

Music to his ears

Disney's *Coco* a boon for Mexican guitar makers

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Donated lung inspires recipient

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Downhill is up

Bird's Nest in Beijing hatches love of winter pastimes SPORTS, PAGE 23



CHINADAILY

中國日報

MONDAY, January 15, 2018

chinadaily.com.cn RMB ¥2

Watchdog vows strong enforcement

Inspections will ensure spirit of 19th CPC National Congress is carried out

China's top anti-graft agency pledged on Saturday to safeguard the position of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, as the core of the Central Committee and the whole Party.

The key to implementing the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress is to safeguard this position and to safeguard the authority of the CPC Central Committee and its centralized, unified leadership, said a statement adopted at the second plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which was held from Thursday to Saturday.

Another key is to study and grasp Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and make it the guide in practice and work, the statement said.

"Currently, the fight against corruption remains grave and complex, and the full and strict governance over the Party should not be given up halfway. We must have the resolve and tenacity to persevere in the never-ending fight against corruption," it said.

The most important task in 2018 is to tighten the Party's political rules and disciplines, the statement said, calling for better supervision over the political life of the Party and

Major tasks of CCDI in 2018

1. Tighten the Party's political rules and disciplines
2. Push forward with reform of the national supervision system
3. Fight bureaucracy and curb privileges
4. Continue dispatching inspection teams regularly and on specific missions
5. Launch more education campaigns
6. Consolidate momentum against graft
7. Address corruption that occurs on the people's doorsteps
8. Supervise Party committees at all levels to ensure they shoulder the responsibility of ruling the Party strictly

SOURCE: CCDI

how its policies are being implemented.

Those who are two-faced, disloyal and dishonest to the Party, who comply in public but oppose in private, should be firmly excluded, it said.

In the statement, the CCDI pledged to enhance monitoring

See *Anti-graft* page 3



РЕЛИЗ ПОДГОТОВИЛА ГРУППА
VK.COM/WSNWS



The Panama-registered oil tanker *Sanchi* suddenly reignited on Sunday, with smoke and flames shooting up 800 meters. The tanker carrying 136,000 metric tons of light crude oil has been adrift and on fire following a collision with another vessel in the East China Sea on Jan 6.

PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

Tanker sinks, but flames persist on surface of the sea

By LUO WANGSHU
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The Panama-registered oil tanker *Sanchi* exploded and sank in the East China Sea on Sunday afternoon, eight days after it collided with a cargo vessel and burst into flames. China's ocean administration is busy monitoring its subsequent environmental impact.

Of the 32 crew members, just three bodies had been recovered by Sunday, officials said.

A large amount of oil from the spill continued to burn on the sea's surface, affecting the environment, the State Oceanic Administration said on Sunday evening.

The consistency of petroleum material in the seawater in the area was up to 25 micrograms per liter on Saturday before the ship sank, the administration said. It did not provide a context as to whether that was serious or not.

Officers planned to intensify monitoring and assess its environmental impact, the administration said.

The Iranian ship sank about 4:45 pm, 151 nautical miles from the collision site, according to the Ministry of Transport. A 10-square-kilometer oil belt could be observed visually, a report by China Central Television said.

The *Sanchi*, carrying 136,000 metric tons of highly flammable condensate oil, or natural gas liquids, collided with a Hong Kong-registered cargo ship about 8 pm on Jan 6 some 160 nautical miles east of Shanghai.

Zhang Yong, an engineer from the administration, told CCTV that the condensate, a type of ultralight oil, has comparatively less effect in damaging the ocean than other crude oil products because of its high volatility.

The *Sanchi* had 32 crew members — 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis. As of Sunday, three bodies of the missing had been recovered — two were found by a salvage team on Saturday and one was discovered at the collision site on Jan 8, according to the ministry. The cargo ship's 21 crew members were rescued.

On Saturday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif over the phone that "China will continue to carry out 100 percent effort as long as 1 percent hope remains".

Zarif expressed gratitude for China's efforts on rescuing the Iranian sailors, and said Iran is willing to keep close communication and cooperation with China on the matter.

On Saturday morning, four rescuers were placed on the back of the *Sanchi* by a crane. They found two bodies on the deck of a lifeboat. The ship's "black box" had also been retrieved, according to the ministry release.

Thirteen vessels — 10 Chinese, two Japanese and one from South Korea — are participating in the search and rescue operation, including searching for victims, contamination control and putting out the fire.

Xi's bookshelf illustrates goal of developing AI powerhouse

By AN BAIJIE
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Two books on President Xi Jinping's shelf drew public attention from both home and abroad immediately after they were seen in the video of Xi's New Year speech.

The two books were about artificial intelligence — *The Master Algorithm: How the Quest for the Ultimate Learning Machine Will Remake Our World* by Pedro Domingos and Brett King's *Augmented: Life in the Smart Lane*.

The *Master Algorithm*, published in 2015, describes how

machine learning is remaking business, politics, science and war.

Augmented describes how society will be impacted by technologies that will change the world more in the next 20 years than it has been changed in the past 250 years.

The Business Insider said it is "interesting" that Xi has the two books on his bookshelf. It reflected China's ambition regarding AI, said the report.

A report published on the WeChat account of xuexixi-aazo, which is operated by the overseas edition of People's Daily, labeled the two books as

"newly published leading edge scientific books" among eight different categories of books on the president's bookshelf that appeared in the New Year address.

Innovation highlighted

The president has attached great importance to the development of artificial intelligence, cloud computing and big data in recent years. In his address to the 19th CPC National Congress, Xi called for more efforts to foster new areas of growth through further integration of the internet, big data and artificial



These two books about artificial intelligence appear on President Xi Jinping's bookshelf.

intelligence with the real economy.

Speaking at a collective study session of the CPC Central Committee's Political Bureau in December, Xi said

that the internet, big data, artificial intelligence and the real economy all should be interconnected.

Xi also emphasized the necessity of using big data to improve governance.

While inspecting a company in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, in December, Xi called for more innovation in the equipment manufacturing sector to accelerate China's drive toward becoming a manufacturing powerhouse and to bolster the real economy.

At Xuzhou Construction Machinery Group Co Ltd, a leading domestic manufactur-

er, Xi was briefed about the company's intelligent assembly lines and big data platform.

"Innovation is the source of business core competitiveness," Xi said. He urged a shift from "Made in China" to "Created in China".

Innovation ranks first among the Five Concepts of Development raised by Xi as the drive of a new kind of economic growth, along with the other four concepts of coordination, environment, openness and sharing.

In a signed article in German media ahead of his state

visit to Germany in July, Xi called on the two countries to deepen practical cooperation in such fields as innovation, the internet and smart manufacturing.

The G20 Hangzhou Summit, held in East China's Zhejiang province in 2016, adopted the Blueprint on Innovative Growth and formulated a specific action plan.

Wu Fei, head of the Artificial Intelligence Institute at Zhejiang University, said that as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and president, Xi has set a visionary tone for China's AI development, which is to turn into a global AI leader in the coming 15 years.

See *AI* page 3

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year in Review

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ANN
ASIA NEWS NETWORK
A member of the Asia News Network

国内统一编号: CN11-0091
国际标准编号: ISSN0253-9543
邮发代号: 1-3

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Vol.38 - No. 11763

DRIVING FAMILY JUST A DREAM FOR THOSE AWAITING LICENSE PLATES

Beijing's municipal lottery policy leads some hopefuls to apply instead for new energy vehicles, but others wait and hope

By DU JUAN
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Yu Huapeng got a driver's license six years ago, so he could take his wife and baby daughter on weekend road trips. He rarely used it, though, because after all this time he's still waiting to strike it lucky in Beijing's car plate lottery.

The capital introduced an

indepth

annual quota on new car registrations in 2011 to ease traffic congestion and combat smog. For the past two years, the cap has been set at 90,000 licenses for conventional vehicles, available only by

entering a monthly drawing, and 60,000 for new energy vehicles, which are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

If people thought it was tough to get a plate before, they could find it even more difficult in 2018. The municipal government has slashed the quota for gas and diesel cars by more than half to 40,000.

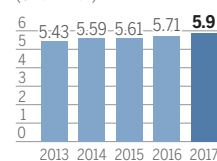
"I've been taking part in the lottery for years," said Yu, 36, deputy manager of an energy company. "It's ironic that my driver's license is about to expire this year, and I still can't buy a car."

Although other Chinese cities have adopted car registration quota systems, Beijing is the only one that distributes

See *Plate* page 5

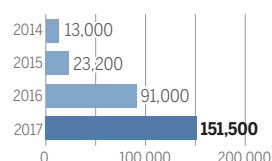
WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

Number of vehicles in Beijing (Unit: million)



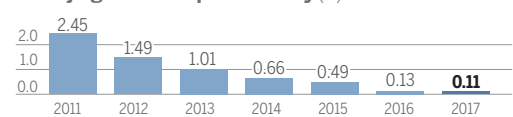
Sources: Beijing Traffic Management Bureau, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics

Number of new energy cars in Beijing



Sources: Beijing New Energy Vehicle Promotion Center

Proportion of successful entrants in Beijing's license plate lottery (%)



Sources: Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport

CHINA DAILY

2 PAGE TWO

Looking ahead

Events and stories coming up in the next few days

Two climate change reports to be released on Monday

The China Meteorological Administration will release reports on the effects of climate change last year and greenhouse gas emissions in 2016 at a media briefing in Beijing on Monday. Last year, China implemented a series of measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on the country. Most recently, the world's largest carbon trading system was launched in December, sending a strong signal that it plans to use the market as a key policy tool to curb emissions and meet its Paris Agreement commitments.

Taiwan Affairs Office will brief media on Wednesday

The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, China's Cabinet, will hold a media brief-

ing in Beijing on Wednesday about issues involving cross-Straits ties. Since the Democratic Progressive Party took over leadership on the island in May 2016, cross-Straits relations have worsened and official communications have been suspended.

Reciprocal visa exemption agreement begins on Tuesday

China and the United Arab Emirates will reciprocally exempt visas for each other's citizens starting Tuesday. As the UAE is one of the favorite destinations of Chinese tourists as well as a major international transportation hub, the upcoming visa exemption measure will benefit about 1 million Chinese visitors to the country each year and another 3.5 million Chinese travelers that have a stopover in the country, industry experts estimated.

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Trend: Gucci serves up food for fashionistas in Florence

The Italian fashion house Gucci opened a 50-seat restaurant in Florence on Tuesday. Three-star Michelin chef Massimo Bottura serves up high-end dishes at Gucci Osteria, which is situated behind the walls of the 14th century Palazzo della Mercanzia building, overlooking the city's most famous square, Piazza della Signoria. The Italian fashion house, owned by Kering, is not the only luxury company to foray into food; LVMH announced late last year it would open a second branch of its gourmet grocer La Grande Epicerie in Paris, days before Tiffany & Co opened its Blue Box Cafe in New York.



Culture: Art inspired by visits to Belt and Road countries

An exhibition featuring works by 36 contemporary artists opened at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing on Thursday. Most of the works are new creations by the artists after visits to countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. The last day of the exhibition is Jan 21.

Movie: The Heart of Madness captures Chinese hearts

Brazilian biographical drama *Nise: The Heart of Madness* has been winning praise from Chinese moviegoers since it was released in the country on Jan 5. Directed by Roberto Berliner, the film is based on the true story of psychiatrist Nise da Silveira, a well-known pioneer of occupational therapy in Brazil. The story is set in a psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s, where Silveira, played by award-winning actress Gloria Pires, refuses to use electroshock therapy to try and cure schizophrenia. Instead, she insists on using painting, pets and love to treat her patients. On the Chinese film review website Douban, the 106-minute feature received a rating of 8.2 points out of 10, with many online users praising it as a heartwarming story about the triumph of humanity.



Photos: Shanghai villas reborn as tourist B&Bs

Shanghai's alleyways and their villas have become symbolic of a vanishing way of life in recent years. However, a local woman, Pan Rongda, has given three villas a new lease on life by renovating them and turning them into bed-and-breakfast accommodation for tourists. Pan said her greatest pleasure in running the B&Bs is making friends with guests from all over the country.



People: Hobby crafted into successful business

Song Lele, a 23-year-old woman in Lanzhou, Gansu province, has turned her hobby into a business by opening a woodworking studio, where people can learn woodworking skills under her instruction. With more people coming to try their hand, Song now enjoys a monthly income of nearly 10,000 yuan (\$1,548).



Candid camera: Bay watch

РЕЛИЗ ПОДГОТОВИЛА ГРУППА VK.COM/WSNWS



Four women dressed in similar outfits take selfies on the beach at Repulse Bay in Hong Kong on Tuesday.

KAPPAPKDC YEUNG / FOR CHINA DAILY

The stink covers the world thanks to ...

US President Donald Trump is at it again. Or should I say he is a little behind schedule given his penchant for creating controversy almost every week. Last week, he almost surprised the world, although in a positive way, by saying he was ready to talk with the



OP Rana
Second Thoughts

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the United States could "conceivably" rejoin the 2015 Paris climate agreement if a better deal could be reached. Trump, however, was then back to his usual self, describing Haiti, El Salvador and the entire continent of Africa as "shitholes," shocking the world and drawing the indignation of people and media outlets across the world.

Haiti, during Paul Magloire's presidency, became a favorite tourist spot for Americans and Europeans. Thanks to his strong anti-communist policies, he got a lot of help from the US, both in funds and policies.

But the theft of relief funds after Hurricane Hazel in 1954 made Magloire an unpopular leader. Francois Duvalier, or "Papa Doc", seized the opportunity to become Haitian president in 1957. His rule was followed by that of his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, or "Baby Doc", in 1971, which continued until 1986.

Three decades of Duvaliers' rule, with US support, ruined Haiti politically, socially and economically. What followed was no better. The US loaned money to Haiti for social and economic development. There was condition, though. Haiti also had to buy surplus food from the US. As a result, farmers

in Haiti went out of business, and the country, which produced enough rice to feed its people up to two decades ago, imports 75 percent of its rice from the US. It's anybody's guess what the rest of the Haitian economy has gone through.

El Salvador, too, has suffered US interference, covertly and overtly (especially during the 1979-92 civil war).

And the sad tale of lives, livelihoods, economies, elected leaders and way of life lost in African countries because of US interference is too well known.

But apart from the direct interference in the internal affairs of scores of countries across the world, the US has also been exporting different types of scrap and waste, many of them highly toxic, to other countries for disposal, which have not only damaged the environment and ecology in those countries,

but also taken many lives. It doesn't stop there. Some of the invasive plants the US has exported, by accident or design, are wreaking havoc in many countries.

I know of one such plant widespread in India. *Chromolaena odorata*, better known as devil weed or Siam weed. As its name suggests, it has a pungent odor. In Hindi, it is rightly called *tivra gandha* (strong stink).

It has wiped out many native shrubs and bushes, thwarts the growth of many flowering plants and trees, and reduces the output of many fruits and vegetables.

I'm not sure whether Trump's comments and tweets have any thought behind them.

But if they have, I dread to think what goes on in his head.

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This Day, That Year



Editor's Note: This year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up policy.

