



Aircraft carrier Shandong spotted launching drill

China's Shandong aircraft carrier group reportedly started its first far seas exercise of the year after it was spotted on Tuesday operating in the West Pacific **4**

China launches probe into EU's FSR actions

The move is aimed at protecting the legitimate interests of Chinese enterprises as well as upholding a form of true multilateralism for trade rules, say experts **10**

Chinese games inspire overseas players to go on 'pilgrimages'

As Chinese games gain popularity overseas, they are driving international gamers to make pilgrimages to the real-world locations that inspired their favorite works **16**



Chinese President Xi Jinping meets with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on July 10, 2024. Photo: Xinhua

► 'Bilateral relations an example of friendly exchanges between countries'

China, Bangladesh elevate ties, broaden cooperation

By Wang Qi

China and Bangladesh on Wednesday elevated their relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Bangladeshi Prime Minister

XI'S MOMENTS

ter Sheikh Hasina announced this while meeting in Beijing.

Experts described Hasina's visit to China as a journey of

cooperation and friendship. Although some Indian media outlets are seemingly concerned about the visit, experts said the development of China-Bangladesh ties does not target any third party, and will be conducive to overall peace and stabil-

ity in South Asia.

During Wednesday's meeting, Xi told Hasina that China and Bangladesh are good neighbors who know each other well and have had friendly exchanges for thou-

Huangyan Dao area's environment quality excellent, investigation finds

By Hu Yuwei and Fan Wei

China on Wednesday released the first investigation and assessment report on the ecological environment near Huangyan Dao (also known as Huangyan Island) in South China Sea, revealing that the area enjoys excellent eco-environmental quality.

As the Philippines accused Chinese fishermen of destroying coral reefs around Huangyan Dao due to "illegal actions such as harvesting endangered giant clams" in May, Chinese experts believe that Manila's move to shift blame to China in an attempt to pursue a new legal battle is doomed to be futile in light of the evidence and facts revealed in the report.

From May to June, Chinese scientific researchers carried out an unprecedentedly large-scale on-site investigation to assess the ecological and environmental conditions in the Huangyan Dao area.

This included evaluating seawater quality, marine sediment quality, biological quality, floating litter, as well as coral communities, reef-dwelling fish, and other typical biological groups, with the assistance of satellite remote sensing analysis.

The results of the research revealed a good seawater and marine sediment quality, which was below-standard levels of pollutants, zero cyanide detected of seawater samples, an abundant distribution of giant clams, and a healthy state of the coral reef ecosystem. Experts pointed out that this scientific research shows that China's effective governance of Huangyan Dao has played a positive role in protecting the island's ecological environment.

► 2
Co-op

► 2
Accusation



Co-op does not target any third party, benefits peace, devt: analyst

► China, from Page 1

sands of years. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have always respected and supported each other, treated each other as equals, and cooperated for win-win results, setting an example of friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between countries, especially between the "Global South."

China cherishes the profound friendship established by the older generation of leaders of China and Bangladesh, and is willing to take the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations next year as an opportunity to deepen the high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and expand the depth and breadth of cooperation in various fields, the Chinese President said. Xi stressed that China supports Bangladesh in adhering to an independent foreign policy, following a development path that suits its national conditions, safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and opposing any external interference.

Hasina said that Bangladesh firmly adheres to the one-China principle, supports China's stance on the Taiwan question, resolutely opposes external forces' interference in China's internal affairs, and firmly supports China in safeguarding its core interests.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang also met with Hasina on Wednesday. According to the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), the country's national news agency, the two countries have signed 21 instruments including two renewed MoUs and announced

seven more projects.

Talks between Li and Hasina mainly concerned trade and investment, as well as bilateral relations alongside various regional and international matters, according to BSS. The instruments on cooperation in the economic and banking sector, trade and investment, digital economy, infrastructure development, assistance in disaster management, construction of 6th and 9th Bangladesh-China friendship bridges, export of agricultural products from Bangladesh and people to people connectivity were signed.

Closer economic, trade ties

While in Beijing, Hasina attended the Bangladesh-China Business, Trade and Investment Summit on Tuesday and delivered a keynote speech.

Hasina said she "encouraged the Chinese business community to consider key sectors in Bangladesh, such as energy, renewable energy and logistic centers," adding that Bangladesh is also "keen to export more products to China, such as textiles, garments, leather and leather goods and other products," according to CGTN. At the event, industry giants Huawei and China National Chemical Engineering Group Corporation signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with delegates from Bangladesh.

Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, said the visit by Hasina is a link between the past and the future for bilateral relations, especially in promoting high-level cooperation in the field of economy and trade. The development strategies of the two countries

will be further synergized, and more economic and trade cooperation projects are expected to be implemented in the future, injecting more substantive connotations into the duo's strategic cooperative relations, Qian said.

In the latest trade data released by China's General Administration of Customs, from January to May, China-Bangladesh bilateral trade amounted to 74.91 billion yuan (\$10.30 billion), gaining a positive growth of 0.2 percent year-on-year. China remains Bangladesh's largest trading partner.

Moreover, China has also been one of the largest sources of investment in the South Asian country. As of the end of 2023, China's investment stock in Bangladesh had increased to nearly \$1.4 billion, and there were nearly 700 Chinese-funded companies in Bangladesh, creating more than 550,000 jobs, according to the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh.

Hasina's visit to China will further promote the traditional friendship between the two countries, said Hu Zhiyong, a research fellow with the Institute of International Relations at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Through cooperation over the past years, Bangladesh has clearly seen how China's development ideas and experience have played a huge role in promoting the economic and social development of Bangladesh, Hu said. "Specifically, the economic and technical assistance of Chinese enterprises in Bangladesh's infrastructure construction, China's assistance in training local medical and health professionals in Bangladesh, and the increase in the scale of people-to-people exchanges between the two countries," Hu added.

Accusation by Manila against Chinese fishermen refuted by facts, truth

SOUTH CHINA SEA WATCH

► Huangyan, from Page 1

Huangyan Dao is located in the southeast of Zhongsha Qundao, serving as a key traditional fishing area and natural shelter in China. It is also a vital "harbor" for maintaining marine biodiversity in the South China Sea, holding substantial strategic and ecological significance.

A harbor of corals

Since last year, some Philippine politicians and media have repeatedly hyped up the topic of falsely claiming that Chinese fishermen used cyanide to fish in waters off Huangyan Dao and deliberately destroyed the traditional fishing grounds of Philippine fishermen.

However, according to the report, no cyanide, copper, lead, cadmium, total chromium, mercury, or arsenic were detected at any survey sites.

In response to Global Times' question on whether it means there was no cyanide fishing in the area, Lin Kui, the deputy director of South China Institute of Environmental Sciences under China Ministry of Ecology and Environment, confirmed the conclusion.

During the more than 20 days of scientific research, the joint investigation team did not find fishermen illegally using cyanide for fishing, Lin stressed.

He also cited published academic paper that Filipino fishermen have used cyanide to poison fish since 1930s, and even during the global pandemic years, there were still reports of Filipino fishermen using cyanide to poison fish at sea.

"We sincerely hope that countries around the South China Sea can stop using cyanide for fishing and other destructive fishing activities, and work together to protect the fragile ecosystem of the South China Sea," Lin said.

Results also show that it meets the water quality requirements for coral growth in the South China Sea. There are also no signs of seawater eutrophication.

The hard coral communities were in healthy condition, while live coral cover in the northeast part of Huangyan Dao reached as high as 37.1 percent. This is comparable to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia that contains the world's largest collection of coral reefs, the report showed.

The scientific research recorded 109 species of hard corals belonging to 34 genera and 12 families, marking the highest species diversity ever documented. The average hard coral cover reached 28.6 percent, higher than the survey results in 2015, with sufficient recruitment of juvenile corals.

All the hard coral species were listed as national Class II protected wildlife in China. Among the hard corals in this survey, 41 species were classified as Near Threatened and 14 species as Vulnerable in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. The species diversity of coral communities was relatively high, as the survey recorded 125 species of coral reef fish from 23 families on-site.

International scholars generally believe that global warming is the major reason behind the rapid degradation of coral reefs (coral bleaching) on a global scale. But hard coral communities near Huangyan Dao demonstrate strong resistance and a tolerance to rising sea temperatures, making the island a healthy habitat for corals and related species in the South China Sea.

► World civilizations forum



Guests attend the 10th Nishan Forum on World Civilizations in Qufu, East China's Shandong Province on July 10, 2024. The forum aims to provide solutions to better address global challenges and promote the progress of human civilization. Photo: VCG

► Concerns over possible arm races in Asia-Pacific region grow: analysts

Japan-NATO engagement adds instability

By GT staff reporters

Japan and NATO are reportedly finalizing plans to establish a line for sharing highly confidential security information during the ongoing NATO summit in Washington, DC. This latest move, along with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's remarks implying China's "support" for Russia, underscores Japan's "pivotal role" to cater to the US strategy in building an "Asian NATO" and to serve Japan's goal of breaking free from post-war restrictions, observers said.

Japan's introduction of NATO into the Asia-Pacific has drawn criticism for escalating regional instability and introducing uncertainty, with some experts expressing concerns about a potential arms race.

Kishida is expected to meet with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to reach an agreement on Thursday to strengthen security cooperation by establishing a system on sharing high-level information even at ordinary times, The Japan News reported on Wednesday.

"Japan has played a pivotal

role in driving NATO's engagement in the Asia-Pacific and integrating the region into NATO's strategic framework. It has facilitated NATO's entry into the Asia-Pacific through various means and assisted the US in establishing cooperative relationships with neighboring countries," Xiang Haoyu, a research fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, said on Wednesday.

Hyping threats from North Korea, Russia and China, along with emphasizing the Taiwan question and maritime disputes, is tactics that Kishida has

taken to "persuade" the Japanese to back his plan to revise the pacifist constitution, bolster the defense budget and elevate cooperation with NATO, said Da Zhigang, director of the Institute of Northeast Asian Studies at the Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences.

At a regular press conference on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said that China's position on NATO is consistent.

We firmly oppose NATO acting beyond its characterization as a regional defensive al-

liance, inserting itself into the Asia-Pacific to incite confrontation and rivalry, and disrupting the prosperity and stability in this region. We urge NATO to make real contribution to world peace, stability and security, Lin said.

Japan's efforts to introduce external influences into the region have been criticized for increasing regional instability and introducing uncertainty. Their collaboration with NATO often prioritizes military aspects, thereby heightening the risk of arms races, Da said.

See also
Pages 5

Ready for action



French Gendarmerie officers stand guard in front of a security fence adorned with a Paris 2024 Olympic Games banner at the Trocadero Esplanade near the landmark Eiffel Tower in Paris, ahead of the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic Games, on July 9, 2024. Photo: VCG

US puts 3 sectors in Xinjiang in crosshairs to 'strangle China in global supply chain'

By Zhang Han

The US Department of Homeland Security has put three more industries – aluminum, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and seafood – in its crosshairs as it ramps up enforcement of the so-called Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA).

