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XI, BIDEN TACKLE PRESSING ISSUES

Leaders agree to initiate more contacts on military, AI, climate, air travel, exchanges

By XU WEI in San Francisco
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President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden agreed to enhance dialogue and cooperation in various fields during a summit on Wednesday, with both sides pledging to initiate intergovernmental talks on artificial intelligence, step up counter-narcotics cooperation and jointly tackle the climate crisis.

These consensuses between the leaders of the world's two largest economies were reached during their hours-long meeting at Filoli, a historic estate south of San Francisco, California. The summit included several sessions, a working lunch and a brief walk after the lunch.

The two presidents agreed to, on the basis of equality and respect, resume high-level military-to-military communication. This includes the China-US Defense Policy Coordination Talks and the China-US Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meetings, as well as telephone conversations between theater commanders.

They also agreed to commit to working toward a significant increase in scheduled passenger flights early next year, and expand educational, student, youth, cultural, sports and business exchanges.

They welcomed recent positive discussions between special climate envoys from Beijing and Washington. These included plans for national-level actions to reduce emissions in the 2020s, common approaches toward a successful COP28 and operationalization of the Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s.

The two presidents also stressed the importance of both countries treating each other with respect and finding ways to live alongside each other peacefully. They also emphasized maintaining open lines of communication, preventing conflict, upholding the United Nations Charter, cooperating on areas of shared interest and responsibly managing competitive aspects of the relationship.

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President Xi Jinping shakes hands with US President Joe Biden on Wednesday before their meeting at the Filoli Estate, a country house approximately 40 kilometers south of San Francisco, California. RAO AIMIN / XINHUA

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XI'S VISIT

Summit: Xi puts forward five pillars of bilateral ties

From page 1

During Xi's first visit to the United States in six years, he told Biden that there are two options for China and the US in this era of global transformation that is unseen in a century. The two sides can either enhance solidarity and cooperation and join hands to meet global challenges and promote global security and prosperity, or they can cling to the zero-sum mentality, provoke rivalry and confrontation, and drive the world toward turmoil and division.

The two choices point to two different directions that will decide the future of humanity and Planet Earth, he said.

"For two large countries like China and the US, turning their back on each other is not an option," Xi stressed.

"It is unrealistic for one side to remodel the other. And conflict and confrontation have unbearable consequences for both sides."

He went on to say that major-country competition is not the prevailing trend of current times and cannot solve the problems facing China and the United States or the world at large.

"Planet Earth is big enough for the two countries to succeed, and one country's success is an opportunity for the other," he said.

The president said that China will not take the old path of colonization and plundering, or the wrong path of seeking hegemony with growing strength as it forges ahead with the Chinese path to modernization, adding that it does not export its ideology or engage in ideological confrontation with any country.

He stressed that China does not plan to surpass or unseat the US, and, likewise, the US should not scheme to suppress or contain China.

The two nations are fully capable of rising above their differences and find the right path to get along, as long as both sides respect each other, peacefully coexist and pursue win-win cooperation, he said.

While recalling pledges made by Biden during their meeting in Bali, Indonesia, last year, Xi highlighted the necessity for Beijing and Washington to assume a new vision and build five pillars of China-US relations.

The first pillar, he said, is to jointly develop a right perception of each other. Beijing is consistently committed to having a stable, healthy and sustainable relationship with Washington. Meanwhile, the nation has interests that must be safeguarded, principles that must be upheld and red lines that must not be crossed.

Second, he called upon both nations to manage their differences effectively, saying that they should look for ways to build bridges to meet with each other halfway. Beijing and Washington should appreciate each other's principles and red lines, and refrain from flip-flopping, provocation and crossing lines, the Chinese president said.

Third, both countries should work together to promote mutually beneficial cooperation, the president said. He underscored the broad common interests between China and the US, including in such traditional areas as the economy, trade and agriculture, as well as in such emerging areas as climate change and AI.

Both sides should make full use of restored and new mechanisms in foreign policy, economics, finance, commerce, agriculture and other fields, and carry out cooperation in such areas as counter-narcotics, judicial affairs, law enforcement, AI, and science and technology, he added.

Fourth, the Chinese president called upon both sides to jointly shoulder responsibilities as major countries, saying that they should lead by example, step up coordination and cooperation on international and regional issues, and provide more public goods for the world.

He also appealed for stronger people-to-people exchanges, which serve as the fifth pillar.

Xi elaborated on China's principled position on the Taiwan question, calling for the US side to take real action to honor its commitment of not supporting "Taiwan independence", stop arming Taiwan and support peaceful reunification.

China will realize reunification, and this is unstoppable, he stressed.

He pointed out that US actions against China regarding export controls, investment screening and unilateral sanctions seriously hurt China's legitimate interests.

Stifling China's technological progress is nothing but a move to contain China's high-quality development and deprive the Chinese people of their right to development, he said.

It is important that the US side take China's concerns seriously and adopt tangible steps to lift its unilateral sanctions to provide an equal, fair and nondiscriminatory environment for Chinese businesses, he said.

Biden, in his opening remarks at the summit, said his meetings with Xi have always been " candid, straightforward and useful".

"I think it's paramount that you and I understand each other clearly, leader to leader, with no misconceptions or miscommunication," Biden said.

"We also have a responsibility to our people — and the world — to work together when we see it in our interest to do so. And the critical global challenges we face, from climate change to counter-narcotics to artificial intelligence, demand our joint efforts."

He later tweeted on the social media platform X that the two leaders "made real progress" during the talks.

APEC CEOs have their say



Li Zhengguo (left), founder and president of LONGi; Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi; and Anna Bjerde, managing director for operations at the World Bank participate in a session on Wednesday during the APEC CEO Summit in San Francisco. ERIC RISBERG / AP

PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF XI-BIDEN SUMMIT

Tom Watkins, former Michigan state superintendent of education



Both (Joe) Biden and Xi (Jinping) understand ultimately, all major world issues will land at their doorsteps, and it is imperative they transcend their differences and address them. Henry Ford once proclaimed: "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."

The world needs our collective success. The world has witnessed the value we have jointly produced when we work together. It was positive to see the tensions between our two nations turned down several notches. It is imperative that we find ways to maintain an open dialogue, focusing on the "seven C's" — communication, collaboration, cooperation, coordination and competition — while avoiding unnecessary confrontations and conflict.

Relationships are built on trust. We have witnessed a San Francisco thaw of the chilly relationship. We need more engagement, not less, to avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation. I hope to see more people-to-people and subnational connections reestablished around culture, education and local governments.

Steve Orlins, president of National Committee on U.S.-China Relations



The two presidents are going to be able to talk about their visions for US-China relations. It's much healthier to have the president of the United States and the president of China sit together

for hours and talk about what the relationship is and what it should be. My hope is they will lay a foundation for more progress as we go into 2024. So there are a lot of areas where the cooperation exceeds the conflict. We'll see improvement in visa issuance. We'll see improvement in people-to-people exchange. We'll see (an) increase in the number of flights, very, very, very important. I will be going nonstop from San Francisco to Beijing in two weeks, which is great that United has started that along with many other US and Chinese carriers. Because that's important, as President Xi points out, the foundation of US-China relations is in the people-to-people exchanges.

Diao Daming, professor at Renmin University of China's School of International Relations

During the talks, the Chinese side put



is a clear reminder of Beijing's great sense of responsibility and commitment as a major country to stabilize China-US relations in a manner that is truly responsible to history, to the people and to the world. For the US side, it should fully understand the importance of shaping a proper perception of the key issues concerning China and the US ... so as to make a thorough and long-term adjustment of its strategy and policies toward China.

Only in this way can Washington achieve a stable relationship between the two countries that meets the interests of the US and its people, serve the general expectations of the international community, and make the bilateral relations stop declining, stabilize and get back on the right track.

Sourabh Gupta, senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for China-America Studies



The fact that it was not just at a conference center or a meeting hall, but at a very specific location where they were ensconced together, and they have that walk

(that) reminded me

frankly of President Xi when he came in 2013 for the Sunnylands meeting.

And Sunnylands started a process in US-China relations which blossomed in the next two years in that Obama administration. This was the Sunnylands meeting in California in 2013 between Obama and President Xi.

And then there were a lot of deliverables coming out in 2013, 2014 and 2015, including a state visit. However, the competition will remain, the export controls, and there will be technology competition, really technology conflict, and decoupling in terms of supply chains.

Jim Herlihy, The San Francisco Experience podcast host and executive producer



We're very fortunate that our two countries have been so successful in creating that kind of trade relationship, and that kind of trade relationship is based on trust, smart business

tomers in China and in the United States with the products they want.

This is a unique relationship, one that the rest of the world looks at with envy. Both Americans and Chinese need to truly value this relationship, work on it, and treasure it.

Both sides must be careful to continue maintaining and cultivating it. In the history of the world, we have never seen such a large trading relationship, so both of our countries are very fortunate to have created it.

We just need to continue cultivating it and treating it with care, so that the next time we get together and talk, we'll be discussing a \$1 trillion relationship.

Su Xiaohui, deputy director of the Department of American Studies at the China Institute of International Studies



Meetings between the two heads of state play a leading role in the bilateral relations, and the summit meeting in San Francisco built on last year's Bali meeting, shaped

fresh consensus on top of the previous agreement, and put forward very concrete proposals for the further management of the China-US ties. The outcomes of this meeting include the two presidents' successful push for establishing a broader scope of two-way communication mechanisms to cover a wider range of topics. The two sides resumed some of the established lines of communication in terms of military exchanges. The two sides have worked toward the same goal of more effectively stabilizing relations between the two major countries. The top priority in the next phase is to put the fresh constructive consensus into practice, so as to tangibly achieve the goal of stabilizing the ties, respond to the concerns of the international community, and boost their momentum in yielding more cooperation and positive interactions on international issues.

Paul Sheard, former vice-chairman of S&P Global



The fact that the summit is happening, yes, is an important development. It's always a good sign when people are talking rather than not talking. Summits are typically part of

a process rather than being ... a curable event that changes everything, a watershed moment. But I think it's good. I'd be interested to read the readouts from both sides and see what they say ... and then you ... see if they are on the same page, so to speak, or are they saying

different things?

That is an indication of whether there was a meeting of the minds. There are many things that are beyond the control of the leaders — yes, both of them. I would say even particularly on the US side because of the nature of the political system. So ... it's rather limited in what they can do but ... from a government point of view for leaders to meet in this way, it's very encouraging.

Yasheng Huang, professor in international management at the MIT Sloan School of Management



For the past 30 years, we took it for granted the geopolitical stability of relations (between the US and China). And that was not true in the last five years. These two sides must come

to an agreement, and this comes with understanding, common understanding.

I think that having an understanding is going to be good for both economies because you need geopolitical stability. The problem now is that the geopolitical situation is so unstable, so you need to stabilize ... (President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping) need to come up with an understanding of some basic, fundamental issues, also come to an understanding that if you don't manage the relationship well, you can end up in a war, and I don't think anybody wants that. So to me the summit is very important.

Dominic Piazza, graduate student in international relations at San Francisco State University



It's no secret that relations between the United States and China have been tense. There is a competition between our two countries. Both America and China are quickly becoming

the most important countries in the world. So I think it's very important that we work together on a lot of the most important challenges.

I've met many Chinese people while I've been here at the APEC meeting. They are all very friendly and very kind. It's very easy to forget the tensions in the international politics between our countries. And I think this is a good thing because it shows that we can work together to address important global issues. I trust that Biden and Xi will be able to come to an agreement and cooperate on issues like climate change, global security, peace, safety, prosperity. I think that both America and China have very skilled diplomats and we both have a mutual interest in working together.

XI'S VISIT

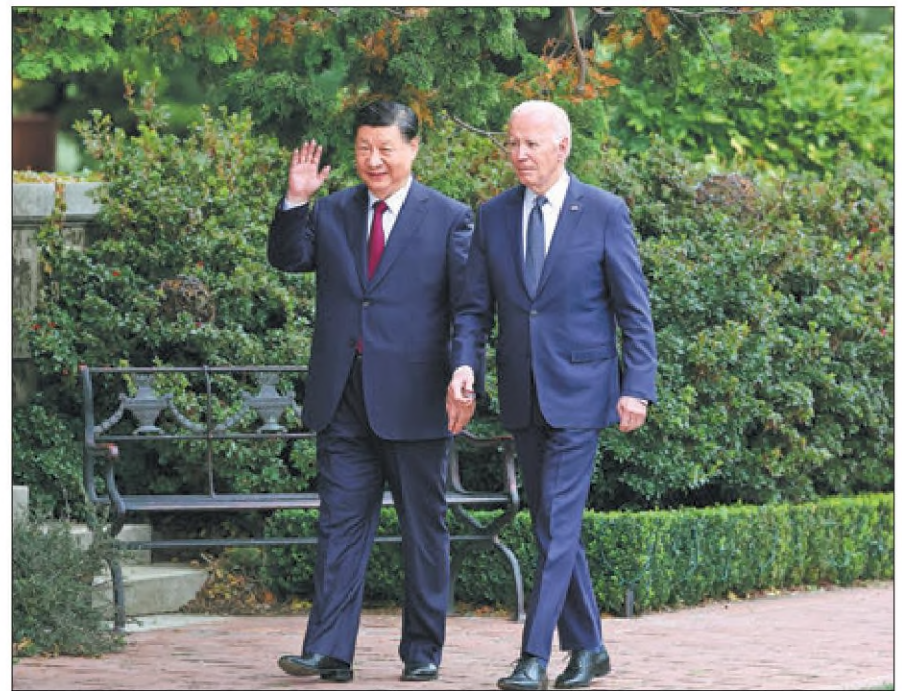


President Xi Jinping holds a summit with US President Joe Biden at the Filoli Estate, a country house approximately 40 kilometers south of San Francisco, California, on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

PIVOTAL MOMENTS



President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden wave to the media at the Filoli Estate on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



Following a banquet on Wednesday afternoon, President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden take a stroll and engage in conversation at the Filoli Estate. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Right: Overseas Chinese hold up flags and cheer during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' event in San Francisco, California, on Wednesday.

FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Far right: Chinese students studying in the United States pose with copies of a special edition of China Daily marking President Xi's visit as they wait to welcome the president near the San Francisco airport on Tuesday.

LIU XUCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY



XI'S VISIT

CHINA SHARES DEVELOPMENT DIVIDENDS WITH APEC ECONOMIES

Unwavering support also shown for trade liberalization and WTO

By ZHONG NAN in Jingjiang, Jiangsu
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At several wharves owned by New Times Shipbuilding Co in Jingjiang, Jiangsu province, engineers and workers are busy welding steel hulls and testing equipment.

Their mission is to ensure that their work meets standards set by various ship classification societies and the specific demands of clients.

But the majority of the container ships and oil and chemical tankers built at the shipyard will not be delivered to domestic buyers.

Instead, they will go to shipowners in many Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies, including Singapore, Indonesia and the United States, as these countries are experiencing a significant surge in demand for new vessels equipped with dual-fuel engines, and offered at competitive prices. Deliveries of these vessels address the rising need for ocean shipping services.

Du Haiming, assistant director of the sales department at New Times Shipbuilding Co, said, "Even though many parts of the world still face uncertainty and challenges in the global economy, including fragile supply chains and subdued investment sentiment, orders placed by our clients in the Asia-Pacific region have remained high since last year."

Government officials and experts noted China's precedent-setting role in fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and encouraging APEC economies to bolster their economic and technological exchanges.

They emphasized that China, as a major trading nation, has not only supplied a significant quantity of manufacturing products to other APEC markets, but has also distinguished itself for unwavering support of trade liberalization, the World Trade Organization and its rules.

China's foreign trade with APEC economies amounted to \$3.74 trillion last year, representing 59.7 percent of the country's total import and export value. Among China's top 10 trading partners, eight of them are APEC economies, Ministry of Commerce data show.

Wu Haiping, director of the general operations department at the General Administration of Customs, said that after more than three decades of development, cooperation among APEC economies has evolved beyond the two traditional pillars of trade liberalization and investment facilitation, as well as economic and technological cooperation. It has extended into new domains, including technology innovation, modern agriculture, trade in services, inclusive growth, and digital and green economies.

An economic analysis published by the APEC Policy Support Unit shows that economic growth in the APEC region is expected to reach 3.1 percent this year, following a 2.6 percent moderation last year.

With APEC playing a key role in supporting the world's economic recovery, He Yadong, spokesman for the Ministry of Commerce, said early this month that China will take proactive steps to advance its accession into the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement.

He said China looks forward to joining these two trade deals at an early date, and is willing to make joint efforts with all parties to actively promote regional economic integration and the liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region.

Zhao Ping, dean of the academy at the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said multilateral mechanisms for economic cooperation and free trade deals, such as APEC, the Regional Compre-



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

hensive Economic Partnership agreement, and the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, are practical in promoting free trade and consolidating the achievements of globalization. This is especially the case in view of a slowdown in global economic growth, Zhao said.