In December 1991, Qinshan, China's first nuclear power station, was connected to the power grid. The project began commercial operation in April 1994, making China the seventh country in the world to build and operate nuclear power plants.

China is now a pioneer in the nuclear power sector and has been accelerating its construction of nuclear power plants.

The installed nuclear power capacity has reached 35.8 gigawatts from 37 units, and another 20 were under construction as of last year, according to the China Nuclear Energy Association.

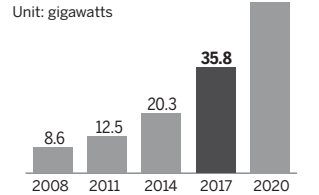
By 2020, China's installed nuclear power generation capacity is planned to be 58 gigawatts, according to an energy development plan issued by the State Council, China's cabinet.

In November, the coun-

try's first nuclear reactor using Hualong One technology, a domestically developed third-generation reactor design by China General Nuclear Power Group and China National Nuclear Corporation, completed all its tests in Sichuan province.

There are now four projects using the Hualong One design under construction, including two reactors in the

The installed nuclear power capacity



Source: China Nuclear Energy Association CHINA DAILY

Pakistani city of Karachi. China is also seeking regulatory approval for use of the technology in the United Kingdom.

MON - TUE JAN 15-16

weather

TRAVELER'S FORECAST

LOW/HIGH TEMPERATURES, IN DEGREES CELSIUS, AND EXPECTED CONDITIONS

CHINA				
Beijing	-5/2	O	-5/5	O
Changchun	-16/-6	S	-11/-4	C
Changsha	5/14	C	7/11	Sh
Chongqing	6/10	O	9/11	D
Dalian	-4/2	S	-1/2	S
Fuzhou	10/17	O	14/21	O
Guangzhou	9/21	S	11/22	S
Guilin	7/14	O	9/16	D
Guiyang	4/10	O	4/9	D
Haikou	15/20	C	15/22	C
Hangzhou	3/14	C	6/15	O
Harbin	-20/-7	C	-21/-10	C
Hefei	1/15	C	4/12	C
Hohhot	-13/-1	C	-15/-4	S
Hongkong	14/18	S	16/21	C
Jinan	0/8	S	1/7	C
Kunming	4/16	S	3/17	S
Lanzhou	-6/3	C	-7/7	C
Lhasa	-4/11	C	-5/11	S
Lijiang	3/13	C	-1/17	C
Macao	14/19	S	16/22	S
Nanchang	5/15	C	8/16	O
Nanjing	1/14	C	7/12	O
Nanning	12/18	O	13/16	O
Qingdao	1/7	C	4/7	C
Sanya	19/25	C	19/26	C

CHINA				
Shanghai	6/15	C	10/14	D
Shenyang	-16/-4	C	-10/-1	C
Shenzhen	13/23	S	14/21	C
Shijiazhuang	-4/2	C	-4/6	C
Suzhou	-2/14	O	2/16	D
Taipei	15/22	D	16/23	D
Taiyuan	-9/3	C	-10/4	C
Tianjin	-5/3	C	-4/5	C
Urumqi	-15/-11	C	-15/-8	Sn
Wuhan	2/14	C	5/10	D
Xi'an	-3/6	O	-1/8	O
Xiamen	10/19	S	13/20	C
Xining	-12/1	O	-15/5	C
Yantai	-2/4	S	0/5	S
Yinchuan	-11/2	O	-11/3	O
Zhengzhou	-2/8	C	1/9	O
Zuhai	14/19	S	16/22	S

EUROPE				
Athens	2/11	D	0/16	R/Sn
Berlin	-5/-4	Sn	-4/-2	C
Brussels	0/3	O	2/7	D
Geneva	-8/-4	S	-8/1	O
Istanbul	2/10	C	4/11	D
London	0/8	R/Sn	4/4	D
Madrid	1/4	C	-1/2	S
Moscow	-8/-5	Sn	-9/-5	Sn
Paris	-2/2	O	-5/2	Sn
Rome	1/8	D	3/9	D
Vienna	-1/-1	Sn	-2/0	Sn

ASIA-PACIFIC-MIDDLE EAST				
Abu Dhabi	16/24	S	14/24	C
Bangkok	20/33	O	23/32	O
Colombo	22/32	C	21/31	S
Dubai	18/23	C	16/25	S
Hanoi	1/24	C	12/25	C
Islamabad	3/20	S	3/21	S
Jakarta	25/30	D	25/29	R
Karachi	14/29	S	13/26	S
Kuala Lumpur	23/25	R	24/28	D
Manila	24/29	D	24/29	D
Mumbai	19/33	O	19/33	S
New Delhi	8/20	S	5/20	S
Pyongyang	-3/4	O	-5/4	Sn
Riyadh	-2/22	S	-1/13	S
Seoul	2/6	O	0/6	O
Singapore	22/27	D	26/28	R
Sydney	16/24	D	17/21	D
Tel Aviv	0/4	S	0/2	R/Sn
Teheran	1/11	S	5/12	C
Tokyo	18/21	D	18/22	D
Wellington	18/32	O	18/32	S
Yangon	18/32	O	18/32	S

AMERICAS				
Buenos Aires	18/28	O	17/28	S
Caracas	25/26	D	24/26	D
Chicago	-11/-2	Sn	-3/-3	Sn
Houston	0/7	C	7/9	D
Las Vegas	5/9	C	5/9	C
Los Angeles	11/15	S	11/13	C
Mexico city	1/5	S	3/7	S
New York	-5/-2	Sn	-2/2	Sn
Ottawa	-17/-13	C	-16/-9	O
Rio De Janeiro	27/27	R	27/28	D
San Francisco	4/11	O	8/12	O
Sao Paulo	20/29	O	19/23	D
Vancouver	4/5	O	4/6	O
Washington	-5/-2	O	-5/0	C

AFRICA				
Cairo	9/19	S	10/18	C
Cape Town	18/21	D	17/27	S
Johannesburg	14/31	D	14/30	C
Lagos	20/27	C	21/26	C
Nairobi	11/29	D	14/28	C

1,300 fugitives returned last year

By ZHANG YAN
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A total of 1,300 fugitives suspected of economic crimes, 347 of whom were corrupt officials, returned to China from abroad to face justice last year, according to the country's top discipline watchdog.

About 980 million yuan (\$152 million) of illicit assets were recovered, according to the Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

Discipline watchdogs have also tightened management of Party and governmental officials so that the number of newly escaped fugitives dropped from 101 in 2014 to only four last year, CCDI figures show. The number was 31 in 2015 and 19 in 2016.

This year, China will further enhance international cooperation in fighting corruption, said a statement adopted at the second plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which was ended on Saturday.

China is preparing to sign more bilateral or multilateral agreements with other countries in this sector, and will enhance information exchanges and joint investigation especially with Western countries such as the US, Canada and Australia on some major or individual cases, according to the CCDI.

"Under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee, we'll broaden judicial cooperation with relevant countries so that there will be no 'safe heaven' for corrupt fugitives," said La Yifan, director of the CCDI's

International Cooperation Department.

In the past years, many Chinese corrupt officials or senior executives of State-owned enterprises have fled overseas to escape legal punishment due to the lack of bilateral extradition treaties between China and other countries, and complex legal procedures.

Since 2014, China has set up a central authorized office responsible for coordinating and directing various departments to hunt down the fugitives, and it has conducted the SkyNet capture operation.

Interpol issued red notices to arrest the 100 most-wanted Chinese corrupt fugitives in April 2015. So far, more than half of them have been returned, including No 1 fugitive Yang Xiuzhu, who was back to China in November 2016 after 13 years on the run in the US.

Under a court ruling in October, Yang, a former official in Zhejiang province, received eight years in prison for embezzling 19 million yuan in public funds and taking bribes of 7.35 million yuan.

"Apart from nabbing the fugitives, to improve the procedures to prevent corrupt fugitives from fleeing is also a priority," La said.

Discipline inspectors will work closely with relevant authorities, including the police, personnel departments and the banking system to strengthen management of officials' private passports and monitor their suspicious assets sent abroad, according to the CCDI.

Anti-graft: Political disciplines are priority

From page 1

of political life within the Party and inspect how key principles and policies are carried out.

"We'll place political disciplines of the Party as a top priority, and firmly put the major decisions and deployments made by the CPC Central Committee into practice," said Liu Xuexin, head of Fujian Provincial Discipline Inspection Commission.

Jiang Jinqun, director of the inspection team stationed with the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, said his team will investigate cases of political and economic corruption intertwined, those who are disloyal or dishonest to the Party, form cliques for selfish interests or stop at nothing to seek political ambitions.

The statement also pledged

to build a supervisory network over all State functionaries, under the Party's leadership. Efforts should be made to create a highly efficient supervisory mechanism to ensure coordination between discipline inspection and judicial investigation, it said.

The CCDI also will fight corruption in selection and appointment of officials, government approval and supervision, resource exploitation, finance and other key areas prone to corruption.

Corruption that occurs on the people's doorsteps, especially related to poverty relief, will be better addressed. The fight against corruption at the grassroots level will be combined with that against criminal gangs. The "protection umbrella" behind the gangs will be removed, it said.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Serving peace



Members of the fifth Chinese peacekeeping police team in Liberia take part in an integrated tactical drill in Monrovia on Friday in preparation for a variety of emergency situations. ZHAO XIAOXIN / XINHUA

Wang urges Iran to stay calm in deal with US

Trump complains of flaws, warns Washington might abandon pact

By ZHOU JIN
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Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Iranian counterpart on Saturday to remain calm, and he pledged to continue playing a constructive role in maintaining and implementing the Iran nuclear deal.

Wang made a phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif after the United States decided to extend sanctions relief on Iran but threatened to withdraw from the landmark pact unless alleged "disastrous flaws" could be fixed.

Calling it "a last chance," US President Donald Trump said in a White House statement that his country "will not again waive sanctions in order to stay in the Iran nuclear deal."

Continuing to maintain and implement the deal is the responsibility of all parties concerned, as well as the common wish of the international community, Wang said.

The deal will help to uphold the international

nonproliferation system, maintain regional peace and stability and solve other hot spot issues in the world, he said.

Implementation of the deal has not been derailed but will face new complicating factors, Wang said, calling on Iran to remain calm and continue to fulfill its obligations under the deal.

Zarif said he agrees with Wang and expressed his gratitude for Wang's position.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang called on all parties on Saturday to cherish the hard-won Iran nuclear deal.

"Under the current situation, we hope the relevant parties can ... properly manage differences and continue to comprehensively and effectively implement the deal from an overall and long-term perspective", Lu said.

He also emphasized that it is China's consistent and clear position to oppose unilateral sanctions against other countries in accordance with a country's

“We hope the relevant parties can ... properly manage differences and continue to comprehensively and effectively implement the deal from an overall and long-term perspective.”

Lu Kang, Foreign Ministry spokesman

domestic law.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that the Islamic republic will never succumb to pressure from the US to renegotiate the 2015 nuclear deal.

Russia, one of the parties to the Iran pact, called Trump's stance on the pact "extremely troubling", according to RIA state news agency.

The US Department of Treasury said on Friday that it had imposed new sanctions on 14 individuals and entities over Iran's alleged human rights abuses and ballistic missile program.

Analysts pointed out that the US is seeking to amend the deal by putting pressure on other countries because unilaterally tearing up the Iran nuclear deal might bring diplomatic and security costs, but the risk still exists and the future of the deal is uncertain.

Niu Xinchun, director of the Institute of Middle East Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations said that extending sanctions relief shows that the Iran nuclear deal conforms with US interests because it is the most effective way to restrict Iran to develop nuclear weapons.

"The US did not want to completely tear up the Iran nuclear deal, while the country would like to put pressure on other relevant countries to take actions to restrain Iran's missile ability and Iran's policy to the Middle East", he said.

Xinhua and Reuters contributed to this story.

AI: France optimistic on joint projects

From page 1

"President Xi has said that AI will definitely change the world and society, so we should take the opportunities," Wu said.

Global exchanges on AI

In his state visit to China, French President Emmanuel Macron stressed the importance of boosting cooperation between France and China in the field of artificial intelligence on Jan 9.

Speaking at the conclusion of a Sino-French forum on artificial intelligence in Beijing, Macron presided over the signing of various cooperation agreements on technology and trade.

Macron said China had a great advantage in the AI sector given its enormous domestic market.

While talking with Macron, Xi called for integrating the development strategies of China and France, strengthening innovative cooperation, and achieving common development in the areas of digital economy and artificial intelligence.

Fei-Fei Li, Chief Scientist of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at Google Cloud, announced in December that Google would launch a new AI research center in Beijing, as part of its AI First strategy.

China is "a rising country of AI work and research", she told Xinhua News Agency. The Google AI China Center, the first of its kind in Asia, will primarily focus on basic AI research.

China's AI industry has been developing rapidly in recent years. The number of AI companies has increased from 57 in 2007 to 592 by June 2017, more than tenfold over the past 10 years, according to a report released by Tencent Research Institute.

In December, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology unveiled a three-year plan to boost the application of AI in the automobile, robotics, healthcare and other sectors to upgrade the country's real economy.

Zang Yarui contributed to this story.

10m copies exist of Xi's new book on governance

Global circulation of President Xi Jinping's new book on governance exceeded 10 million by Friday, according to China International Publishing Group. The second volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* was published in November in English and Chinese versions.

The articles in the book are put into 17 topics, under which there are 99 of Xi's speeches, conversations, instructions and letters, as well as 29 photos of the leader, all of which were published between Aug 18, 2014, and Sept 29, 2017.

The book is expected to help the international community better understand China's contribution as it tries to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, as well as peace and development of mankind, the publishing group said in a statement.

The new book is going to be published in more languages.

XINHUA

Mobile link opens window on daily life in isolated village

By HUANG ZHILING
in Chengdu
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Great changes have taken place in a land-locked Yi village in Sichuan province thanks to mobile communication.

Young villagers give live broadcasts on their lifestyle to earn money and sell local specialties online.

Atuleer, a village in Zhaojue county, in the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture, that lies atop a cliff more than 1,400 meters above sea level, was famous for relying on an 800-meter zigzag network of rattan ladders to link with the outside world.

The rattan structure — 17 small ladders tied together without railings or other safety features — had been used

INTERNET ACTION IN A NEW ERA

by villagers for years. They relied on it to reach the nearest market several kilometers away once a week to sell local specialties like walnuts and to buy necessities.

Photos published by a Beijing newspaper in May 2016 of pupils climbing the cliff on the rattan ladders sparked a public outcry and prompted Liangshan officials to address the issue.

The villagers, who did not want to leave their time-honored habitat, could not be relocated so decision-makers in Liangshan, which has China's largest Yi population and is one of Sichuan's least developed areas, promised to replace the rattan ladders with steel.

Construction of a steel lad-



Yang Yang, of the Yi ethnic group, live-broadcasts climbing the steel ladder at Atuleer, a village in Zhaojue county, in the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture, in December. WANG QIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

der with handrails was completed on November 19, 2016, at a cost of 1 million yuan (\$153,480) — the Liangshan and Zhaojue governments

splitting the cost.

It took three hours to return home via the rattan structure, but the steel ladder has reduced that journey by

1 hour

Time that the steel ladder reduces from villagers' journey home

an hour, said Er Dijiang, head of Atuleer.