This "infamous bill" enacted in 2021, and numerous actions stemming from it, share a malicious purpose of smearing China's Xinjiang policy and strangling China in the global supply chain, analysts said on Wednesday.

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) claims these industries have been identified as high priority sectors for enforcement due to risks of so-called forced labor or state labor transfer, according to the department's website on Tuesday. It also continues to designate apparel, cotton and cotton products, silica-based products including polysilicon, and tomatoes and downstream products as high priority sectors.

The three "priority sectors" in the crosshairs of Washington are key industries in Xinjiang's economic structure, analysts said, adding that aluminum is related to automobile production, while PVC manufacturing is part of petrochemical engineering, another pillar of Xinjiang's industry.

Seafood is a sector developing at a fast pace in Xinjiang, with its salty underground water and lakes providing an environment similar to the ocean. Official data show that aquatic produce in Xinjiang increased 6.3 percent to 184,000 tons.

Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, told the Global Times the US' real intention is to curb Xinjiang's development and economic opportunities, and using the Xinjiang region to smear China's international image and contain economic growth.

The continuous expansion of the US suppression under the excuse of "preventing forced labor" is aimed at disrupting and restructuring the global industrial chain, attempting to eliminate or marginalize China, and maintaining all core elements of globalization under US control, the Chinese expert said.

HK's non-Chinese residents hail new mainland travel permit

By Chen Qingqing

"Finally, we can apply for permit like other Hong Kong residents," Will Bedoucha, a business consultant, told the Global Times on Wednesday on the first day non-Chinese residents in Hong Kong could apply for a new travel permit to go to the Chinese mainland.

Starting from July 10, 2024, non-Chinese permanent residents of Hong Kong and Macao are eligible for a card-type mainland travel permit, to enhance convenience of clearance at entry points of the mainland, facilitating their visit to the mainland for business, traveling and visiting relatives.

Holders of the permit can travel to the mainland multiple times within the five-year validity period of the permit, with each stay not exceeding 90 days, China's National Immigration Administration announced on July 1.

Foreigners living in Hong Kong hailed the new policy when talking with the Global Times on Wednesday. Bedoucha, a French passport holder who was born and raised in Hong Kong, said he applied for the document "the very day the news was launched."

"I travel once every two weeks to Shenzhen just for shopping and dining. It's so easy to go there as it's a good little break from the city and I live 15 minutes away from Shenzhen," he said.

"I carry a French passport and so I was not eligible for the Home Return Permit as I was not born Chinese. Unlike those with Chinese backgrounds, we previously couldn't apply for permits," he said, noting that crossing the border with a passport can take more than 40 minutes to an hour.

A Canadian living in Hong Kong since 2000 said he is going to ap-

ply for the permit. "My wife is Chinese, and I have many friends in the mainland and I go there almost every month," he told the Global Times. He said he also believes the integration of the Greater Bay Area is accelerating.

The new policies facilitate non-Chinese permanent residents of both SARs to explore opportunities in the mainland, especially Beijing, Shanghai and South China's Guangdong Province. They may devote themselves to engaging in business, innovation, entrepreneurship, partnerships and pursuing studies, said Chu Kar-kin, a veteran current affairs commentator and deputy secretary-general of the Hong Kong Association for Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China.

They may also consider China as their second home and input capital, patents, talent, workmanship, technology and overseas networks to the country, Chu said.



► Voyage takes place amid China-Russia joint patrol

Aircraft carrier Shandong spotted launching far seas drill

By Liu Xuanzun and Guo Yuandan

China's *Shandong* aircraft carrier group reportedly started its first far seas exercise of the year after it was spotted on Tuesday operating in the West Pacific, where another group of Chinese and Russian warships are conducting a joint maritime patrol.

Amid Taiwan Straits and South China Sea tensions, as well as the US-led RIMPAC 2024 exercise that blatantly targets China, Chinese naval activities, not aimed at any other country, serve to enhance combat capabilities and deter unstable security factors, experts said on Wednesday.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy's aircraft carrier *Shandong*, the Type 055 large destroyer *Yan'an*, the Type 052D destroyer *Guilin* and the Type 054A *Yuncheng* were spotted sailing in the Philippine Sea on Tuesday, the news website of the US Naval Institute reported on

the day, citing a news release from Japan's Ministry of Defense Joint Staff.

It marks the first time the *Shandong* has embarked on a far seas exercise beyond the first island chain this year, observers noted.

The aircraft carrier *Shandong* and its escorts are not the only PLA Navy warships currently operating in the West Pacific. Russian News Agency Tass reported on July 4 that the Russian corvette *Sovershenny* joined the PLA Navy's Type 052D destroyer *Yinchuan*, Type 054A frigate *Hengshui* and Type 903 replenishment ship *Weishanhu* at a designated meeting point to commence the fourth joint Russia-China maritime patrol in the Asia-Pacific region since 2021 to bolster naval cooperation and maintain peace and stability.

The China-Russia joint group was spotted entering the West Pacific from the East China Sea via the Osumi Strait from July 4 to 5, according

to Japan's Ministry of Defense Joint Staff.

Zhang Junshe, a Chinese military expert, told the Global Times on Wednesday that the China-Russia joint maritime patrol has become regular occurrence, and such activities can further consolidate the strategic mutual trust between the two countries and the two militaries. "It is not impossible that the *Shandong* carrier group and the China-Russia joint group join force in the West Pacific waters to conduct mock confrontation drills or joint defense drills."

The Chinese drills combined with the China-Russia joint patrol are completely different from the US-led RIMPAC exercise, as they are not targeted at any other country. The RIMPAC, on the other hand, is obviously simulating a scenario in which the US militarily interferes in the Taiwan question in case of a conflict, analysts said.

Nation integrates AI to ensure nuclear power operation safety: forum

By Fan Anqi

The overall safety level of nuclear power in China ranks among the best in the world, and China is working on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and big data into the application of nuclear power plants to ensure safer and more reliable nuclear power operations, industry insiders said at a forum held in Beijing on Wednesday.

Ye Qizhen, an academican at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said at the forum that China's operational nuclear units have maintained safe and stable operation, with no International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES) level 2 or above operational incidents in the last 30 years. In 2023, there were no operational incidents of INES level 1 or above, placing China's operational safety level among the best in the world, Ye noted.

Ye said the radiation levels around Chinese nuclear power plants have always remained low, without having any adverse environmental impacts. Meanwhile, the emissions from nuclear power plants are more than two orders of magnitude below the national standard limits. Neither occupational disease hazards nor cases of occupational overexposure have occurred.

To better address the challenges, China is spearheading advancements in a number of innovations, including the development of accident tolerant fuels, and integrating cutting-edge technologies and robust safety protocols into its nuclear power industry.

AI will play a pivotal role in enhancing nuclear safety and efficiency in China, industry insiders revealed at Wednesday's event.

They said AI applications are being integrated into nuclear power plants to guide operator actions, optimize operational procedures, and facilitate rapid response to emergencies. This includes automated monitoring of critical systems and the deployment of robots for maintenance tasks in radiation-prone areas, significantly reducing human exposure.

Additionally, China is harnessing big data to create comprehensive systems that consolidate operational data from multiple nuclear plants. This enables proactive management by identifying patterns and anomalies, thereby enhancing overall operational reliability and safety measures.

Scholars at the forum also shared insights on the digital transformation of the nuclear power industry, which includes the implementation of intelligent operation control systems and advanced monitoring technologies.

► Fortune and luck



International youth show their calligraphy of the Chinese character Fu, which means fortune and luck, at the 18th Shanghai International Youth Interactive Friendship Camp in Shanghai on July 10, 2024. A total of 112 campers from 16 countries are participating in the event, which aims to promote cultural exchanges and friendship among young people from different countries and regions.

Photo: Chen Xia/GT

China's top court issues 1st batch of typical cases for applying extraterritorial laws

By Liu Caiyu

The Supreme People's Court (SPC), China's top court, on Wednesday issued its first batch of typical cases for clarifying and applying extraterritorial laws after the country in 2023 adopted judicial interpretations on the applicability of international treaties and practices in handling overseas-related civil and commercial cases.

"These typical cases are highly representative and have important guiding significance for enriching the practice of identifying extraterritorial

laws and clarifying the rules for identifying extraterritorial laws," the SPC said.

The release of typical cases is believed to have great significance for continuously creating a market-oriented international first-class business environment under the rule of law in China and enhancing the international credibility and influence of China's judiciary.

The five released typical cases involve common types of overseas-related civil and commercial cases such as company investment, sales contracts, guarantee contracts, multimod-

al transport contracts and engineering supervision contracts.

Laws of countries and regions including the US, the UK, Mexico and Tajikistan, as well as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region are included, the SPC said.

In December 2023, the SPC released a set of judicial interpretations on the applicability of international treaties and practices in handling overseas-related civil and commercial cases in China. The interpretations provide courts in China with the basis for appropriately handling overseas-related civil

and commercial cases, said an official with the SPC.

Wan Miaoyan, director of Sichuan Dingchi law firm, told the Global Times that the released typical cases mirror examples of judicial progress in China.

China's law for overseas-related civil relationships was established in accordance with international legal norms. The identification of extraterritorial laws in overseas-related cases is a fundamental prerequisite for determining the basic legal facts of a case and making a fair judgment, Wan said.

From the released cases, we can tell that the courts in overseas-related judicial trials have accurately identified and applied the extraterritorial laws, international treaties and international customs most closely related to those cases. It greatly increases the confidence and evaluation of foreign investors in China's investment environment, trade environment and judicial environment, Wan told the Global Times.



NATO's 'globalization' can only accelerate its failure

The 2024 NATO Summit kicked off in Washington on July 9, local time. In addition to NATO members, the US also invited representatives from Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand to participate. The background of this summit is the 75th anniversary of the founding of NATO. In order to demonstrate the continued relevance of this organization that should have disbanded after the Cold War, the US and NATO have boasted about NATO's "glorious history" and "unity" among its member states long before the summit began. It is also reported that they would discuss China's "support for Russia" in "strong language." However, the more exaggerated the performance, the more it reveals the internal and external predicaments NATO faces.

At the opening ceremony of the summit, US President Joe Biden claimed that NATO today is "more powerful than ever." NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also described NATO as "not only the most successful and strongest, but also the longest-lasting Alliance in history." Western public opinion has generally responded negatively to this kind of "optimism." The New York Times mentioned that the White House seeks to "bolster confidence," but as participating leaders arrived in Washington, this confidence "seemed at risk." Some media outlets also said that few are in the mood for a party. Due to the major reshuffle in US and European politics, "it's hard not to wonder how the alliance will look a year from now – whether it will make it to 76 alive and well."