Kok Ping Soon, CEO of the Singapore Business Federation, which represents more than 29,000 Singaporean companies globally, said China has the dual advantages of rapid economic growth and technological progress, coupled with the mature development of its businesses.

"We welcome Chinese companies to set up regional hubs in Singapore to extend their reach into other APEC economies, especially countries in Southeast Asia," Kok said.

Naja Aki, vice-president of Toshiba (China)

Co, said numerous valuable experiences can be shared with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, such as China's support for technological innovation, fast development of tech-intensive green products, and the provision of human resource training for the public and private sectors in the region.

Trade development

Many APEC economies are seeking ways to advance free trade in the global economy during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco, amid the proliferation of trade and economic groups.

As a result, market watchers and business leaders from China and the US believe that improved bilateral economic and trade relations will be conducive to the economic

development of both countries and contribute to the stability and growth of the global economy.

Chen Wenling, chief economist at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said stable business ties between the world's two largest economies will serve to counteract anti-globalization sentiments and growing protectionism.

Efforts by the US to facilitate the reconfiguration of supply chains in the Asia-Pacific region have already encountered substantial obstacles. Supply chains have become longer, more complex, and costlier structures, potentially yielding outcomes contrary to their intended objectives, Chen said.

Craig Allen, president of the US-China Business Council, said: "The US and China have benefited considerably from their long-

standing economic integration. We remain committed to expanding the US-China commercial relationship by advocating for the US companies doing business in China, and look forward to continuing to support that growth in the long run.

"US businesses continue to be optimistic about the size and dynamism of China's markets. In an evolving world, we need to work together to safeguard strong, stable and resilient global industrial supply chains for the future."

Lance Rezac, vice-chairman of the US Soybean Export Council, said it has always firmly believed that the Chinese and US economies are deeply intertwined, and that there is a great deal of potential for cooperation. Steady growth in agricultural trade can be observed between the two countries.

Rezac predicted that China's demand for soybeans will drive continued growth in the US' soybean trade. From the 2024 marketing year to the 2033 marketing year, China's soybean imports are expected to rise from 101.5 million metric tons to 134.1 million tons, an average annual growth rate of 3.1 percent.

Data from the US Department of Agriculture show that China's soybean imports from the US totaled 31.5 million tons in the 2023 marketing year — which ran from September last year to August — accounting for 59 percent of US annual soybean exports, a rise of 2.3 percent year-on-year. Deep involvement

Eager to secure more market share in China, more than 200 US exhibitors took part in the sixth China International Import Expo in Shanghai this month. They included a wide range of agriculture, automotive, technology, consumer goods, pharmaceutical and healthcare companies. It was the largest US delegation in the expo's history, information released by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai shows.

Arnold Li, senior vice-president of Ingersoll Rand, a US industrial goods manufacturer and six-time participant in the Shanghai expo, said well-aligned China-US business relations contribute to the expansion of US companies conducting operations in China.

"With strong determination and long-term confidence, we will continue to increase investment in local research and development capabilities in China, especially in digitalization and technologies for the new energy sector," Li said.

He said China has progressively bolstered its innovation and production capabilities, which will enable Ingersoll Rand to export more of its products made in China, particularly to economies in the Asia-Pacific region and countries and regions taking part in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Tapestry, the luxury goods group headquartered in New York, is upbeat about its Chinese market, and plans to open 60 more stores in the country by the end of 2025.

Yann Bozec, Tapestry's president for Asia-Pacific, said: "China is not just a market, but also a source of inspiration for breakthroughs and fashion innovation. We will continue to explore opportunities for local collaboration to bring more innovative products and experiences to Chinese consumers."

Liu Zhenmin, former UN under-secretary-general for economic and social affairs, said in an interview with China Daily last month that China's development presents opportunities, not threats, to the rest of the world. Western countries need to increase their understanding of China and be more accommodating to the nation's development, Liu added.

Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao told media last week that the Chinese path to modernization is a way of common prosperity for all the people, and China welcomes companies from all countries to share the dividends of its market.

China and US need to work together to improve relations, experts say

By YIFAN XU in Washington
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Both sides should try to increase opportunities and reduce barriers to manage and improve relations between the United States and China, and facilitate bilateral trade, US foreign policy experts said.

Jack Midgley, principal of global consultancy Midgley & Co, said, "There's a long way to go for both sides to continue to put machinery in place so that there is dialogue every day between them, and to focus on small steps that reduce barriers and increase opportunities."

"Those aren't huge policy changes, but this is the business of international trade. It's the business of governments to work together to find opportunities and lower barriers."

The World Economic Outlook published last month by the International Monetary

Fund said the baseline forecast is for global growth to slow from 3.5 percent last year to 3 percent this year and 2.9 percent next year.

Midgley said it is very important for the US and China to find every possible opportunity to expand trade bilaterally to increase the speed and volume of the bilateral relationship that will influence growth globally.

"That focus, the bilateral focus, has spin-offs for growth of the global economy. So that's one important point of focus for both countries," he added.

The US sent its highest-level delegation ever to take part in the sixth China International Import Expo in Shanghai this month, which Midgley said was "a good gesture."

"This business is not controversial. It's well-established. Any good meeting, any positive outcome — we should take some

joy and some pleasure in that," he said. "The overall trade relationship is improving gradually," added Midgley, because "US-China bilateral trade is still the biggest in the world by far."

However, despite all the positive signs, such as the record-breaking bilateral trade level and improving US investment in China, Midgley said there are still some challenges around dual-use technology and technology for military applications.

"Issues that the Americans refer to as 'de-risking' and so forth are not ever going to be solved. They will only be managed," he said.

Midgley said China is doing very well worldwide in sales of high technology, because the nation has emphasized export growth.

"There are relatively few restrictions on obtaining Chinese telecommunication or transportation technology. The US is much

more protective of its technology," Midgley said.

He added that when customers worldwide look at the two countries as potential commercial partners, they find China easier, while the US is more difficult to do business with.

"This issue of protecting American technology by regulation is going to be a long-term problem that has to be worked," Midgley said. "There's no agreement. There's no paper that anybody can sign that makes this problem go away. I think it has to be managed case by case on a permanent long-term basis."

Midgley said he is hoping for a slow and steady development of US-China trade. "And that requires constant dialogue, checking, and trust-building. No easy way, no short way to do that," he said.

"The point is to compete openly and to cooperate whenever it's possible. That's

harder, but I think that has to be the future."

Gary Clyde Hufbauer, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, said he thinks the meeting between the two countries' leaders will lead to a quiet period in US-China trade relations.

The US will continue to expand the list of export controls — for example, surveillance equipment and probably semiconductor design — but these will not affect a large volume of current trade, Hufbauer said.

"On the other hand, I don't foresee the removal of existing barriers on a significant scale," he said. "Once the US election campaign is going full swing, there could be an escalation of tensions. Representative Mike Gallagher has a long list of restrictions he wants to place on US-China trade and financial ties. These could get more prominence in the election campaign."

XI'S VISIT

Sino-US tech ties seen as recovery key

Cooperation will help stabilize global industrial, supply chains, experts say

By MA SI and CHENG YU

Deeper China-United States cooperation in technology is the key to stabilizing global industrial and supply chains, and driving the recovery of the global economy amid challenges such as subdued investment sentiment and lackluster demand, company executives and experts said.

Underscoring that "decoupling" driven by geopolitical tensions poses a big risk to global economic stability, they said that China holds great appeal for US tech companies, because the country boasts a complete supply chain support system, a strong logistics system, a huge market and favorable government policies that spur innovation.

The comments came amid gradually warming China-US relations, which, coupled with more efforts, could pave the way for closer bilateral ties in the digital economy, advanced manufacturing, and low-carbon and healthcare technologies, experts said.

Frank Meng, chairman of Qualcomm China, said the US chip heavyweight sees huge opportunities in partnering with Chinese companies in 5G, artificial intelligence, internet of things and intelligent connected vehicles, as the company highlights its commitment to China.

"Qualcomm has consistently considered China as a pivotal business partner and valued customer, viewing it as more than just a market or a link in the supply chain," he said.

According to Meng, Qualcomm's cooperation with Chinese partners has been instrumental in advancing technology development and introducing products to the global market. "This underscores the significance of the Chinese market and our partnership with Chinese companies," he said.

Wei Jianguo, former vice-minister of commerce, said it is an irreversible trend for China and the US to engage in scientific and technological cooperation, because the two countries are both very powerful and influential in high-tech areas.

"China is vital to the US tech sector. No one can deny the fact. Let's just consider the long line of chief executives visiting China this year — Elon Musk of Tesla, Tim Cook of Apple, Pat Gelsinger of Intel and Cristiano Amon of Qualcomm," he said.

An analysis by Nikkei Asia echoed his views. The Japanese media outlet found that China accounted for a significant share of these four US tech companies' revenues last year — 62 percent for Qualcomm, 27 percent for Intel, 22 percent for Tesla and 18 percent for Apple.

Any restrictions imposed on Chinese tech companies will eventually harm the interests of US companies, and motivate Chinese enterprises to double down on efforts to pursue technological breakthroughs, Wei added.

For instance, amid the US government's curbs, Huawei Technologies Co developed its in-house operating system HarmonyOS, which will drop support for apps made for Google's Android operating system.

Chinese memory chip company Yangtze Memory Technologies Co has made technological advances in recent years despite US bans, and last week, it filed a lawsuit against its US counterpart Micron Technology for patent infringement in the US District Court for Northern California.

Kumsal Bayazit, CEO of Netherlands-based academic publishing company Elsevier, which owns top academic journals such as The Lancet and Cell, said there is enduring strength in the China-US research relationship, despite noises about the two countries "decoupling."

"The US and China are the two largest scientific producers in the world. They both produce approximately 20 percent of the scientific articles. China is the US' number one partner in terms of international research collaboration and the US is China's number one partner," Bayazit said.

"If we look at the impact index of the articles that come from China-US collaboration, it is twice as high as the world average, and higher than the performance of either China or the US alone," she added.

The US' robust tech research cooperation with China also comes as the latter sharpens its technological prowess. Take artificial intelligence for instance. In 2022, China secured the top position globally in terms of the number of patent applications for AI, according to a report by Stanford University.

Arvind Krishna, CEO of IBM, said: "We know that China's AI industry is thriving with many innovations. IBM works closely with Chinese authorities and customers to build an open and vibrant AI ecosystem, while ensuring the responsible use of AI."

He added that IBM remains "committed to making further contributions to China's digital economy through co-creation with our Chinese partners."

Sally Loh, president of Otis Worldwide Corp China, a US high-tech elevator manufacturer, said that China remains "a strong market for many US businesses, as the country is pushing forward its infrastructure construction and modernization."

Otis has a "complete supply chain system" in China, and more than 90 percent of its supply chain has been localized here in the Chinese market, according to Loh.

"We will strive to integrate digital technology into every link of Chinese enterprises' industrial chain and value chain, (in order) to comprehensively improve their production efficiency and product value in China," she added.

Qiu Jinwei, general manager of the US integrated circuit manufacturer Texas Instruments' branch in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, said that China's electric vehicle industry has experienced explosive growth and generated big demand for intelligence, digitalization and electrification in recent years, "which offers us great opportunities".

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Focus on future

Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen (second from left) attends on Tuesday the opening session of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Ministerial Meeting in San Francisco, California, the United States. The meeting kicked off with a focus on creating a resilient and sustainable future. ZHAO HUANKIN / CHINA DAILY

Officials call for deeper China-US health collaboration

By WANG XIAOYU
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The long history of China and the United States collaborating to combat health challenges, especially infectious diseases, has yielded plenty of outcomes globally, and hopes are now high for deeper bilateral cooperation to address more health issues and promote health equity, experts and officials said.

During a video call in September with Loyce Pace, assistant secretary for global affairs at the US Department of Health, Cao Xuetao, deputy head of the National Health Commission, said the long-term cooperation between health authorities in China and the US has not only benefited the people of both countries, but has also brought improvements in other parts of the world.

Cao said that China is willing to work with the US to translate the consensus reached during a meeting between the two heads of state in Bali, Indonesia, last November into concrete actions, while upholding the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win collaboration.

"Health authorities in China and the US are expected to maintain regular

communication, promoting cooperation in prevention and treatment of chronic diseases, such as cancer, and strengthening coordination efforts on multilateral platforms, such as the World Health Organization, in order to advance building a global community of health for all," he was quoted as saying according to a notice released by the commission.

Pace said that cooperation programs between China and the US suit the interests of both sides. She also expressed willingness to deepen mutual exchanges and safeguard global health security.

A highlight of the China-US collaboration in the healthcare sector has been the partnership between their disease control facilities, spanning over four decades, the US embassy in China said in an article released in March.

In September 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national public health agency of the US, and its Chinese counterpart — the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention — jointly launched a program aimed at controlling HIV/AIDS, unveiling a series of cooperation drives in the following years targeting other infectious

diseases such as tuberculosis, influenza, polio, measles and hepatitis B as well as noncontagious illnesses.

Heads of the US and China centers have held 12 face-to-face meetings since, according to the US embassy article.

As an emerging power in global health, China has also worked with the US health agency to promote global health security. A fitting example is their joint efforts in supporting the establishment of a disease control center in Africa.

During the Ebola outbreak in West Africa from 2014 to 2015, China sent 23 health personnel as part of an epidemiological training program. They worked with US disease control workers and those from around the world to provide technical assistance to tackle the outbreak.

Another highlight of the collaboration was the monitoring and handling of flu outbreaks, which culminated in the designation of the China National Influenza Center as a WHO Collaborating Center for Reference and Research on Influenza.

The designation, conferred by the WHO in 2010, was the fifth in the world and the first granted to a developing country.

Zhang Linqi, a professor at Tsing-

hua University's School of Medicine and a leading scientist behind China's first antibody combination therapy for COVID-19, said that China-US cooperation has also contributed to the development of the treatment during the pandemic.

"The third and late stage of clinical trials for the treatment was rolled out in cooperation with the National Institutes of Health in the US due to a lack of suitable patients in China, which played an important role for us to obtain the final market approval," Zhang said during a recent forum held in Beijing.

"Comprehensive resources are essential behind the product's creation. We've learned from the process that prompt support, especially international support, is vital for the development of new drugs," he added.

Harvey Fineberg, president of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and former president of the US National Academy of Medicine, said during a recent forum held in Beijing that COVID-19 highlighted the significance of global equity in facing a pandemic.

He said the best global competition he could have envisioned is the US and China competing to save more lives and advance global equity.

Potential of exchanges among youth highlighted

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Maurice Chong, a 20-year-old student from the United States, who is now studying at Peking University, is one of those who believes that more exchanges and collaboration between the two peoples of China and the US in various sectors will yield great tangible benefits.

At the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou last month, Chong and his team, using AI technologies, made a splash at the venues, offering convenience to audiences at the site and viewers in front of screens.

For a large-scale sporting event that had multiple matches of a particular sport being played at the same time, it was a daunting task to ensure that sports commenting services were available simultaneously for all matches.

Guided by Peking University faculty members including Professor Huang Tiejun, Chong's team helped address this issue by introducing an AI-driven, multilingual sports commentary system using high-speed cameras and large multimodal models.

"The system captures key moments in competitions, sorts out highlights

efficiently, analyzes the data and provides real-time, customized comments based on the analysis, making simultaneous sportscommenting for multiple matches possible," he said.

Chong's team also built an intelligent robotic software service system that provided voice-commanded navigation and assistance to the visually impaired during the Asian Games.

He said that young people from both China and the US are smart and diligent enough to make miracles happen and their joint efforts have paid off.

"I hope to apply what I have learned in practice and contribute to building a bridge of mutual learning and appreciation between the US and China, and be a young messenger to promote mutual trust between the two nations," Chong said.

Observers said there is great potential to be tapped through youth exchanges and subnational friendships, and both sides should look more at their common ground rather than the differences.

"Cultural and people-to-people exchanges have always been a vital component of China-US relations and a source of driving force for the growth of the relations," Foreign Min-



US athlete Jack Matthew Dunn matches steps with a Sichuan Opera performer during the athletes' gala at the 31st Chengdu FISU World University Games in July in Sichuan province. ZHANG DUAN / XINHUA

istry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Monday at a news conference.

Nell Chennault Calloway, CEO of the Chennault Aviation and Military Museum, told China Daily that she was once asked what the difference is between the American dream and the Chinese dream.

"There is no difference in our dreams. There is no difference if you ask anybody in the world what their dream is — most of the time the answer would be to live in peace, and to raise their family, and to give their future generations a better life," she said.

"If we would work toward those common goals of making a better world for our future generations, then we would find that we have much, much more that makes us alive than the differences that sometimes we look at," she added.

She stressed that the relationship between China and the US "is the most important relationship in our world today. If that does not work out good, the whole world loses."

"Everybody looks to us," she added. "We are that example now. So that's why it's so important that we get the story right."