In November 2016, China Telecom decided to invest more than 1.5 million yuan to cover the village with mobile communication.

More than 40 workers were involved in the challenging task, carrying wires and equipment for the installation of mobile communication on their shoulders to the village using the steel ladder, said Zheng Chengyu, president of China Telecom's Sichuan branch.

“It's illegal to interfere with air quality monitoring, whether these vehicles were assigned to do it on purpose or not.”

Ministry of Environmental Protection

Airlines told to clean up web errors

US carrier Delta apologizes for listing Chinese territories as 'countries'

By HOU LIQIANG and ZHANG YI

Foreign airlines and hotels have been told to review their websites and apps to ensure no Chinese territories are incorrectly labeled as countries, after errors by several major international companies were exposed.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China made the demand to airlines after Delta, the United States-based carrier, was found to have listed Tibet and Taiwan as countries in a drop-down menu in an online comments section.

It followed a similar warning for hotel companies from the China National Tourism Administration in response to Marriott International having listed Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Tibet as countries in an email survey. “Foreign airlines operating routes to China should comprehensively check their websites, apps and other platforms immediately,” the aviation authority said on Friday. “All should strictly comply with Chinese laws and regulations and ensure there are no similar mistakes.”

The CAAC added that it had summoned representatives from Delta and asked for a thorough investigation into the incident to be published as soon as possible.

On Friday night, the US airline issued a statement online apologizing for its “serious mistake” and for hurting the feelings of the Chinese people. “China is one of Delta’s most important markets. We are fully committed to serving the Chinese market and customers,” the company said.

When China Daily reporters visited the comments section on Delta’s website on Sunday, the title of the controversial drop-down menu had been changed from “country” to “country/region”, and Tibet was no longer listed as a location.

The word “China” had been inserted before Hong Kong and Macao, but not Taiwan, in the menu on the Chinese-language version of the site. On the English-language version, the names of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan stood alone.

Shanghai news portal The

“Foreign airlines operating routes to China should comprehensively check their websites, apps and other platforms.”

Civil Aviation Administration of China

Paper reported on Saturday that at least 24 members of the three global airline alliances — Oneworld, SkyTeam and Star Alliance — had labeled Chinese territories as countries on websites or apps.

However, on Sunday, China Daily reporters found that two of those companies — Finland’s Finnair and Russia’s S7 Airlines — labeled Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao as Chinese regions. The others list the regions or Tibet as countries, or are vague on their status.

The notice from the top tourism authority said it had ordered immediate and thorough checks of websites and apps by hotels and other companies offering accommodations.

Marriott International issued a full apology last week and on Thursday was ordered to close down its Chinese website and app for a week. Some online hotel booking platforms, including Meituan-Dianping, the country’s largest group-purchasing company, have stopped selling rooms at Marriott properties.

Fashion retailer Zara and US medical equipment company Medtronic were also found to have similar mistakes on their websites. Both have apologized.

Contact the writers at houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

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Walking through winter



Hikers walk on the ice in Panjin, Liaoning province, on Saturday. More than 4,100 people, including 20 from overseas, are participating in a five-day challenge that includes hiking, camping and ice climbing. PAN YULONG / XINHUA

Reports on SOEs will boost transparency

By HU YONGQI huyongqi@chinadaily.com.cn

The State Council, China’s cabinet, will report annually on the management of State-owned assets to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, a vital way to boost transparency and maintain the values of such assets, according to a guideline released on Sunday.

The assets should include those of State-owned enterprises — including financial assets and natural resources — and especially assets used in China’s outbound foreign investments, according to the guideline.

The management system of State-owned assets should be

improved during restructuring, and strategic mergers for the State-owned economy should be accelerated to maintain and increase the value of these assets, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, said in the report to the 19th CPC National Congress in October.

The guideline was adopted at the first meeting of the Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform of the 19th CPC Central Committee, which Xi presided over on Nov 20.

The guideline said the annual report is a vital measure to strengthen State-owned asset management, as emphasized in Xi’s report to the congress.

It ensures that the National People’s Congress will exercise its supervisory authority and boost the transparency of State-owned assets, which can help keep and increase the values of such assets and the welfare of the public, a statement released after the meeting said.

Zhu Lijia, a professor of public management at the Chinese Academy of Governance, said the NPC Standing Committee, as the top legislature, has the power to supervise and consult over State-owned assets.

The report is a crucial step to spotlight how State-owned assets are being used and will be beneficial to controlling losses in State-owned assets

by enhancing management transparency, he said.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, Chinese companies have made leaps in making investments and contracting projects overseas, Zhu said.

Since these assets are hard to trace and manage, the report is a good way to strengthen supervision of them and prevent the loss of State-owned assets earned from investments and contracts in other countries, he said.

Strengthened supervision can also make SOEs more cautious in investing overseas and can help protect State-owned assets, Zhu added.

Woman plans lawsuit over dog’s death

By LI LEI lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

A woman in Chengdu, Sichuan province, who suffered mental anguish after her dog was taken away and killed is expected to turn to the courts for justice.

Two attorneys from the local Taikunlyu law firm have offered to provide legal assistance to the 21-year-old dog owner, surnamed Wu, after she asked for help on Sina Weibo on Friday.

“We are collecting evidence and analyzing where the case is going,” said Zhu Jieping, the director of Taikunlyu and one of the attorneys who offered Wu help. He added that it has not been decided when the case will be submitted to court.

According to Cover News, the news website that first broke the story, Wu’s corgi went missing on Dec 23 and

she was told by the security guard at her community that two men had taken it away. Wu learned that because of the dog’s incessant barking, the men had given it to a 34-year-old woman surnamed He, the report said.

She tried to reclaim her dog through WeChat, but He demanded money and threatened to kill the dog for food, it said.

After negotiating for half a month, He was still unwilling to return the dog and so Wu posted screenshots of their WeChat conversation. Infuriated netizens targeted He, and much of her personal data was made public online, including her address.

On Thursday, Wu went to He’s flat and called police after she wasn’t allowed in. The corgi was then found dead on the ground next to the building.

The woman who had been

15 days

in detention is the maximum penalty for occupying or destroying property worth more than 500 yuan (\$75).

assistance from law firms and insisted that He should apologize to her publicly and compensate all her losses.

Liu Lin, a lawyer at Beijing Shuangli Law Firm, said considering a corgi is an expensive breed, He’s act might have violated the law of public order and management.

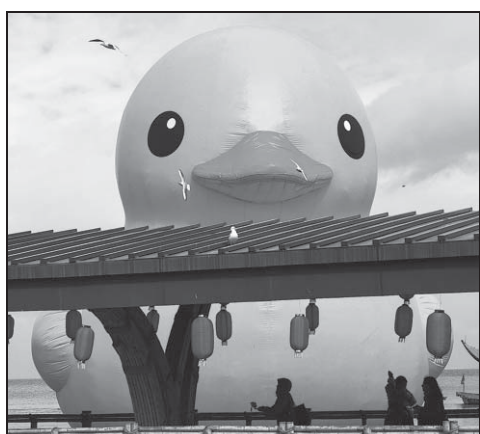
“Occupying or destroying someone else’s property worth more than 500 yuan (\$75) could lead to detention of up to 15 days and a fine,” Liu said. “In this case, He is entitled to claim money from the dog owner if she returns the animal, but by declining to return the corgi and killing it she has violated the law.”

Jiang Chenglong contributed to this story.

Inside

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The quack is back



An inflatable rubber duck is displayed near the bank of Dianchi Lake in Kunming, Yunnan province, on Saturday. The Rubber Duck, designed by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, measures 18 meters in height and 25 meters in length. It will be displayed in Kunming until March 2. LIN YIGUANG / XINHUA

Briefly

BEIJING Ex-professor removed from scholar program

Chen Xiaowu, the former professor involved in a sexual harassment scandal at Beijing’s Beihang University, has been removed from the Chang Jiang Scholars program, the paper.cn has reported. The program is a renowned academic award issued by the Ministry of Education to an individual in higher education. Allowances to Chen, who worked at Beihang’s College of Computer Science and Engineering, have been suspended and he

has been asked to repay earlier allowances.

Courts blacklist 9.59m defaulters

More than 9.59 million people were placed on a credit blacklist for defying court orders by the end of 2017, the Supreme People’s Court said. The blacklist blocked defaulters from buying more than 9.36 million plane tickets and 3.67 million high-speed train tickets, according to the top court, which cooperates with airlines and railway companies to stop defaulters purchasing tickets based on their

ID card and passport information.

JIANGSU Over 90 held for telecom fraud

Authorities have detained more than 90 suspects connected with a telecom fraud case. Yancheng police said the case involved more than 20 million yuan (\$3 million) and at least 10,000 victims nationwide. Officers were alerted to the scam in August, when a Yancheng resident reported being swindled out of about 2,000 yuan. The investigation lasted about five months.

TIANJIN Study measures kids’ online time

Nearly a third of Chinese preschool children spend more than 30 minutes a day online for entertainment, according to a study by an education research center affiliated with the China National Youth Palace Association. The study found 29 percent of children age 3 to 6 spend more than 30 minutes online every day, while for children age 14, the proportion is over 60 percent.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Cities used cannons to improve air quality data

By ZHENG JINRAN zhengjinran@chinadaily.com.cn

Environmental chiefs have punished officials in two cities for using mist cannons — devices for clearing smog — to wash pollutants from monitoring stations to improve air quality readings.

The large cannons, usually mounted on trucks, spray a mist of liquid to disperse fine airborne particles. Many cities, including Beijing, now use them to reduce air pollution over a small-scale area.

However, officials in Xinyu, Jiangxi province, have been criticized for deploying the devices to clear the air around an environmental monitoring station in September and October.

“The government leaders in that area felt great pressure about the air quality assessment, so they decided to use this method to lower the monitoring data for a better result,” the Ministry of Environmental Protection said on Sunday.

A similar situation was discovered in Xinyang, Henan province, during the same two months.

Some cities have failed to build effective systems to prevent and control such illegal behavior, to ensure the monitoring data is free of interference from governments and individuals, the ministry said.

2,125 locations

in 28 major cities in northern China have been inspected by environmental authorities since the area was blanketed by smog on Friday.

Reports show the heads of environmental protection in both cities have been punished, including being ordered to make a public self-criticism, while the drivers of the trucks carrying the cannons have been fired.

“It’s illegal to interfere with air quality monitoring, whether these vehicles were assigned to do it on purpose or not,” the ministry quoted an unnamed environmental monitoring official as saying on Sunday.

“City governments and their environmental protection authorities are required to make thorough inspections to avoid interference as well as encourage public supervision,” the official said.

Falsifying monitoring data is an environmental crime in China, according to a judicial interpretation of the Criminal Law that went into effect on Jan 1, 2017.

“It’s the first time such an act has been made punishable as a crime, which means offenders can be criminally prosecuted and face tougher penalties,” said Ma Yong, an environmental law researcher for the Supreme People’s Court.

In addition to protecting the integrity of monitoring data to get a clear picture of the pollution situation, the ministry has conducted strict field inspections to find violations, especially during periods of heavy smog.

Inspectors have visited 2,125 locations in 28 major cities in northern China since the area was blanketed by smog on Friday, including Beijing and Tianjin. They discovered violations at 21 companies, including the excessive discharge of pollutants, the ministry said on Sunday.

Signs of friendship



Foreign students from Jiangsu University show their handwritten Spring Festival couplets in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province, on Sunday. Using brushes, students from the Netherlands, Ghana, Tajikistan and Jamaica learned about Chinese culture by writing good wishes under the instruction of residents. SHI YUCHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Plate: 2.8m petrol tags in Beijing already

From page 1

license plates solely through a lottery. In Shanghai, car plates are auctioned in monthly sales — the average price in December was 92,848 yuan (\$14,371) — while Shenzhen and Guangzhou have both lotteries and auctions.

Beijing's first lottery in January 2011 had only 187,420 applicants. Last month, the number stood at more than 2.8 million, with another 117,678 still waiting for an NEV plate. Due to soaring demand, the chances of getting a license plate for a gas or diesel vehicle fell from 9.39 percent in 2011 to 0.11 percent in 2017.

Yu, who saw the trend and felt there is little hope to get a petrol plate, gave up his application in the lottery and joined the waiting list for an NEV license — although he will still need to wait two years.

He said it's not a problem to take public transportation for work during weekdays, but it is frustrating when he wants to take the family to suburban resorts during the weekends.

"There are many car rental companies in Beijing, which is a choice for people who don't own a car, when necessary," he said. "However, because I don't have driving experience, it's risky for me to rent."

An employee responsible for answering the Beijing city hotline said among various complaints, frustrated people who failed to win a petrol license in the lottery call the most.

"Some of them are furious, angry and rude," said the employee, who was not authorized to talk to reporters and requested anonymity.

Rong Jun, spokesperson of the Beijing Traffic Commission, said on Thursday that the lottery policy is far from perfect, but it's a "have-to" method under the certain circumstances — that Beijing's population and car demand has surpassed the city's capacity.

Beijing aims to keep the total number of cars on the road to under 6.3 million by 2020. By the end of 2017, the city had about 5.9 million cars. In 2011, when the lottery policy was launched, the number was around 4.98 million.

Rong said the government encourages people to use electric vehicles, which reduce emissions.

In 2017, there were 151,500 registered new-energy vehicles in Beijing, which ranks top among all Chinese cities.

Cutting traffic, pollution

Easing traffic congestion and other big city problems is one of the main reasons the capital chose to control the growth of new cars.

According to the municipal traffic commission, the annual growth of car numbers in Beijing has fallen from 44 percent in 2011 to 24 percent in 2017, which the government consid-

Eight cities in China curb purchases of vehicles



Guilang, Guizhou province: In October 2011, the local government began issuing daily lists of license plate numbers that entitle drivers to use the roads at certain times and days.

Guangzhou, Guangdong province: In July 2012, Guangzhou implemented new license plate issuance measures that combine a lottery and an auction.

Shenzhen, Guangdong province: In December 2014, Shenzhen imposed an annual purchase quota of 100,000 for conventionally powered cars. The number of license plates issued for new energy vehicles via a lottery was capped at 20,000 a year.

Beijing: In 2010, the capital implemented a monthly license plate lottery. Since 2014, the lottery has been held twice a month.

Tianjin: In December 2013, the municipality launched a policy to limit the number of license plates issued via a combined lottery and auction. Since March 2014, the government has published lists of license plates eligible for use on the city's roads on certain times and days.

Shijiazhuang, Hebei province: Since 2013, drivers are automatically issued with license plates for the first two vehicles they purchase. Those wishing to own three or more cars must apply for additional license plates.



Shanghai: In 2016, the city implemented a quota for the auction of license plates for private cars. An auction is used to award new plates or reassign previously used plates. Single people are required to apply via their family. The city's auction system was first used in 1994.

Hangzhou, Zhejiang province: In May 2014, Hangzhou imposed new limits on the issuance of license plates for conventional vehicles by adopting a combined lottery and auction system. There is no limit to the number of plates that can be issued for new energy vehicles.