NATO is the product of camp confrontation and group politics, and stands in the opposite of the general global trend as well as the aspiration of the people. No matter how hard it tries to present itself as a "peacekeeping organization," it cannot hide its true nature as a "war machine." NATO's so-called security comes at the expense of the security of other countries; many of the "security anxieties" peddled by NATO are created by the organization itself. We will not speculate on whether NATO "will make it to 76 alive," but it is certain that NATO will not peacefully move into the future. Not content with dividing Europe, NATO is also seeking to incite conflicts and confrontations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Biden announced that the US will provide "historic assistance" to Ukraine along with its allies, including allocating \$1 billion to strengthen Ukraine's air defense system. In addition, an official from the US Department of State said before the summit that "some of China's threats" will be reflected in the communique, which is just clichés. Now, providing assistance to Ukraine, increasing military spending, and

hyping up the "China threat" are the three "lifelines" of NATO. NATO relies on these three lifelines to maintain a high level of strategic binding with the US, serving as a tool for the US to confront, control and suppress other countries.

The so-called "success" and "strength" of NATO that the US and the bloc boast about today pose great danger to the world. All forces in the international community that love peace should remain vigilant against this dangerous trend. NATO's continued expansion in Europe and its reach into the Asia-Pacific region aim to infiltrate group politics and confrontational thinking into regional integration and economic globalization.

If NATO is allowed to group all the world's problems, the entire world will inevitably become factionalized, divided, and confrontational, with the clouds of war becoming denser as NATO's functions strengthen, posing a very real threat.

According to American media reports, most Americans are not interested in the NATO summit in Washington. Not caring is also an attitude that is probably representative in the Western world. The strengthening of NATO comes at the expense of the well-being of people in various countries, including those in the West. Look at Stoltenberg's latest "celebratory" speech, which boasted about how to arm and how to confront, without a single word about how to benefit the lives of ordinary Western people. He also boasted that defense spending accounting for 2 percent of GDP in member countries will become a bottom line in the future, which comes at the expense of social welfare and development resources of Western countries. If used for aid to developing countries, how much hunger and poverty can be solved.

Now the US is shifting most conflicts in the world toward China, and NATO is also following suit to strengthen its competitive stance against China. This not only arouses opposition from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, but also complaints within European states. Viktor Orban, prime minister of Hungary, which holds the current rotating presidency of the EU Council, recently warned in the American magazine Newsweek that if NATO chooses conflict instead of cooperation, and war instead of peace, it will be committing suicide. If NATO continues to rely on its counter-trend approach to sustain existence, especially in pursuit of the bloc's "globalization," its accelerated failure is inevitable.

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Orban's 'peace mission' creates rational space for EU diplomacy

On Wednesday, Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban arrived in Washington, the fourth stop of his "peace mission." Since July 1, when Hungary officially took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, Orban has visited Ukraine, Russia, and China consecutively. The "whirlwind tour of diplomacy" by Hungary has

faced strong dissatisfaction from some EU officials. Hungary's actions have been even labeled as "undermining EU unity."

Despite those unwarranted accusations, Budapest's diplomatic efforts indicate that some countries or individuals within the EU still hope to push EU strategic decision-making toward rational pragmatism, avoiding being led astray by "political correctness." In an interview with German media, Orban called on the EU continent to "pursue an autonomous policy." He stated, "Europe is just copying the American position instead of having its own strategic approach," as an escalation of Russia-Ukraine conflict would be bad for Europe.

With the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, US influence on European diplomacy is increasing. The trend of the EU being integrated into the US strategic track in areas such as economy, energy, and defense is becoming obvious, while the EU's own economic and industrial interests, as well as people's well-being are severely impacted. Moreover, the prospects for development and transformation are severely hindered, making it increasingly difficult to achieve "EU strategic autonomy."

In this context, Hungary's diplomatic efforts meet the need for Europe to strengthen its strategic autonomy. Cui Hongjian, a professor with the Academy of Regional and Global Governance at Beijing Foreign Studies University, told the Global Times that some of Orban's policy proposals, including using "Make

Europe Great Again" as a slogan during Hungary's term as the rotating EU presidency, and claiming to "take Europe closer to peace," are in line with the demands of building the EU's strategic autonomy.

Hungary has always implemented its strategic concept of "opening to the East" in diplomacy, seeking opportunities and cooperation in the East in order to inject strong and sustainable development momentum into its economy and people's livelihoods.

Against the backdrop of the current turbulent international situation, this clearly aligns with the mainstream expectation of the international community for opposing camp confrontation and returning to cooperation and openness.

To be realistic, during its six-month rotating presidency of the EU Council, Hungary's impact on the direction of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the EU's internal and external policies may be limited. Nevertheless, Hungary is still trying its best, taking a series of diplomatic actions to promote more reflection within the EU on how to break away from existing policy inertia, accelerate the alleviation of the bloc's difficulties, and reserve space for possible policy adjustments and maneuvers in the future of the EU. Taking the example of its policy toward Russia, Hungary is one of the few channels in the EU that directly communicates with Russian leadership.

Stepping back, as the US presidential election approaches, the EU is increasingly concerned about the impact of the US' election results on transatlantic relations. Some have even called for strategic preparations for a possible fully reversed shift in US policy toward Russia in the future. From this perspective, Hungary's current series of actions appear to be an effective hedge against external risks.



OPENMIC

"If American elites were truly patriotic, they would collaborate with other nations in creating a multi-polar world."

User @Kanthan2030 said on X (formerly Twitter) on Wednesday.

The opinions expressed are those of the writer(s) alone and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Global Times. Please send submissions to opinion@globaltimes.com.cn. Pieces should be no longer than 800 words. The Global Times reserves the right to edit the articles for length and clarity. Inquiry: (8610) 65367563

Urgent call to clear toxicity of SCS arbitration award

By Wu Shicun

With the approach of the 8th anniversary of the illegal award on the South China Sea arbitration, some troubling developments have recently emerged in the region. A number of extraterritorial countries have increased their military activities in the South China Sea, and the Philippines has ratcheted up legal motions and maritime actions aimed at solidifying this arbitration award. Certain countries have intensified unilateral actions to consolidate and expand their vested interests.

In less than two years, the current Philippine government has nearly dismantled the good practices established over recent years for managing maritime differences and properly handling the South China Sea issue between China and the Philippines. The bilateral relationship, which had gradually emerged from the shadow of the illegal South China Sea arbitration case, now appears to have reset and is even regressing.

The international community is widely aware of China's position of not accepting or recognizing the award. However, some countries have not fully grasped the significant damage and harm that the award has caused to the handling of the South China Sea dispute, the rule-building in the region, the

fairness and authority of international dispute settlement mechanisms, and the international order based on international law. Some even harbor unrealistic fantasies about the award.

Judging from the current provocative actions of the Philippines against China's rights and claims in the South China Sea, the current Philippine government has intensified its use of the award to change the status quo, consolidate illegal gains and expand the scope of infringement. Since taking office, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has frequently cited the award as a so-called "basis" to attack and smear China's actions of safeguarding legitimate rights at the Ren'ai Jiao and Huangyan Dao. In fact, the arbitration award contains significant errors and flaws in legal interpretation and application, fact-finding and evidence acceptance. China's stance is precisely an act of maintaining its legitimate rights and interests, maintaining maritime peace and stability and upholding the rule of law.

Looking back at the volatile situation in the South China Sea since the award was issued eight years ago, it can be asserted that the award has not brought, and indeed cannot bring, peace and tranquility to the South China Sea.

The arbitration award has become a "troublemaker" for peace and stability in the South China Sea, a "spoiler" for

bilateral relations between China and relevant parties, and a "roadblock" for the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and the orderly advancement of consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

We must recognize that the arbitration award has had an extremely negative impact on political mutual trust at all levels between China and the Philippines. Outside the Philippines, some other disputant sides also occasionally refer to or cite the arbitration award as the basis for their respective claims. Additionally, some extraterritorial countries hold the arbitration award as a standard, pressuring the Chinese government to "respect" or "implement" the award.

Therefore, it is crucial to make relevant countries within and outside the region clearly understand the essence and dangers of the award, and to promote the relevant parties to return to the correct track of resolving disputes through negotiation and consultation, mitigating differences through maritime cooperation and managing crises through rule-building.

As for the Philippines' threat to initiate new arbitration against China, it is, in a sense, a manifestation of the lingering toxicity of this arbitration award. No matter how the Philippine government

packages the so-called "second arbitration," its content will definitely be related to some errors in the previous arbitration award. China has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea islands and the adjacent waters. It needs to repeatedly and continuously clarify the toxicity of the arbitration award from a legal standpoint to thoroughly eradicate this "tumor" that has long undermined the rule of law and order at sea.

Rebutting the arbitration award and countering the erroneous statements of countries within and outside the region are not intended to provoke a new round of legal battles, but to make a rightful response to actions and forces that disrupt peace and stability in the South China Sea, interfere with China-Philippine relations and profit from the award.

This will further reveal to the international community the political background of the arbitral tribunal's composition and the historical errors of the arbitration award, and lay bare the irreversible severe harm the award has caused to the rule of law and maritime order.

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American politicians, don't get too big for your boots when viewing China

Chinese people have a saying, "Who regards you as a green onion?" In English, a similar phrase is "Who do you think you are?" which roughly translates to "Don't get too big for your boots."

An article in The New York Times made me think of this saying. The article, entitled "Why America's Adversaries Are Wrong About the Biden-Trump Debate," suggests that America's adversaries, including China, have sized on US leadership crisis. This implies that the Chinese would be pleased with the disorder in the US as it reveals the truth about American democracy and highlights the stability of the Chinese political system.

Like some American politicians, the author seems to suffer from an imaginary, illusion-like fear and hostility of Chinese politics. Anything negative about American politics is seen as positive or profitable for China.

Yes, Chinese people no longer blindly worship American democracy; they see it more as a different governance system.

For most Chinese, the US election is like a distant political drama with little relevance to their daily lives. In reality, Chinese people don't place as much importance on Ameri-

can politics.

Chinese people aren't particularly concerned about who becomes the US president because the policy toward China will likely remain consistent regardless of the outcome. They are more focused on safeguarding their interests and continuing their own development within this global context change.

It's the Europeans, who have a close relationship with the US, that are more concerned about the US election, as the chaos created by it not only shakes the electoral system, but also reflects voters' shifting political intentions, potentially affecting traditional

US-EU relations.

American politicians should understand that China's development considerations don't revolve around the US. China has its own development trajectory, strategic goals, and political system that differ from the US.

China's stability and progress rely on its efforts, not mimicking the US or using American politics as a benchmark.

In today's globalized world, Chinese people hope for a rational, stable, and visionary Washington rather than one that views the world and China's rise with fear and hostility. A superpower embroiled

DING GANG



and conceit.

No one believes that America will collapse overnight, and Chinese people don't see the chaos in American

elections as a sign of imminent collapse.

No country can bring about America's downfall; only this arrogance could lead America to its demise.

In a recent speech by former Chinese ambassador to the US Cui Tiankai, he noted that being superstitious and blindly worshipping the US is neither scientific nor objective. Conversely, believing that the US will inevitably decline is also a one-sided and unrealistic view. While the US faces significant problems, its military strength, financial power, technological innovation, and cultural influence continue to lead the world and maintain its advantages.