China-US meeting reopens conversation

The difference between daytime and nighttime temperatures in San Francisco is quite pronounced. During the early winter days, even lingering in the long shadows of towering buildings for a while, I shivered in the cold chilly air. But by stepping forward just a little, I was enveloped in the sunshine again, where I chose to stay longer and feel more comfortable.

While conducting street interviews, I observed that each interviewee seemed keen to focus on one particu-

lar detail — the anticipated summit meeting between President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden.

No matter what topics will be discussed, what the perspectives of the two countries are, or what their outlooks are, people believe that sitting together and talking shows a willingness to reopen the dialogue, despite the recent tension between China and the US.

"It's fantastic that we should be talking. We are all one large world, and we should be talking to each other and having an open dialogue. It's a

great opportunity to do that here," said David Perry, a San Francisco resident working in the IT industry.

Regarding the potential agreements between China and the US, people generally have a reserved outlook, yet there remains a sense of anticipation for the meeting, as it is seen as a new beginning of communication and cooperation between the two sides.

"Hopefully the US government and the Chinese government will work together, combine together, stop arguing, and work together to



Mingmei Li
Reporter's
log

do many good things. Because without humans, without people, you cannot do anything," said David Ou, a Chinese American business owner in San Francisco's Chinatown.

Ou said that the economies of San Francisco, the US and the world at large were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and people in the Asian American community are experiencing increased misunderstanding because of their identity.

Chinatown is a well-known location, but now fewer tourists are coming since the pandemic.

"People are still working from home. There are many, many empty offices. Many small businesses and restaurants are closed in Chinatown and the financial district," Ou said.

From local business owners' perspectives, San Francisco, a hub of multinational corporations and a center for economic exchanges, has been negatively affected in recent years.

"We need people back to work, we need investment from the Asia-Pacific, so we can develop and build. We have massive opportunities here," John Quackenbush said. He

said he hoped Biden and Xi could reach more agreements on economic development and cooperation.

"We people really want to have a better country, in both China and the US," said Amelia Hurtado, a San Francisco resident.

In the APEC forum host city of San Francisco, the dynamics between China and the US resemble the city's changing temperature. If both are willing to take a step forward in mid-November, the cold may dissipate. Similarly, the midst of winter also signals the approaching warmth of spring.

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XI'S VISIT

As the 2023 holiday season approaches, subnational exchanges between the United States and China are picking up pace.

The most noticeable example has been California Governor Gavin Newsom's weeklong visit to China that strengthened the state's cooperation with China on climate control, trade and cultural ties.

As the first US governor to visit China after a gap of more than four years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Newsom accomplished a lot in his trip in late October, which was highlighted by a meeting with President Xi Jinping.

During his visit, Newsom signed five memorandums of understanding with the National Development and Reform Commission, Beijing, Shanghai and the provinces of Guangdong and Jiangsu. The MOUs advance California and China's work on climate policy.

California's agencies and departments will immediately initiate steps to implement the terms of the MOUs with their Chinese counterparts. This includes forming working groups, conducting bilateral meetings, establishing formal work plans and planning site and delegation visits, according to Newsom's office.

The California Energy Commission plans to attend the World New Energy Vehicle Conference in China, and California officials will engage with their Chinese counterparts at APEC in San Francisco and COP28 in Dubai.

"When it comes to climate, it's a G2 issue. The United States and China make up 42 percent of global emissions. We can't be serious about climate change without working together," Newsom said.

As large trading partners, California and China conducted annual business of \$166 billion in two-way trade in 2022. Newsom sought to strengthen the relationship and focused on rebuilding tourism between California and China. Tourism from China once poured \$4 billion into California but hasn't recovered since the pandemic.

"Divorce is not an option. I do not want to see this relationship deteriorate — it serves no one," Newsom said. "We are better when we are cooperating and competing, not cold-shouldering one another." Days after his return to California, direct flights were opened between San Francisco and Shanghai.

Plowing ahead

In Iowa, local farmers and members of Iowa's Sister States welcomed a Hebei provincial government delegation to celebrate their friendship of 40 years on Oct 26.

Led by Jin Hui, Hebei's deputy governor, the delegation visited the same Kimberly Farm near Des Moines



Left: Tourists visit a Spring Festival lantern display at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington last year. SHEN TING / XINHUA Right: A US student learns calligraphy from a Chinese student in New York. WANG YING / XINHUA



China, US pick up pace on subnational exchanges

Cooperation grows as both sides find more common ground. **May Zhou** reports in Houston.



Two people in Washington experience the charm of Peking Opera at a cultural activity organized by the Chinese Embassy in the United States on Oct 15. XINHUA

that Xi went to in 2012, to discuss further exchanges in agricultural best practices. The delegation also met with former governor and ambassador to China Terry Branstad to renew the friendship, and witnessed the signing of a \$3 billion soybean deal between the US and China.

The sister state-province relationship has flourished over 40 years, as summarized by Roger Nowadzky, president of Iowa Sister

States, during a celebration lunch in Des Moines.

"Forty years is a significant amount of time for friendship. Before Iowa and Hebei came together, there was very little trade between

the United States and China. There were very few professional delegations coming to Iowa from Hebei and very few people going out to Hebei," he said.

The friendship between Hebei

and Iowa was strengthened in 1985 when Xi — then a county leader from Hebei — visited Iowa as part of an agricultural study program under the sister-state program. Twenty-seven years later in 2012, then vice-president Xi made a return visit to see old friends. During the pandemic, Iowa and Hebei helped each other by shipping medical supplies to one another. "We have a wonderful friendship, something beyond just trade partners and cultural understanding. It's also a connection of people to people and a connection of our hearts," Nowadzky said.

On Oct 29, Oregon State Senator Michael Dembrow and an Oregon China Council goodwill delegation including leaders from the business and cultural sectors were welcomed by the Tianjin Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export.

Oregon's China Council and the Tianjin chamber have been promoting bilateral relations for years, and the collaboration has proved fruitful. Oregon's exports to China have continued to grow since 2020, the start of the pandemic.

Last year, Oregon's \$8.4 billion in exports was more than 16 percent higher than the 2019 level, according to the state's data. China has been Oregon's No 1 export destination for several years.

The Oregon delegation also held a forum in Fujian province on Nov 1 to discuss climate challenges and sustainable development. Crater Lake National Park and the Wuyishan National Park signed a cooperation agreement to further such exchanges.

At the same time, while Washington state welcomed a trade delegation from Sichuan province, a trade delegation from Houston, Texas, and six mayors from the heartland region made their first post-pandemic trip to China for a multicity visit to seek economic and trade cooperation, educational collaboration and people-to-people exchanges.

The flurry of subnational exchanges hasn't escaped the notice of many US experts. They have been quick to point out that such exchanges are playing a very important role at a time when the US federal government's relations with China are constrained by domestic politics.

Newsom's visit shows that progress is possible with Chinese provinces and city officials away from the scrutiny of official diplomacy, Joanna Lewis, a professor at Georgetown University who closely watches US and China climate engagement, told the Politico news site.

"Any dialogue that happens outside of Washington and Beijing by default just tends to be more open and frank," she said.

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Hebei students follow Xi's steps toward friendship during Iowa study tour

By ZHANG YU in Shijiazhuang
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It's been over a month, but Yu Xiaoping's trip to the United States remains vivid in her memory.

The 13-year-old took part in a weeklong study tour in the Midwestern state of Iowa in early October, together with nine other students and two teachers from Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School in Shijiazhuang, capital of Hebei province.

"I got a small golden pumpkin from Kimberley Farm in Des Moines," the teenager told China Daily on Monday, adding that she saw a truck full of pumpkins as it was harvest time at the farm.

"As Halloween was approaching, the farmer, Rick Kimberley, gave each of us a pumpkin as a gift. I think it was very meaningful because our country's president had been to that farm and fostered friendships with the farmer," she said.

Zhao Suxia, head of the school's foreign affairs office, said the Friendship Inheritance Study Program was initiated for students to retrace the routes President Xi Jinping took during his visits to Iowa in 1985 and in 2012, and for them to advance and expand the friendship.

In the spring of 1985, Xi, then a county leader in Zhengding, Hebei, set foot on US soil for the first time.

Xi led a five-member agricultural delegation to look at farm technology in Muscatine, Iowa, a leading US production area of corn and soybeans.

That trip helped Xi get acquainted with the US, and from then on, he has fostered friendships with US people.

Zhao said the study group also visited the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines, as well as



Left: Kenneth Quinn (third from right), honorary chairman of the World Food Prize Foundation, chats with students from Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, in Des Moines, US, on Oct 4. Right: Quinn and the students from Shijiazhuang pose for a photo. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



the Sino-US Friendship House and Muscatine High School in Muscatine.

The house where Xi stayed in 1985 has come to symbolize the desire of ordinary people for closer ties between China and the US. "We have fully experienced the warm and friendly hospitality of the American people," Zhao said, adding that the trip has also helped plant the seeds of bilateral friendship among youngsters.

Yu was very excited when she told China Daily that she had become friends with several students from Muscatine High School. "I talked with several students in the school about multiple topics, such as painting, music and performances," she said.

Such friendships have also created opportunities for study exchanges among Chinese and US youths.

Zhang Yuchen, a senior high school student from the Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School, participated in a weeklong academic conference that focused on young

people's efforts to address global food security issues.

The 2023 World Food Prize Youth Institute event was held in Des Moines from Oct 24 to 27, during which students such as Zhang from across the world shared their recommendations from research they had conducted on food security issues and related topics.

"I shared my study of how cooperation among enterprises, universities and research institutes can contribute to rural vitalization," the 16-year-old said.

Zhang said he had learned a lot from his peers and the panel of experts on food security, agriculture, climate change and sustainability issues.

He said he also discussed other issues with US students such as the different education systems in the two countries.

"These experiences in the United States not only allowed me to experience the warm hospitality and inclu-

siveness of American people, but also broadened my knowledge and perspective. I feel that they will have a great impact on my life," Zhang said.

Education experts in Hebei said the program has provided a great international exchange platform for youths to make contributions and help build a community with a shared future for mankind.

"It is thanks to the Sino-US people-to-people friendships that students from our school are able to participate in the World Food Prize program," said Pei Hongxia, head of the Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School.

A total of 80 high school students from the school have participated in the World Food Prize program for 11 consecutive years, including 10 this year, Pei said. They are the only team taking part in the event whose native language is not English, she added.

In 2013, the 30th anniversary of the Hebei-Iowa sister state relation-

ship, Kenneth Quinn, then president of the World Food Prize Foundation, invited the students from the school to participate in the program.

The invitation came after a visit to China in 2012 by a delegation of Xi's old friends who also visited the Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School.

During this visit, Sarah Lande, former president of the Iowa Sister State Friendship Committee, and Terry Branstad, former US ambassador to China, former governor of Iowa and current president of the foundation, introduced the youth program to the students, Pei recalled.

The students participating in this year's study tour to Iowa visited the home of Lande, who received Xi when he visited Muscatine in 1985. When he visited the US again in 2012, Xi, then Chinese vice-president, went to Lande's home again to meet his old friends.

"It was a beautiful two-story building, and Lande, who was in her eighties, stood at the door to greet

us," recalled Zhao, who visited Lande. She was "very touched" when the students sang *Lasting Memory*, a song about friendship, at her home, Zhao said.

The 10 students participating in this year's academic conference also visited Valley High School in Des Moines to experience high school life in the US and engage in exchanges with the students. They also got a taste of family life in the US through their host families.

"After feeling the sincerity, enthusiasm and friendliness of the country's people, I believe they will act as messengers for friendly exchanges between China and the United States and make their contribution to the long-term friendship between the two countries," Pei said.

She added that her school has also invited students and teachers from Muscatine High School and Valley High School to visit the Shijiazhuang school.

"Via exchanges in person, we can enhance mutual understanding between youths, so that they can carry forward friendships," she said.

In October, Xi said it was necessary to gather the strength of all parties to advance China-US ties when he met with California's governor, Gavin Newsom.

Xi said the foundation of the relationship lies in the people, the hope for the two countries' future lies with their youth, and vitality comes from local cooperation.

Zhang Yan, an English teacher at the Shijiazhuang school who led the October tour to the US, said she was impressed with the great hospitality.

"A lady even kissed me on my face when welcoming us," she said, adding she will remember it as a "souvenir" of the friendship.

XI'S VISIT

Friendship developed over historical photos

US force's presence in Yunnan in the 1940s forged lasting links with locals



A photo of the countryside near Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, taken by the US army doctor Clinton Millett in the 1940s. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By LI YINGQING in Kunming and CHEN LIANG

To help promote friendly China-US exchanges, Flying Tigers veterans Harry Moyer and Melvin McMullen began a 10-day trip to China on Oct 28, together with nearly 30 relatives of veterans from the well-known combat team.

Moyer, 103, and McMullen, 98, arrived in Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, on Nov 2.

Their first stop was the Kunming City Museum, where they visited the Flying Tigers Memorial Hall. Then they paid a visit to the former site of the United States Air Force General Hospital and the headquarters of the Flying Tigers.

The team's ties to China were forged decades earlier.

In 1941, a group of volunteer US pilots — later known as the Flying Tigers — stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Chinese people to fight invading Japanese troops during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). The group consisted of three fighter squadrons of around 30 aircraft each. Two of the squadrons were based in Kunming.

They flew over the Himalayas during the invasion, helping deliver strategic supplies to break through the Japanese blockade.

The delegation's recent visit has rekindled the city's memories of its connection with the US Army during the war — particularly a US medical officer, his color photos and his descendants' friendship with the city and its people.

On Jan 31, 2004, an email sent from the US caught the attention of Jin Feibao, general manager of a travel agency in Kunming at the time.

The email came from a man named Gregg Millett, who



Clockwise from top left: Two US soldiers and a Chinese man pose for a photo on the Yuantong Hill in Kunming. A woman carries a bouquet at the flower market in Kunming. People walk to a fair on the outskirts of Kunming. A US airfreighter lands at the Kunming airport.

expressed his desire to visit Kunming and hold a small photo exhibition there during his trip. Jin asked Millett to send him a few photos to preview.

When Jin received the photos, he was shocked. The scenes of Kunming that were depicted were clearly taken during the war.

Jin did some research and discovered that color reversal film was not

available until 1942. Realizing the historical value of these old, rare photos, Jin suspected that they might be the first batch of color photos taken in Kunming. Through subsequent emails, he learned that these photos — 152 in total — were taken by Gregg Millett's father, Clinton (1910-64), who was a US army doctor stationed in Kunming between 1944 and 1945.



While in Kunming, Clinton Millett took Kodachrome slides of the countryside and of Chinese people going about their daily lives. He also captured the lively atmosphere of the streets and alleys in Kunming, the enchanting scenery of Dianchi Lake and the magnificent historical buildings in and around the city.

Jin proposed organizing a large-

scale photo exhibition. Gregg Millett agreed to attend as a guest of Kunming.

In May 2004, Millett took the colored pictures back to Kunming for the exhibition. The monthlong show at the Yunnan Provincial Museum attracted more than 300,000 viewers.

Following the first exhibition, Jin, the principal organizer, published a

book of the photographs. He also produced a 60-minute TV documentary about the show.

Later, the photos were identified by experts from the National Museum of China as the earliest color photos of China.

A third exhibition was held at the national museum in 2005. The original 152 Kodachrome slides were donated to the museum by the Millett family.

Before he died in 2016 at age 78, Gregg Millett returned to Kunming many times and developed a deep friendship with Jin and other residents.

In 2004, he advised his nephew, Jesse Millett, to study Chinese in Kunming. Jesse went on to marry a young woman from the city and the couple have two children.

"Gregg and I were not only friends, but like family. He was more like an elder brother to me, always caring," Jin said.

Jin traveled to the US to attend Millett's funeral and brought some of his ashes to Kunming. He scattered them at Dianchi Lake according to Millett's wishes.

In August 2015, Jin and other four Chinese cyclists embarked on a people-to-people diplomatic mission to deliver "friendly letters" from Kunming to the mayors of eight US cities, including Boston, Massachusetts; Flagstaff, Arizona; and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

They rode for 66 days, crossed 13 states and covered a distance of 6,000 kilometers. During their journey, they visited the relatives of the Flying Tigers.

Jin believes that the spirit of those veterans will be passed down from generation to generation between the people of the two countries.

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Stint in HK sparks US man's lifelong love of China

By YIFAN XU in Washington DC yifanxu@chinadailyusa.com

Benjamin Renton was only 6 years old when he traveled to China for the first time. Many years later, he refers to China as his "second home".

Renton and his family relocated from the United States to the region in 2006 because his father, a banker, had work in Hong Kong. They didn't return to the US until 2010.

Because he cherished the country where he spent some of his formative years, Renton frequently returned to China. He spent every summer between 2015 and 2019 studying, traveling, interning or participating in research projects in the country. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, making international travel more challenging.

This September, Renton embarked on a two-week trip to China after being away for three years. Over the years, he estimates he has visited the country more than 20 times. "I certainly have a very deep connection to China," Renton told China Daily.