CHINA DAILY

Stores see rise in cars from outside capital

Automobile service shops in Beijing have seen a surge in the number of vehicles registered outside the capital since the city introduced a license plate lottery in 2011 to limit new car purchases.

"Seventy percent of cars were bought and registered with Beijing plates five years ago," said Ma Qian, who has worked for Beijing Junbaowei Motors Trading Co for seven years. "But that's changed in the past two years, and now only 40 percent are registered in Beijing."

"It's not surprising for us since the license plate quota began," Ma added.

According to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, sales of vehicles in northern China, including Beijing, decreased 71.7 percent to 45,700 in 2017 compared with the previous year.

The lottery has also

XIN WEN

ers an obvious effect of the lottery policy.

The capital's traffic index in 2017 — a major gauge measuring traffic congestion — remained roughly the same as it was in 2016 at 5.6, standing for mild congestion. In 2010, the index was 6.1, showing a level between mild congestion and enormous congestion.

However, according to TomTom Traffic Index, an international information provider, Beijing ranks 10th on the list of the most congested cities in the world and drivers in Beijing spent 46 percent more travel time in 2017 as a result, up 8 percent from 2016.

Reducing emissions is another municipal concern.

affected other businesses at the Laiguangying auto shops, the largest hub for auto dealers in Beijing.

"It's obvious that it's been more difficult to sell cars in recent years," said Zhang Libin, a salesman for Mazda who has worked at the shop for more than two years. "We advise customers to buy cars when they're sure that they've already got a plate."

A policy to offer subsidies to encourage people to trade in vehicles in use for over five years has helped, but overall sales in Beijing are still slowing.

"It's the long-term development policy for Beijing to relieve the pressure from vehicles," said Ye Shengji, deputy secretary-general of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. "The decline is a natural trend."

Vehicle exhaust is the top source of PM2.5 — the hazardous fine particles in Beijing's air, based on an analysis from the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau in 2014, the latest numbers available.

It accounted for 31.1 percent of PM2.5, higher than the amount discharged from coal-consumption and industrial production, it said.

"Beijing has taken effective controls and managed to cut the pollution from vehicle exhausts in the past five years, which fueled the improvement of the air quality," Li Xiang, director of air quality management at the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau, said on Jan 4 while

releasing Beijing's air-quality report for 2017.

Ways around

Yu, the driver awaiting a tag, said he has seen more clear days this winter in Beijing and understands the government faces a complex problem.

He said he would like to compromise on his car dream from a petrol vehicle to a new energy vehicle and has completed the documents.

Liu Jiangbo, 30, an administrative clerk with a State-owned enterprise in Beijing, changed his application from petrol car to a new energy one in February 2017 after two-years of waiting. He received his tag several months later.

"When I noticed that the number of applicants for EV licenses have exceeded the number of NEV licenses given per year, I made up my mind to apply for an NEV," he said. "Otherwise, it would be a much longer time to wait to own a car in Beijing."

"Even though the new energy cars still have shortcomings, such as charging inconvenience and a low mile range, it's more important to own a car to serve my daily life than the difference of the power of the car," Liu said.

Some others tend to rent a car plate from people who own a plate but don't have the need to use their car.

Liu Lin, a lawyer with the Beijing Shuangli Law Firm, said it is illegal to rent a plate.

Yu Dan, 32, a bank clerk, bought a car with his friend's car license in 2016. "I've been driving this car for more than a year. Nothing bad happened," he said. "It's important that I have a car to use and my friend has kept his license. When he wants his license back, I just sell my car and give the plate back to him."

According to the regulation, one has to purchase a car and get it registered within half a year after he or she wins a license in the lottery. The period was extended to one year beginning in 2018.

The lottery policy not only blocks individuals, but also companies and organizations.

Ta Foundation for Animal Protection, a nonprofit organization in Beijing, was unable to get a license for its van, which was turned to a mobile animal clinic.

Lu Ping, a project manager for the foundation, said they waited for a year to eventually get one through a special approval process from the authority, but it's not the standard practice.

There is also a way to get a car license through buying a small-scale company that owns car plates, and there have been some successful cases. It is legal, but requires a lot of money.

Zheng Jinran contributed to this story.

Regulator targets bank quality, risks

Financial products, irregularities focus of efforts to maintain order

By JIANG XUEQING

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China will deepen efforts to maintain market order in the banking industry to prevent financial risks and promote the high quality growth of banks, the sector's regulator said on Saturday.

The China Banking Regulatory Commission listed a wide range of activities as key points for rectification this year, including preventing banks from funneling funds into the stock market, the real estate industry, local government financing vehicles, or high-polluting and overcapacity industries that do not meet national industrial policies.

The regulator will further control the risks of shadow banking and cross-market financial products by continuing to crack down on regulatory violations in the areas of interbank, wealth management and off-balance-sheet businesses.

It will strengthen supervision over commercial banks' corporate governance to prevent the transfer of benefits to main shareholders and prevent a single shareholder from holding an excessive proportion of a stake in a bank.

During the National Financial Work Conference in 2017, President Xi Jinping emphasized that guarding against systemic financial risks is the ongoing theme of financial work.

Regulators have stepped up a crackdown on financial irregularities. The CBRC punished 1,486 banking institutions and 1,096 individuals during the first 10 months in 2017, imposing fines of 592 million yuan (\$92 million) on institutions and 24.4 million yuan on individuals.

This year, the agency has issued a regulation on equity management for commercial banks, announced new rules to standardize the management of entrusted loans, and started seeking opinions on

the administrative measures to prevent large risk exposures for commercial banks.

"The CBRC will emphasize the construction of a long-term mechanism to lead banks in making a transition from high growth to high-quality development... and to improve their internal impetus for risk control," the regulator said in a statement.

Zeng Gang, director of banking research at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Finance and Banking, said the efforts to maintain financial order have achieved significant results, but some deep problems remain unsolved. To consolidate these results, the regulator must maintain its tough posture.

"In the past, China's banking industry was so concentrated on growth that it neglected risk control and compliance to a certain extent. Now, the banks have hit a dead end with this model of development," Zeng said. "Once they go through the pains brought by regulatory tightening, they'll find a new model and take the path of sustainable development."

Couple hot online for funny selfies in burned-out house

NANNING — A young couple have become online celebrities after taking humorous selfies in the wake of a blaze in their home in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

"I was in the bathroom, and smelled burning. When I opened the bathroom door, I saw a big fire," Zhong Cheng said after the incident last week.

He immediately woke his girlfriend and went to get water to put out the fire. His neighbors brought extinguishers and the flames were soon extinguished.

Instead of running from the wreckage, the couple began taking selfies in their pajamas, and even recorded a video of New Year's blessings.

"We wish you the best," the couple said in the video, their faces black from smoke.

The video began trending on Sina Weibo, where the topic "couple's selfies in burned house" received more than 10 million hits. Many netizens dubbed them "the funniest couple in history".

Zhong and his girlfriend run a noodle restaurant in Guilin, a popular tourist des-



Zhong Cheng's girlfriend poses for a picture with an extinguisher after the fire. ZHONG CHENG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

tinuation in southern China.

"We met each other at a party and were impressed by each other's sense of humor," Zhong recalled. "We like presenting our lives in a positive, humorous way."

The accident did not have a big impact on their life, and they plan to move back to the house after redecoration.

In the video, he also cautioned the public about the dangers of fire. "It's important to prevent fires in winter," he

said, sitting on a scorched couch. "In addition, it is important to face up to life's difficulties with a smile."

Zhong said the fire could have been caused by a heater, an item widely used during the cold, humid winter.

The couple were invited to visit the city's fire department to learn about fire prevention.

"Our experience will help raise public awareness of fire risks," Zhong added.

XINHUA



Punjab Saaf Pani Company
Government of the Punjab, Pakistan



Notice of Additional Pre - Qualification for Round 1 & 2 (Round 3)

For Bidders to provide clean drinking water infrastructure facilities in the Punjab Province, Pakistan

Government of the Punjab has launched a multibillion dollar, Chief Minister Punjab's Safe Drinking Water Program (Khadim-e-Punjab Saaf Pani Program) to provide safe drinking water to the people of rural and peri-urban areas of Punjab. The overall ambition is to provide clean water to over 20,000 villages with an estimated population of 77 million.

Punjab Saaf Pani Company - North (PSPC - North) with the support of international consultant engineers, project managers and advisors, is seeking the procurement for the construction, operation and maintenance of water facilities predominantly in the Southern part of Punjab province. This Pre-Qualification is a part of a significant ongoing program and covers seven contract packages, which may increase in Southern Tehsils of Punjab. Each package is between \$20 million to \$50 million (covering construction and five years of operations and maintenance period).

PSPC - North invites applications for the Pre-Qualification from contractors for this international competitive bid which would be launched after Pre-Qualification of contractors. For this Round, given the size and scale of the program, PSPC - North is particularly keen to invite international and national contractors having experience in water infrastructure projects. Procurement will be done under PPRA rules 2014 (www.ppra.punjab.gov.pk).

Contractors may acquire the Pre-Qualification document from the office of the PSPC - North (address below) or by sending an email to procurement@saafpani.gov.pk. It can also be downloaded directly from www.ppra.punjab.gov.pk or <http://saafpani.gov.pk/information-for-bidders>.

Applications for Pre-Qualification must be delivered in a sealed envelope by hand or through registered mail to the company address given below no later than **5 pm (Pakistan Standard Time) February 16th 2018**, and must be clearly marked as "Application for Pre-Qualification for PSPC - North Packages for additional Round 1 & 2".

CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER
PUNJAB SAAF PANI COMPANY - NORTH
5-Ahmed Block, New Garden Town, Lahore, Pakistan
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Reforms aim to boost business

Last year, Premier Li Keqiang chaired a series of meetings intended to produce policies that will help companies overcome major challenges, as **Zhang Yue** reports.

2017
year in
Review

Key categories

Healthcare reform and building medical partnerships



Poverty alleviation



Education



18 Improving people's livelihoods



9 Increasing employment



6 Innovation and entrepreneurship



4 Reforms of State-owned enterprises



7 Developing modern agriculture and raising farmers' incomes



6 Boosting manufacturing



30 Easing burdens on business and improving the business environment



STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MEETINGS IN 2017

China's Cabinet had discussions about **80** topics during **34** executive meetings

Key categories

Cutting taxes and fees



Government information transparency



Source: www.gov.cn

XIA DIWEN AND LI XIAOTIAN / CHINA DAILY

Sun Zhonghai, founder of Zhanrui Technology Co, made local media headlines when he introduced his company's work to Li Keqiang during the premier's visit to Dalian, Liaoning province, in June.

At that moment, Sun knew he had made the right decision when he chose to become an entrepreneur.

"I was lucky with the timing. My business would not have survived and developed without the country's policies to support entrepreneurship and innovation," the 25-year-old said.

A year ago, Sun's family voiced strong objections to his plan to start his own business, pointing out that his peers were busy landing jobs.

"My family believed that starting a business was too complicated and risky," he said.

Now, Sun, along with his team of six, is about to launch his first product and is receiving the first round of financing.

It took just one week to complete the registration procedure: all Sun had to do was to decide on a name for his company, and agree on a certain amount of registered capital — in his case about 100,000 yuan (\$15,480).

Like tens of thousands of young entrepreneurs, Sun is benefiting from a raft of new policies approved by the State Council, China's Cabinet, in the past year.

The measures are designed to remove the obstacles that have held businesspeople back and nurture new economic drivers.

Last year, the State Council held 34 executive meetings on 80 topics.

The meetings, chaired by the premier, discussed State-level policies and guidelines, and about one-third of them produced concrete guidelines to remove institutional hurdles and create a more comfortable environment for investment from both home and abroad.

The measures included reductions in taxes and fees, the development of inclusive finance, the provision of faster, cheaper broadband, the reduction of business charges and red tape, and the removal of obstacles to market access for private and foreign enterprises.

The moves were designed to facilitate China's economic transformation from an export-led growth model, which has provided dynamic results in the past 35 years, to one driven by consumption and services.

Cost reductions

State Council executive meetings in January, February, May and August produced measures to expand financing channels for micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

Business fees deemed unreasonable were cut to lower institutional costs and boost market vitality. Meanwhile, oversight charges levied on banks and other financial institutions were put on hold.

Zhao Jie, 31, has worked at Weimeinuo, an innovation industrial park in Changzhi, Shanxi province, since 2014. The park offers production, sales and financial services to companies, especially small and microbusinesses. Most of the businesses in the park sell construction materials.

Last year, the fees levied on the park by local and central governments were reduced by more than 300,000 yuan, according to Zhao. While she expressed approval for the

changes, Zhao is more interested in the removal of administrative hurdles.

Weimeinuo welcomed 10 new companies last year, and scores of startups registered to share business premises there in accordance with measures released in 2014 that cut rents and costs.

The State Council also decided to roll out a host of reform measures that had been piloted in eight areas, aiming to allow innovation to spur entrepreneurship and employment, and accelerate the transformation of innovation into real productivity.

Flourishing

In the first three quarters of last year, new business registrations rose 12.5 percent as an average 16,500 new businesses were registered every day.

A report published by the Center for China and Globalization, the country's largest independent think tank which specializes in globalization and international cultural exchanges, showed that more than 40 percent of people who returned to the country last year after studying overseas joined private companies.

In 2014, Wang Shengdi founded Daddy's Choice Co, which makes paper diapers, directly after gaining an MBA from Cornell University in New York because the "real economy is crucial for China, and I want to contribute."

The company now has more than 500 employees, and its young CEO has been impressed by the government's preferential policies for startups, especially the expansion of financing channels for small businesses.

Miao Lyu, co-founder of the Center for China and Globalization, said the State Council's decision to aid domestic startups and attract foreign businesses has ignited competition in innovation and industrial parks, and in business incubators nationwide.

Tax reform

Since May 2016, China has expanded tax reform to all industries, using tailored measures and a number of incentives to reduce the tax burden on companies and nurture business vitality.

In November, the State Council approved a regula-

tion that replaced corporate tax with value-added tax.

The move marked a milestone in the reform process by signaling the end of corporate tax, which was introduced in the 1950s.

Last year, the State Council's executive meetings produced three guidelines and documents related to tax reform and the reduction of fees levied on companies.

In addition, Premier Li chaired a number of seminars that centered on tax reform. Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics show that the tax burden and charges levied on companies has been reduced by more than 1 trillion yuan since VAT was launched nationally in May 2016.

Zhu Qing, a professor at Renmin University of China who specializes in tax studies, believes the move from corpo-

rate tax to VAT will have a profound effect, which many people have yet to realize.

"What's crucial about VAT is that it establishes a uniform tax to replace the previous two separate taxes. This is more important than the amount of money businesses have saved through tax reform," he said.

Zhu believes the implementation of a uniform rate of VAT is achievable as a result of China's adoption and development of internet technology and big data.

"The sound development of internet governance, online registration and big data makes it easier to track businesses that try to avoid paying taxes, thus improving the prospects for a uniform rate of tax," he said.