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Illustration: Xia Qing/GT



Page Editor: wangzixuan@globaltimes.com.cn



Editor's Note:

As the Chinese economy, along with the entire global economy, has been confronted with considerable challenges in recent years, some Western officials and media outlets have stepped up their long-standing smear campaign against the world's second-largest economy. They cherry-pick information and even distort facts to hype various specious narratives such as "Peak China," while turning a blind eye to China's considerable strengths and vast potential.

As part of the Global Times' multimedia project to set the record straight, the opinion page is publishing a series of in-depth interviews and signed articles with economists, experts and scholars from different countries and regions who share their views on the prospects of the Chinese economy and debunk the Western rhetoric.

In the eighth article of the series, Global Times (GT) reporter Qian Jiayin talked with Sourabh Gupta (Gupta), a senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for China-America Studies. Gupta noted that China's "economic miracle" was forged under conditions of openness, and high-quality development of the economy too will need to be carried out under open conditions. China has already made strides on these fronts but the pace, at the moment, needs to be accelerated.

GT: The Communist Party of China (CPC) will convene the third plenary session of its 20th central committee on July 15 in Beijing, which will focus on further comprehensively deepening reform and promoting high-quality development. How do you think of China's pursuit of high-quality development and its accomplishments?

Gupta: The transition from high-speed growth to high-quality development – a process that has been ongoing since the 19th [CPC] Party Congress of October 2017 – is both timely and necessary. No non-natural resource-endowed economy that has made the difficult transition from middle-income economy to high-income advanced economy has managed to do so without switching its development focus from "extensive growth," based on quantitative increases in land, labor and capital, to "intensive growth" based on gains from overall total factor productivity. To realize a high-quality development framework and its 2049 modernization goals, China must continue shifting to a more rebalanced economic structure driven by consumption and services-led growth. It must continue upgrading its industrial structure to a more science and technology-led and diffused advanced manufacturing ecosystem. And it must continue moving toward high-standards international opening that organically combines the domestic and international cycles. China's "economic miracle" was forged under conditions of openness, and high-quality development of the economy too will need to be carried out under open conditions. China has already made strides on these fronts but the pace, at the moment, needs to be accelerated.

Ultimately, it is high-quality development that will propel China to or near the head of the front rank of nations. But this journey is just beginning; it is an arduous one, and it will require perseverance over the next quarter century and

beyond for its successful accomplishment.

GT: With the expectation of China's economic recovery further strengthening, some international organizations have recently raised their forecasts for China's economic growth. What impact do you think China's economic growth has on the global economy?

Gupta: Much like the rise of the American economic behemoth a century-and-a-quarter ago transformed global economics and politics, China's rise and footprint within the global economy today is similarly transformational. China has been the leading contributor to global growth over the past two decades, and its contributions as a pillar economy within the global system will only get magnified over the next quarter century. With China itself becoming a more consumption and domestic demand-led economy, its role in the global economy will gradually shift from being a global producer of first resort to also becoming a global consumer of final resort. This will add a layer of stability to the global economy. China will also continue to

be the most dynamic and cost-effective global supplier of green goods, such as lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicles – in turn, contributing to the bending of the climate warming curve to below dangerous levels. It is not just important to the global economy that China grows, but how China grows is also just as important.

GT: Although the International Monetary Fund has raised its forecast for China's GDP growth to 5 percent, the West continues to hype negative comments about the Chinese economy, such as the "China collapse" rhetoric. You have said that these derisive projections about the Chinese economy are off the mark. How do you arrive at forecasts for the Chinese economy?

Gupta: The "China collapse" rhetoric is widely off the mark. Although China has made rapid strides economically over the past four decades and is a technology "overachiever," the country judged in per capita income terms ranks just slightly above the global average today. This, in turn, means there is still an immense scope for productivity-led "catch-up" growth. China's demographic dividend may have approached the point of exhaustion, but there is ample pent-up growth potential awaiting release in its ongoing transitions from state to market and from rural to urban. The country continues, furthermore, to grow at a rate that is somewhere between two to three times that of the US (averaged over a five-year time horizon), which is just beneath the norm that has held for much of the past few decades of reform and opening-up.

Looking ahead, China's growth and macroeconomy will broadly follow the trajectory of its East Asian peer, South Korea. In the early 1990s, South Korea's per capita income

as a percentage of the US' was roughly close to where China's is today. Over the next three decades as South Korea transitioned to a more productivity-led and consumption and services-oriented growth model, the economy recorded an average GDP growth rate of roughly 4-4.5 percent. As a result, South Korea's per capita income, measured in current US dollars, is about 50 percent of the US' today. A quarter-century hence, when China's per capita income also is a shade under 50 percent of the US', it will host an economy that is almost twice the size of the US. For this to be the case though, China must continue pursuing structural reforms, including of its growth model and its fiscal and taxation system.

GT: Some US researchers believe there are signs of "decoupling" between China and the US based on trade data for consumer electronics products. How do you view this? What consequences will the "decoupling" of the Chinese and American economies result in?

Gupta: At this time, the signs of "decoupling" on the ground are still few-and-far-between in terms of the rupturing of supply chains. Reshoring, nearshoring and friendshoring have yet to materialize in any significant way. Rather, what one witnesses is a lengthening of supply chains, with final assembly of goods that are now exported from third country markets to the US still dependent on Chinese intermediate goods inputs. So, while China's trade surplus with the US has decreased by \$100 billion in 2023 from 2022 numbers, a good deal of the difference in that figure represents merely this lengthening and re-routing of US-China trade flows rather than a "decoupling" of flows. That being said, there is merit in the researchers' views that relative "decoupling" will inevitably settle into China-US economic ties, particularly as China becomes an advanced society and hosts an economic structure with comparative advantages similar to that of the US. With Washington intent on cutting all organic links commercially between the two nations in the chips, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, biomedical, and green goods sectors, the scope for "coupling" in many of these frontier industries will never be allowed to materialize in the first place. This is unfortunate. It will lead to a duplication of supply chains, a less productive and less efficient global production structure, the rise of economic bloc-building, and a potentially steeper cost of dealing with the global climate emergency.



Sourabh Gupta
Photo: chinaus-icas.org

CHINA'S ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

China's 'economic miracle' was forged under conditions of openness



Photo: VCC



OPPO IN CRISIS

By Leng Shumei and Huang Lanlan in Shanghai

US tech firm OpenAI has restricted access to its artificial intelligence (AI) models through its application programming interface (API) service in China since Tuesday.

The Global Times interviewed several Chinese AI developers and users, who generally agreed that the ban was not anticipated to have a significant impact on the domestic industry as OpenAI's products were not officially available in China anyway. In fact, some believed that this restriction will motivate Chinese developers to redouble their efforts to compete in the AI development and application sector.

What implications does this ban have for Chinese AI developers on a more granular level? And what is the actual gap between China and the US in terms of AI development? How should the two AI giants lead the world in AI developing and governance?

API refers to interface that allows external access, which means that third-party developers can integrate ChatGPT's capabilities into their applications, building their own AI software. In March 2023, OpenAI announced the opening of the API, allowing third-party developers to integrate ChatGPT into their applications and services through an API. The Global Times perused the OpenAI website on Tuesday and found that the company had published a list of 188 countries and regions where its API service is officially available, excluding the Chinese mainland, China's Hong Kong, or Macao regions.

"Accessing or offering access to our services outside of the countries and territories listed below may result in your account being blocked or suspended," OpenAI said on its website.

According to media reports, there were two main channels for developers to access OpenAI's products in China:

By connecting to OpenAI's official API service or by connecting to Microsoft's Azure services.

Azure is reportedly the only legal way to access OpenAI products and services in China. In a report by US-based news portal PYMNTS.com on Monday, a Microsoft spokesperson was quoted as saying that Microsoft will maintain its Azure OpenAI Service offerings in China, and will continue to provide access to eligible customers in the country via models deployed in regions outside of China.

The other boot drops

OpenAI's suspension may be a result of several factors, according to analysts.

First, legal compliance must have been taken into account as of June 21, as just a few days before OpenAI made the move, the US Department of the Treasury issued draft rules to ban or require notification of certain investments in AI and other technology sectors in China that could threaten US national security.

At the same time, China has also been enhancing the implementation of laws and regulations on cybersecurity and data security law. Requirements for cross-border data transmission and processing have been raised, making OpenAI faces more complex compliance procedures and high costs in the Chinese market.

In addition, the need to train GPT-5 and a shortage of computing power may also be part of the reason as some industry insiders told the media that they had been receiving shorter responses from ChatGPT recently.

Meanwhile, the move is also believed to help OpenAI to crack down on companies that "package" OpenAI technology as their own product, driving out companies without core technology and competitive strength from the market.

Chinese industry insiders pointed out that most Chinese companies will suffer little from this time's service suspension. They will either transfer to domestic large models, or purchase OpenAI's services via Microsoft or other providers outside China. In the long run, this move may be good to China's independent development of large models and self-reliance.

Chinese domestic large model developers have been ready to take customers from OpenAI. Companies like Moonshot, Zhipu AI, Baidu, Alibaba, Zero One Wanwu, and other large model manufacturers, took immediate action to release their "relocation plan" for OpenAI API users.

At the exhibition during the World AI Conference (WAIC) held between June 4 and June 7 in Shanghai, the Global Times noted that various large model manufacturers in the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong are now providing relocation services.

Chinese large model manufacturers are also ready to "go global." A fund manager in Beijing told stcn.com that domestic large model developers are striving to catch up with the US. If these developers have plans to explore overseas markets, they can set up branches in countries and regions where OpenAI is legally available.

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OPPORTUNITY

▶ OpenAI's cut of China's access to its API service would 'push domestic developers to catch up vigorously'



A robot performs tasks at the World AI Conference 2024 in Shanghai on July 7, 2024. The innovative application of robots draws a lot of attention at the conference.

Photo: IC

True gap

OpenAI's move did sound an alarm for Chinese model developers to reflect on the gap between them and their US competitors.

Generative AI, one of the most widely used and the most widely known field of today's development, as an example.

The US and China are leaders in the generative AI field. But the US does better in cutting-edge underlying technology while China has advantages in industrial application and design, Ni Kaomeng, initiator of the AIGC (AI-generated content) Industrial Alliance nationwide civil group of China's AIGC insiders, told the Global Times.

Generative AI refers to AI systems that are capable of creating new content, such as images, music, based on patterns and data they have been trained on.

At the just-concluded WAIC, the Global Times saw many Chinese enterprises showcasing their newly developed generative-AI tools, such as various interesting text-to-video applications.

Leading domestic developers told the Global Times that their products have reached, or exceeded, the level of Sora, currently the most famous cutting-edge text-to-video model by OpenAI.

For instance, "the world's first text-to-video model with Sora-level abilities that has been made available to the public," its R&D team from tech company Kuaishou told the Global Times. Sora, by contrast, remains inaccessible to users.

Text-to-video is a super sunrise industry. There will be a 100-fold increase in the number of AI-generated videos in two years, predicted Song Donghuan, founder of StorySonic, one of China's earliest AI-generated video communities.