One of his favorite things about China is how easy it is to travel around the nation. "It's such a big

country, and it's so well-connected, particularly recently by train, plane or boat even," he said.

Among his many trips to China from his childhood up until two months ago, two were particularly memorable.

The first was in 2015. That summer, Renton, who said he has had a keen interest in China's "extreme and border regions", stayed with a local family in a village with people of the Naxi ethnic group near Lijiang, Yunnan province. The visit gave him the opportunity to learn about the group's society, which emphasizes the role of women in the household, mostly focuses on farming and has a beautiful script.

"I think that's really helped me to sort of go beyond what some people's conceptions of China are just in the major cities of Beijing or Shanghai, for example, and really see what else China has to offer."

The other really memorable trip was in 2017, when he took a Yangtze River cruise from Chongqing to Yichang, Hubei province. During the three-day trip, Renton, one of the few foreigners aboard who could speak Mandarin, dined with other passengers and took excursions



Benjamin Renton poses with members of his host family in Nanyao village near Lijiang, Yunnan province, in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

on smaller boats to view the gorges along the river, which he said was "very cool" for him.

Renton said that on every trip he has taken to China, he has tried to do something different, but he has also enjoyed going back to places he had visited before to see changes that had occurred.

"When I used to travel with groups or by myself between Kun-

ming and Lijiang in Yunnan province, that used to be a nine-hour train ride on one of the overnight trains, where you would sleep overnight and get there in the morning. Now, that can be done in two or three hours by bullet train," he said. "That train service has expanded down past Dali and to Xishuangbanna and into Laos, which is really cool to see. And it is cool to see the

village that I stayed in near Lijiang is on the line of a new railway line that is being built."

Recalling more about his 2015 trip, Renton said he also stayed with a family in Kunming, capital of Yunnan, where he shared a room with his "homestay brother" for two weeks. "He is two or three years younger than me but is now doing a PhD at a university in Chengdu (in Sichuan province) on microbiology. And I think it's been really cool to see the development of a person who has a life that is in some ways different but in some ways is very similar," Renton said.

"My friends in China are people who go to school or go to work in the same way that we do here in the United States," he said, expressing how he enjoyed meeting them when he was in China before and how special it was to see them again when he returned in September.

Renton's last trip to China before this year was in early 2020, but he left as soon as the COVID-19 epidemic began sweeping the nation. During his September visit, he reunited with old friends, tried new things — for example, attending a traditional Chinese wedding — and

visited several universities and international schools.

He said he was glad to see a China that "continued to develop over the pandemic", and he was equally happy to meet familiar people in familiar places.

"I think it's always been a priority of mine to go to China," Renton said.

He said he has always enjoyed exploring and trying something new in China, and he appreciated some of the perspectives and practices in Chinese culture, such as emphasizing family bonds and sharing food.

"And I think those types of experiences are only possible with people who open up their lives and cultures and allow people like me to meet with them and understand that. And that's been really, I think, experiences that I will always remember," he said.

From his experiences, Renton grew to understand the significance of people-to-people connections by means of activities such as study abroad programs or cultural exchanges.

"All of those opportunities are incredibly important, and I think they can also lead the way for collaboration in other areas in terms of health, the economy, or other areas of the US-China relationship," he said.

TOP NEWS

Experts stress resilience of China's economy

Stable growth momentum, better output and consumption herald brighter future, they say

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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Experts have scotched rumors about the Chinese economy running into rough weather, saying that recovery continued in October, while consumption and industrial production improved, and the same trend will continue in the coming months, which is a testament to China's economic resilience and vitality.

They said the economy faces pressures from weak domestic demand, tepid private investment, ongoing stress in the property sector and mounting uncertainties, but underlined that more stimulus can consolidate the foundation for recovery.

Looking ahead, the economy will likely sustain its stable growth momentum with existing supportive measures taking effect gradually and more countercyclical adjustment measures in the offing, they said.

Liu Aihua, spokeswoman for the National Bureau of Statistics, said the economy had maintained recovery momentum in the first 10 months, "laying a solid foundation for meeting the objectives of full-year economic and social development".

The economy will likely continue to recover in the following months with the macro policies taking effect gradually, underpinned by the anticipated improvement in demand and production as well as the steady development in industrial transformation and upgrading, Liu said at a news conference on Wednesday in Beijing.

Figures released by the NBS showed that China's retail sales — a gauge of consumption — grew 7.6 percent year-on-year in October, up from 5.5 percent in September.

"Retail sales in October were particularly strong, beating even our above-consensus estimates, given sharp increases in holiday-related spending components, including catering, tobacco and alcohol, sports and entertainment, and communication equipment," said Louise Loo, lead economist at British think tank Oxford Economics.

She said the momentum may persist in the first quarter of 2024, given seasonal spending patterns and positive base effects for annual comparisons.

China's value-added industrial output also grew 4.6 percent in October, up from 4.5 percent in Sep-

tember, according to the NBS.

Loo said that fading destocking pressures likely contributed to an uptick in manufacturing activity, and notably three "new economy" sectors — electric vehicles, batteries and renewables — raced ahead, all growing at a double-digit pace year-on-year.

Despite the improvement in some key indicators, she said the drag from the property sector intensified in October, estimating that the weakness in housing sales and investments may stay through 2024, given the property correction process.

Loo highlighted the need for more stimulus to consolidate the recovery trend, saying that these anticipated supportive measures would help further stabilize the growth momentum.

In the January-October period, fixed-asset investment grew 2.9 percent compared with a year earlier, while in the January-September period, it increased 3.1 percent year-on-year. Real estate investment contracted 9.3 percent year-on-year, pulling down total private investments by 0.5 percent, NBS data showed.

Zhou Maohua, an analyst at China Everbright Bank, said that while it may still take some time for the property sector to recover, the fixed-asset investment will likely pick up, especially as the approval of a fresh 1 trillion yuan (\$138 billion) in central government bonds suggests future acceleration in the implementation of key projects.

He warned of pressures from a still-weak domestic demand, souring private investment, stress in the property sector and uncertainties in the external environment, saying that macro policies should be kept consistent to promote the steady recovery of demand and stabilize prices.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said that considering the foundation for recovery is not solid yet, the country should further step up countercyclical adjustments to stabilize overall growth.

Referring to the recent tone-setting Central Financial Work Conference, Wen said the policy stance will stay accommodative, with focus on creating a favorable monetary and financial environment, expanding central government borrowing while resolving local debt problems, and stabilizing the property market.



A woman works at a woven bag production line in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Coloring the sky



Fursan al-Emerat or the Knights of the UAE, the aerobatics team of the UAE Air Force, puts on an impressive display on Tuesday during the 2023 Dubai Airshow at Al Maktoum International Airport in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. KARIM SAHIB / AFP

City in Portugal gets Chinese-made trains

By ZHANG YU in Shijiazhuang
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Four subway trains made by a Chinese company carried out a trial run in Porto, Portugal, on Monday, marking the first such test run by a Chinese-made subway train in a European Union country.

The trains are among a consignment of 18 that China has exported to the EU country, according to CRRC Tangshan Co, the train's manufacturer. Founded in 1981 and based in Tangshan, Hebei province, the company is one of China's largest makers of

trains and subway vehicles.

According to the company, the trains ran without passengers on Line C of Porto Metro, in a mixed operation with existing passenger trains on the line.

Once fully operational, the new trains will pass through some of the busiest routes of the local subway network and the city's core area, as well as Porto's largest transfer station, Trindade Metro.

The routes include both underground and aboveground sections and different types of track, creating a complex working condition.

Before the test run, various preparatory tasks were carried out jointly by CRRC Tangshan Co and the Porto Metro company of Portugal. Preparations included the training of drivers and endurance tests for the train cars.

The agreement for the train project was signed in January 2020. In keeping with the contract, CRRC Tangshan Co has produced a total of 18 subway trains of four cars each for Porto. The Chinese company will provide maintenance service for five years.

The first train for the project

arrived in Porto in December 2022.

In July this year, the subway trains successfully passed an independent safety assessment by a third party from Italy. This was the first independent safety assessment certificate obtained by Chinese subway vehicles in the EU.

The new subway trains have a maximum speed of 80 kilometers per hour and capacity for 244 passengers, with a seating capacity of 64, according to an earlier report by Xinhua News Agency. With the addition of the new cars, the Porto Metro fleet will increase to 120.

Lessons of history can help improve Sino-US ties

The relationship between China and the United States is one of the most important bilateral relations in the world.

China-US cooperation not only serves the interests of both countries, but also contributes to world peace and development. However, in recent years, the relationship has encountered serious difficulties and been damaged. How to overcome these difficulties and repair the relationship is a serious challenge faced by both countries.

Therefore, it is necessary to summarize historical experiences, learn from the past and promote the stability and improvement of China-US relations.

In the development of China-US ties — whether it was the "icebreaking" of the early 1970s or the subsequent "honeymoon period" of the 1980s; the "shock" that China-US relations experienced in the late 1980s and early 1990s; or the significant developments achieved over the past decade — head-of-state diplomacy played a crucial role.

In February 1972, then US president Richard Nixon led a delegation to China and held talks with Chairman Mao Zedong, breaking the thaw that had lasted for more than 20 years between China and the US and initiating the process of normalizing China-US relations.

Under the theme of head-of-state diplomacy, China and the US have established a multifield dialogue and

WORLD WATCH
By Liu Deshou

exchange mechanism to pragmatically promote bilateral cooperation.

At the beginning of the new century, based on the important consensus reached by the leaders of both countries, the China-US Strategic Dialogue and the China-US Strategic Economic Dialogue were launched. The former was the first time since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US that such a high-level regular dialogue had been held, which has enhanced mutual understanding and strategic trust between the two countries and promoted cooperation in various fields.

The latter is a strategic dialogue that strengthens cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, energy and environment, food and product safety. It also establishes a long-term economic cooperation relationship between China and the US.

Looking back at China-US relations since the 1970s, it can be seen that the fundamental reason for the significant development of the ties — from breaking the ice, initiating the normalization of bilateral relations, and achieving significant development — is that both countries share common interests and have a full

understanding of this.

The three joint communiques between China and the US emphasize the common interests of the two countries.

In the Shanghai Communiqué jointly issued by China and the US on Feb 28, 1972, the two sides stated that "the normalization of relations between the two countries is not only in the interest of the Chinese and American peoples but also contributes to the relaxation of tension in Asia and the world".

The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States of America, issued on Dec 16, 1978, said, "Both believe that normalization of Sino-American relations is not only in the interest of the Chinese and American peoples but also contributes to the cause of peace in Asia and the world".

In the Joint Communiqué of the People's Republic of China and the United States of America issued on Aug 17, 1982, both sides clearly stated, "The two sides are determined, on the principle of equality and mutual benefit, to strengthen their ties in the economic, cultural, educational, scientific, technological and other fields and make strong, joint efforts for the continued development of relations between the governments and peoples of the United States and China."

Over the past decades since the

normalization of China-US relations, despite the ups and downs in the relationship, the two countries have made significant progress in various fields, confirming the broad common interests of China and the US.

The development of China-US relations is the result of the two countries transcending ideological differences and pursuing common interests. It has been proved that only by transcending the constraints of institutional differences can China and the US continuously deepen cooperation and promote the smooth development of bilateral relations.

The Taiwan question has always been the core question in China-US relations, and proper handling of it is the key to the stable development of bilateral relations. After the normalization process of China-US relations began, whether the US side has adhered to its commitments on the Taiwan question has been the key to the stable development of China-US ties.

China-US relations are at a new crossroads. China and the US have the ability and responsibility to explore a correct way of coexistence, in order to benefit the people of both countries as well as the world.

The author is a researcher at the Institute of American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Cultural, tourism firms bank on financial support

By SHI JING in Shanghai
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More financial support should be given to Chinese cultural and tourism companies so that new technologies can be applied in a wider area and new growth engines can be nurtured, said industry experts on Tuesday.

They made the comments during a conference for the construction, investment and financing of cultural and tourism projects, which was held in Shanghai between Nov 14 and 15.

The Ministry of Culture and Tour-

ism signed strategic cooperation agreements with the Export-Import Bank of China and Agricultural Bank of China at the conference on Tuesday.

Cui Yanmei, deputy general manager of the customer service department of the Export-Import Bank of China, said that the bank will support the export of Chinese cultural products and services, outbound trips and the construction of cultural and tourism demonstration platforms, according to the newly signed agreement.

It will also support the application of information technologies in cul-

tural and tourism industries. Companies will be supported in exploring overseas markets and investing in and building cultural and tourism projects via direct foreign investment, and mergers and acquisitions, which are also part of the agreement, said Cui.

Xing Fengqin, general manager of the agro-related corporate business department at Agricultural Bank of China, said that the bank will focus on granting more credit to cultural and tourism companies, product innovation, digital management in the two industries and building industrial clusters for key sectors

based on the new agreement.

The agreements are part of lenders' efforts to address the State Council guideline on the high-quality development of the tourism industry, which was released on Sept 27. While aiming to release more consumption potential, the guideline said that investment in tourism infrastructure should be optimized.

The country's fiscal, financial and investment policies should be better used to revitalize existing tourism projects and assets and broaden financing channels. Financial institutions should be better guided to optimize credit management, enrich

credit products, and support the construction and operation of tourism facilities. Scenic projects are encouraged to issue infrastructure real-estate investment trusts, according to the guideline.

Lyu Hao, deputy general manager of the Shanghai Stock Exchange, said during the conference that cultural and tourism companies can make full use of the various tools provided in the capital market including stocks, bonds, funds, derivatives and real estate investment trusts or REITs. In this way, the capital market can play a bigger role in helping companies lower costs, enhance efficiency and raise their recognition by comprehending prices and diversifying risks.

Xu Bo, general manager of China Cultural Investment, said recovering

market demand in China has laid the groundwork for investment and financing in the cultural and tourism industries.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Chinese consumer spending on domestic trips spiked 114.4 percent year-on-year to 3.69 trillion yuan (\$509.1 billion) in the first three quarters. The total number of domestic tourist trips exceeded 3.67 billion in the first nine months, up 75.5 percent year-on-year, recovering to nearly 80 percent of the 2019 level.

Fang Shizhong, head of the Shanghai municipal administration of culture and tourism, said that cultural and tourism industries are the best platforms to apply emerging technologies, such as blockchain and AI large language models.

BUSINESS

City to lift Silk Road trade

Cabinet approval for Shanghai pilot zone to boost e-commerce biz

By WANG YING in Shanghai
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Shanghai is looking to nurture a batch of e-commerce operators with international influence by 2025 as the city gears up to explore Silk Road e-commerce cooperation by aligning with international trade agreements including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), according to official sources.

By 2025, Shanghai seeks to attract a set of e-commerce business entities with global competitiveness, set regional vehicles with respective characteristics and have public service platforms promoting Silk Road e-commerce, to provide outcome support and practical experience for the development of Silk Road e-commerce, said Zhang Xiong, deputy secretary-general of the Shanghai municipal government during a news conference held in Shanghai on Tuesday. The State Council approved establishing a pilot zone for Silk Road e-commerce cooperation in East China's Shanghai, according to the council's official website, citing a circular released on Oct 23.

The circular urged the metropolis to exert a pioneering role in making breakthroughs in reform and opening-up, aligning with high-standard international economic and trade rules and exploring institutional innovation.

The pilot zone is expected to boost the high-quality cooperation development of the Belt and Road Initiative. More efforts will be made to expand opening-up in the e-commerce sector and build a new hub for international



A Pakistani businessman (center) and a colleague ring in the Chinese New Year during livestreaming amid a Silk Road e-commerce New Year's shopping festival on Jan 13 in Shanghai. FANG ZHE / XINHUA

cooperation for the digital economy.

From short video platform Douyin and Chinese online discounter Pinduoduo, to global fashion marketplace Shein, apps made by Chinese developers are among the world's top 1,000 applications, whose downloads nearly doubled over the past decade, according to a report from US search giant Google.

The plan approved by the State Council prioritizes institutional opening-up and the cultivation of entities and cooperation mechanisms. Shanghai will accelerate its alignment with international high-standard economic and trade rules, explore institutional innovations and expand opening-up in e-commerce, Zhang said.

A total of 19 tasks on expanding e-commerce opening-up, creating a pilot environment and vigorously promoting international and regional exchanges and cooperation will be carried out to achieve the targets, the plan showed.

"As the nation's largest economic

center, Shanghai is a strategic city in realizing the goals of the nation, and a center of reform and opening-up," said Zhang.

With continuous optimization in its transportation systems for sea, land, air and rail, Shanghai has established its strength as a shipping hub. The port of Shanghai has held the title of the world's busiest container port for 13 consecutive years, and the city's two airports ranked third in terms of cargo throughput for 15 years in a row. Since the first China-Europe Railway Express started in Shanghai two years ago, some 150 China-Europe freight trains have departed the city for European cities, Zhang said.