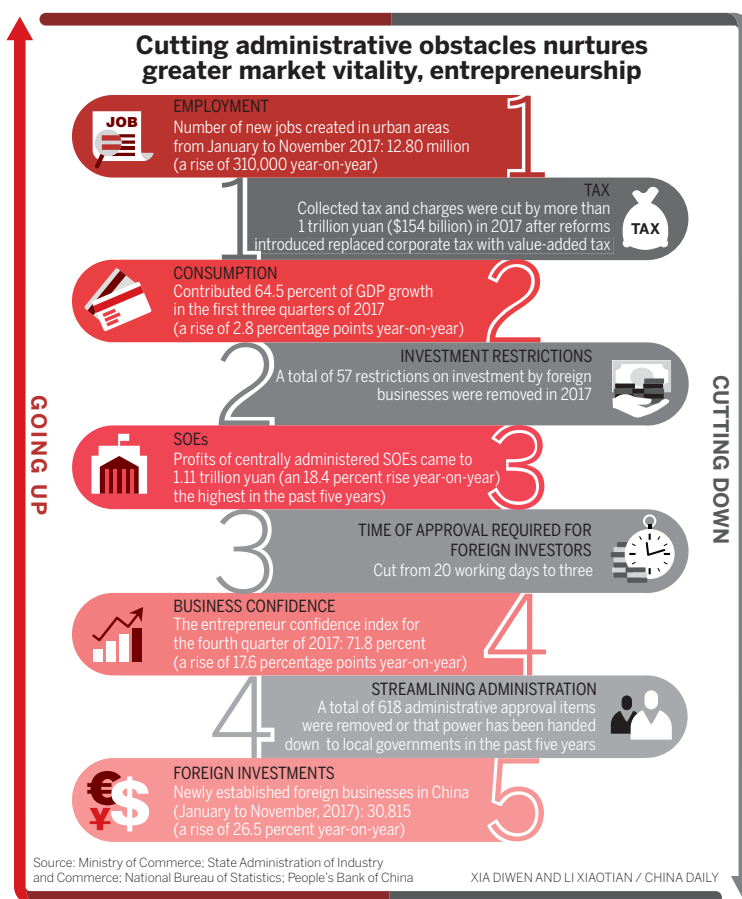
For Bai Chong'en, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and

Management, the reduction of fees levied on companies is an essential move to promote business vitality. He said companies that try to avoid paying fees rarely save money in the long run.

"Cutting fees is just as important as cutting taxes. But because there is a lot of flexibility with fees, some companies may work on finding loopholes to help them avoid paying. Yet by doing so they are also paying the cost of taking a risk," he said.

"Government moves to reduce business-related fees are crucial, because they will discourage companies from trying to avoid fees, and that will gradually build a business environment that more people will believe in."

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Made in China 2025 seen as a key priority for govt

By **HU YONGQI**
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In the past year, the government has been committed to transforming the manufacturing industry into a smart, high-quality sector by providing greater policy support and establishing national demonstration zones for the Made in China 2025 initiative.

Last year, the initiative, which was introduced in 2015, became a priority for the State Council, China's Cabinet, as Premier Li Keqiang presided over three executive meetings intended to push forward the strategy and raise the competitiveness of manufacturing.

On May 17, the State Council approved six measures to further promote the initiative and the transformation of the manufacturing sector. The meeting focused on key technologies such as sensors, industrial software and management systems, and also aimed to improve research and development in technologies such as new materials.

A meeting on July 19 approved several national demonstration zones for the strategy, involving 12 cities and four city clusters. The cities are Ningbo and Huzhou in Zhejiang province, Quanzhou in Fujian province, Shenyang in Liaoning province, Changchun in Jilin province, Wuhan in Hubei province, Wuzhong in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Qingdao in Shandong province, Chengdu in Sichuan province, Ganzhou in Jiangxi province, Guangzhou in Guangdong province and Hefei in Anhui province.

The demonstration zones will be given greater financial support, professional training programs and streamlined administrative procedures.

An executive meeting on Sept 6 decided that the upgrading of the quality management system will be completed by the end of this year, while service providers and small and microenterprises

will be encouraged to join the system.

Upgrading of the manufacturing sector has been a key priority for the State Council since Made in China 2025 was proposed in late 2014. In March the following year, Li used the Government Work Report to announce a plan to promote the concept.

In 2016, the premier presided over four State Council executive meetings to move the strategy by further promoting its integration with the Internet Plus initiative, which combines the internet with traditional industries, along with the standardization of equipment manufacturing and improving the quality of consumer goods.

Visiting manufacturers was a must for Li during his tours of the provinces of Shandong, Shaanxi and Hubei last year, illustrating their importance.

The executive meetings were in line with the policy support and coordination demands required by China's transformation, said Zhu Sendi, a consultant with the China Machinery Industry Federation.

As early as 2010, the nation's manufacturing sector output was the highest in the world, but China still trails developed economies in terms of quality, innovation, industrial structure and sustainable development, he said.

Transformation into a stronger manufacturing sector will require a large number of innovation-oriented professionals, which will require reform of the education system, along with a good business environment which will encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, he added.

Huang Qunhui, director of the Institute of Industrial Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the sluggish global economy means Chinese manufacturers must improve the quality of their products and improve competitiveness to win market share.

Improvements seen in employment, education

By **HU YONGQI**

Thirteen of last year's 34 State Council executive meetings approved moves to boost employment, improve education and healthcare services, and undertake shantytown renovation work.

Four of the meetings, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang, were devoted to employment policies, addressing job creation and ensuring steady rises in employment.

In January, the 13th Five-Year Plan on Promoting Employment (2016-20) was approved by an executive meeting with the aim of creating more jobs and improving the quality of the labor force.

On April 5, the State Council decided to boost employment prospects for key groups, including migrant workers, graduates, returnees and those affected by the reduction of outdated production capacity.

In the first eight months of last year, more than 10 million jobs were created for urban residents, while an executive meeting in September approved preferential policies to help key groups, including funds to boost startups.

As a result, 11.9 million jobs were created in urban areas between January and October, beating the target of 11 million Li pledged in the Government Work Report.

The premier also frequently reiterated the importance the government attaches to employment as a vital way of improving people's lives.

1.84
trillion yuan

amount invested in the renovation of shantytown dwellings

The Government Work Report also pledged the renovation of shantytown homes.

By Dec 20, work had started on more than 6 million shantytown apartments, with investment of 1.84 trillion yuan (\$278 billion), according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

The reform of public hospitals and direct settlement of medical reimbursements were discussed at an executive meeting on Oct 9, and earning commission from the sale of medicines is now banned in public hospitals.

The premier also announced the cancellation of roaming charges paid to telecommunication companies.

Employment is a key priority, and the premier has noted that a steady income is the best way of improving people's livelihoods, said Jia Xijin, associate professor of public management at Tsinghua University.

The executive meetings aimed to fulfill targets outlined in the Government Work Report to reduce costs and improve people's sense of improvement, especially in areas such as healthcare, education and jobs, she added.

Appreciative lung recipient registers as organ donor

Gift of life sparks desire to raise public awareness and understanding of donation system

By CANG WEI in Nanjing
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A donated lung links a woman in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, with a boy who grazed cattle thousands of miles away in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

For Wu Yue, 30, who received the lung transplant, breathing deeply is the best thing in the world.

In 2017, to show her gratitude, Wu registered as an organ donor herself, which she considered a gift for the donor. "It's not an easy decision to make, but I want to voice my support for the organ donor system and encourage more people to understand and support it. Even if my organs are not suitable for donation, I'm willing to donate my body for medical research."

She calls the donor "cattle-grazing boy", because the only information she knows about him is that he was a boy who grazed cattle and fell to his death from a hill.

"He gave his lung to me and I should take good care of it," Wu said. "I often imagine what he looked like and how he lived his young life. He is my best listener. Besides my parents and good friends, he is another reason for me to carry on."

In May 2013, Wu was diagnosed with lymphangioleiomyomatosis, a rare lung disease. "My happy life suddenly changed," she said. "The doctors told my parents that I could live up to five years if I



Wu Yue wakes up after undergoing lung transplant surgery in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, in 2013.

inhaled oxygen continuously. In other words, my life would be painful and meaningless."

The doctors told her that a lung transplant was her only chance of survival. However, she might not live long enough to receive a donated organ.

According to the China Organ Donation Administrative Center, the number of people willing to donate organs has risen since the country launched its public organ donation system in March 2010. In 2016, 4,080 people donated 11,296 organs

in China, while about 300,000 patients were on waiting lists for organs.

Wu was lucky. She received a call from a hospital three months later, telling her that a matching organ had just been donated and she must go immediately to the Wuxi People's Hospital.

Wu still remembers when she woke up the next morning after the surgery. She said the pain in her chest reminded her every second that she was still alive.

Recovering from the surgery was tough and she tried



Wu visits Hong Kong Disneyland in 2015.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

her best not to cry, believing it would slow the recovery process and harm the donated organ.

Doctors have told her that every patient that receives a lung transplant faces a risk of rejection and the longest a patient has lived after lung transplant surgery is 15 years.

She has shown symptoms of lung function failure since September, but she chose to keep it to herself for three months. After doctors confirmed that she needs to be hospitalized, she said that she would prefer to receive treat-

ment after celebrating New Year's with her parents.

"My parents are too tired and they deserve a good relaxing New Year's Day," she said. "I can never forget my father's smile when he saw me walk again by myself. My mother was worried about me and could not fall asleep for days at the hospital."

Wu said doctors agreed that she be hospitalized immediately after the New Year.

Guo Jun contributed to this story.

Around China

HENAN Kind man dubbed 'brother of mutton'



A butcher shop owner has been dubbed "the brother of mutton" after donating more than 1,000 kilograms of mutton to local sanitation workers in Zhengzhou for eight consecutive years. Sun Heli has donated meat and cash coupons worth more than 100,000 yuan (\$15,380). Sun and his wife also send mutton to the homes of disabled people who are not able to visit his store.

HUNAN Falling headboard injures hotel guest

city's Haidian district. Gao, who has only a primary school education, said he believed the money would bring him good luck when he used it to buy lottery tickets.

BEIJING MORNING POST

HUNAN Falling headboard injures hotel guest



A woman, surnamed Xia, was injured after a decorative wooden headboard fell on her head while she was sleeping in a hotel in Changsha on Jan 3. Xia was sent to the hospital, where she received nine stitches for a 3-centimeter cut near her left eye. Xia is negotiating with the hotel over compensation after refusing an offer of 10,000 yuan (\$1,530).

CHONGQING MORNING POST

HUBEI Driver racks up 271 traffic violations



Traffic police were shocked to discover the driver of a car had violated traffic rules 271 times and was in arrears with traffic fines amounting to 34,850 yuan (\$5,370) in Huangshi. In addition, he had not purchased insurance for three years or conducted annual vehicle inspections. The driver is liable to lose his license for violating traffic rules, according to traffic regulations.

CHUTIAN METROPOLIS DAILY

BEIJING Temple theft funds lottery tickets

A man, surnamed Gao, has been detained for stealing 4,000 yuan (\$610) from donation boxes in a temple in the

Patient suspected of dealing drugs

Police have detained a man, surnamed Li, on suspicion of selling drugs from a private room in a hospital in Changde. During a special operation, police seized drugs, needles and related equipment hidden inside quilts and pillows. It is the first time that a suspected drug addict has been investigated for using a hospital room to sell and take drugs in the city, police said.

XIAOXIANG MORNING POST



Advertorial

Jaguar XEL drives luxury beyond the possible into the imagination

By HAO YAN
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Pursuing the essence of dynamics, renowned British auto brand Jaguar's unsurpassed all-new XEL sports sedan is redefining high performance handling, while driving beyond luxurious comfort.

Chery Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Co announced its all-new Jaguar XEL's global launch in Kunming, capital of Yunnan province on Dec 15, and leading movie actor and singer William Chan from Hong Kong was on hand at the ceremony to ensure the excitement stayed high-octane.

After giving a rousing performance of his hit song *Meant to be Unique*, the Jaguar brand spokesman handed over to a lucky owner the first of 100 units of a limited edition of the XEL, which were pre-ordered. Promising an excellent deluxe experience, sporty handling and advanced technology, the all-new Jaguar XEL is tailored to a trendier and younger generation of owner, for a top driving and riding experience.

"The launch of the all-new Jaguar XEL is another milestone in the development of Chery Jaguar Land Rover in China," said Chris Chen, deputy president of Chery Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Co.

"It not only further improves and adds to the Jaguar brand in China's luxury car market, but also brings leading technology and products to more Chinese consumers," he continued.

The launch of the all-new Jaguar XEL not only demonstrates Chery Jaguar Land Rover's comprehensive corporate strength, but also represents its decisive move into China's premium automotive segment.

The company said it is adhering to its superb global standards, pure British quality and intelligent style in understand-

83,888 cars

were sold by Chery Jaguar Land Rover in 2017

ing the true demands of today's Chinese market, and the new products are designed with state-of-the-art technology to meet customer expectations.

"The target customers are a group of younger passionate Chinese people who desire a high-quality in life," Chen said.

"Our market segment is highly competitive, and we have to satisfy buyers who have very high expectations about product attractiveness."

Thanks to its precise positioning and the compelling looks of four locally manufactured models, Chery Jaguar Land Rover has realized significant business achievements and in its market performance over the past year.

After achieving sales of 10,269 units, translating to 25.5 percent year-on-year growth in December, the joint venture recorded total deliveries of 83,888 units for the full year in China, 35.2 percent more than in 2016.

The local models that sport Jaguar and Land Rover badges contributed about 60 percent to the dual brands' total China sales volume in 2017, an extraordinary milestone reached five years after Chery Jaguar Land Rover joined the luxury car race in the Chinese market.

Un-surpassed sportiness

The all-new Jaguar XEL carries on the pure brand's sporting traditions. With fresh dynamic technology and aluminum architecture on a sports-car-caliber chassis, it fully demonstrates Jaguar's unparalleled art of performance.



Chery Jaguar Land Rover's four locally made models are popular. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Final adjustments of cars are made at a Jaguar XEL production line.



A worker plays close attention to detail in the paint shop.

The sedan is powered by the advanced Ingenium 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine from Jaguar Land Rover, tied in to an 8-speed automatic transmission delivering a more robust, efficient, smooth driving experience.

The all-new Jaguar XEL is the only model in its segment equipped with intelligent aluminum architecture. Advanced forming materials

and technologies are integrated into the latest model, while handling performance is optimized.

Without sacrificing internal space, the all-new Jaguar XEL achieves an agile handling performance and also maintains an elegant figure, thanks to a 50:50 front-back weight distribution.

The new model is equipped with a sportscar-caliber chassis

and double wishbone suspension system sourced from the Jaguar F-TYPE, enhancing the overall body stability. Through systematic refining and fine tuning, it delivers a rich driving experience and delicate sporty handling.

With precise and agile steering, and a torque vector allocation system utilizing track technology, the vehicle can stay relaxed and

stable through cornering, allowing drivers to enjoy more.

The new model impressively performs in its 200PS version, achieving a fuel efficiency of 6.7 liters after running 100 kilometers.

Luxurious experience

The all-new Jaguar XEL further enriches the luxurious commitment of the vehicle,

through innovative technologies and deluxe configurations for drivers and riders, to enjoy a better-than-expected technical experience.

The all-new Jaguar XEL is equipped with unique 12.3-inch TFT multifunction LCD instrumentation, which is visually impactful and exclusive in its class.