Song said that some of the AI-generated video software or mobile applications popular in overseas markets, such as PixVerse and NeverEnds, are actually

products by Chinese companies, "although many people don't know it."

As for Chinese developers, it is no exaggeration to say that Chinese enterprises "account for half of the overseas AI-generated video market," Ni said.

But still, none of these Chinese products can be as epoch-making as Sora.

Sora allows global developers to see the potential of the diffusion transformers. As a product, it can generate stable long videos with good semantic consistency. Video generative products in China have made great progress this year, but few of them can be compared with Sora in terms of long and stable video generation and semantic understanding. Hong Wenyi, a doctoral student at the School of Software, Tsinghua University, told the Global Times during the WAIC.

Luckily, China's diverse application scenarios provide a good environment for the development of AI technology. AI self-driving technology is another typical example apart from generative AI, as mushrooming domestic automobile companies are cooperating with tech firms to constantly introduce new products to the booming market.

Many Chinese auto brands displayed their recently launched self-driving vehicles at this year's WAIC. Many vehicles are found to have been the results of technological collaboration between China and other countries, particularly the US.

One of the exhibited vehicles is equipped with a Chinese self-developed autonomous driving platform and US processor chips, said the exhibitor. "In today's globalized world, it is quite normal that different parts of tech products come from various countries," he told the Global Times.

Generally, China follows the path of the US in terms of the underlying technology of autonomous driving, but China has a vast market, diverse and complex road conditions, and Chinese developers and enterprises are enthusiastic about the field, an industry insider told the Global Times.

"I'm more optimistic with China's AI self-driving development in the long run," he concluded.

Catch up and cooperate

To catch up with the US, Chinese experts and entrepreneurs call for more investment in basic research and talent cultivation.

During the WAIC, iFLYTEK showcased the latest iFLYTEK Starfire V4.0 large model launched at the end of June. According to the company, iFlytek Starfire V4.0 is fully benchmarked against GPT-4 Turbo. However, GPT-4 Turbo was released in November 2023, nearly 9 months ago, not to mention that OpenAI introduced GPT-4o in May, further enhancing the model's capabilities.

"We are confident in quickly benchmarking various sizes of large models in the market. But we must admit the gap while recognizing our own advantages. We need to establish a mechanism for continuous development for national computing power construction and data resource aggregation in order to develop further with a more scientific, rational, and long-term mindset," iFlytek chairman Liu Qingfeng told media during the WAIC.

China must have a universal benchmark large model comparable to the US, otherwise the long-term development potential and core competitiveness of China in the era of general AI will be hindered, Liu

This makes China have to import foreign-trained university teachers every year, which is not a sustainable situation. In the future, China must be able to cultivate such talents domestically," Yao noted during the WAIC.

Beyond the gap and competition between the US and China – two leading countries in the field of AI to cooperate – there are seemingly more urgent tasks for the two leaders to cooperate to promote AI governance while facing the risks brought about by booming AI technologies.

Xue Lan, dean of Schwarzman College at Tsinghua University, said during the conference that the problem lies in an infrastructure gap, with 2.5 billion people worldwide still lacking access to the internet. "These are challenges that require global cooperation to address, as they not only hinder global development but also have a significant impact on global governance," Xue said.

"The governance and development of AI have reached a critical 'crossroads,' especially with the unprecedented challenges brought about by generative AI," Xue said during the conference.

"It is quite challenging to balance competition and cooperation



Visitors watch a robotic dog performance at an exhibition during the World AI Conference, on July 6, 2024. Photo: Leng Shumei/GT

noted. "With the support of a universal base large model, vertical industry large models, and small models in various application scenarios can all flourish."

In April, Tsinghua University's School of Artificial Intelligence was officially established with Chinese Turing Award winner Andrew Chi-Chih Yao serving as the first dean.

According to Yao, the goal of the school is to train 100 doctoral students annually in the near future.

"China now lacks top talents in AI frontier innovation research. While there are many good universities in China that can cultivate excellent talents, few of the Chinese doctoral students can be compared with their counterparts in top US universities.

between China and the US. However, I believe it is important to at least consider how to create a safe space for technology professionals and experts to collaborate without fear, and freely discuss and solve technical issues. Without this, many of the things we talk about today would be impossible to achieve," Xue said.

► Move aims to uphold true multilateralism: experts

China launches probe into EU's actions under FSR

► POLICY

By GT staff reporters

China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) on Wednesday launched a trade and investment barrier investigation into EU's related practices in its investigations of Chinese enterprises based on the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR).

Chinese experts said the MOFCOM move is aimed at protecting the legitimate interests of Chinese enterprises as well as upholding a form of true multilateralism for trade rules. They also urged the EU to stop its shortsighted behavior, as only a close cooperative relationship with China is the most beneficial long-term solution for the bloc's industrial development.

According to the MOFCOM, it received on June 17 an application filed by the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, in which the applicant requested to conduct a trade and investment barrier investigation into the

EU's investigations of Chinese enterprises.

Measures investigated involve relevant practices adopted by the EU in investigations such as preliminary examinations, in-depth investigations and surprise inspections carried out targeting Chinese enterprises in accordance with the EU's FSR and the implementing rules.

The application mainly involved products such as rolling stock, photovoltaics, wind power and security inspection equipment, the Chinese ministry said.

According to related laws, the MOFCOM may use questionnaires, hearings, field investigations and other means to obtain information from stakeholders and conduct investigations.

The probe shall be completed by January 10, 2025, and may be extended to April 10, 2025 under special circumstances, said the ministry.

"Launching the investigation is a move by Chinese authorities to protect

the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises, as in some of the EU's so-called investigation and evidence collection process, we also see that Europe is now reflecting a stronger unilateralism, which violates the rules of the WTO," Cui Hongjian, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University's Academy of Regional and Global Governance, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

Cui noted that currently, the EU has a series of practices that are constantly trying to break the international rules, whereas the MOFCOM action is truly upholding the rules of multilateralism in trade.

"Europe is now facing a series of economic and social crises, including inflation, energy shortages and rising prices for raw materials, so it's abusing trade protection measures, including setting tariff barriers to protect its increasingly hollowed-out manufacturing industries," said Zhao Junjie, a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of European Studies.

Yellen admits sanctions impact dollar dominance

► CURRENCY

When US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Tuesday testified before the House Financial Services Committee, she said that one of her concerns is how best to protect the international status of the US dollar as US financial sanctions have pushed more countries seek alternative financial transaction methods that do not involve the US dollar, VOA reported.

The remarks from Yellen have shed light on growing concerns regarding US dollar hegemony. Experts believe that the weaponization of the US dollar will reduce its dominance as the world moves toward local currency settlements and accelerate policies to facilitate de-dollarization. China and other countries are actively promoting local currency settlements and multilateral cooperation, offering more choices and possibilities for the global financial order.

In her testimony before the Committee on Financial Services in the US House of Representatives, Yellen said that the more sanctions the US impose, the more countries will seek financial transaction methods that do not involve the US dollar, VOA reported.

For a long time, the US has abused its dollar hegemony, shifting domestic crises and harvesting global wealth by damaging the economic and financial stability and well-being of other countries. It is also used as a tool to impose financial sanctions, isolating other countries from the dollar payment system.

There has been an accelerating trend of de-dollarization over recent years, driven by the US wielding its financial sanctions, leading some countries to be unable to settle in dollars and prompting them to seek alternatives, Zhao Qingming, a Beijing-based veteran financial expert, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

"This will have a certain impact on the international status of the US dollar. In the short term, the position of the US dollar should remain stable, but over time, its position may weaken," Zhao said.

Global Times

► Harvest season

Combine harvesters reap crops in a paddy rice field in Jinhua, East China's Zhejiang Province, on July 10, 2024. Provinces in the warmer parts of the country have entered the harvest season for early-season rice. In 2023, the country harvested 28.34 million tons of early rice, according to Xinhua.

Photo: VCG



Middle-income countries view China's influence more positively: survey

► SURVEY

A report released by the Washington-based Pew Research Center on Tuesday indicates an increasing global economic influence of China between 2019 and 2024, with respondents from middle-income countries holding a predominantly positive view of China's influence on their domestic economies.

Experts attribute the shift in perception among developing countries to China's economic structure and increased international economic collabora-

tion, especially within middle-income countries. Additional factors, including public opinion and political elements, may have also influenced the survey outcomes.

The Pew Research Center surveyed 35 countries across six continents with varied income levels, revealing that two-thirds or more of the respondents in the countries surveyed perceive China as significantly influencing their domestic economic conditions.

Notably, according to Pew, in the 17 middle-income coun-

tries surveyed, a median of 47 percent of adults sees China's influence on their economy as positive, significantly outweighing the 29 percent who view it negatively.

Chinese-made products have been fulfilling the developmental need of many developing countries, offering them more cost-effective options. Additionally, China's investments in several middle-income countries, such as Mexico, have boosted local economies, He Weiwen, a senior fellow from the Center for China and Glo-

balization, said.

Zhou Mi, a senior research fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, noted that China and the middle-income countries share closer economic development levels, which enhances prospects for industrial cooperation and facilitates easier partnerships.

China's economic and trade cooperation with Latin American countries has also strengthened over the past few years based on mutual trust and shared development goals,

Zhou said, noting that respondents from trade partners are more likely to think of China's economic influence positively.

In middle-income countries, where political environments are generally more relaxed, respondents are more likely to objectively assess China's economic influence, He Weiwen stated.

Global Times

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► Steady recovery achieved in H1, 2024, boosting annual target: expert

China equities see surge in capital inflows

► ECONOMY

By Ma Jingjing

China equity funds have welcomed rising capital inflows for a string of five consecutive weeks, reflecting a vote of confidence in the stable recovery of the world's second-largest economy amid multiple sound macro-economic figures and expectations for measures on further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization.

While key economic data are yet to be published, analysts forecast the country's GDP growth rate will be 5.2 percent

in the first half of the year, laying a solid foundation for the achievement of pre-set annual GDP growth target.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Tuesday held a symposium on the economic outlook. Li called for the solid implementation of macro policies and enhancement of the effectiveness of the policies to promote the healthy development of the economy, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

According to data released by global industry information provider Emerging Portfolio Fund Research, Chinese equity funds have seen capital inflows

for the fifth straight week by July 3, while the country's bond funds reported flows for eight consecutive weeks, the Shanghai Securities News reported.

Recently, it is becoming a point of consensus among foreign financial institutions that investors' confidence in China's financial markets are storming back amid the country's improved macro-policies.

Although Chinese stocks have now dropped somewhat after a strong bounce back of 32 percent in the first five months of the year, we still maintain the view that Chinese stocks will bounce again over the up-

coming months, Hu Yifan, regional chief investment officer and head of macroeconomics for Asia-Pacific at UBS Global Wealth Management, wrote in a note sent to the Global Times.

Now is a good opportunity for investors to seize China's stock market opportunities amid the country's improving market fundamentals and deepening reforms, Hu added.