Shanghai has formed evident advantages in the e-commerce ecosystem. Express deliveries between Shanghai and destinations beyond the Chinese mainland reached 170 million units in 2022, up 8.5 percent year-on-year, accounting for 8.2 percent of the nation's total, Zhang added.

Being one of the nation's first

batches of e-commerce demonstration cities and cross-border e-commerce pilot cities, Shanghai saw its e-commerce transaction volume reach 3.33 trillion yuan (\$466.7 billion) in 2022, said Zhou Lan, deputy director of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce.

Zhou said the city is currently home to nine e-commerce platforms, each with a business scale above 100 billion yuan, and 17 platforms sized at some 10 billion yuan each.

The cross-border e-commerce trade volume of Shanghai surged 38.6 percent year-on-year to reach 184.1 billion yuan last year. The trend continued at an accelerated pace of 60 percent year-on-year in the first three quarters of this year, Zhou said.

"The rapid development of e-commerce in Shanghai has laid a solid foundation for cooperation between China and its partner countries. Shanghai's setting up of a pilot zone for Silk Road e-commerce cooperation will create more space for further and better cooperation," said Zhou.

Muji eyeing China for top-slot market

By CHENG YU
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Japanese retailing giant Muji is eyeing a bigger presence in China as the domestic market assumes a more critical role in the company's global radar, a top executive said.

"China, now the biggest overseas market for Muji in terms of both sales revenue and profit, is an important market for Muji's global business," Nobuo Domae, president and representative director of Muji, told China Daily in an interview on the sidelines of the sixth China International Import Expo that concluded earlier this month.

Muji, which currently has over 385 stores in China and 400 in Japan, is eyeing 50 new stores in the Chinese market by August 2024. If it is able to meet the target, there will be more Muji stores in China than in its home country soon.

Previously, the Japanese retailer, well known for its environmentally friendly and sustainable lifestyle products, seldom participated in global expos or exhibitions. This is the reason why Muji's maiden appearance at the sixth CIIE garnered wide attention.

"We have been observing when, how and what effect the expo could bring. As China plays an increasingly critical role for Muji's global business, we feel that it is the right time to demonstrate to our Chinese customers our latest brand and vision through the expo," Domae said, reflecting the company's changed perspective on the Chinese market.

In the past, Muji mainly sold products that were produced, manufactured and designed in Japan to the world, Domae said.

"At that time, China was just one of our global markets. But now, we are making more and more products that are produced, manufactured and designed here in China," he said,

emphasizing that China is the only overseas country with a closed loop industrial chain for Muji.

He noted that around 70 percent of daily-use products have been developed and designed in the Chinese market this year, rising quickly from around 60 percent last year.

According to the company, more than 5,000 kinds of items have been designed in the Chinese market so far.

"Moreover, as we design more products here, we are also promoting these local designs to the world," Domae added.

Amid a slowing economic recovery globally, Domae said China's economic momentum will continue over the long term, which will offer more opportunities to multinational companies.

"We are confident in our future growth here and will continue to enlarge our business here," he said.

Muji is expected to open another flagship store in Beijing in January, its largest shop in the country.

Shao Tianyi, chief marketing officer of Muji China, said digitalization is another important part of the company's strategy for the Chinese market, as the country pushes for it to become a fresh growth engine.

Market consultancy International Data Corp had forecast that 65 percent of global GDP would be driven by digitalization by 2022 and drive over \$6.8 trillion in IT spending from 2020 to 2023, with China being an important driver.

"The digitalization improvement for Muji China is not driving business online, which can also be seen in the company's business model, customer experience, marketing techniques and many other aspects," Shao said.

Muji, she said, has launched an instant retailing business in cooperation with food delivery platforms such as Meituan and Ele.me earlier this year, marking a step forward in its digitalization journey.

热烈祝贺亚太经合组织(APEC)领导人非正式会议召开

Warm congratulations on the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

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BUSINESSFOCUS

AI virtual hosts change game for livestreaming

Digital anchors favored for tireless, scandal-free work; humans still retain edge

By FAN FEIFEI
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In a livestreaming base in the Binjiang district of Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province, a batch of digital anchors is tirelessly introducing various types of products 24 hours a day.

These virtual hosts can mimic human facial expressions and movements and are almost indistinguishable from real humans. They can interact naturally with consumers and answer their queries promptly.

Hangzhou is China's e-commerce livestreaming hub where sales personnel promote products in real-time broadcasted sessions, with more than 50,000 human anchors and a large number of virtual hosts flocking into livestreaming rooms.

Lier Baby, a top-notch livestreamer of Taobao Live, Alibaba Group's livestreaming platform, enabled her six different virtual replicas to be on the same stage in a live broadcast at the end of July.

These virtual anchors offer a glimpse into China's burgeoning e-commerce sector, which is embracing artificial intelligence-powered virtual humans. A string of Chinese tech companies has ratcheted up efforts to promote the use of virtual hosts for livestreaming.

Qianxun Holdings, one of China's top livestreaming companies, recently rolled out an AI hosting service and a one-stop comprehensive AI livestreaming service platform.

Tao Yadong, a partner of Qianxun Holdings and CEO of Qianyu Intelligence, said: "It costs about 150,000 yuan (\$20,730) to 250,000 yuan per month to run a traditional



Visitors check out livestreaming devices displaying artificial intelligence-powered digital anchors during an e-commerce expo in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, in June. LYU BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

livestreaming room with a dozen workers and equipment. In comparison, brand owners just need to spend several thousand yuan to operate a virtual livestreaming room helmed by a virtual host."

Tao said AI-powered hosts are professional, have stable demeanors and can work 24 hours a day. He noted the tests conducted by Qianxun showed that the performance of virtual hosts in terms of gross merchandise volume, average view duration, number of viewers and transaction rates is better than that of human hosts.

Qianxun Holdings has also inked cooperation agreements with eight companies, such as online retailer Suning and sportswear brand Xtep, to promote their products through leveraging virtual hosts in livestreaming sessions.

Tao said virtual hosts are digital clones of real humans and their

production should be authorized by real people. At present, the company owns nearly 100 virtual humans, he added. The advances in AI technology have improved AI hosts' interactive capabilities.

In addition, virtual hosts with different prices boast diverse interaction functions. "However, under current technical conditions, the digital anchors can't totally replace real humans as it is difficult for them to establish trust with fans," Tao added.

Data from market consultancy iiMedia Research showed that 948 newly registered companies offered virtual host livestreaming services in 2022.

Some 47.5 percent of the interviewed users said that human livestreamers and virtual ones will coexist in the future. Moreover, the demand for livestreaming hosts is expected to reach 9 million in 2025, according to iiMedia Research.

locations, hardware and hiring human anchors.

"The virtual human industry is still in an early stage and there are some challenges, such as how to produce low-cost digital assets and digital content, and how to make digital humans interact with real people more naturally," Li said.

Resolving these issues relies on the iteration of technologies such as natural language processing and computer vision, Li said, adding that Baidu will continue to pour capital and manpower into the digital human industry.

According to iiMedia Research, the revenue of China's e-commerce livestreaming sector reached 1.4 trillion yuan last year, up 19.5 percent year-on-year. This is projected to reach 2.1 trillion yuan in 2025.

Global consultancy Forrester said more business-to-consumer, or B2C, brands are using virtual hosts to attract digital-savvy and novelty-seeking young consumers, as they cost less than human talent and reduce risks such as scandals.

"The use of virtual hosts in livestreaming sessions can bring a feeling of freshness to users and brand owners can attract new consumers via this innovative method," said Mo Daiqing, a senior analyst at the Internet Economy Institute, a domestic consultancy.

Mo said AI-powered digital humans in livestreaming can help improve operating efficiency, enhance the shopping experience, boost sales of products and promote the development of e-commerce livestreaming.

Virtual livestreamers can play an important role in finishing tedious and repetitive tasks, thus allowing human hosts to devote more time to creative work. However, they will not replace human hosts, Mo added.

In August, Chinese authorities issued a 24-point guideline for managing generative AI services. The country encourages the innovative development of generative AI and supervises the technology using

methods compatible with innovation and development.

Pan Helin, co-director of the Digital Economy and Financial Innovation Research Center at Zhejiang University's International Business School, said he is optimistic about the business prospects of virtual humans in the e-commerce livestreaming segment.

More efforts are needed to improve 3D modeling, rendering and motion capture technologies to bolster the development of the country's virtual human sector, Pan said.

Thanks to technological advancement in AI, digital avatars bearing a close resemblance to real humans in appearance and behavior have been put into service — not only in livestreaming, but also in a wide range of other segments, industry experts said.

For instance, Baidu has worked with Shanghai Pudong Development Bank, China Everbright Bank and China Unicom to launch service-oriented virtual humans.

Chinese AI pioneer SenseTime's virtual human acted as a shopping guide at Aeon Mall in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, as well as a customer service representative at Bank of Ningbo's Shanghai branch, providing inquiry services for customers.

The size of China's virtual human market is forecast to reach 270 billion yuan by 2030, according to an industry report released by QbitAI, an industry services platform focusing on AI and cutting-edge technology.

Officials have high hopes for the market as Beijing released an action plan last year that bolsters the innovative development of the virtual human sector. The scale of the virtual human industry in Beijing is expected to exceed 50 billion yuan by 2025.

The capital city aims to develop one or two leading virtual human companies by 2025 with revenue surpassing more than 5 billion yuan each, and 10 companies that would generate annual revenue of 1 billion yuan each, according to the plan.



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COMMENT

Editorials

Asia-Pacific should join hands to promote peaceful, sustainable and inclusive growth

The attendance of President Xi Jinping at the 30th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting that is being held in San Francisco on Thursday and Friday demonstrates the great importance China attaches to Asia-Pacific economic cooperation.

The Asia-Pacific is the most dynamic regional economy. Home to one-third of the world's population, it accounts for over 60 percent of the global economy and nearly half of international trade.

As an important platform for economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, APEC has made continuous progress in promoting regional trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and played a positive role in promoting global and regional economic growth.

At present, the situation in the Asia-Pacific region is generally stable, regional cooperation has made continuous progress, and peaceful development and win-win cooperation are still the mainstream trend. But the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change, and geopolitical tensions are overlapping with the evolving economic landscape. The development environment and cooperation architecture of the Asia-Pacific region have not been immune to the impacts.

In the speech he will deliver at the 30th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, China's top leader will comprehensively expound on China's proposals for deepening Asia-Pacific cooperation and promoting regional economic growth. He will call on all parties to join hands with China to promote prosperity and development in the Asia-Pacific.

China is one of the most important economies in the Asia-Pacific region, and it has made important contributions to regional economic growth. According to the Asian Economic Integration Report 2023 released by the Asian Development Bank, China contributed 64.2 percent of the economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, and 37.6 percent of the growth of trade in goods and 44.6 percent of the growth of trade in services.

Greater trust, inclusiveness, cooperation and mutual benefit will deepen the Asia-Pacific partnership. That in turn will produce new opportunities and impetus for the development and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large. China on its part is committed to building an Asia-Pacific that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, clean, beautiful and mutually supportive.

China's development has benefited from that of the Asia-Pacific, and the world's second-largest economy has also contributed to and benefited the Asia-Pacific with its own development. It will continue to share its development opportunities with the region as it opens up on a wider scale at a higher level and with higher standards.

Peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific belong to all the people in the region, and the future of the Asia-Pacific depends on people in the region working together to build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future.

It should be recognized that a prosperous and strong China not only serves the fundamental interests of the Chinese people, but also benefits the people of the Asia-Pacific and the world at large.

EU's raw material concerns self-induced

The European Union on Monday agreed a plan to secure its own supply of critical raw materials ranging from cobalt to lithium, as the bloc seeks to reduce its dependence on other countries for them.

The Critical Raw Materials Act sets targets for the EU member states to mine 10 percent, process 40 percent, and recycle 25 percent of the critical raw materials it uses by 2030. The act now needs to be signed off formally by its member states to go into force.

"From green and digital technologies to defense and aerospace, demand for critical raw materials is increasing fast," Thierry Breton, the EU's internal market chief, said. "Without action, Europe risks supply shortages and unwanted dependencies."

The EU's self-reliance plan was first proposed in March, as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict that cut off Europe's energy imports, forcing many EU member states to find alternative sources of fossil fuels. Since a secure and sustainable supply of the key raw materials are indispensable for the EU's green transition, the bloc has also justified the new regulation by pointing to the urgent need to catch up with the United States and China which are now leading the world in the transition to clean technology.

The US, in particular, has poured billions of dollars in subsidies into the development of green technology, despite the subsidies being suspected of violating the World Trade Organization rules.

The EU's move, which favors local industry at the expense of foreign competition, has raised concerns about it taking a more protectionist policy course.

That tendency first appeared when the bloc suspended the ratification of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment that the two sides reached in 2020. Events that afterwards — from the EU strengthening its stance on banning the use of 5G telecommunication equipment from Huawei, to the launch of its anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric vehicles recently — have further amplified the impression of Europe increasingly turning inward.

Actually, Breton himself has urged member states to block Chinese investment in critical European infrastructure, for example, saying he "preferred" Germany's decision to limit China's Cosco to a 25 percent stake in the Tollerort container terminal in Hamburg Port rather than approve the original 35 percent stake the Chinese company sought.

It is understandable that the EU wants to keep the supply of critical raw materials directly under its control. But the risk to Europe's supply of critical raw materials comes not from China, but from internal and external pressure to politicize and weaponize such key global supply chains at China's expense.

History shows that protectionist moves aimed at reshoring production or making sure certain materials or products are extracted or manufactured domestically only serve the opposite purpose.

Escalation of Middle East crisis must be checked

Speaking on Monday, Geng Shuang, China's deputy ambassador to the United Nations, once again expressed China's grave concerns about the continuing crisis in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza.

"Violence cannot bring true security. The use of force will not create lasting peace," he said.

Geng made the remarks at a United Nations conference whose major focus was on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction.

China fully supports this move as it believes that it will not only provide an "important mechanism for the maintenance of long-term regional peace and security" but also help safeguard the authority and effectiveness of international nonproliferation regimes and reduce the risk of an arms race.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League on Saturday called for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East and effective action against war crimes perpetrated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government in the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza. Such a call became an exigency after Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said last week that dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza Strip was an option.

Despite the fact that this reckless remark was criticized even by Netanyahu and the minister himself was suspended from Israeli Cabinet meetings, it

nonetheless reminds the world of the reality that the sinister shadow of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction should not be ignored.

The relations between different parties in the Middle East are extremely complicated. It is unrealistic to expect that the tensions between Israel and Palestine and other Arab countries, as well as those among other countries in the region, can be resolved through negotiations in a short period of time.

The worsening situation in Gaza only does a disservice to the moves that have been underway to secure lasting peace in the region.

It is essential that the United Nations demand strict adherence to relevant treaties to try and prohibit countries or forces in this region from acquiring nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction.

The continuation of the conflict will only lead to its escalation, increasing the possibility of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction being used. Major countries should concentrate on leveraging their influence to bring about a cease-fire.

The intertwined historical and practical contradictions in the Middle East make the situation extremely precarious. All countries should abandon their narrow geopolitical interests and political manipulation, stop deliberately provoking confrontation in the region, and make practical contributions to securing peace and stability.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Cameron's return rekindles memory of 'golden era' for ties

In a Cabinet reshuffle on Monday, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak appointed former prime minister David Cameron as the new foreign secretary in place of James Cleverly, who replaces Suella Braverman as the new home secretary after Braverman came under fire over immigration policies and criticism of police action at recent demonstrations.

The appointment breaks a more-than-50-year-old record with Alec Douglas-Home being the last former prime minister to have been appointed foreign secretary in 1970. Cameron will be appointed to the House of Lords, the upper chamber of Parliament, demonstrating Sunak's determination to bring him back to the Cabinet.

Cameron is popular with Conservative voters and his reentry could help reverse the Conservative Party's fortunes. Cameron's return also reduces the ranks of "Brexit-

ers" among core members of the Sunak Cabinet. Cameron will also find a companion in Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt, who supported the United Kingdom staying in the European Union.

Evidently, this is not good news for Brexit supporters in the party. In fact, after the announcement of Cameron's return, Conservative hard-liners were plotting to install Braverman as the next Conservative leader. Some Braverman supporters reportedly intend to write to the 1922 Committee to organize a vote of no confidence in Sunak.

Cameron's unexpected appointment as UK foreign secretary has also led to speculation whether it will lead to changes in the UK's foreign policy. In 2010, when Cameron first became UK prime minister, he stressed that the UK would be a "loyal and not blindly loyal ally" of the United States. As foreign secretary,

he might nudge the UK's foreign policy to adopt a middle-line approach.

Cameron's position was also relatively pragmatic and friendly when it came to China. Sino-UK relations had entered a "golden era" when he was prime minister. Under his push, the UK applied to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2015, becoming the first major Western country to join the financial institution. In the seven years since leaving politics, Cameron has worked on the Belt and Road project and visited China several times.