The center console features a seamless and fluidly responsive 10.2-inch touchscreen, whose operation is as convenient as an iPad. The two-sided screen display can satisfy the needs of drivers and passengers.

The built-in InControl Touch Pro infotainment system — with its powerful navigation functions and its premium remote control functionality — allows the driver to power the engine, AC and unlock doors via their Apple and Android devices.

The 4G Wi-Fi hotspot can provide network connectivity to as many as 8 devices simultaneously, to connect them with the world.

The all-new Jaguar XEL has a class-leading wheelbase length of 2,935 millimeters, leaving an additional 112 mm leg-room and an additional 100 mm knee-room comfort for rear passengers, without compromising the outstanding proportions and seductive lines.

In addition, the panoramic roof allows additional natural light to illuminate the extra room in the rear seats.

While on the road, the Meridian audio system delivers an unparalleled pure and exquisitely detailed sound quality, with an awe-inspiring sound effect configuration which gives a top-end in-car theater impact.

The auto makers are offering a total of six configurations, including the XEL first edition, with price ranging from 288,800 to 428,800 yuan (\$45,515 to \$67,579).

EDITORIALS

No flouting of China's core interests will be tolerated

What if a Chinese enterprise listed Alaska or Hawaii as an independent country rather than a state of the United States? It would definitely be considered as having infringed on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United States. Of course, none of them would be stupid enough to make such a mistake as they well know that they should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country when doing business there.

However, Marriott International did that by listing China's Tibet autonomous region, the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions and Taiwan as independent countries in a questionnaire to members of its loyalty program. Some staff members of Marriott even gave thumbs up for "Tibet independence". Other foreign companies, such as Delta Airlines and other carriers have done the same thing on their official websites.

These foreign companies should be aware that Chinese people are particularly sensitive to the status of Tibet, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, which are all parts of China. There is not the least reason for Marriott and the other foreign companies to list these regions as independent countries on any occasion. They should have known that they would provoke a strong reaction from Chinese people.

They should also be aware that they have flouted China's laws, as both the country's Cyber Security Law and the Advertising Law prohibit any individual or company from doing anything that undermines the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It goes without saying that any foreign company that makes the mistake of doing so owe Chinese people a sincere apology, which Marriott and Delta Airlines have both issued. But apart from that, they need to investigate how such a terrible mistake could have been made given the fact they have already been doing business in China for many years and should have known that such actions constitute a violation of China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also need to adopt necessary measures to prevent such mistakes from being made again.

China welcomes all foreign companies to do business in China, and Chinese authorities have reiterated on many occasions China's opening-up policy. But that does not mean foreign enterprises are immune to the consequences of defying China's laws and can flout the core interests of the country.

Trump's ultimatum on Iran deal out of touch with reality

Though Donald Trump did heed appeals from advisers and allies and waive sanctions against Iran, he simultaneously planted a time bomb for the Iran nuclear deal, the United States' relations with its allies, as well as peace and stability in the Middle East.

Warning that the waiver was "the last chance" to "fix the terrible flaws" in the agreement, he threatened to withdraw the US "immediately" otherwise.

Such a blunt ultimatum, as has been typical of his unilateralist approach to significant international affairs, is both irresponsible and potentially dangerous.

As is obvious in its name — Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — the Iran nuclear agreement was in the first place a multilateral arrangement. The nature of such an international accord calls for a consensus among all stakeholders for any changes to be made. Not only are all the other parties to the deal content with it, the rest of the international community thinks highly of it too.

And despite Trump's allegation of "multiple violations", the International Atomic Energy Agency, the US' European allies, even his own government find Teheran is generally complying with the deal.

Beijing cherishes the agreement as a "paragon" for resolving international hot-spot issues through diplomacy. So do the US' European allies.

President Trump's request for a side accord, to make the current constraints on Iran's nuclear pursuit permanent, add "triggers" for re-imposing sanctions, or to tie sanctions to other concerns, is anything but constructive since Iran would not participate in the process. Teheran has explicitly refused any such attempt.

Trump's "holistic" approach is unrealistic, because it aspires for too much in a single deal that was meant specifically to address nuclear concerns.

The Trump White House has been vocal about various other topics regarding Iran, from alleged threats from its long-range missile programs to Hezbollah. More recently, they have berated Teheran for human rights violations amid the latest protests in Iran. But tying those to the nuclear deal will go nowhere in the real world and only destroy what has already been attained.

The existing agreement would not have been possible had the Obama administration not been pragmatic enough to focus on the nuclear issue.

What the Trump administration lacks is precisely the diplomatic realism his immediate predecessor demonstrated in cutting the deal.

Luo Jie



OPINION LINE

Schools must take seriously their responsibility to prevent bullying

ON TUESDAY, a 15-year-old female middle school student in Xianyou city, East China's Fujian province, was stabbed to death by a male classmate. The local police said the suspect stabbed the victim in the neck. Thepaper.cn comments:

The local police said the suspect is under the age of 18, which sparked fierce discussion online because many people fear he might be given a too light penalty as he is still a minor.

There has already been much discussion about this incident and the legislature might need to consider improving the law on the protection of minors to make sure underage persons get their deserved punishment if a court finds them guilty of a crime.

Yet the incident in Fujian raises another question: How can schools prevent violence and bullying?

The school said the suspect stabbed the victim to death during a quarrel. Quarrels happen every day between middle school students, yet seldom do we hear of any involving the use of knives.

Indeed, even carrying a knife is prohibited in schools, so why was the boy able to have one on his person and use it.

In December 2016, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Security, together with nine other ministries co-issued a national plan on preventing campus violence.

According to the plan, the principal of a middle school or primary school or a kindergarten is responsible for preventing any violence.

The involved school should answer the question of how the suspect was able to carry a knife at school.

However, in its most recent announcement, the school did not answer any questions about the knife. That arouses worry about the involved school trying to hide the whole incident.

We hope that the local education authorities will investigate to find out if the school could have done more to prevent the tragedy.

Schools should never seek to hide bullying in the closet, and school managements should take the initiative to shoulder their responsibility to prevent any violent incidents.

Ban professors dating students

ON THURSDAY NIGHT, Beihang University in Beijing dismissed one of its professors, after investigating claims by four female graduates that he sexually harassed them when they were in college. China Daily writer Zhang Zhouxiang comments:

According to the university, Chen Xiaowu not only lost his professorship but his teaching qualifications as well. He was also removed from his position as deputy head of the university's undergraduate school.

On the university's official micro blog account, there have already been more than 16,000 likes and 4,000 comments, the vast majority of which support the university's actions.

However, some have also asked why the university made the scandal public.

It is surprising such a question still exists in 2018. Living in the age of the internet, no one should dream of hiding the truth of such a scandal forever. If any part is hidden, there will always be accusations of trying to bend the law for power.

Beihang University acted quickly in response to the allegations and has been very brave in

making the whole thing public. The next step, as its announcement mentioned, is to further improve the university regulations so as to prevent similar incidents from happening again.

For example, in many top global universities, there are strict rules prohibiting a professor from dating a student, because the former has power over the latter and any relationship is fundamentally unequal. In domestic universities such things are not encouraged, but most universities have not introduced a strict ban. That's partly why Chen had the chance to sexually harass these students.

Maybe Beihang University and other institutions of higher education could learn from the example from their foreign counterparts and introduce such bans. Only with proper and strict regulations can such scandals be prevented in the future.

Many legal issues surrounding death of a dog in Sichuan

HE XINGLI, a 34-year-old in Chengdu, Sichuan province, found a dog one month ago. Yet when the owner came to get the dog back, He threatened to kill the dog if the owner did not give her money. When the police were called, He reportedly killed the dog by throwing it off the building. Beijing News invited a lawyer to analyze the legal issues behind the incident:

Having already intimidated the dog's owner with WeChat messages suggesting she have sexual relations with her "brother", when the dog owner came to collect the dog, He refused to give the animal back unless she was given some money for feeding the dog. Many people have asked whether He was extorting money from the owner in this way.

According to the law, He is obliged to return the dog, but she also has the right to ask for some money to cover the dog's living costs, but the money should be within a reasonable limit and should not be given under duress. In this case, especially, He should not be considered trying to extort money from the dog's owner because she did not name an amount. However, the police should investigate the dog owner's claim she felt threatened by the WeChat messages to see if they broke the law.

Some netizens said He has apologized, but she should compensate the owner for her loss, which was the result of her actions.

If He killed the dog intentionally and the dog was purchased for more than 5,000 yuan (\$773.9), she could be charged with the crime of intentionally damaging another person's property. The dog was a Corgi, and these generally sell for more than 5,000 yuan so that is a possibility.

Even if the dog was bought for less than 5,000 yuan, He broke the Public Order Management and Punishment Law by ruining another person's property if she killed the dog intentionally. The legal penalty for that is 5 to 15 days detention.

However, the law allows the police to negotiate a settlement between the two parties if the case is not serious. The latest news updates suggest the dog fell from He's home on the sixth floor when the police arrived, so that might be the way to resolve the dispute over the dog. The owner's claim of being threatened is another matter.

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HOT WORDS

Three-year action plan for quality enhancement

三年质量提升行动
(sānnián zhiliàng tīshēng xíngdòng)

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine said at a recent national quality supervision work conference that it is launching a three-year action plan for quality enhancement from 2018 to 2020.

The three-year action plan intends to remarkably increase the quality of products, construction and services, steadily improve the quality of industrial development, upgrade the level of regional quality and fully enhance the efficiency of national quality infrastructure construction.

The action plan for quality improvement will mainly focus on increasing the supply of quality agricultural products, food and drugs, and promoting the upgrading of consumer goods. It also aims to improve the competitiveness of equipment manufacturing and the quality of construction projects, promote improved quality and efficiency in

the service sector, and promote social governance and higher quality public services, as well as accelerate the optimization and upgrading of foreign trade.

According to Zhi Shuping, director of the quality supervision administration, the three-year action plan aims to help make China a strong power in product and services by 2035.



Online
Scan it for more hot words.

Yu Yongding

Has economic growth stabilized?

For the last decade or so, China's economy has been on something of a roller-coaster ride. As 2018 begins, is the country approaching a new ascent, a steep drop, or something in between?

Before the global economic crisis a decade ago, the Chinese economy was growing at a breakneck pace. But when the crisis hit, the growth rate fell relatively sharply. Thanks to a 4 trillion yuan (\$586 billion) stimulus package, growth soon reached its trough and began to climb again, reaching 12.2 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2010.

Soon after, however, monetary tightening put economic growth back on a downward trajectory, spurring the government to loosen policy and introduce mini-stimulus packages in late 2011 and early 2012. This produced a short-lived and moderate rebound, with economic growth again beginning to slide, albeit less steeply, soon after.

Finally, in 2016, Chinese economic growth began to stabilize again, with the annual rate reaching 6.7 percent for three quarters in a row. The latest figures show China's economy grew by 6.8 percent in the third quarter of 2017, leading many economists to offer rather optimistic forecasts for the coming year.

Though China's financial system is fraught with worrying vulnerabilities, many Chinese economists believe the country has at last entered a period of stable annual growth of about 6.5 percent — a level that is in line with potential. The International Monetary Fund has echoed this view in its latest World Economic Outlook, predicting 6.8 percent growth in 2017 and a 6.5 percent rate in 2018.

I am less sanguine. For decades, fixed-asset investment was the main driver of growth, accounting for almost half of the total demand. Its share of China's GDP today exceeds 50 percent, while investment calculated as residual capital formation accounts for some 45 percent of GDP.

Yet, since late 2013, investment growth has been declining steadily, a trend that accelerated in the second half of 2017. In the first three quarters of 2017, fixed-asset investment grew at an average rate of just 2.19 percent year-on-year. In the third quarter, investment growth was actually negative, at -1.1 percent. China has not seen such lows in decades.

From the perspective of structural adjustment, China's declining dependence on fixed-asset investment should be hailed as an achievement. But, as the Financial Times' Martin Wolf emphasized in 2016, it will be very difficult for China to sustain aggregate demand amid weakening investment growth.

Household consumption is unlikely to pick up the slack. In the first three quarters of 2017, private consumption grew by 5.9 percent in real (inflation-adjusted) terms — down 0.5 percentage points from 2016. It is difficult to envisage a sudden surge in household consumption in 2018.

Growth in net exports, too, seems unlikely to offset declining investment, not least because US President Donald Trump continues to lean toward protectionism in his dealings with China. And while China probably will continue to use fiscal policy to shore up demand, the extent to which it can do so will be constrained by factors such as local governments' debt burden and a consequent clampdown on so-called local-govern-

More promising, the Chinese government's ongoing efforts to cultivate innovation and implement structural reforms are likely to produce major returns in the long term.

ment financing vehicles. The government is not likely to allow the budget deficit to surpass 3 percent of GDP.

China's fixed-asset investment comprises three main categories: manufacturing, infrastructure, and real estate. Manufacturing investment accounts for the largest share — 30 percent. But it has been declining steadily since 2012, weakening overall investment growth. And it is unlikely to pick up again, unless China achieves some technological or institutional breakthrough.

On the other hand, investment in real estate has followed a cyclical pattern over the past two decades, recovering strongly in early 2016 before falling again in 2017. Given the government's determination to contain housing prices — which have, at various times, stoked concern about local bubbles — there is little reason to expect real-estate investment to rebound anytime soon.

This leaves only infrastructure invest-

ment, whose share of total investment has been increasing since 2012. But infrastructure investment has already reached such a high level that continued growth could worsen resource allocation — the opposite of the government's stated objectives. Add to that fiscal constraints and stricter financial regulation, and a further expansion of infrastructure investment would be difficult, to say the least.

All of this leads to a simple conclusion: unless I've read the official investment statistics wrong, optimism about China's economic growth in 2018 is not warranted. But this does not mean China's prospects are altogether dismal. If economic growth seems to be falling far below the 6.5 percent target, the government will employ macroeconomic stabilization tools despite the high heavy future costs, while working to prevent financial vulnerabilities from turning into systemic financial risks. More promising, the Chinese government's ongoing efforts to cultivate innovation and implement structural reforms are likely to produce major returns in the long term.

This suggests China's economic roller coaster is headed for another climb, and that growth will eventually stabilize at a decent rate. But, as with most popular attractions, its passengers may have to wait a while.

The author, a former president of the China Society of World Economics and director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, served on the Monetary Policy Committee of the People's Bank of China from 2004 to 2006. Project Syndicate



Cai Hong

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Relay races reflect the spirit of Japan's youth

It would not be an overstatement to say Japan's New Year begins with the Hakone Ekiden, as an iconic long-distance road relay race is known. The 217.8-kilometer relay marathon sees male runners from more than two dozen college teams in the Tokyo area run from the center of the Japanese capital to the hot-spring resort of Hakone in Kanagawa prefecture in the Fuji foothills on Jan 2. They run all the way back to downtown Tokyo on Jan 3.

The event is one of the highest-rated annual sports broadcasts.

Participants from Aoyama Gakuin University, who for nine decades had not won a single race, won the victor's trophy this year for the fourth time in a row.

