integrated marketing communications

Learning to talk the talk

Following the submission of resumes, the next crucial step is the interview. Liang shared his strategies, emphasizing the importance of preparation.

"When it comes to inquiries about personal experiences, such as the most significant challenge you've encountered or your leadership experiences, I delve deep into my past to draw out relevant anecdotes," he said.

"On the professionalism front, I undertake extensive research into the industry, the company, and its products, ensuring that I'm equipped with substantial background knowledge."

He also provided other valuable tips for interviews. For example, he advocated taking a moment to think before responding to questions.

"Many interviewees tend to rush their answers. In fact, it's perfectly fine to say, 'That's a great question, please allow me to think for a second,' and then proceed after a brief pause. A well-articulated response is more effective than a hasty one."

He recommended using the "STAR" (situation, task, action, result) principle for storytelling to ensure clarity and understanding.

Liu suggested thinking from the interviewer's perspective and stressed the importance of sincerity. "It's crucial to be honest and show an authentic version of yourself. Interviewers are seasoned and can distinguish sincerity from fabrication."

Nervousness before interviews is a common experience, even for those well-prepared. Liang's remedy involved "warming up" his mouth before the interview and jotting down words of encouragement for psychological reassurance.

Waiting for the final outcome

After the interview, the outcome may be a job offer or a rejection letter. Liu regards this as a mutual selection process.

"Through the interview, you gain profound insights into the position and the company that often surpass what you can glean from the job description," he said, adding that rejections also prompted reflections on how to improve.

Liang agrees that rejection can happen to anyone. For his first internship, for example, he applied to more than 50 companies but only received one interview invitation from P&G, an American consumer goods corporation.

"When people around you get an offer but you don't, it's perfectly human to feel frustrated and beaten up. I think the best way to deal with the frustration is to accept this emotion, vent it, or distract yourself with something else."

For medical students like Zhang, the interview isn't the sole determinant of success. Their years of preparation in school and the specific needs of the hospital in terms of clinical experience or research are also pivotal factors.

If one is fortunate enough to receive multiple offers, they face the challenging task of choosing the right path.

In Zhang's case, her decision-making process starts with considering the city, followed by her well-being and salary, and lastly, whether she can engage in research alongside her work.

On the other hand, for Liu and Liang, most job opportunities are concentrated in first-tier cities like Beijing and Shanghai, making city relocation a non-negotiable factor.

"I value personal development and aspire to strengthen my strengths while addressing my weaknesses," Liang said. "Work-life balance is also of utmost importance to me."

Liu expressed his aspiration to find a job that not only brings him enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment but also fosters financial independence.

Generation Z, in contrast to their parents' generation, enjoys a wealth of opportunities and diverse information sources.

In the past, for example, professions like medicine were highly valued as they were seen as respectable career choices. However, intriguingly, a quarter of Zhang's classmates did not opt for a medical career. They've embarked on different but thriving paths rooted in their academic backgrounds. The unifying characteristic of Generation Z lies in their diversity and their embrace of differences.

Ultimately, for those embarking on the journey of fall recruitment, Liu emphasized the importance of self-awareness. Knowing oneself and one's true desires is the foundation for making right or proper choices.

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eight-year program may differ," Zhang explained. "Some focus on clinical experience, while others allocate more time for scientific research. In my case, I immersed myself in clinical work during almost all

three years and dedicated my off-hours to research endeavors. However, clinical experience doesn't fit neatly into quantifiable metrics like research papers." Zhang's solution was to emphasize her

clinical expertise and the procedures she could perform. She acknowledged the significance of the medical school she attended and her mentor's influence, highlighting these advantages on her resume.

SPORTS

OLYMPICS

Cricket bowled over by big-stage return

Sport's Asian powerhouses say Olympic inclusion is 'game-changer'

MUMBAI, India — Cricket's return to the Olympic program for the 2028 Los Angeles Games drew an enthusiastic response from around the world.

Cricket was one of five sports added to the LA Games by the International Olympic Committee on Monday. Flag football, baseball-softball, lacrosse and squash were also included. Organizers have proposed a six-team Twenty20 cricket competition — the shortest format of the game — for women and men in LA.

"After a wait of more than a century, our beloved sport is back on the Olympic stage," former India captain Sachin Tendulkar wrote on X, the social-media platform formerly known as Twitter. "This marks the dawn of a new era for cricket as it will be a golden opportunity to foster inclusivity and showcase new talent from emerging cricketing nations. A start of something truly special!"

Monday's decision was made at an IOC meeting in Mumbai, the Indian city that will host five matches at the ongoing Cricket World Cup.

"Our beautiful game of cricket has a rich heritage and diverse international following," said Pakistan captain Babar Azam, the world's top-ranked one-day international batsman. "It has the potential to enhance the spirit of Olympics even further. Cricket in the Olympics will inspire (a) new generation, athletes and fans around the globe."