During a visit to China as foreign secretary in August, Cleverly said the UK would engage "robustly and constructively" with China, rather than isolate it in a "new Cold War". It is hoped that with Cameron, the momentum of constructive engagement between China and the UK can continue.

— BEIJING NEWS

Green vehicles to pilot clean environment project

Eight departments including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Ministry of Transport have issued a notice to designate 15 cities including Beijing as pilot cities for introduction of electric cars and buses.

The authorities plan to replace 600,000 vehicles, mainly buses, with electric ones. Undoubtedly, this will bring new development opportunities for China's new energy vehicle manufacturers. Since the automotive industry itself is a long-chain industry, countless market entities have grown up in the upstream and downstream.

When the demand side is activated, enterprises in the entire chain will find opportunities to grow, injecting new vitality at a time

when the industry is facing uncertainty in recovery.

According to the Ministry of Transport, by the end of 2022, the proportion of electric vehicles and hybrid electric vehicles in the national bus fleet had reached 76.7 percent, far ahead of other countries in the world.

China's pioneering strides in the field of urban green travel are serving as reference points for other countries. In 2021, the World Bank issued a case study report based on the comprehensive electrification practice of Shenzhen Bus Group to 189 member countries. In addition, electric bus manufacturers such as BYD have also manufactured new energy bus fleets for cities overseas.

The large-scale electrification of

public transport vehicles significantly reduces carbon emissions, too. After public transport became fully electric in Shenzhen, data show 345,000 metric tons of standard coal were saved annually, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 1.353 million tons. Zero emissions from electric buses will undoubtedly improve air quality and the health of urban residents.

Therefore, from any perspective, the electrification of public vehicles will bring new benefits to all parties. However, it should be noted that past attempts to electrify urban public transport encountered a series of problems, including subsidy adjustments and battery degradation, which need to be tackled with solutions.

— THEPAPER.CN

What They Say

West adopts double standard on sanctions as weapons

The average price of Russian crude oil exported in October was above \$80 a barrel, according to the export data the country released. A senior European government official confirmed to the Financial Times that "almost none" of the shipments of seaborne crude oil from Russia in October were priced below the \$60-a-barrel limit that the G7 and its allies have attempted to impose.

That means the United States-led price cap on Russia's oil sales, which is an integral part of the West's sanctions on Russia in a bid to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict at an early date, is being almost completely circumvented. It is no coincidence that some Western media are now trying to hype up the news that way, as relevant European Union officials are in discussions on strengthening the

sanctions. These timely reports provide the EU and Washington with convenient excuses to explore ways to reinforce the oil price cap on Moscow.

"The latest data makes the case that we're going to have to toughen up... there's absolutely no appetite for letting Russia just keep doing this," as the aforementioned anonymous EU official was quoted by the FT as saying.

Neither the US nor the EU will ever admit that they have actually never ceased importing large amounts of Russian oil via third-party countries, such as India, where the crude oil is processed and sold around the world. That trade model does not break their sanction policies on Russia, as the oil is deemed to be exported by India. The West's price cap on Russian crude oil has benefited coun-

tries such as India tremendously, as it has enlarged the profit margin for them.

But the US and the EU still claim they are sticking to the sanctions and insist on weaponizing them to coerce other countries to align their actions and policies with them. If the US says that other countries are violating the sanctions on Russia, which have no legal foundation in international law and are approved by no world bodies, it will go even further and impose new sanctions, embargoes and restrictions on these countries.

That is Washington's justification for putting hundreds of enterprises from China on various blacklists in recent years.

The double standard of the US and the EU on these sanctions is thus beyond all question.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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COMMENT

Alpha Mohamed Jalloh

Chinese modernization benefits world

China's rapid economic growth, which has paved the way for Chinese modernization, has a unique approach to development, combining elements of planning and market-oriented reforms. China has not only been modernizing its economy, but also has become a significant partner of many developing countries, including African countries, in their development efforts. The relationship between China and Africa in the context of modernization is worth exploring, as it has the potential to reshape the global economic landscape.

China's multifaceted approach to development combines elements of socialism with rules of market economy. This model has been instrumental in propelling China from a largely agrarian economy to the world's second-largest economy in a relatively short period. The main factors driving Chinese modernization include the Chinese government's important role as well as the market's decisive role in developing the economy, encouraging private enterprises to play a bigger role in economic growth, and keeping key sectors such as finance, energy and telecommunications vibrant and strong.

The launch of reform and opening-up, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, opened up the Chinese economy to foreign investment, fostered entrepreneurship and promoted trade. The result has been the unprecedented growth and expansion of the middle-income group. China's modernization is anchored on the principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which are quite distinct from the West's philosophy of development.

China has invested heavily in infrastructure, both at home and abroad — more so as part of the Belt and Road Initiative — especially to build vital transport and energy networks. These infrastructure initiatives have had a huge impact on China's development and laid the foundation for China's global engagement, including with African countries. What is particularly important for African leaders is to take advantage of the infrastructure that China has helped develop in countries like Ethiopia and Kenya.

Africa, a continent with abundant natural resources and a growing population, has been a focal point of China's interna-



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Chinese modernization and the China-Africa joint development partnership represent a unique approach to development that has the potential to reshape the global economic landscape.

tional engagement. Sino-African relations are often characterized as "win-win" in which both parties benefit from collaboration.

China is Africa's largest trading partner, with substantial investments in sectors such as infrastructure, mining, agriculture and manufacturing. African countries get part of the funding for their development projects from China, while China secures valuable resources for its industries from African countries and has found a big market for its goods in Africa.

Also, China has assisted African countries in various technology transfer programs, boosting industrialization and local capacity-building. Initiatives such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation have facilitated knowledge exchange and

training. And China has shared its agricultural expertise with African countries to boost food security and promote sustainable farming practices. These efforts have helped reduce poverty and hunger in Africa.

Besides, China has been involved in building healthcare facilities and supporting educational programs in Africa, which enhance the overall well-being and human capital of African countries. This fact can never be overemphasized, because the presence of international students at the seminar shows how ready is China to cooperate with Africa to build on its human resources.

Chinese modernization and the China-Africa joint development partnership represent a unique approach to development that has the potential to reshape the global economic landscape. As China continues its modernization drive and Africa seeks to accelerate its development, cooperation between the two sides becomes essential.

With responsible and sustainable practices, the Sino-African partnership can foster economic growth, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for millions of people in Africa. By embracing a win-win policy and thoughtfully addressing concerns, both sides can benefit from this mutually advantageous relationship. With the world watching, China and Africa can strengthen their collaboration and turn it into a model for international cooperation in the 21st century.

At their recent graduation seminar at the Guangzhou-based Huangpu Institute for Advanced Study, under the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a group of African scholars deliberated on Chinese modernization and China-Africa common development, focusing on China's development model, which has helped the country to eradicate extreme poverty by the end of 2020. The African scholars are also keen to learn from the specific approaches China has adopted to achieve unprecedented economic growth and social development.

Chinese modernization really helps build a community with a shared future for mankind to boost the economic development of their respective countries.

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

John Gong

US needs to shift from 'Indo-Pacific' back to 'Asia-Pacific'

President Xi Jinping is in the United States this week for the meeting with President Joe Biden and for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' meeting in San Francisco.

It has been quite a while since he visited the US, the last time being in April 2017 to Mar-a-Lago in Florida when Donald Trump was president. Sino-US relations have seen a tumultuous period in the past six and a half years because of many reasons, the most important being Washington's somewhat antagonistic policy toward Beijing.

But it seems things could take a turn for the better after Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a visit to the US recently. With the ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Palestine-Israel conflicts heavily draining the US Treasury, and probably after soul-searching reassessment of US hawks' bankrupt China policy, Washington has finally returned to the talks table for a constructive and meaningful discussion.

Highlighting the importance of "Asia-Pacific" over "Indo-Pacific" during this APEC moment is worth emphasizing. The distinction between the two terms goes beyond mere semantics. The difference between "Asia-Pacific" and "Indo-Pacific" is not just geographical. These are entirely different notions with entirely different economic and geopolitical implications. Political scientist Amitav Acharya had once famously said that Asia-Pacific is a concept coined by economists, and "Indo-Pacific" by strategists.

In contrast, China's Belt and Road Initiative is all about economic cooperation and development, devoid of the kind of geopolitical big-power politics of that time.

The Asia-Pacific concept generally refers to the region surrounding the Pacific Ocean. The region's precise boundaries vary depending on context, but it typically includes economies in East Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania, sometimes Southern Asia, and parts of the Pacific-adjointing members in the Americas as well. The APEC forum is mostly an economic forum, emphasizing regional economic integration and cooperation against the backdrop of the rapidly growing emerging markets of this vast region. This is why the theme of "creating a resilient and sustainable future for all" holds immense significance for both the region and the global community as a whole.

The "Indo-Pacific" concept is an entirely different notion, with its origins deeply rooted in geopolitics. The term was first concocted in Weimar Germany by scholars in oceanography and geopolitics. Some German political oceanographers and strategists envisioned a Germany-led alliance including India to counter "Euro-America". More recently it was picked up by the late Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe to promote the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) security architecture, an informal grouping of the US, Australia, Japan, and India. Washington immediately fell in love with the term that has been increasingly used in geopolitical discourse in the US for its China policy.

Geographically speaking, China is nestled within the Asia-Pacific region and does not harbor any ambition or design for the Indian Ocean region. More importantly, China prioritizes economic development for regional cooperation and tends to stay away from geopolitical power games or so-called security competitions. That is why China has been steadfastly rejecting the use of "Indo-Pacific", sticking instead to Asia-Pacific.

China's participation in globalization and its rise in the world in general in the past 40-plus years have been a peaceful process, whereas the West's approach to globalization in the colonial era was backed principally by the navies and foreign legions. Today, the US' constant reference to the "Indo-Pacific" smacks of expansions and contests in the maritime domain during the colonial era. In contrast, China's Belt and Road Initiative is all about economic cooperation and development, devoid of the kind of geopolitical big-power politics of that time.

In short, the term "Indo-Pacific" belongs to the 19th century mindset, whereas "Asia-Pacific" belongs to the 21st century and the future. Let us keep fingers crossed that the US will shift from "Indo-Pacific" back to "Asia-Pacific" from now on.

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Helen Han

China's sustainable growth key driver of global economy

China's recently released economic report shows that the GDP in the first three quarters of 2023 registered 5.2 percent growth. China has just announced a 1 trillion yuan (\$137.38 billion) national government bond to plug the investment gap in the regional disaster relief efforts. Despite real estate and debt issues, China's economic growth will be sustainable and strong, and it will remain the key driver of global economic growth.

China aimed to have an "olive shaped" society with the bulk of GDP growth benefiting a large middle-income group, therefore "common prosperity" becomes a very important goal.

Investments in modernizing rural agriculture, eco-cultural tourism and digitalization of the infrastructure will further boost the rural township economy. Young migrant workers will prefer to go back home to work in the companies in nearby towns. It has been observed that since 2018, the economy of "small-town youth" has been an important factor pushing up consumer consumption, much higher than that in the first-tier cities. Entrepreneurship, cultural development and vitalization, beautiful villages, green mountains and emerald waters will further boost the quality of rural vitalization in China, and a bigger middle-income group will emerge from the efforts.

China's consumer market's growth is propelled by e-commerce, data-driven consumer technologies and deeper penetration of the many mega city clusters in China. In 2022, China's online goods sales reached 12 trillion yuan, while that in the US was \$1.03 trillion. With the leading

e-commerce and world's largest consumer data collection, more advanced data-driven consumer technologies further enable companies to optimize the products in the market, boosting consumer demand. China also planned 22 mega city clusters for further urbanization to expand the consumer market. It is estimated that mega city clusters will account for over 70 percent of consumer consumption growth, and according to McKinsey Insight, by 2030, the Chinese working age urban consumers will contribute to 18 percent of global consumer consumption growth.

With the increase of the new middle-income group, higher quality life style is in vogue. Other than obvious electric cars, smart phones and consumer goods, new demand will revolve more around experiential, cultural and healthy living. The young people of China need more than Karaoke and TikTok. They prefer travel to see the country and the world, engage in sports activities, create new things, express themselves and have access to deeper knowledge and new ideas. They also crave to be part of China's national rejuvenation and a citizen of the world. All these new demands are huge potential growth areas.

China is currently accelerating digitalization in all sectors and every economic aspect, particularly smart manufacturing and artificial intelligence in manufacturing, embracing the Internet of Things, AI, blockchain, cloud, data and 5G. New technologies and digital economy are also boosting agriculture and county level economic development by improving output, reducing cost and commanding higher price based on brand value as well as

improving overall management efficiency. Software development for lifecycle management, production process management, private traffic system for digital marketing and brand value building, as well as digital talents training and development are the areas in focus. This level of intensity and investment have never been seen before.

China has long planned and invested in innovation. The result is quite impressive. It has achieved a leading position in solar energy, electric cars and lithium batteries. Other leading technologies include high-speed rail, high voltage power grid, 5G, AI, super computer and space science, just to name a few.

While the centralized digitalization and innovation efforts are bearing fruit, it is also important for China to foster an innovation ecosystem, with the greatest innovations sprouting from small startups. China is still relatively early in building its robust innovation system, and it will promote more grassroots startups that can really bring the most innovative ideas to reality.

China ranked No 3 in outbound foreign direct investment, which reached \$146.5 billion in 2022, surpassed by Japan, while the United States leads with \$373 billion. China's share of outbound investment is still relatively low considering its economic position in the world. With the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Belt and Road Initiative and newly expanded BRICS as well as the G20, China further strengthens its regional and global economic cooperation, trade and direct investment across the world.

China's development-based BRI investment philosophy aims to help particularly developing countries build up their infrastructure, modernize industries, agriculture and accelerate digitization. It emphasizes on long-term development and life quality improvement of the local people than short-term return on investment. By developing the infrastructure and digitization, trading of consumer goods, food, industry equipment and raw material all become accessible.

With the rapid development of the internet, AI and other technologies, globalization is increasingly taking the form of easy global access of commerce, people-to-people exchange and faster capital flows, and global integration of knowledge and ideas. However, hindered by protectionism, geopolitics, friend shoring and populism, globalization is facing the danger of regression and regionalization. Further opening up China's market to international investment and cooperation, taking higher level of global development, and addressing all people's needs of improving lives are the path to a sustainable global economy.

New quality growth revolves around several key words such as innovation, harmony, green, openness and sharing. China is striding confidently with these words at heart, bringing prosperity to its people while leading the global economic growth to a new level.

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GLOBAL VIEWS

YU YONGDING

Dual circulation strategy, a necessary adjustment

The US' strategy of 'building a small courtyard with a high fence' has not held back but rather fueled innovative inspiration in China

For a long time, China has implemented a "great international circulation strategy", which relied heavily on foreign markets for the provision of raw materials, intermediate goods and technology as well as the sale of processed products. Essentially, this was a variant of the export-oriented development strategy.

On July 30, 2020, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed to accelerate the establishment of the new dual-circulation development paradigm, in which domestic and international circulations coexist, with domestic circulation playing the primary role. After the launch of the reform and opening-up policy, the shortage of foreign exchange reserves was the biggest bottleneck to China's economic takeoff. China desired to import advanced foreign equipment, but in 1978, it had only \$167 million in foreign exchange reserves; China aimed to participate in the global market and engage in foreign trade, but it lacked the foreign exchange to import raw materials, intermediate goods and technology.

Fortunately, China's reform and opening-up coincided with the boom of subcontracting and original equipment manufacturing in East Asia. This trade model enabled China to obtain the necessary raw materials, intermediate goods and technology without using much foreign exchange. By processing them and then exporting the processed products, Chinese companies could earn foreign exchange equivalent to the value added through processing. The processing trade led to a surge in China's trade surplus. As an important ingredient of the "great international circulation strategy", China provided various incentives to attract foreign direct investment, and as a result China started to run a large capital account surplus in the 1990s.

The "great international circulation strategy" successfully solved China's foreign exchange and capital shortages, thus it made a significant contribution to China's rapid economic growth.

In 1979, China ranked 11th by GDP behind the Netherlands, accounting for only 1.79 percent of the world economy. In 1978, China's exports totaled \$9.75 billion, a negligible share of global exports.

In 2009, China became the world's largest exporter, and in 2013 the world's largest trading nation. In 2010, it overtook Japan to be the world's second-largest economy. By 2022, China's GDP had reached \$18 trillion, which was 18 percent of the world's total and more than four times the GDP of Japan.

However, the very success of the "great international circulation strategy" meant it started to negate itself. First, the Chinese economy has become susceptible to external shocks. Second, the trade protection-

ism of developed countries, especially that of the United States, which is specifically aimed at China has surged. Third, the enterprises of developed countries are becoming less willing to transfer new technology to China. Fourth, China has accumulated a large amount of foreign exchange reserves, consisting mostly of US government bonds, whose asset value is threatened by the US' worsening fiscal deficit and external position.