The Hakone Ekiden takes place along a section of the Tokaido, one of the oldest roads connecting eastern and western parts of Japan — Tokyo and Kyoto — with the iconic, snow-capped Mount Fuji soaring in the background.

Ekiden, a word comprising eki (station) and den (passing down), originally referred to the system developed during the Edo Period (1603-1867) to arrange relays of horses to carry important messages between different points on major roads. Ekiden entered the Japanese language lexicon as a byword for long-distance running in 1917 thanks to the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper.

The relay races shape young people, instilling in them the qualities of patience, commitment and perseverance, which has allowed Japan to always put up a bold and brave face even in the worst of times.

Long-distance running has a long and noble tradition in Japan, which is famous for a large contingent of elite amateur runners thanks to the marathons and ekiden races held in many cities. As part of the rebuilding process after World War II, many companies, from department stores and automakers to cosmetics makers and even a lingerie store, formed sports teams to help raise the morale of their workers.

The Hakone race is a team sport based on the concept of one runner passing a *tasuki*, or cord, to another. The *tasuki* that also serves as a baton symbolizes years of each team member's training, setbacks, sacrifices and dreams.

The college students' passion for the New Year's relay marathon is inspiring. Many runners dedicate their college life to it. From one section to another, passing the school *tasuki* is more important to the runners than anything else. Such passion and love for relay races create dramatic moments every year.

Some runners outdo themselves thanks to their team members' faith in them. A few runners, even after suffering an injury in their leg or ankle, are known to have kept running to pass on the *tasuki* to the next runner. Crowds and commentators alike lavish praises on the losers as much as the winners.

The relay race is believed to have become a national bonding ritual in Japan. It tells us a lot about the strengths of Japanese culture — celebrated attributes of cooperation, duty, dedication and perfectionism. The situation in Japanese workplaces is similar — and the lack of an antidote to fatigue results in employees fighting through pain to success.

In the end, the Hakone Ekiden is all about the runners with their vast reservoirs of strength, endurance and talent. Even when hope is lost, they give the race everything they have.

The competition appeals to Japanese people's penchant for teamwork. When the first-place team crosses the line, it is an ecstatic "we" moment. When a runner trips or falls, the time lost is also a crushing "we" moment. Passing the *tasuki* from one runner to another carries a heavy emotional load. Tears do flow.

The relay races shape young people, instilling in them the qualities of patience, commitment and perseverance, which has allowed Japan to always put up a bold and brave face even in the worst of times.

The Hakone relay race during the New Year's holiday is inspirational; it helps people find persistence and ingenuity, and build the team spirit, leaving a romantic package of nostalgia for the youth for years to come.

Is West forming anti-China coalition?

Editor's note: A rising number of media reports say a new Western coalition may be in the making to counter China's rise and its increasing "sharp power". Is it true? What are the causes of the increasing conflicts between China and some major Western countries? Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily's Pan Yixuan. Experts follow:

No need to over-react over disagreements

The existing US alliances with some major countries may not necessarily be targeted at China. Perhaps their vigilance on China has strengthened because of the country's astounding development pace. For example, former US president Barack Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement was an economic version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. And the "Indo-Pacific" strategy US President Donald Trump has proposed — with Japan, Australia and India — might play the same role as TPP.

Besides, the ideological differences have also driven Western countries to treat China differently. China is still developing much faster than many people's expectations. In contrast to many major economies struggling to cope with the post-global financial crisis slowdown, China has maintained a steady and sustainable growth momentum.

Thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative and President Xi Jinping's efforts to build a community of shared future for humankind, China is much closer to global center stage than ever before. Hence, some Western countries consider China a challenge to the world order led by the United States.

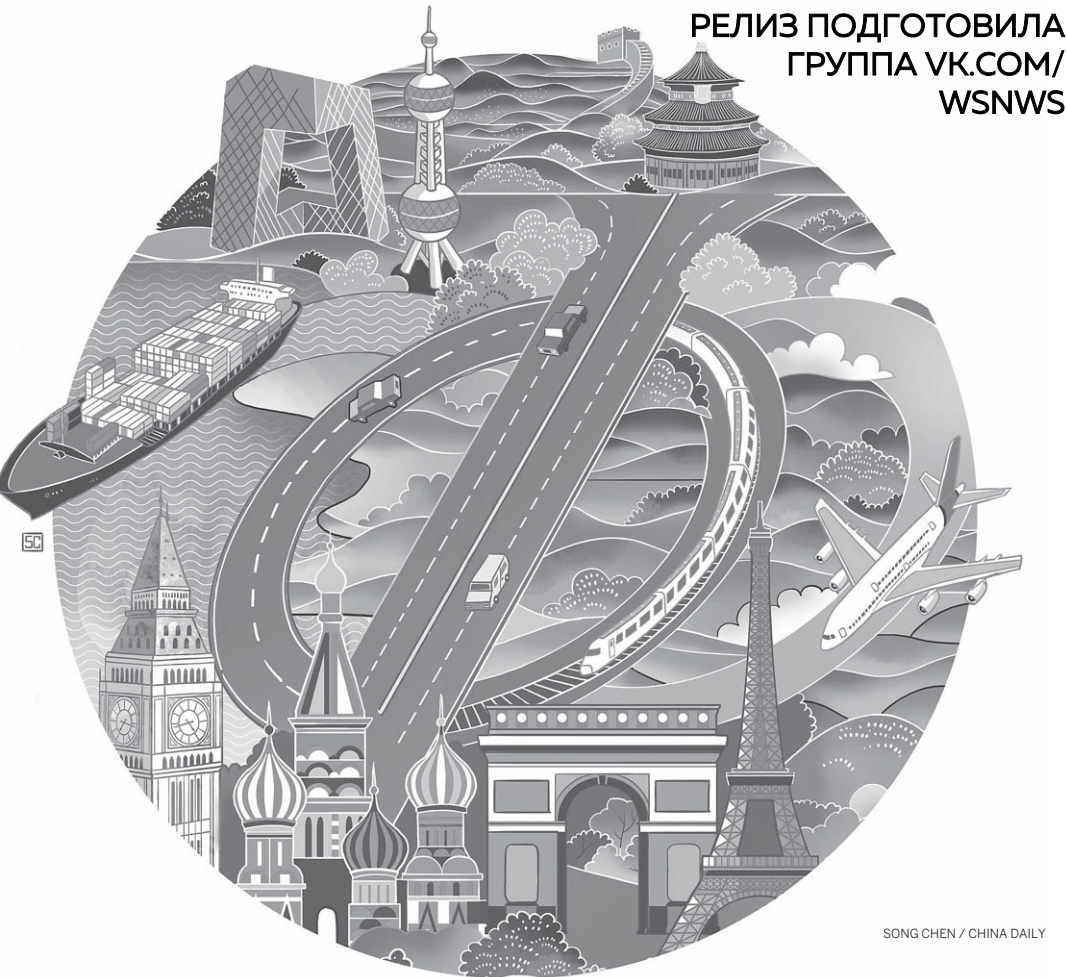
Also, Japan and India could become less friendly toward China, partly because of their imbalanced economic development. Japan used to be the largest economy in Asia, but today it is facing many economic and demographic challenges — fast aging population for instance — which are obstructing its growth. Like China, India is also a large developing country, but it has a big development gap with China. So it is natural that a rising China will have differences and conflicts with some other countries.

Therefore, China and the other countries should make concerted efforts to keep the disputes under control, so as to help make the world order fairer and more stable. It is also important for China to take measures that would enable the world to understand that China will remain committed to peace.

Tao Jian, president of the University of International Relations

Using cooperation to build confidence

That some Western countries' conflicts with China are increasing is a worrying trend, but all sides should be cautious



РЕЛИЗ ПОДГОТОВИЛА ГРУППА VK.COM/WSNWS

SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY



Tao Jian



Wang Yiwei

China is shifting from quantity to quality growth.

China has also made big contributions to global governance, which have further increased in the past years thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative. The initiative is not only fueling economic growth in all the involved countries but also improving local people's well-being. But the West may not appreciate such public products provided by China.

The world is paying greater attention to China because its increasing cooperation with other countries is yielding more and more mutual benefits. So Beijing should use its economic advantage to take steps that would help other countries to better understand China.

Also, China should be careful about how it presents itself to the outside world. For example, it should let the world know

enough to not fall into the Cold War trap. After the end of the Cold War, the West became more open toward China and its economy, and China adhered to socialism with Chinese characteristics to make unprecedented economic achievements. Now, Chi-

na's development model is not a nationalistic concept aimed at just boosting its economy — the model suits its national conditions but it has also been learning from the good experiences and good practices of other countries. More important, as an important member of the international society, China will remain committed to developing with other countries through cooperation.

Wang Yiwei, Jean Monnet chair professor at Renmin University of China

Beijing plays positive role on world stage



Han Feng

Besides, the US has launched several anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations against Chinese products. And even

though China is the European Union's second-largest trade partner, the EU has joined the US to deny that China is a market economy.

Last year, Australia claimed China is interfering in its internal affairs despite having few differences with China.

Misunderstandings over a rising China co-exist with the age-old Western bias against China. For example, the aim of the Belt and Road Initiative is not to project China as a big geopolitical player, but the West is not convinced. In contrast, given its remarkable comprehensive development, China is willing to further contribute to global development.

Although anti-globalization sentiments in some parts of the world have made the world more complicated, cooperation and talks still work.

And Xi's efforts to strengthen global governance, including building a community of shared future for all humankind and the Belt and Road Initiative, have been acknowledged worldwide, which means China's voice is being widely heard, and this is good for regional and global development.

Han Feng, a researcher at the National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

US skiing industry praying for snow

Low precipitation throughout the west triggered one of the worst Decembers

DENVER — Across America's west, prayers for snowfall are being offered to the skies as the winter season has offered little relief to drought stricken areas thus far.

"Draw a line from eastern Washington down to Colorado — everything north is OK; everything south is in danger," said National Weather Service meteorologist Russell Danielson.

The enormous "danger zone" includes seven large western states — California, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada — and the "four-corner" states of Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico.

Danielson said that these areas are seeing up to an 80 percent reduction in snowfall so far this season, spelling a disastrous upcoming fire season unless more snowpack occurs.

"This Is Literally the West's Worst Winter in 60 years," a headline in influential Outside Magazine read last week, pointing to the lack of snow hurting America's \$ 5.6 billion ski industry.

In the 2016-2017 season, Colorado ski resorts saw 100,000 fewer visitors than

the previous year and an overall 2.8 percent annual decline in North American ski areas, according to Colorado Ski Country magazine.

"Much of western Colorado is dependent on the ski industry economy, so no snow means no income," said Carbondale Airbnb host Glenn Nemhauser.

While last season heavy December snows pushed visitor totals upward, this year, record low precipitation throughout the west triggered one of the worst Decembers in skiing history.

Without snow, seasonal ski guests are reluctant to make room reservations.

"The lack of snow also affects many, many small businesses and thousands of people in this part of the country," Nemhauser said. "Our bookings were dead in December."

Both the NWS and Colorado's ski resorts are hoping for heavy snowfall soon — that occurs regularly in the region at the end of January and early February.

"We're not banking on it ... and we definitely have to accommodate for the lack of

snow," said Liz Rovira, a public relations spokesperson for Aspen Skiing Company.

The US ski industry employs about 60,000, mostly seasonal workers, with mountainous Colorado and its 34 resorts leading the nation, according to US Department of Labor statistics.

The dry weather has put extra pressure on the marketing arms of Colorado's ski resorts to find creative ways to bring skiers to the slopes, despite the conditions.

Last month, to celebrate its 50th anniversary, Snowmass Mountain advertised a one-day "throw-back" promotion offering lift tickets for \$6.50 — the actual ticket price in 1967.

Climate scientists are quick to point to global warming as the culprit of the dry weather, while conservatives point to record cold temperatures in the East as proof global warming is overrated.

A report released Thursday by World Weather Attribution said the brutal two-week East Coast cold snap wasn't global warming, but a natural occurring anomaly.

The group of international scientists said climate change has made such cold spells less common and less intense.

XINHUA



Mexican luthier Salvador Meza (left) and his wife, make a replica guitar from *Coco* at their workshop, in Paracho, Michoacan state, Mexico on Tuesday. RONALDO SCHEMIDT / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Coco guitars all the rage in Mexico

MEXICO — Salvador Meza has been making guitars since he was a boy, but his leathery hands have never had to churn them out as fast as now — thanks to the hit movie *Coco*.

Meza, 41, is one of many renowned guitar-makers in the Mexican town of Paracho, which has been producing artfully crafted guitars since the 18th century.

But the sleepy colonial town has never seen a boom like this — all because of *Coco*, this year's Golden Globe winner for best animated film and a box office smash that has grossed more than \$500 million so far.

Set in Mexico, the movie tells the story of Miguel, a young boy who secretly longs to be a musician but is growing up in a family where music is forbidden.

Fate thrusts into his hands a white guitar encrusted with mother-of-pearl, topped with gold tuning pegs and a stylized black skull.

The skull, like the film itself, is a playful tribute to

Mexico's Day of the Dead, a festival of colorful costumes, decorations and sweets during which, according to tradition, the dead come back to visit the living.

Director Lee Unkrich has called the film a "love letter to Mexico," and Mexico loves it back: it is the country's highest-grossing movie of all time.

"I usually work out of my home with my wife and a friend. But now, I've had to call up my godmother, my nephew, my cousin," said Meza through the cloud of sawdust in his workshop.

"We're all going crazy over *Coco*!"

Since *Coco* had its world premiere in Mexico on October 20, Meza says he has been sleeping three hours a night and has doubled his output from 50 guitars a week to 100.

Paracho, the "guitar capital of Mexico," makes nearly 1 million classical guitars a year, many exported to the United States.

Typically, they are elegant and understated masterpieces

“

... He fights and fights until he achieves it ... I think in that way I'm also like little Miguel.”

German Vazquez, guitar maker

of burnished brown wood. At least, that was the case until the town caught what guitar shop owner Maria Eugenia Gomez calls "*Coco* fever."

Now, she says, she can't keep up with demand for the flashy white guitars.

"If I had 1,000 of them, I'd sell them all," said Gomez, 76.

'Life out of a movie'

The man behind the original "*Coco*" guitar is German

Vazquez, a Paracho native who emigrated to the United States 25 years ago, slipping over the border to chase the American dream.

The state where Paracho is located, Michoacan, was until recent years swept by grisly violence unleashed by the Knights Templar drug cartel. It is among the states with the highest rates of emigration to the US.

After Vazquez crossed the border, he found work, eventually became a US citizen and finally managed to open his own guitar workshop in Los Angeles — which is where Pixar found him.

He said he sees a little bit of young Miguel in his own life's story.

"He wants to be a musician, and he searches for a way to make it happen. He fights and fights until he achieves it. I think in that way I'm also like little Miguel ... in love with guitars," he said.

"My life is straight out of a movie."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Haiti still rebuilding after quake

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Eight years ago, a magnitude-7 earthquake upended life in Haiti, killing more than 300,000 people by some estimates and destroying hundreds of thousands of homes. For many of those left homeless, life hasn't yet returned to normal.