Cricket was last played at the Olympics in 1900, but the game is played at other multisport events like the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. It is likely to be retained for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics, which will be held in cricket-loving Australia.

"Players will get the chance to compete for an Olympic gold medal and be part of the Games, which will be so special," said Mithali Raj, a former India women's team captain. "It's also a chance for more fans around the world to enjoy our fantastic sport."



Sri Lanka's Dilshan Madushanka (center) celebrates taking an Australian wicket at the ICC Cricket World Cup in Lucknow, India, on Monday. The World Cup features the one-day game (50 overs), but the Olympics will feature the shorter Twenty20 format (20 overs). AP

For the last two years, the International Cricket Council has been working extensively with the IOC for inclusion at the LA Games.

"To have the opportunity to showcase our great sport at the LA28 Games and hopefully many Olympic Games to come will be great for players and fans alike," ICC chairman Greg Barclay said.

The ICC hoped the Olympics, which have an estimated audience of more than 3 billion, will provide an opportunity for cricket to "engage new audiences and further boost the sport's reach across the world, opening the door to a new generation of cricket enthusiasts."

Another Indian cricket great, Sunil Gavaskar, was also excited for



Players will get the chance to compete for an Olympic gold medal and be part of the Games, which will be so special. It's also a chance for more fans around the world to enjoy our fantastic sport."

Mithali Raj, former India women's team captain

the players to mingle with athletes from around the world.

"That is totally fantastic, isn't it?" Gavaskar said while commenting during Australia's cricket match against Sri Lanka. "What an experience it'll be for every team, and par-

ticularly the Indian team, to be able to see what the Olympic Village is like, to be able to spend time with other athletes, other champions."

In Australia, the governing body of the sport in the country praised the decision as a chance to expand

further afield.

"This is a game-changer for our sport that is already among the fastest growing in the world," Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley said. "The Olympic Games will undoubtedly increase the global reach of cricket, inspiring a whole new generation to love and play the game."

Cricket at the Los Angeles Olympics will be a six-team event for both men and women and will be played in the Twenty20 format.

Los Angeles organizing committee sports director Niccolò Campriani said the format will be "appealing to the younger crowd."

"We are thrilled to welcome the world's second-most popular sport with an estimated 2.5 billion fans

worldwide," Campriani said. "Some of you might be wondering why in LA? Well, the commitment to grow cricket in the US is real, and it's already happening with the launch of the very first Major League Cricket season earlier this year, which exceeded all expectations. And the (men's) T20 World Cup in 2024 coming to US and West Indies."

'Powerful combination'

"It's a win-win situation," ICC chairman Barclay told reporters in Mumbai of cricket's inclusion in the LA 2028 program.

"We've got a global sport, what I think is the fastest-growing global sport, but getting onto the biggest sporting stage in the world, the Olympics, is a massive shot in the arm for the game," the New Zealander added.

Explaining the push for cricket's inclusion, Los Angeles 2028 chairman Casey Wasserman said: "We think the opportunity to bring a sport that has 2.5 billion rabid fans to what we think is the greatest sport city in the world, it's a really powerful combination."

Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, welcomed "a momentous occasion" that "aligns" with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announcing on Saturday that India would bid to stage the 2036 Olympics.

"Moreover, we anticipate that this decision will yield significant financial dividends and have a profound positive impact on our sport's ecosystem," Shah said, with the decision to include cricket at LA 2028 estimated to increase the value of India's broadcasting rights for the IOC by over \$100 million.

But IOC president Thomas Bach, speaking after Monday's IOC session, said any financial boost would be a "consequence."

"The first argument and the most important argument is we have seen the growing international importance of cricket and the Olympic Games want to incorporate the most popular sports worldwide," said Bach. "This sport (cricket) also has a growing importance in the United States."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Egypt's world-beaters celebrate as squash finally arrives

Squash stronghold Egypt celebrated on Monday as the sport's inclusion in the program for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles raised hopes of winning some gold medals. However, the head of the country's squash federation warned against excessive optimism.

Squash, cricket, flag football, lacrosse and baseball-softball are the five sports added to the program after being approved by the International Olympic Committee as it looks to tap into new global audiences.

"I'm super happy and excited that we finally made it to the Olympics," Nour El-Sherbini, the sport's women's world No 1, said in a video posted on Facebook.

"I have been always dreaming to play in the Olympics Games and have finally made it. Congratulations to everyone and all the squash players and fans. See you in the Olympics."

For his part, Mostafa Assal, ranked third in the world in the men's competition, wrote on Facebook: "Farewell to the phrase

squash is not an Olympic game.

"Thanks, God, for squash's entry into the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics."

Egypt dominates squash, with five players currently in the top 10 in the men's world rankings, in addition to Mohamed El-Shorbagy, an Egyptian who decided to switch allegiance to England.

Egypt also holds the top three positions in the women's rankings in addition to a fourth player among the top 10.

The country's squash federation

celebrated the decision to include the sport in the Olympics on its website.