The Chinese government recognized the limitations of the export-oriented strategy long ago and began to adjust its "great international circulation strategy" in 2006. In fact, the share of exports in GDP peaked at 35.21 percent in 2006 and has declined ever since.

It is mutually beneficial for both developing and developed countries when the former, with an abundant labor force, promotes the export of labor-intensive products and manufactured goods to the latter. However, the elite class in developed countries often fails to fairly distribute the benefits they gain from international trade. With no effective industrial upgrades, the livelihood of blue-collar workers in these countries is impacted, leading to a rise in protectionist and xenophobic public sentiment.

The rapid deterioration of the Sino-US relationship and the US' sudden instigation of a trade war against China in 2017 have significantly added to the urgency for China to adjust its development strategy and trade policies.

The declaration and implementation of the dual-circulation strategy by the Chinese government is a response to the changes in geopolitics as well as the external economic environment. But make no mistake, while China is prioritizing domestic demand to drive economic growth, it will continue to promote trade liberalization, uphold the principles of multilateralism, strive to maintain the authority of multilateral international organizations such as the World Trade Organization, and participate in negotiations for the establishment of free trade areas.

Through trade, investment and technological exchanges, the economies of China and the US are deeply interdependent. However, the narrowing economic gap between the two has evoked a strong fear of China among the US political elite.

The Donald Trump administration regarded China as the US' top adversary, and initiated the US' ongoing trade war with China, dramatically raising tariffs, placing many Chinese high-tech companies on its entity list, and imposing sanctions on high-tech companies including ZTE and Huawei.

The Biden administration has somewhat moderated the US' economic policy toward China, but continues to exclude China from global high-tech industry chains on the pretext of national security.

China thus has to deal with the daunting challenge of how to actively participate in the international division of labor while at the same time establishing and maintaining a relatively comprehensive domestic industrial system. It is a problem which economists have been debating for the past 230 years, ever since Alexander Hamilton, the first US secretary of the Treasury, published his famous *Report on the Subject of Manufactures* in 1791.

For all nations, especially major ones, participating in the international division of labor based on comparative advantages (including dynamic comparative advantages) is not unconditional. It has to be coordinated with building a comprehensive industrial system.

The comprehensiveness of the domestic industrial system is important because industries within a country are interdependent. But all industries are not equally important. Although the absence of one industry (or industry group, category, subcategory) can affect others, the roles that different industries play in a country's survival and development are varied.

A sufficiently comprehensive industrial system presents security in two ways, first, if the industrial system is comprehensive enough, even when more advanced trade partners "kick away the ladder", the country is still capable of achieving its development goals. Some counter examples show that without industries such as the steel industry, machinery manufacturing and certain high-tech industries, major nations may lose the opportunity to enter the club of advanced countries. Second, the comprehensiveness of an industrial system is a guarantee of national security in terms of food, energy and defense. Regardless of profitability, industries such as these are essential for growth and national security, and hence must be developed.

In building and perfecting its industrial system, China needs to strike a balance between efficiency and security. While comprehensiveness is essential for security, efficiency requires getting as involved as possible in the international division of labor and integrating into global supply chains. The key to balancing efficiency and security is adaptability.

Having adaptability means that despite a country having an industrial system that is not fully comprehensive, it retains strong capabilities to quickly make up for any shortages when necessary, due to its participation in the international division of labor.

The adaptability of an industrial system largely depends on whether basic industries are fully developed. For instance, a strong general machine tool industry can rapidly address shortages in a specific segment of machine tools. Ultimately, adaptability comes from education, research and high-tech industries.

Although the US and its allies are making every effort to exclude China from global supply chains, China will not voluntarily withdraw, which we call "body-lock" tactic. On the contrary, China will work with other countries to maintain the integrity of global supply chains.

With the US striving to exclude China from certain global industry chains, China is left with no choice but to build its own industry chains. In other words, China has to prepare "spare wheels" in case of being cut off entirely from the supply chains dominated by the US. China has already established a strong industrial base and the largest army of engineers and skilled workers in the world. Hence, the US is unlikely to succeed in containing China's development. The best the US can get is a pyrrhic victory. In fact, the US' strategy of "building a small courtyard with a high fence" has not held back but rather fueled endogenous innovation in China.

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JEONGMIN SEONG AND NICK LEUNG

Cusp of new era in Asia

New strategies will be needed as it is going to be very different from the past 30 years when the continent, with China at the vanguard, surged to global prominence

China has been at the forefront of Asia's remarkable rise to prominence in the global economy over the past 30 years, becoming the epicenter of trade and growth. But more complex times are coming and new challenges will need to be met. New research from the McKinsey Global Institute asserts that Asia may be on the cusp of a new era, which will have very different underlying forces than the previous one.

Asia is in a strong position to influence and shape a new era not only for its own economies but for the world because it is the world's "new majority" — accounting for more than half of the key metrics that we use to measure the world economy. For example, Asia accounted for 57 percent of the growth in global GDP between 2015 and 2021, 59 percent of the growth in global trade between 2001 and 2021, and 53 percent of global manufacturing value added in 2022. China accounts for the majority of Asia's contribution to these numbers, and it will be critical in maintaining the impressive momentum of the region in a new era.

The research highlights opportunities and challenges for China in each of the five domains. The world is heading toward a multipolar world and China is clearly an important pole. In 1990, it was the world's 11th-largest economy but became the second-largest by 2010 and larger than the economies of the European Union by 2021. In purchasing power parity terms, it rose to be the world's biggest economy in 2014. China is also a major trading hub. In 2021, China was at one end of the world's 20 largest trade corridors and 11 of the world's 20 fastest-growing trade routes between 2016 and 2021. And its trade is diversifying and reconfiguring. China's trade with Brazil, Chile, Poland, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has been growing by more than 15 percent a year. China's share of US imports declined by about 6.0 percentage points between 2018 and 2022, while those of other Asian economies increased by 4.4 percentage points. At the same time, trade between China and Vietnam grew by 16 percent annually, suggesting the potential for an emerging trade triangle between China, other Asian economies, and the United States.

China is also at the center of strategically important trade routes for materials, such as metals and minerals. In 2022, it accounted for 42 percent of the value flowing through the world's 20 largest trade corridors. Ten of the world's top 40 microchip trade corridors constitute imports from the Chinese mainland.

China has become an innovation economy in many respects. For example, it punches above its weight in manufacturing related sectors, such as electric vehicles and consumer electronics. But as manufacturing becomes increasingly commoditized, China needs to add to its strength in tech manufacturing and innovate in technologies such as artificial intelligence and clean tech that affect every sector in order to capture a significant share of global revenue and profits. China is already building a considerable presence. Of all new unicorns related to transversal technologies formed after 2016, 20 percent originate from China. The share is even higher in sectors such as electrification, renewables and climate tech (46 percent) and applied and generative AI and machine learning (26 percent).

However, China still needs foreign input in tech value chains. In 2022, China imported three times the value of intellectual property as it exports.

China used to be in a demographic sweet spot with plentiful young workers and its labor productivity soared 14-fold between 1990 and 2022. But now China is aging and it needs another productivity miracle. By 2050, 30 percent of China's population is expected to be elderly (aged 64 or above). To continue to improve living standards, sustaining wage growth and productivity gains will be critical. This requires a reskilling in China's workforce. Up to one-third of global occupational and skills transitions may occur in China over the coming decade. Automation could also be important. China's robot density in the manufacturing industry grew by 35 percent a year between 2017 and 2021, with 322 robots installed for every 10,000 employees. As such, China ranked fifth in the world for robotization.

China needs more energy to continue its industrial upgrading and urbanization. Today, its per capita energy consumption is only at 60 percent of the OECD average. China is expected to

account for more than 30 percent of global final energy consumption growth between 2021 and 2050. Asia as a whole is the world's largest net importer of fossil fuels — at \$775 billion in 2021. China imports more than 70 percent of oil and over 40 percent of gas it consumes. China also relies on imports of many minerals that are key to the energy transition. For instance, Peru and Mexico supply 80 percent of China's imports of copper, a key conductor in wiring.

Nevertheless, Asia — notably China — is in a strong position to provide what the rest of the world needs for its energy transition. China assembles 66 percent of all battery cells and manufactures 54 percent of the world's electric vehicles. It also has 74 percent of the production capacity for electric vehicle battery components, and for more than 80 percent of global manufacturing at all key stages of solar panels production. However, challenges remain. For example, the weight of industry in China's final energy consumption is the highest of all its sectors at 53 percent, much higher than the weight in the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of 26 percent and North America at 22 percent. Industry is the hardest sector to decarbonize.

China and Asia as a whole need to continue to mobilize more capital. Consider, for instance, that real fixed capital stock per worker in Japan is still about quadruple that of China. China's incremental capital-output ratio — the amount of money needed to yield a unit of growth — rose threefold from 2010 to 2022. In other words, for every unit of GDP growth, three times more capital is required today.

A new era is clearly going to be very different from the past 30 years when Asia — with China in the vanguard — surged to global prominence. Equally clear is that the many potential challenges that China faces in a new era do not have a clear playbook to follow. New strategies may be needed for the new era.

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SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

WORLD

Briefly

UNITED KINGDOM

Supreme Court rules Rwanda plan unlawful

The United Kingdom's Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday that the government's plan to send some migrants to Rwanda is unlawful, striking a major blow to a key policy of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government that has drawn international attention and criticism. A five-judge panel said asylum-seekers would be "at real risk of ill treatment" because they could be sent back to their home countries once they were in Rwanda. Britain and Rwanda signed a deal in April last year to send some migrants who arrive in the UK across the English Channel to the East African country, but no one has yet been sent there as the plan has been challenged in the courts.

JAPAN

Economy contracts in blow to Kishida

Japan's economy has gone into reverse, government data showed on Wednesday, in a further blow to struggling Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. The world's No. 3 economy shrank by 0.5 percent between June and September compared with the second quarter, preliminary data showed, worse than the consensus forecast of minus 0.1 percent. The drop, which followed two straight quarters of growth, was on the back of continued low consumer spending and weakness in the global economy hitting Japan's exports. Kishida's poll ratings have hit their lowest levels since he took office two years ago as consumers reel from rising prices.

DPRK

New solid-fuel engines for missiles tested

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has developed new-type high-thrust solid-fuel engines for intermediate-range ballistic missiles, the official Korean Central News Agency reported on Wednesday. The country's missile industry successfully conducted the first ground jet tests of the first-stage and second-stage engine on Saturday and Tuesday respectively. The tests were aimed at evaluating the technical specifications of the newly developed engines for intermediate-range ballistic missiles, the report said.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Myriad mosaics



Visitors look at glass lamps in a Turkish stall at the India International Trade Fair in New Delhi on Tuesday. About 3,500 exhibitors from India and 13 other countries, including Iran and Thailand, will showcase their products during the 14-day fair held at the Pragati Maidan. SANJEEV VERMA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Deeper educational exchanges urged

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo

Educators from China and Japan have called for joint efforts to further promote comprehensive, multilevel collaboration in education to deepen mutual understanding and communication between the two peoples.

"I hope that schools and educators from both countries can promote cultural exchange and people-to-people interactions by engaging in wide-ranging and multidimensional educational exchanges and cooperation," said Fu Bo, deputy secretary-general of the China Education Association for International Exchange, at the ninth China-Japan Conference on Education Exchange and Cooperation, which opened in Tokyo on Tuesday.

"This is especially important in strengthening the exchange and interaction among young people, contributing to the healthy and stable development of China-Japan relations."

More than 100 educational institutions from both countries are taking part in the three-day event.

"Through this conference we hope to discuss teaching policies that align with 21st-century devel-

opment, especially in the post-COVID-19 era," Yoshihiro Watanabe, executive vice-president for cultural affairs at Waseda University in Tokyo, said. "We anticipate lively discussions among educators from China and Japan on how to collaborate in the areas of cultivating future talent, implementing globalized education and strengthening university-level exchanges."

Last year about 100,000 international students from China studied in Japan, accounting for about half of Japan's total international student body.

In 2019 about 6,000 Japanese studied in China, said Yosuke Kobayashi, director of international affairs at the Higher Education Bureau of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Collaborative research

Additionally, universities in China and Japan are engaged in collaborative research across various fields. There are 9,000 exchange agreements between universities in the two countries, and 130 Japanese universities have established offices in China, Kobayashi said.

Du Kewei, counselor of the educa-

tion section at the Chinese embassy in Japan, said the fundamental approach to fostering people-to-people connectivity is through cultural and humanistic exchange, which plays a crucial role as a stabilizer of national relations, a catalyst for practical cooperation and a facilitator of people-to-people friendships.

"By promoting cultural and humanistic exchange, advancing mutually beneficial cooperation, and addressing differences appropriately, we strive to construct a China-Japan relationship that meets the requirements of the new era," Du said.

Chiang Cheng-yin, adviser to the dean of academic affairs at the international affairs division of Waseda University, said he hopes Japanese students who wish to study in China can have a good understanding of China and approach it with an open mind.

"Sometimes we take students to visit top Chinese enterprises, and many students are very surprised because it is completely different from what they see on Japanese television," Chiang said. "They have the opportunity to gain an objective understanding of China."

Chinese firms shoulder social responsibilities in Africa

By EDITH MUTETHYA

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As Chinese companies help build infrastructure in Africa that has accelerated the continent's economic growth, they have also taken full charge of their social responsibilities.

Over the past 10 years such companies have built more than 6,000 kilometers of railways, more than 6,000 km of highways, nearly 20 ports and more than 80 large-scale power facilities in the continent, the Corporate Social Responsibility Report of Chinese Business in Africa 2023 said.

China has also sent about 9,000 medical personnel to African countries over the past 10 years, provided more than 100,000 training places and built a number of infrastructure and social and livelihood projects.

"The majority of Chinese businesses in Africa focus on helping the continent cultivate endogenous growth capacity and actively promote the process of poverty reduction and development in Africa," said the report, published in Nairobi



Employees of BeU Delivery, a Chinese-invested company, prepare to deliver meals in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. MICHAEL TEWELDE / XINHUA

by the Alliance of Chinese Business in Africa for Social Responsibilities.

Cavince Adhere, a Kenyan expert on international relations, in particular China-Africa relations, said the report has given the lie to the Western accusation that Chinese companies do not care about their social responsibility in African communities in which they operate.

Against these numbers Western

smears pale into insignificance, Adhere said.

Chinese companies have contributed more than 20 percent to Africa's economic growth in the past 10 years, he said, and they have done an amazing job in Kenya with their corporate social responsibility activities, such as supporting education, modernizing infrastructure in local communities and giving

generously in the wake of disasters. "Some companies like China Road and Bridge Corporation have seconded students for training in China as part of their social responsibilities, people who have later turned out to be excellent employees in the firms."

The report said Chinese businesses have created more than 4.5 million jobs in Africa since the beginning of the century and provided more than 100,000 training places, helping African countries to turn huge demographic dividends into talent dividends and empowering the continent's modernization.

The first modern deep-water port, Lekki Port in Nigeria, invested in, built by and operated by Chinese business, could provide 170,000 jobs for locals.

In Zimbabwe the Chinese government provided help in building 1,000 water wells in the 10 years to 2021.

Popularly known as Chinese wells, they provide clean and hygienic water, benefiting more than 400,000 people, accounting for 3 percent of the country's population. The project has greatly alleviated water scarcity in the country's rural areas.

Call for renewal in China-Japan economic ties

Relationship evaluated as treaty signing's 45th anniversary marked

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo
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Discussion among participants of the ninth round of dialogue between Chinese and Japanese businesspeople and former high-level officials has focused on global issues such as the economies of Japan and China, the establishment of an open business environment, climate change and common challenges that both countries face.

The driving force behind the continuous dialogue is the strong desire in economic circles of Japan and China that communication should not be interrupted under any circumstances, said Masakazu Tokura, chairman of the Japan Business Federation, at the opening ceremony of the two-day dialogue in Tokyo on Wednesday.

"Although there are various issues between Japan and China at present, it is precisely at such times that we need to recall the profound strategic thinking and political courage of our predecessors. Through active dialogue with all sectors of society we can promote mutual understanding and usher in a new era."

The Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the People's Republic of China and Japan was signed 45 years ago.

"As we revisit the spirit of the treaty, both sides should work together from a broader perspective to jointly strive for the building of a constructive and stable relationship between Japan and China," Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said in a video speech.

Over the past 45 years, economic exchanges between the two countries have laid the foundation for bilateral relations, making significant contributions to the development of both sides, Kishida said.

"During the meeting in November last year, President Xi Jinping and I agreed that concrete progress in mutually beneficial cooperation could be made in the economic field. We reached a consensus on actively promoting cooperation in areas such as green economy ... medical care and elderly care."

Through various activities commemorating the 45th anniversary of the signing of the treaty, both sides reiterated the importance of bilateral collaboration.

"The three key words — peace, friendship and cooperation — are crucial," said Yasuo Fukuda, former prime minister of Japan. "We must look toward the future and move forward around these three major themes."