Compared with developed markets, the valuations of Chinese stocks remain low, indicating further growth potential for Chinese stocks, Singapore's DBS said in investment insights for the third quarter.

Notable growth of high-frequency data in various sectors indicated the potential of China's domestic demand, the resilience of foreign trade and enterprises' innovation vitality.

China is set to publish its GDP and several other macro-economic data on July 15.

Wen Bin, chief economist from China Minsheng Bank, told the Global Times that exports play a remarkable role in driving the economy. "In the second quarter, export growth rate continues to rebound, which contributes to investment and production in the manufacturing sector," he said.

► Production line roars

Workers assemble new-energy-assisted bicycles in Jiujiang Economic and Technological Development Zone, East China's Jiangxi Province, on July 10, 2024. Companies in the region have recently developed and manufactured environmentally friendly electric power-assisted bicycles, exporting them to European and American markets.

Photo: VCG



Inbound travel revival speeds up as entry restrictions relaxed

► POLICY

By GT staff reporters

Chinese embassies in 14 Central and Eastern European countries, including Greece, Poland and Hungary, have announced that China will grant five-year multiple-entry visas to citizens of these countries who hold a valid ordinary passport and meet all relevant requirements to visit China for business, tourism or family visits, effective on Wednesday.

These measures are being added to China's ongoing efforts to expand visa-free policies and streamline entry procedures for inbound tourism, aimed at accelerating the country's high-level opening-up to shore up the comprehensive economic revival, analysts said.

Foreign tourists' enthusiasm for visiting China has surged. According to a report sent by Tongcheng Travel to the Global Times, the number of foreign visitors to some domestic tourist cities has increased significantly during the peak summer travel season.

The robust demand has greatly boosted hotel bookings and tourist spending in major cities. In the first half of this year, foreign bookings for various branded hotels on the eLong hotel-booking platform nearly doubled year-on-year. Hotel bookings by foreign guests are expected to continue growing momentum during the summer, according to the report.

China has implemented measures to revive inbound tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts note that the further relaxation of entry restrictions will provide a significant boost to both domestic and international tourism markets.

A series of inbound facilitation policies have spurred a consumption recovery across China's tourism market, drawing a large influx of foreign visitors recently, Zhang Lingyun, an industry expert, told Global Times on Wednesday.

"Regarding the market structure, international markets beyond neighboring countries are holding significant potential for further growth in China's inbound tourism," Zhang said.

Japanese businesses see potential in Chinese market

► COMPANIES

By Yin Yeping

More than half of the surveyed Japanese companies in China consider China to be one of the most important markets in view of the development of the second largest economy, according to a survey released by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China on Wednesday, indicating the remaining importance that Japanese businesses attached to the Chinese market, despite external uncertainties.

These remarks were made by the Chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China Tetsuro Homma in the preamble for the "White Paper on the Chinese Economy and Japanese Companies."

In preparing this white paper, opinions were solicited from 8,312 Japanese-affiliated companies that are members of the chamber.

China offers significant market opportunities for foreign companies and is a powerful source of corporate

profits for many companies that have set up operations in the country, the chamber said.

According to the second survey on the perception of the economic and business environment by the chamber, regarding the amount of investment in China in 2023, of the 1,713 Japanese companies that answered, 15 percent of them plan to "significantly increase" or "increase" investment year-on-year.

When asked how they see the Chinese market this year and beyond, 51 percent of the companies said that China is "the most important market" or "one of the three most important markets."

What also noteworthy is that less than 10 percent of the respondents said that they will downsize or withdraw investment, which the chamber said showing that the majority of Japanese companies have a strong commitment to remain firmly entrenched in the Chinese market.

Osamu Onodera, a vice chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Com-

merce and Industry in China, said that China is very important for foreign-funded enterprises, and at the same time, the existence of foreign-funded enterprises in China is also very important, noting that "We hope that both parties can form a win-win relationship."

External factors have caused challenges to Japanese companies doing businesses in China. Homma said on Wednesday that the impact of economic and trade frictions between the US and China has brought greater uncertainty to Japanese companies when making major decisions.

Despite challenges, Japanese companies still hope to achieve greater development with the Chinese market.

"China is no longer just a manufacturing and consumption powerhouse, but has become an innovation and engineering powerhouse, and winning in the fast-paced and highly competitive Chinese market is to serve as a training center to enhance its competitiveness in the international market," Homma said.

Yuan going global to support economy, not replace others

VOICE SOURCE

Despite the progress made in the internationalization of the Chinese yuan, it is crucial for China to maintain a clear perspective on the financial fluctuations and risks behind the hype over de-dollarization.

geopolitical agenda, making the dollar increasingly resemble a political tool and causing many countries to promote de-dollarization to avoid potential geopolitical risks. But given the reality of international trade and investment landscape, the US dollar still remains the most important currency for trade settlement and investment, making it difficult to challenge its dominance in the short term.

Of course, while there is no denying about the dominant position of the US dollar, the diversification of international currencies is still crucial for mitigating geopolitical risk of currencies. The yuan's internationalization can play a role in this, but it should not be overstated.

Furthermore, as China pushes forward with the internationalization of the yuan, it is imperative to fully consider the intricate nature of the China-US economic and trade relations. The economies of China and the US have established large-scale, complementary and interdependent partnership. China's economic stability and growth, to a certain extent, is closely linked to the US dollar, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach on the issue. Thus, rather than actively pushing for de-dollarization, China should focus on seeking further resolution of the China-US trade issues through negotiations, while continuing to promote the expansion of global trade, creating a conducive environment for the global acceptance of the yuan.

In addition, a hasty push of the

internationalization of the yuan may pose risks of volatility and instability in the financial markets. This is because rapidly expanding the use of the yuan in the international market may introduce new challenges to the management of China's foreign exchange reserves. Currently, China maintains substantial holdings of dollar reserves, which serve as a guarantee for the stability of the Chinese economy and its resilience against external threats. If other countries ditch the dollar too quickly, it could result in fluctuations in the valuation of dollar assets, placing strain on China's reserve management.

In short, the internationalization of the yuan is a delicate process that necessitates China's careful navigation of the international political and economic environment, bolstering domestic economic reforms and financial stability, facilitating multilateral trade and investment, along with the implementation of a cautious strategy. After all, the primary goal of the yuan's internationalization is to facilitate greater integration of China into the global economy, rather than to displace others.

Despite the progress made in the internationalization of the Chinese yuan, it is crucial for China to maintain a clear perspective on the financial fluctuations and risks behind the de-dollarization hype.

The Chinese yuan's share on Russia's foreign exchange market reached 99.6 percent in June, Bloomberg reported on Wednesday.

It marked a substantial increase from the previous month when the Chinese yuan accounted for just 53.6 percent of Russia's exchange trading volume. This is mainly because the latest sanctions introduced by the US in mid-June forced the Moscow Exchange to halt trading in US dollars and the euro, according to the report.

It was not hard for US policymakers to foresee the potential consequences before imposing sanctions on Russia. As it stands, it was US sanctions that contributed to the de-dollarization of trade between China and Russia. With de-dollarization hype in the West ramping up, China must exercise caution toward the yuan's internationalization efforts to avoid geopolitical interpretation.

In recent years, the progress of the yuan's internationalization has sparked concerns in the US regarding the potential de-dollarization effects of the currency. It is true that the US government has abused the dominant position of the US dollar within the international financial system to advance its

Japan's semiconductor ambition needs to avoid Washington's political trap

By Wang Yi

Japan's top eight semiconductor makers including Sony Group and Mitsubishi Electric are planning to deploy around \$30 billion in investments through 2029 in a fierce production race amid Japan's ambitious bid to become a leader in advanced chips for artificial intelligence (AI) and electric vehicles (EVs), Nikkei reported on Tuesday.

Japan's increasing efforts to boost chip production to explore the opportunities in the expanding AI and EV markets will inevitably result in competition with rapidly advancing industries in China. However, the vast market potential and the mutually beneficial collaboration in the industrial chain between China and Japan indicate that the two countries can cultivate a positive "cooperation" relationship, despite the US pushing an anti-globalization agenda.

The rapid growth of the global EV industry and the shift toward electrification and smart technology in traditional fuel vehicles are undeniable trends. Countries like China and Japan are increasing their investments to take advantage of the lucrative market opportunities presented by these new dynamics. Industry experts predict that in the future, each fuel vehicle will

be equipped with an average of 1,000 chips, while EVs will require over 2,000 chips.

It is crucial to recognize that amid this significant emerging market opportunity, China and Japan share not only a competitive relationship but also vast opportunities for cooperation and common interests. China and Japan have mutually beneficial industrial cooperation in key industries, particularly in innovative sectors such as EVs, semiconductors and AI.

As China's massive vehicle market is expected to see approximately 30 million vehicles sales annually, Japanese car manufacturers are strategically pivoting toward electrification and intelligent technologies to strengthen their foothold in the competitive Chinese market.

By prioritizing the integration of advanced technologies like autonomous driving features, Japanese automakers, who have already seen success in the Chinese market, are aiming to maintain their lead in this rapidly expanding market.

China not only has a huge vehicle consumer market, but also a rapidly developing auto manufacturing industry, which

can provide broad opportunities for industrial chain cooperation with Japan's automobile and semiconductor industries.

Although China's chip production capacity has been growing rapidly, the domestic supply rate of chips in the Chinese automotive manufacturing industry remains relatively low, leading to a large demand for imports. This undoubtedly presents a huge opportunity for Japanese industries that are currently increasing investment to expand production capacity.

However, for some time, under the influence of factors such as pressure from the US, Japan's economic and trade policies have also shown the "politicized" tendency. This shift has raised concerns among some observers about the potential impact on Japan's economy and its relationships with other countries. It remains to be seen how these developments will play out in the long term.