But Assem Khalifa, president of the federation, said the task will not be easy.

"The decision makes squash an Olympic game in the 2028 edition only, and after that the existence of the game will be evaluated again," he told local media.

"Therefore, the game must participate successfully, and its existence be proven. Then we wait for the new decision after the 2028 Olympics.

"We hope to achieve more than one gold medal, but this decision will certainly increase other countries' interest in the game," he added.

"We would be wrong if we felt that we were guaranteed a gold medal at the Olympics. We must be extremely prepared to achieve the maximum possible."

Zena Wooldridge, president of the World Squash Federation, said the game is an "amazingly dynamic, diverse and demanding sport that is perfectly suited for the

Olympic Games."

"The inclusion of squash ... is a significant breakthrough for the sport," US Squash chief executive Kevin Klipstein said.

"Being part of the Olympic Games has been a long-held goal for the squash community, and inclusion will serve as a catalyst to increase awareness of what is already a major participatory sport globally with a long and diverse history."

REUTERS

TRACK AND FIELD

Legend Kipchoge chats history bid in Shanghai

By ALYWIN CHEW in Shanghai
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Two-time Olympic marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge said on Monday he is determined to find ways to improve and better the current world record, and suggested that his age would work for rather than against him in the pursuit of this goal.

"With age comes experience, and experience is important," said the Kenyan, who turns 39 in November.

Kipchoge made the remarks during his trip to the INEOS China office in Shanghai. He also took part in a two-kilometer run with the employees later that day.

Kipchoge was the previous holder of the world record of 2:01:09 — it was set at the 2022 Berlin Marathon — until his compatriot Kelvin Kiptum clocked 2:00:35 at the Chicago Marathon on Oct 8.

The Kenyan also implied that he is confident of breaking the two-

hour marathon barrier in an official race.

"In sport, you train and be confident. It's like boxing. If you enter the ring not feeling confident, you'll be knocked out after 30 seconds," he said.

British multinational chemicals company INEOS is the creator of the INEOS 1:59 Challenge, a special event that helped Kipchoge become the first man in history to break the two-hour barrier in marathon running in October 2019.

The time of 1:59:40.2 clocked during the challenge was not ratified as a world record because of the use of pacesetters and the absence of open competition.

During the event in Shanghai, Kipchoge also unveiled the first set of INEOS 1:59 Pace Challenge posts. These physical posts are located around the world, with the first located in the Austrian capital of Vienna. Running enthusiasts can take on the challenge of running



Eliud Kipchoge

352.6 meters within a minute — the pace that Kipchoge kept when he clocked 1:59:40.2 — at these posts.

"The INEOS 1:59 Challenge has a special place in my heart. Since that event in 2019, I have seen many people inspired to either start running or to take off the brakes in their heads and achieve what they want to achieve," said Kipchoge.

"I like to inspire people through running. This is why I'm encouraging runners to take on the challenge and run my pace from the INEOS 1:59 pace challenge."

BASEBALL

Harper wants big-leaguers at LA28

PHILADELPHIA — Bryce Harper wants to take a swing at the Olympics.

The Philadelphia Phillies slugger said it would be a dream to play for Team USA when baseball returns for the 2028 Los Angeles Games. Harper, who turned 31 on Monday, has long been an advocate of Major League Baseball taking a break during the season to allow major-leaguers play in the Olympics.

Harper said his wife texted him a happy-birthday message attached to news about baseball's return.

"You talk about growing the game, and that's the way you grow it at the highest peak," Harper said.

"You let guys that are playing in the league take that break just like in the NHL and see what happens. I think it would be really cool. I think it would be a lot of fun. I don't know if they'll ever go for it, but I would love to put USA on my chest and represent it at the highest level."

Baseball became an official Olympic sport in 1992 and was initially open only to amateur players.



Bryce Harper

Pros were later permitted, but MLB hasn't let active big-leaguers participate. The Olympics scrapped baseball after the 2008 Games, although it was brought back for the 2020 Tokyo Games in baseball-mad Japan. Baseball and softball were left off the Paris 2024 slate.

Harper, a two-time NL MVP, was batting .368 with three homers for the Phillies in the postseason. Harper spoke ahead of Game 1 of

the NL Championship Series against Arizona.

Harper signed a 13-year, \$330 million contract with the Phillies ahead of the 2019 season. He would be 10 years into the contract and 35 years old, should he get the chance to play for Team USA in LA.

"I will be old at that point, so I don't know if they're going to want me to be on the team, but it's always a dream," Harper said. "I mean, I think it's everybody's dream to be in the Olympics."

Harper had hoped to play for Team USA in spring training at the World Baseball Classic but was recovering from offseason elbow surgery. The WBC is operated by MLB and takes place during spring training, meaning players do not need to miss regular-season games to participate.

The NHL used to pause its regular season to allow players to skate in the Winter Games, but that ended for the 2018 Pyeongchang Games.

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