The China-Japan relationship carries significant responsibilities for Asia and the world, Fukuda said. "It is essential to build a world of cooperation and coordinated peace. We must reaffirm the importance of Japan-China cooperation."

Zeng Peiyan, former vice-premier of China, said via video link that the foundation of China-Japan friendship lies in people-to-people exchanges, and the cornerstone of the bilateral relationship is economic and trade collaboration.

For more than 40 years China-Japan economic and trade collaboration has achieved fruitful results. The value of trade between the two countries surpassed \$350 billion last year, and Japan's cumulative direct investment in China has surpassed \$130 billion, Zeng said.

Enormous potential

There is still enormous potential for the two countries to work together in areas such as trade, investment, technological innovation, digital economy, healthcare, green development and addressing aging populations and declining birthrates, he said.

Regional conflicts and unrest are occurring one after another, Zeng said, and countries urgently need to overcome challenges together, jointly safeguarding world peace and development.

"At the historic intersection of the new era, the importance of Sino-Japanese relations has not changed and will not change," he said, urging both countries to adhere to the correct direction since diplomatic ties were established and broaden the path of friendly collaboration.

Bi Jingquan, executive vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said businesspeople from China and Japan taking part in the dialogue are encouraged to implement the principled consensus reached by both heads of state.

They are also urged to discuss the challenges present in economic and trade relations between the two countries, Bi said.

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Media congress calls for joint push to combat misinformation

By ZHANG TIANYUAN

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Media professionals should deliver balanced, quality content for diverse audiences in a digital world and work together to combat misinformation while facilitating global connectivity, the Global Media Congress in Abu Dhabi has been told.

The three-day event, under the

theme "Shaping the future of the media industry", opened on Tuesday and includes physical and virtual speakers looking at ways of fostering global connections and reinventing media brands.

Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan, the United Arab Emirates' minister of tolerance and coexistence, told the congress that media professionals have the responsibility to provide balanced, quality content catering to the

diverse needs of national and international audiences.

"The media industry is changing rapidly. We must agree that the most important thing in the media is the content created and not the technology used."

For the media industry to succeed, collaboration and coordination in fighting misinformation and fabricated news are needed, he said, as are efforts to ensure wide access

to the benefits of new ways of delivering information, he said.

Mohammed Jalal Al Rayssi, director-general of the Emirates News Agency, or WAM, and chairman of the congress' organizing committee, said the event is playing "a decisive role in assembling media leaders to tackle the key issues faced by the industry".

"In pooling the drive and ability (of) the diverse participants, the congress is driving the sector's

growth and evolution and highlighting its immense potential to create game-changing solutions and open up new business horizons."

This year's congress is larger than the first one, held last year, with a broader audience and more international participants, Al Rayssi told China Daily.

The congress also serves as a hub for learning, implementation and exchange on various topics, he said.

Madina Idrisova, head of the news service of the North Caucasus Institute, a branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National

Economy and Public Administration, said the issue of fabricated news is a significant problem globally.

"We need to learn how to operate in a new media world, because in the aftermath of the pandemic and other global challenges our world has transformed, and we must adapt to work effectively within it."

The congress, organized by Capital Events of the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre Group and the WAM, brings together government officials, media representatives, businesspeople and academics from 172 countries and regions.

LIFE

Below: Bronze arrowheads unearthed at the Erlitou site in Luoyang, Henan province. **Right:** Bronze bells with sheep's horn loops unearthed at the Muyi site in Guangan county, Yunnan province. **Far right:** Pottery pieces inscribed with the words *bei tian si* (Beitian Temple) unearthed from the ruins of Beiting city, which suggest the existence of a sanatorium in the area during the Tang Dynasty. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Shaanxi hosts historical gathering

Experts convene at the 4th Congress of Chinese Archaeology to share the latest findings and discoveries, **Wang Ru** reports in Xi'an.

In 2021, archaeologists found pottery pieces inscribed with the words *bei tian si* (Beitian Temple) at the ruins of Beiting city, a political, military and trade center along the ancient Silk Road, in what is now Jimsar county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The site is where the Beiting Protectorate, an institute established by the Tang Dynasty (618-907) to govern the north of Tianshan Mountain, was located.

Archaeologists believe that the pieces are related to a Beitian sanatorium, a place where beggars and disabled people were accommodated and taken care of during the Tang era. The concept of such facilities was initially established in the Tang capitals of Chang'an (now Xi'an, Shaanxi province) and Luoyang during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian from 690 to 705, and later, was gradually promoted across the empire.

"The discovery of the pottery pieces implies the establishment of the sanatorium in Beiting at the time," says Hu Tao, a researcher at the Academy of Beiting Studies in Jimsar. "It confirms the consistency of policy implementation between Beiting and the central area of the Tang Dynasty during this period, and shows that, even in the border regions, the decrees of the dynasty were well implemented."

The discovery was introduced at a seminar during the 4th Congress of Chinese Archaeology held in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, last month.

Organized by the Society for Chinese Archaeology, the Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Heritage Administration and the city-level government of Xi'an, the biennial congress was held under the theme of "the formation and development of a unified multiethnic country?"

More than 800 archaeological professionals at home and abroad participated in the event. Many of them gave reports on the latest academic findings on the theme, and exchanged ideas with each other.

According to Chen Xingcan, director of the Institute of Archaeology, CASS, the congress has been successfully held three times before, with each focusing on a frontier academic issue.

Each congress witnesses the latest discoveries and research progress in China's archaeological studies, progress in the comparative studies of ancient civilizations in different regions across the world, and the rising global influence of Chinese civilization, says Chen.

During this year's congress, archaeologists say findings offer clues about China's development as a multiethnic country.

According to Yang Yong, a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology, CASS, the Qin (221-206 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220) dynasties were critical to ancient China's formation and development as a multiethnic country. As a result, it was not accidental that some groups in what is now the southwestern part of the country became part of the Han Dynasty.

Archaeological studies of bronze bells unearthed on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau dating back to the Han Dynasty show that they mainly consist of two types: one with semicircular suspension loops, and the other with sheep's horn loops.

According to Yang, the former was



Top: A bird's-eye view of the ruins of Beiting city in Jimsar county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. **Above:** Participants of the 4th Congress of Chinese Archaeology check artifacts newly unearthed from a tomb accompanying that of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Oct. 25. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

created under the influence of the central region. "The groups living on the plateau are believed to have connected with the music bell culture of the central regions in the later stage of the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), and were influenced by that.

"Probably from the end of the Warring States Period, to the early Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24), they began to make their own bells with semicircular suspension loops, which imitated the style and use of those from the central regions, but also had their own unique regional features. For example, they are often decorated with animal motifs and geometric patterns that are common to their locale," says Yang.

Moreover, people's use of these bronze bells was similar to counterparts used in the Han Dynasty, working as not only musical instruments, but also as part of rituals and as a symbol of social status, he adds.

"Although the groups were remote, living on the plateau, the culture, especially bronze culture, had a close link with the Han Dynasty, and was influenced by Han culture. That paved way for the groups to become part of the country," says Yang.

Some of the artifacts reflect the "outstanding characteristics of Chinese civilization" as pointed out by



President Xi Jinping, namely consistency, originality, uniformity, inclusiveness, and peacefulness, according to Guo Yanli, a professor at the Shaanxi Normal University.

She says bronze weapons vividly reflect the originality of Chinese civilization.

According to Guo, although there were various types of bronze weapons, *yu* axes, *ge* (a long pole with two blades on the end), spears and arrowheads continued to be the major types found from the early period of the Bronze Age to the time before the Qin Dynasty.

But innovations were made in the development of weapons. People of the Erlitou Culture from the 18th to 16th century BC pioneered the use of bronze weapons in China, which were modeled on those made from stone, marking a milestone in the choice of materials and production techniques.

The Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC) was an era for rapid

development of bronze weapons. In the late Shang period, with the techniques of making weapons no longer a secret, people in many places started to make weapons by themselves, instead of only relying on supplies from the Shang capital. This is supported by the large number of bronze weapons from that period unearthed at sites in different areas.

"During the Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-256 BC), the use of bronze weapons became more and more common and widespread, and techniques were improved when people used alloys of iron and bronze, and gold and iron to make weapons. That reflects the creativity of the Zhou people," says Guo.

Weapons were often viewed as a symbol of war, and the Chinese people's eagerness for peace can be shown in their habit of destroying weapons.

Deliberately broken bronze weapons unearthed from the Erlitou site in Luoyang, Henan province, reveal the phenomenon of destroying weapons at the time. Similar findings have also been made at sites from the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

According to Guo, the habit of destroying weapons can often be seen in ancient tombs, where weapons were deliberately broken, and then put beside the dead to show eagerness for peace.

A bronze *ge* unearthed from a tomb of the Warring States Period in Jingmen, Hubei province, is inscribed with the words *dawu bibing*, which refer to performing music and dance to express the idea of stopping military affairs and striving for peace.

The idea was passed down. The *Shiji*, or the Records of the Grand Historian, the foundational text of Chinese history dating back to the 1st century BC, notes that after China's first emperor Qinshihuang unified the country in 221 BC, he ordered the collection of weapons and for them to be melted down in Xianyang, the Qin capital. He then cast 12 metal statues to represent the end of war.

"Ancient Chinese people attached great importance to military affairs, but combining archaeological discoveries and historical records, we now see that their point was to be careful with them, and reduce them as much as possible," says Guo.

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Where the world meets offline to discuss the online world

The true value of attending the World Internet Conference in Wuzhen in person is that discussing online exchanges offline is, in turn, a perfect complement to online exchanges discussing offline exchanges.

That is, to stand both metaphorically and literally at the intersection of cyberspace and physical space, especially as they relate to cultural discourses. The WIC offers an opportunity to navigate the crossroads of human and artificial intelligences, and actual and virtual realities, and see with our own eyes and on screens how the World Wide Web accelerates the interweaving of local cultures into an interconnected global civilization.

These in-the-flesh conversations reaffirm that, alongside digitalization's transformative powers, there will forever remain value in meeting face-to-face and joining hand-in-hand to better see eye-

to-eye. That's because, as the pandemic proved, the personal touch, in every sense of the phrase, can never be fully replaced with any number of ones and zeros.

One way we could think about such in-the-flesh cultural exchanges is like the ancient Silk

Road, as if it were transported to today and then from now into the future, like a digital Belt and Road, especially since the international community has just marked the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative.

My thoughts about online cultural exchanges hark to the BRI a decade later, given that the video series I created for the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation — namely, the Belt and Road Bedtime Stories series — was among the most viral online media presentations related to not only the event, but also the BRI in general at that time.

It rapidly racked up hundreds of millions of views and was reported by all major media around the world, including The New York Times, Time Magazine, The Associated Press, CNN, BBC, El Mundo, Al-Jazeera and Der Spiegel.

One of the points of this series, and the sequel during the second forum, was to emphasize that the BRI is about more than just transportation infrastructure to advance trade in goods, but also about people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

This will ultimately be its legacy, which — especially through the internet — will proliferate immediately and then persist for centuries, or even millennia.

While few of the tangible cultural items, like silk and porcelain, that were traded among civilizations along the ancient Silk Road, physically survive today, many of the intangible cultural products that moved along these trade routes psychologically remain — be they religions or recipes, musical instruments or culinary ingredients, artistic styles or mathematical concepts.

No matter who or where you are on this planet, these cultural exchanges have shaped your life since you were born and will continue to do so for your children, their children and then those who are born after them.

This phenomenon is only set to accelerate and expand, as the physical items traded along the BRI will wear out long before the cultural concepts that are shared through the initiative and the internet. That is, the ballpoint pens shipped from one country's port to another will run out of ink before the artistic concepts these civilizations draw upon and exchange through people-to-people and social media platforms.

We're speaking of such exchanges along the Silk Road as they were transferred millennia ago at the plodding pace of a camel caravan — not at the speed of 5G that connects a growing proportion of our planet today, in a world where more than half of human beings enjoyed at least some internet access as of last year, and at rates set to continue to increase exponentially.

For all of human history, so many peoples have spoken their own distinctive dialects in their respective regions. But now, all of humanity speaks to one another in a shared language of ones and zeros, not only rewriting the cultural exchanges of today's world but also their legacies beyond tomorrow, for the world yet to come.

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SPORTS

SPEED SKATING

Lacing up for a golden encore

Olympic champion Gao Tingyu back at the scene of his Beijing 2022 triumph as World Cup action returns to capital

By SUN XIAOCHEN

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After taking a long break to recuperate, both physically and mentally, Olympic champion skater Gao Tingyu has come back fresh and motivated, targeting a golden encore on the ice at Milano Cortina 2026.

As the world's elite speedsters gather again at Beijing's National Speed Skating Oval for this week's ISU World Cup meet, Gao's return to the iconic track, where he won China's first Olympic gold medal in men's speed skating, has attracted massive attention from fans and media.

A lower back injury had bothered Gao prior to and during Beijing 2022, so after claiming 500m gold at the home Games, he opted to spend over a year away from the track.

Having enjoyed plenty of family time and also starring in several reality TV shows, he described the hiatus as the "first totally relaxing" stretch of his career.

After rejoining the national program in the summer to prepare for the new Olympic cycle, he clocked 35.02 seconds at a domestic league meet in Harbin on Saturday to qualify for this week's World Cup stop, which will be his first international race since Beijing 2022.

"After taking a long enough rest and staying away from the ice completely, I feel the urge to race again and I am mentally refreshed to enjoy competitions again," Gao, who turns 26 next month, told a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday.

"Physically, I am far from my best. Perhaps, I don't deserve such a world-class track as fast as the 'Ice Ribbon' at the moment. I do have strong faith, though, in myself and my support team that we can get back to the top again.

"Hopefully, that happens at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy."

As the second stop of the six-leg ISU World Cup season, the Beijing event has attracted 241 athletes from 25 countries and regions,



Beijing's Olympic oval, aka the Ice Ribbon, will stage this week's ISU World Cup speed skating meet. NATIONAL SPEED SKATING OVAL

who will battle it out in 14 individual and team disciplines from Friday to Sunday at the Olympic oval, known as the "Ice Ribbon" due to its slick, futuristic design.

The venue's operational team, led by ice-making expert Mark Messer of Canada, has prepared the 400m track to the highest standards, with skaters testing it out in open training sessions since Monday.

"We are confident that international athletes will be amazed by the quality and conditions at the Ice Ribbon again since the Beijing Winter Olympics," said Chen Jie, a deputy director of Beijing Municipal Sports Bureau.

Located in Beijing's northern downtown area, where the altitude is close to sea level, the Ice Ribbon earned a resounding thumbs-up from Olympians at Beijing 2022 thanks to an eco-friendly refrigeration system that uses carbon dioxide to maintain a consistent temperature, density and firmness of ice across the rink.

Ten Olympic speed skating records were broken at Beijing 2022, matching the record total from Salt Lake City in 2002, where the oval is situated over 1,400 meters above sea level on the Utah highlands amid thinner air resistance.

Gao reckons the expected full house at the

Beijing oval this week, compared to the empty stands during the pandemic-enforced bubble operation at the Olympics, will help bring out his best.

"Hopefully I can have a fast enough run to pay back the fans. I am kind of stoked and nervous at the same time to skate in front of the fans at the venue for the first time," said Gao, who took gold in an Olympic record time of 34.32 at the Beijing Games on Feb 12, 2022.

With a maximum of five quotas offered in each of the men's and women's individual distances for the host, the Chinese speed skating team is embracing the home World Cup as an invaluable learning curve for its young roster.

"Our goal for the 2026 Winter Olympics is to increase our slender advantage in sprint events to distance events and build a balanced prowess across all distances," said head coach Li Yan.

"This World Cup meet in Beijing offers a great opportunity to gauge ourselves against the world's heavyweights and we are determined to make the most out of it."

Legacy lives on

Following this week's speed skating races, a series of international competitions, including five more World Cup events on the ISU, International Bobsled and Skeleton Federation and International Ski Federation circuits, will mark the return of elite winter sports action to Beijing 2022 venues in the capital and Zhangjiakou, Hebei province over the next two months.

The FIS World Cup series' snowboarding and freestyle skiing Big Air event, scheduled for Nov 30-Dec 2, will feature local hero Su Yiming's first official ride since landing a gold medal in the high-flying discipline at Beijing 2022 at the iconic Shougang Industrial Park.

Another highly popular Beijing 2022 star, freestyle skiing Olympic champion Gu Ailing, will make her return to the slopes in a halfpipe World Cup meet at Genting Resort Secret Garden in Chongli, Zhangjiakou from Dec 6-9. Reigning men's Olympic champion snowboarder Ayumu Hirano of Japan and New Zealand freeski prodigy Nico Porteous also top the bill among a field of around 200 athletes set to compete on the Olympic pipe.

"The hosting of these international events bears witness to the continuous momentum of winter sports in China and helps implement the Chinese organizers' efforts to maximize the value of the Beijing 2022 legacy in facilities and operational expertise," said Li Yang, a deputy director of the National Winter Sports Administrative Center.



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