For instance, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry on April 26 an-

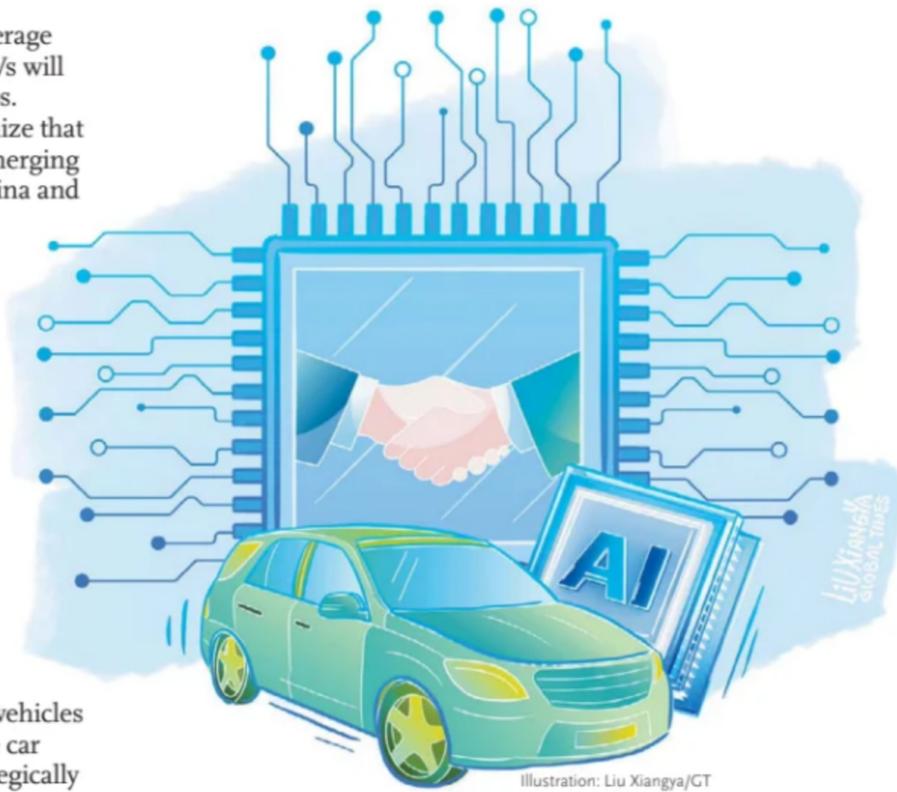
nounced that four technology categories related to semiconductors and quantum will be included in export controls, according to the Nikkei. The move, widely considered as politicizing economic and trade issues, will only hinder the normal economic and trade cooperation between Japan and other countries.

It's no secret that the US' geopolitical calculation behind its coercion of Japan and other countries is attempting to push Tokyo and others to strangle the development of China's semiconductor industries. Yet, in the selfish geopolitical calculations of the US, the interests of Japanese companies and industries can be sacrificed.

Succumbing to US protectionism, anti-globalization sentiments, and attempts to contain Chinese chip and EV industries are a wrong path for Japan. It will only hurt the interests of Japanese companies. Hopefully, Japan's ambitious plan to lead in advanced chips for AI and EV sectors can avoid falling into the political trap set by the US.

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GLOBAL SUPPLIERS

Capital of diamonds

Zhecheng county in Central China's Henan Province supplies over **50%** of the world's man-made lab-grown diamonds, while supplying **6 billion** carats of single crystal diamonds and **10 billion** carats of diamond powder annually. The annual output value exceeds **20 billion yuan (\$2.8 billion)**.

Other 'big' counties

Dalang town (South China's Guangdong Province), dubbed as "the world's wool weaving capital," produces **20%** of global sweaters.

Shaodong (county-level city in Central China's Hunan Province) supplies **70%** of the world's disposable lighters.

Ligezhuang town (East China's Shandong Province) produces **1/3** of world's baseball caps, with an annual output of 500 million caps and an annual output value of **4 billion yuan**.

Small Chinese towns nourish economy

Editor's Note:

Amid the ongoing UEFA European Championships and ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, production and sales of sport-related products continue to grow at factories and shops in Yiwu, a county-level city in East China's Zhejiang Province. Yiwu is one of China's small towns that have become key nodes in the country's manufacturing chain. Most of these towns started with low-end manufacturing and gradually built up modern industrial clusters. The development of these small towns, an epitome of China's industrial development, has empowered China to remain the world's largest manufacturing hub for 14 consecutive years. Now, the towns continue to be driving forces for China's manufacturing transformation – from "Made in China" to "intelligent manufacturing."

TRANSPORT NETWORKS FACILITATE LOGISTICS

China's land, sea and air transport networks are well established, facilitating logistics, which is crucial for cargo transportation and helping global products to circulate.

China-Europe Railway Express

The Eurasia railway network has freight routes combining rail and sea transportation. The China-Europe Railway Express now covers **224** cities in **25** European countries and more than **100** cities in **11** Asian countries.

1,702 Number of freight trains

over **17,000** 2023

Automated container ports

At present, China has built **18** automated container terminals, and **27** automated terminals are under construction (including renovation).

E-commerce overseas warehouses

In the past five years, the scale of cross-border e-commerce trade in China has increased by more than **10** times. More than **2,500** overseas warehouses have been built, covering an area of more than **30 million** square meters.

TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN MANUFACTURING

China's manufacturing industry is transforming into a technology-driven sector, with the deep application of digital technology, scientific and technological innovation, industrial upgrading and green transformation.

China's manufacturing value added accounts for about **30%** of the world's total, ranking first in the world for **14** consecutive years.

Intelligent factories

By the end of 2023, China had built **421** state-level demonstration factories, more than **10,000** provincial digital workshops and smart factories, and a total of **5,095** green factories.

China aims to build **1,000** new green factories at the national level in 2024.

STABILIZE GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL, SUPPLY CHAINS

China's trade of intermediate goods in 2023

61.1% of China's total foreign trade

Imports and exports

61.1%

47.3%

Exports

47.3% of China's total exports

Major destinations

Japan, Mexico

US, Germany

Vietnam, Indonesia

ASEAN, Africa

Exported goods

Auto parts

Lithium batteries and parts

Flat panel display modules

Textiles and plastics

► Underwater world



Tourists enjoy themselves at the Zhoushan Changqiao Ocean Park in Zhoushan, East China's Zhejiang Province, on July 10, 2024. The ocean park features various themed venues, with a total of over 50,000 marine creatures.

Photo: VCC

Nishan Forum on World Civilizations kicks off in Qufu

It has been over 2,000 years since Confucius said, "Is it not a joy to have friends from afar?" On Wednesday, at his hometown Qufu in East China's Shandong Province, the 10th Nishan Forum on World Civilizations embraced the world with open arms, promoting exchanges between diverse civilizations.

Nishan, located 30 kilometers south-east of Qufu in Jining, is well-known for the world cultural heritage sites the Temple of Confucius, the Mansion of Confucius and the Cemetery of Confucius. The forum is seen as an important platform for strengthening dialogue between civilizations around the world.

Themed "Traditional Culture and Modern Civilization," the Nishan Forum, which concludes on Thursday, has attracted nearly 400 international guests from 63 countries, including diplomatic envoys, representatives of international organizations and well-known scholars.

The guests from around the world have gathered at the forum to debate on several topics such as civilizational exchanges and mutual learning amid global challenges. One of the parallel sessions themed Confucius and Aristotle explores how to deal with modern challenges through ancient wisdom.

Foreign scholars cited the classic sayings and thoughts of Confucius at the forum to articulate their views on and support of China's Global Civilization Initiative and the concept of a community with a shared future. US economics professor Jeffery Sachs noted that "harmony but not uniformity" has been the best interpretation of the world, while the US philosophy professor Bryan Van Norden was impressed by "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others," saying that this saying can act as a compass for today's world.

The forum set sessions on sports spirit and family culture for the first time. Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, spoke via video message at the opening ceremony of the forum, during which he approved the sports session themed on traditional Chinese culture and the Olympic spirit.

Global Times

► Scholars at seminar propose concept of CHINDIA

Peaceful devt of China, India 'in line with ancient philosophies'

By Dong Feng

Experts from both India and China discussed in-depth exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilizations at the China-India Dialogue on Civilizations on Wednesday in Beijing.

During round-table discussions analyzing the tradition and modernity of the civilizations of India and China, they explored Asian civilization and a community with a shared future for mankind.

Professor Yu Longyu told the Global Times that there are five major reasons to propose the concept of harmonious coexistence between China and India, or CHINDIA.

Yu said China and India's choice of peaceful development is fundamentally in line with philosophy. Their friendly exchanges have proven the feasibility of the concept of CHINDIA.

In modern times, the sages and philosophers of China and India warned us

that China and India must seek coexistence, Yu pointed out.

Tagore scholar and Chinese professor Dong Youchen, who is also former deputy director-general of the Department of Culture and History of the National Academy of Governance, echoed Yu's point of view.

"It was India that had to provide Britain with a lot of wealth for more than 100 years. When I look back intently on the achievements of the civilized world, I cannot comprehend how the ideals of humanity could have been so tragically perverted in the name of civilization. Finally, I perceive that this perversion exposes the infinite indifference and contempt of some countries for the hundreds of millions of people in other countries," Dong said.

The development trend of the times requires China and India to unite and take on the heavy responsibility of turning the world around, said Yu.

During a group discussion, Sabaree

Mitra, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, told the Global Times that China and India need to develop new platforms to build an Asian civilization based on inclusiveness.

"China's cultural self-confidence shows that the country values traditional culture, rather than challenging other's cultures," she noted.

Li Li, vice dean and research fellow of the Institute of International Relations in Tsinghua University, said that the significance of the cultural exchanges between China and India include improving mutual understanding and trust and fostering the development of human civilization. Meanwhile, cultural exchanges could be a starting point for both countries to solve common problems such as education, healthcare, poverty alleviation and job creation.

Talking about how to enhance cultural exchanges, Li pointed out that it is necessary that both sides focus on communication between youth.

400 million-year-old Silurian fish species discovered in Xinjiang

By Li Yuche

The fossil remains of an armored fish species dating to the Silurian Period was recently discovered by Chinese paleontologists in Kalpin county, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The fish species has been named *Changxingaspis nianzhongi sp. nov.* Led by researcher Gai Zhikun, a research group of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology (IVPP), Chinese Academy

of Sciences, discovered that the fish species lived around 438 million years ago.

With a flat body and long tail, the newly discovered fossil species has a distinctive look as it appears to have a median dorsal opening.

The fossil remains of *Changxingaspis nianzhongi sp. nov.* were spotted around Xinjiang's Tarim Basin, more specifically, in a geological formation called "Tataertag" in Kalpin county.

Changxingaspis nianzhongi

EARTHSTORY

sp. nov. represents the first record of the "Changxing" fish genus ever discovered in Xinjiang's Tarim Basin plate, making it a "rare find" in terms of the location where it was discovered as well as the well-preserved condition of the specimen, Gai emphasized.

"Regarding on our previous research experience, a large number of fossil samples of

armored fish have been unearthed as small fragments. This has hampered research into this subject in the region," Gai noted.

Other than the niche *nianzhongi sp. nov.* species, the fish family of *Changxingaspis* actually includes different members such as the *Changxingaspis gui* that was discovered in the Changxing county, Zhejiang Province.

There is an interesting story behind how both *Chang-*

xingaspis nianzhongi sp. nov. and *Changxingaspis gui* were named. In 1991, Chinese paleontologist Wang Nianzhong named *Changxingaspis gui* by combining the discovery location "Changxing" with "Gui," the surname of his mentor Gu Changdong. The choice of name showed the humble paleontologist's respect for his teacher.

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Like ducks to water: Taiwan youth in mainland

By Zhang Nan

Recently, a cross-Straits activity was held in Beijing to promote exchanges and cooperation among young people across the Taiwan Straits.

Youth is the country's hope and future. Youth exchanges are a fantastic way to energize and vitalize cross-Straits relations' peaceful and integrated development, whether for short-term visits or long-term settlements.

In 2023, former chairman of the Chinese Kuomintang Ma Ying-jeou led a delegation to the mainland to pay homage to his ancestors. He initiated an exchange between the young people of the island of Taiwan and mainland, promoting friendship between them. Subsequently, at Ma's invitation, teachers and students from five mainland colleges and universities visited Taiwan.

In 2024, Ma again led a delegation of youth to the mainland for visits and exchanges in Guangdong, Shaanxi, and Beijing. Upon meeting again after an extended period, the young people reunited with former friends and acquaintances, smiling and exchanging greetings. Ma also extended another invitation to mainland students to visit Taiwan. Over the past year, young people from both sides of the Taiwan Straits have traveled back and forth. Their friendship has further mellowed and matured, becoming integrated into the bond between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits.

Bill Lin, a Taipei resident who came to the mainland in 2000, started his own technology company in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong Province because he found that virtual technol-

ogy and applications were developing rapidly in the city and there was a great demand from European customers. He settled in the city because Shenzhen has a fantastic development environ-

ment with its support policies, resources, and services. Having worked in Shen-

zhen for many years and accumulating rich experience, he is now considering supporting more young people to fulfill more social responsibility.

"I think it's a great option for young Taiwan people to come to the mainland for development because we share the same culture, and it's easier for them to adapt when they come over," said Lin. He has been encouraging university students on the island of Taiwan to make use of their summer and winter holidays to do internships in the mainland.

"I love working and living here. I've taken to it like a duck to water," Liao Chengmao, a teacher from Taiwan at Xi'an Jiaotong University in Northwest China's Shaanxi Province, said, noting that his more than 10 years of study and work in the mainland have given him a sense of accomplishment. In his spare time, Liao enjoys his life in Xi'an. He is fond of exploring shops, tasting food, visiting beautiful scenery and various museums to feel the history and immerse himself in local customs. He is fond of sharing the stories of his work and life in the

mainland with family and friends in Taiwan. He hopes that through what he has seen and heard, he can help improve mutual understanding.

The advancement of cross-Straits youth exchanges is of significant importance. Firstly, it facilitates the inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese culture, enhancing the Chinese nation's sense of identity and belonging. Through common inheritance, historical review, and discussions on future development, young people can collectively appreciate the charm of Chinese culture, thereby strengthening the spiritual bond between them.

Secondly, it enhances social cohesion and centripetal force. The intercollegiate exchange program and joint participation in various forms of exchange, such as academic activities, facilitate the formation of shared values and a sense of common ground between youth on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. This,

in turn, contributes to strengthening social cohesion and forming a unified identity. For instance, since 2009, Renmin University and the National Chengchi University have collaborated to organize the "Cross-Straits Forum on Frontier Issues in Finance and Economics." Dedicated to advancing Chinese modernization with tangible outcomes, this forum, held every other year in Beijing and Taipei, has facilitated cross-Straits cultural exchanges and further deepened cooperative research.

Thirdly, it promotes economic cooperation and integrated development. Through youth entrepreneurship forums and economic trade fairs, cross-Straits youth can work together to identify potential avenues for collaboration, enhance mutual trust, and improve cross-Straits economic cooperation and integrated development. Furthermore, it fosters the growth of future leaders and talented communicators with vision and courage who can inject new vitality into the future development of cross-Straits relations.

While pursuing their aspirations and fulfilling their social responsibilities, young people also realize the greater value of participating in cross-Straits integration and development. It is our hope that young people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits will learn from each other, collaborate, and contribute their strength to national rejuvenation.

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Illustration: Liu Xiangya/GT

Hangzhou enhances experience for tourists with luggage service reform

By Li Hang

As summer tourism peaks, one perennial hassle for travelers, especially foreign visitors, has been how to deal with the burden of luggage upon arrival. Addressing this challenge head-on, Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang Province, has purposed an initiative to enhance the tourist experience with its "One-stop Luggage Service" reform.

Arriving at a destination and immediately setting off to go sightseeing without first detouring to a hotel to drop off bags has long been a dream for travelers. Hangzhou's initiative aims to make this a reality.

Currently, airports and train stations typically offer luggage storage, but retrieving bags often entails a return trip, adding both time and extra transport costs. Some local shops around tourist spots also provide storage, but their scattered

locations, varying fees, and security concerns often leave travelers reluctant to part with their belongings.

The reform focuses on two primary aspects: expanding luggage storage facilities in popular areas and establishing a comprehensive luggage service network citywide. These measures directly respond to the precise needs of travelers for convenient luggage handling.

On one hand, increasing the number of storage points in Hangzhou expands coverage, reducing travelers' need to wander. Particularly near popular attractions and commercial areas, setting up more luggage storage facilities allows visitors to securely store belongings upon entering and retrieve them upon exiting.

Foreign tourists can take advantage of these additional storage options, especially those near popular attractions

and commercial districts, effortlessly depositing their luggage without concern for safety or convenience. They can enter scenic spots or shopping areas without first returning to hotels to drop off luggage, saving time and energy to fully immerse themselves in sightseeing and shopping.

Moreover, Hangzhou integrates storage and logistics, allowing luggage to "move" along with tourists' itineraries independently. This integrated service simplifies procedures, reduces language and cultural barriers for foreign visitors, enhancing the smooth and pleasant travel experience for foreign tourists in China.

Hangzhou's measures underscore the customer-centric trend in the tourism industry. Cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen are also exploring improved luggage storage and logistics services. Shanghai has announced 232 cultural

and tourist venues offering storage services, underscoring the competition to cater to travelers' evolving needs.

For example, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism announced that most tourist spots in the city will no longer require reservations starting from June 20, requiring all tourist attractions to provide high-quality cultural and tourism experiences.

During the summer season, they should install additional sun and rain shelters (such as umbrellas), shaded rest areas, and seating to prevent heatstroke. Temporary restrooms should be added according to summer visitor flow, and more cleaning staff should be deployed to increase the frequency of cleaning and garbage removal.

Following Beijing's announcement that it was ending reservation requirements at tourist spots to benefit tour-

ism, other cities, including Hangzhou, Shanghai, Suzhou in East China's Jiangsu Province, have also joined the trend, with an aim to "enhance basic service quality at summer tourist attractions."

The "One-stop Luggage Service" reform and the cancellation of reservation requirements are not just the service innovation but also a transformation in tourism services. It reminds us that enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations should start from addressing the practical needs of travelers, focusing on the details of tourism, and comprehensively upgrading the tourism experience.

The author is a reporter with the Global Times. life@globaltimes.com.cn

By Li Jiang

In recent years, with the rapid development of China's gaming industry, domestically produced games that incorporate Chinese cultural elements have gained immense popularity among international gamers. These elements give these games a unique appeal in the global market.

A game "pilgrimage" often refers to game enthusiasts visiting the real-world locations that inspired their favorite works, with these sites being referred to as "holy lands." Today, as many Chinese games gain popularity overseas, they are also driving a trend of pilgrimages among international gamers.

A month ago, pilgrimage videos of a Chinese game *Genshin Impact* went viral on major video sharing platforms, receiving numerous positive reviews and promoting various Chinese scenic spots. In one such video, German blogger Mikado first showcased some gameplay footage before transitioning to a shot of himself in a real-life location in China that resembles the game's scenes. This video has received over 700,000 views.

"As a player and fan of the Chinese game *Genshin Impact*, I often saw travel recommendations for this game on various video platforms. To learn more about the culture and stories behind the game, I registered an account on Bilibili (the Chinese equivalent of YouTube). My friends and I discovered potential real-world locations in China that served as the game's inspiration," Mikado told *Global Times*.

"Through these video platforms, I planned a detailed route for a game pilgrimage in China and posted videos along the way. During my travels, I found many real-life locations corresponding to the game's scenes," Mikado noted.

This type of content creation often satisfies players' curiosity and desire

to explore game culture, allowing them to experience real-world versions of game scenes visually. Video creators vividly showcase the allure and historical background of these game pilgrimage sites through careful editing and commentary.

Cultural resonance

Mikado mentioned that his interest in Chinese culture began when he was 12, recalling his first Chinese martial arts game, *Age of Wushu*. His fascination with Chinese games led him to major in Chinese language and history alongside East Asian art history at university.

"When I first started playing *Genshin Impact*, I noticed the game's landscapes were strikingly similar to real-world sites, such as the Huaguang Stone Forest in the game to Zhangjiajie, the Luhua Pool to Huanglong, and the Verdant Canyon to Yangshuo. After researching on YouTube, Bilibili, and *Genshin* forums, I learned that several locations in the game are based on real places in China," Mikado said.

"This information sparked my desire to visit China, not only to see these incredible landscapes in person but also to gain inspiration for my Chinese art studies, particularly in flower, mountain, and bamboo styles."

Mikado noted that Huanglong and Guilin most closely resemble the environments in *Genshin Impact*. Parts of Zhangjiajie and Jiuzhaigou also share similarities. Visiting these places was one of his most memorable experiences.

"I was particularly impressed

with the well-organized national parks and environmental awareness in China, balancing nature conservation with visitor access. Europe doesn't have landscapes like Zhangjiajie, Huanglong or Yangshuo. Although we have stunning scenery like the Swiss Alps in Europe, the diversity and uniqueness of Chinese landscapes is unparalleled," Mikado noted.

Activities like bamboo rafting, which also appear in *Genshin Impact*, further enriched his experience and understanding of the region. However, the trip was more about cultural exchange and experiences.

"Sichuan opera and exquisite cuisines, including hotpot and sweet water noodles, offer flavors I could never find in Europe. Geographically, the limestone karst landscapes around Guilin and Yangshuo create some of the most breathtaking scenery I've ever seen. These unique formations have significantly influenced the local culture and the way of life."

According to the "2023 China Game Overseas Development Report" released at China Game Industry Annual Conference, Chinese game companies have normalized their overseas operations

in surrounding regions, with their presence in North American and European markets gradually increasing.

Wider dissemination

Many gaming forums and video platforms feature numerous recommendations for real-world locations that correspond to game scenes. This content provides players with more in-depth and meaningful information for planning their game pilgrimage trips.

The dissemination of Chinese games overseas isn't limited to video platforms. In major cities, popular areas, public transportation, and large sports events worldwide,

Chinese game companies frequently place billboards. For example, Chinese games like *Genshin Impact*, *Rise of Kingdoms*, and *AFK Arena* have placed ads in New York's Times Square, capturing the attention of many global players.

"I was pleasantly surprised and felt a sense of familiarity when I saw ads for Chinese games that I often play in Japanese subway stations and anime conventions," Wang Haoran, a Chinese student studying in Japan, told *Global Times*. "Recently, I've noticed a significant increase in Japanese friends playing Chinese games."

"The Chinese game *Onmyoji*, which is based on ancient Chinese mythology and folklore, was also very popular in Japan at one time. Two of my classmates even visited China to pilgrimage the locations depicted in the game, to learn more about traditional Chinese culture and myths," Wang said.



German blogger Mikado poses for a photo in Yangshuo, South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Photo: Courtesy of Mikado

► Chinese games inspire overseas players to embark on 'pilgrimages'

TREND SETTERS

Scenery in Huanglong, Jiuzhaigou, Southwest China's Sichuan Province Photo: VCG+

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