In the Delmas district in the north of the capital, Port-au-Prince, Camp Caradeux sprang up as a temporary home for 20,000 displaced people. Promises of new permanent homes have failed to materialize and Haiti's economy remains weak, leaving camp residents with nowhere to go.

As a result, the camp is transforming into a village as people build cinderblock homes and try to create more normal lives.

Photographer Chery Dieu-Nalio visited Caradeux on the approach of the quake anniversary to document the life of its residents, who are selling charcoal, cutting hair and pursuing other jobs so they can slowly accumulate the money to build houses.

For many, the anniversary



Residents sit at a construction site in the Caradeux refugee camp in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. DIEU NALIO CHERRY / ASSOCIATED PRESS

of the quake was made more painful by President Donald Trump's reported remarks questioning why the US would accept more people from Haiti.

"If I were the government officials, I'd shut down the United States embassy because Trump doesn't respect my nation," said priest Brinor Monajejan.

The camp includes about 3,000 temporary shelters and tents and about 50 concrete houses, with 100 more under construction. There is a school, police station, church

and temple, and the camp is supplied with electricity and potable water.

Etienne Acine, a 38-year-old television and radio repairman with six children, says he has been living in the camp for eight years and the wooden walls of his makeshift home are rotting.

"Living in the shelter makes me stressed because the shelter means January 12, 2010 to me," he says. "I want to live in a normal house like other people in the country."

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Artist defends sculpture after 'satanistic' claim

ATHENS — A sculpture by sculptor and painter Kostis Georgiou was placed on the beachfront avenue of the Athens Riviera on Dec 5.

The bright-red metal installation depicting a male figure with wings, was a donation from a Greek shipping family and was warmly welcomed by local authorities as another step in efforts to bring art closer to people who rarely visit museums and galleries.

By the year end Georgiou, the Mayor of Paleo Faliro Dio-

gnosis Hatzidakis, prominent academics and artists found themselves defending *Phylax* against a small minority of locals who rejected the work as "satanistic".

Social media users initially suspected a bad joke when a Greek Orthodox priest who demanded its removal led a few dozen parishioners to the site and sprinkled "holy water" on *Phylax* to "exorcise the soldier of Satan".

When unidentified vandals sprayed white paint on the

sculpture and cut electricity wires to keep it in the dark at night, it reopened a serious discussion about the lack of art education and the battle against prejudice and minorities of religious fanatics.

"I was surprised. I could not believe that there was such a distorted reading of a sculpture. This is the first time ever I have faced such a reaction," said Georgiou. He has had more than 130 solo exhibitions in major galleries and museums throughout the

world and taken part in more than 300 group exhibitions.

"The work was interpreted in a wrong manner. It was interpreted as an angel who due to the color was perceived as satanic, something that is entirely opposite to my beliefs," he said.

Only through education and open mind can societies can beat prejudice, absurdity, dark-ages rationale and behavior, he added.

XINHUA

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中国日报



Panic in Hawaii after missile alert

Human error blamed for 'regrettable' false alarm

“I thought, ‘Oh my god, this is it. Something bad’s about to happen and I could die.’”

Cherese Carlton, who was in Honolulu for a class and was away from her children

this so we can prevent an error of this type in the future,” said Ige in a statement.

The alert, sent to mobile phones and also aired on television and radio, caused panic among Hawaiians and on social media platforms.

Sara Donchey, who said she was in Honolulu, Hawaii, tweeted that her family who were on the North Shore “were hiding in the garage. My mom and sister were crying.”

Wu Qing, a Chinese scholar working in Hawaii, said in a phone interview that she still felt frightened.

“I was still sleeping when I received the message in the morning. Several of my friends also called me or informed me through

WeChat after the missile alert mistake,” said Wu.

The emergency alert, which was sent to cell-phones statewide just before 8:10 am, said: “BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.”

On the H-3, a major highway north of Honolulu, vehicles sat empty after drivers left them to run to a nearby tunnel after the alert showed up, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported. Workers at a golf club huddled in a kitchen fearing the worst.

Professional golfer Colt Knost, staying at Waikiki Beach during a PGA Tour event, said “everyone was panicking” in the lobby of his hotel.

“Everyone was running around like, ‘What do we do?’” he said.

Cherese Carlson, in Honolulu for a class and away from her children, said she called to make sure they were inside after getting the alert.

“I thought, ‘Oh my god, this is it. Something bad’s about to happen and I could die,’” she said.

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency tweeted there was no threat about 10 minutes after the initial alert, but that didn’t reach people who aren’t on the social media platform. A revised alert informing of the “false alarm” didn’t reach cellphones until about 40 minutes later.

The incident prompted defense agencies including the Pentagon and the US Pacific Command to issue the same statement, that they had “detected no ballistic missile threat to Hawaii”.

The White House said President Donald Trump was briefed on the incident at his private club in Florida.

The US Federal Communications Commission, which has jurisdiction over the emergency alert system, announced it was initiating a full investigation.

LOS ANGELES — An emergency text alert on Saturday warning residents in the US state of Hawaii of an imminent ballistic missile threat was a false alarm sent due to human error, state officials said.

The United States military’s Pacific Command and state authorities confirmed that there was no missile threat.

Governor David Ige said in comments aired on CNN that “I was awakened by the alert like everyone else here in the state of Hawaii. It was unfortunate and regrettable.”

Ige apologized for the incident, saying that someone at the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency “pushed the wrong button” during a routine shift change.

Such shift changes occur three times a day every day of the year, he added.

“While I am thankful this morning’s alert was a false alarm, the public must have confidence in our emergency alert system. I am working to get to the bottom of



An electronic sign in Oahu, Hawaii, after the false emergency alert that said a ballistic missile was headed for the state on Saturday. PROVIDED BY REUTERS

XINHUA—AP—REUTERS

Shared outlook is manufacturing a win-win, setting good example

By YAN DONGJIE in Beijing yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese investment has been turning Ethiopia into a manufacturing hub in Africa and helping its economy to sustain double-digit growth for over a decade, the Ethiopian ambassador said.

Berhane Gebre-Christos, who became the top Ethiopian diplomat in China in November, believes that the relationship between the countries is a win-win for both and is a good example for Africa and the rest of the world.

“Africa is changing rapidly. China’s engagement in Africa has been positive,” he said.

One model of the cooperation between the two countries is the industry zones, which have been pushing forward Ethiopia’s economy.

Three of them are operating in Ethiopia, and 15 more are being constructed by the Ethiopian government and Chinese companies.

“We believe this is not enough. We need to do more. We are working very closely with China,” Berhane said.

The Eastern Industry Zone, located near Addis Ababa, has attracted investment from more than 20 Chi-

nese firms, including Huajian International Shoe City PLC, which employs at least 1,500 Ethiopians and 300 Chinese, making women’s shoes for export to Europe and the United States.

Companies from Turkey, India, Brazil and other parts of the world also landed in the industry zones, but the number of Chinese companies has been growing significantly since the Johannes-

burg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in December 2015, Berhane said.

“Chinese companies have a good understanding of our situation. In terms of fundamental outlook, China and Ethiopia share the same views, especially when it comes to development,” he said.

Another industry zone, developed by China Civil Engineering Construction Cooperation in Hawassa, started operation in 2016. Berhane said that it aims to create 50,000 jobs and generate \$1 billion a year.

“We want to make Ethiopia an industrial hub in Africa. China has been very

supportive, encouraging companies to invest in Ethiopia,” he said, adding that the Ethiopian government provides convenience in visa application, customer clearance and infrastructure facilities to investors.

The Ethiopian economy has been growing with double digits for the last 14 years, reducing poverty by 55 percent, Berhane said. In addition to China’s support, the vision of the ruling party, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front, the country’s developing strategies and the people’s commitment contribute to the success.

The Ethiopian government, similar to what China does, makes five-year plans for economic development. Berhane said that the country is in the second phase of the Growth and Transformation Plan, which aims to develop Ethiopia into a low-level developed nation within 30 to 35 years.

Berhane travels frequently in China. He has visited Nanjing, Hangzhou and Chongqing for forums and meetings, promoting Ethiopia to Chinese companies.



Scan it! Watch the video



Baby panda Yuan Meng is pictured playing with his mother Huan Huan inside their enclosure at Beauval Zoo in Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher, central France last week. Five-month-old Yuan Meng, whose name translates as “the realization of a dream”, is the first panda born in France.

GUILLEME SOUVANT / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Debut for first French panda

SAINT-AIGNAN, France — Five-month-old Yuan Meng, the first giant panda cub born in France, made his public debut on Saturday at Beauval Zoo.

The panda, which was born on Aug 4, appeared alongside his mother Huan Huan behind a glass wall in their lavish home adorned with Chinese lanterns and rockeries, amid cheers.

BFM TV video showed him playing and endlessly crawling over his mother, who at one point gathered the black-and-white ball of fur to her side before he escaped again to climb over her.

“We got up at 3 in the morning. My son absolutely wanted to see the cub,” said one zoo visitor who had traveled from the Paris region.

“We felt we took part in a historic moment. It was very moving.”

The name “Yuan Meng”, meaning “the realization of a dream” in Chinese, was given to the baby panda in December at a ceremony attended by its “godmother”, France’s first lady Brigitte Macron.

1.5 million

guests are expected to have visited Beauval Zoo in central France last year, the zoo said

kilograms over the past months, and is doing very well physically, she added.

Two Chinese zookeepers are currently staying in Beauval in central France to train their local colleagues on how to take care of the panda.

Zoo veterinarian Baptiste Mulot said the cub had been brought to the enclosure over the past 10 days to familiarize himself with the surroundings.

The parents of Yuan Meng, Huan Huan and Yuan Zi, arrived in France in January 2012 on a 10-year loan from China.

Since the couple’s arrival, the number of visitors to Beauval Zoo has doubled, and is expected to have reached 1.5 million in 2017, Delord said.

“With the debut of Yuan Meng, we expect more visitors in 2018,” she said.

There are fewer than 2,000 pandas living in the wild, while around 400 live in captivity, according to China’s State Forestry Administration.

Challenging process

Delphine Delord, chief of communication at the zoo, took the opportunity to brief the first visitors on the challenging reproduction process of pandas, and the protection of the endangered animals.

“We have been trying artificial insemination for years, and the birth of Yuan Meng was a success in the protection of pandas,” Delord said.

Yuan Meng has grown from only 142 grams at birth to 11

XINHUA—AP—AFP

Protests hit H&M after ‘racist’ sweater ad

JOHANNESBURG — An H&M store in South Africa was trashed by protesters on Saturday after the company was accused of racism in a sweater advertisement.

Dozens of Economic Freedom Fighters protesters rushed into the store in Sandton City, one of the most prosperous shopping centers in Johannesburg, vandalizing mannequins and scattering clothes on the floor.

After police arrived, protesters gathered in front of the shop’s door chanting, dancing and whistling, according to a Xinhua News Agency reporter at the scene.

The crowd dispersed at noon. The store has remained closed since then.

According to local media, similar protests were seen in other shopping centers.

“What happens if H&M pulls out of South Africa? Will the EFF compensate employees for loss of income?”

Twitter user

EFF Deputy President Floyd Shivambu congratulated members via Twitter for physically confronting racism.

The outrage stemmed from an ad released by H&M showing a black boy wear a green sweater with the slogan “coolest monkey in the jungle” on it.

Shivambu said H&M’s “non-sense of a clothing store is now facing consequences for its racism. All rational people should agree that the store should not be allowed to continue operating in South Africa.”

H&M said it had removed the sweatshirt from sale. “We have got this wrong and we are deeply sorry,” a message on its South African website says.

NBA star LeBron James, rapper Diddy and singer The Weeknd are among the celebrities who expressed shock in recent days over the image, which has been removed from online promotions but continues to be circulated on social media.

The riot also triggered much criticism. A netizen “TheColouredZimbo” said via Twitter: “What happens if H&M pulls out of South Africa? Will the EFF compensate employees for loss of income?”

The scandal is the latest indication of management problems at the Swedish clothing giant, once the darling of shoppers but now struggling to make the switch to e-commerce, analysts say.

XINHUA—AP—AFP

Demonstration held in support of jailed teenager

NABI SALEH, Middle East — Clashes broke out after dozens of Palestinian and Arab Israeli supporters of jailed teenager Ahd Tamimi protested near her home in the occupied West Bank on Saturday, according to media reports.

Tamimi, 16, was arrested on Dec 19, days after a video went viral showing her slapping Israeli soldiers near her home in the village of Nabi Saleh in an apparent attempt to provoke them.

She was charged in a military court on Jan 1 with 12 counts, including assault. The army kept her in custody.

Tamimi’s mother and another relative were also charged over the same incident, with the latter released on bail until her trial in February.

Around 100 Palestinians from across the West Bank



Protesters run from tear gas fired by Israeli troops during clashes near Ramallah. AP

arrived to protest against Ahd Tamimi’s arrest, chanting for her release and against Israel’s occupation of the West Bank.

The demonstration was attended by leaders from various Palestinian factions and Israeli Arab members of Israel’s parliament.

Tamimi’s father Bassem, himself a prominent campaigner against Israeli occupation of the West Bank, thanked participants for their “solidarity with Ahd”.

Protests erupted after the speeches, and Israeli forces fired tear gas at stone-throwing youths.

A spokeswoman for the Israeli army said soldiers used riot dispersal means, and in order to “prevent further violent riots” declared part of the Nabi Saleh area a closed military zone.

Israelis see the video, which showed Israeli soldiers not reacting to an apparent attempt to provoke them, as evidence of the morality of their army.

Palestinians argue that Tamimi was merely seeking to force Israeli soldiers off their land, and point to her subsequent nighttime military arrest as evidence of abuse of a child’s rights.

Tamimi and her mother will be in court again on Monday for a hearing on a request that they be released until their trials begin.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Briefly

PHILIPPINES
Alert level raised for Mayon volcano

The Philippines volcanology institute on Sunday raised the alert level for the Mayon volcano to level two, indicating that the volcano is exhibiting signs of "increasing unrest" that may trigger more ash clouds, rockfalls and landslides. The public were urged to stay more than 6 kilometers from the volcano, which is on Luzon island and erupted on Sunday morning.

INDIA
2 students killed in ferry sinking

Indian police say a ferry carrying schoolchildren sank in the Arabian Sea off the country's western coast, killing two students and leaving six missing. The Press Trust of India news agency quoted police as saying another 32 children were rescued after Saturday's incident in Maharashtra state. India's Coast Guard officials say they are carrying out search operations.

RUSSIA
Cafe poisoning victims up to 133

The number of people poisoned in a cafe in the Republic of Buryatia in Russia's eastern Siberia region rose to 133, the press service of local authorities said on Sunday. The victims, 12 of whom are children, had visited the Shulendo cafe, located in the downtown area of the city of Ulan-Ude, capital of Buryatia, on Jan 8-11, said the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Buryatia.

FRANCE
Macron: Baguette deserves UN spot

President Emmanuel Macron on Friday joined calls by bakers for France's traditional baguette to be recognized as one of the world's cultural treasures on UNESCO's list of "intangible heritage". "The baguette is envied around the world. We must preserve its excellence and our expertise, and it is for this reason that it should be heritage-listed," Macron told a group of master bakers at the Elysee presidential palace in Paris.

XINHUA—AP—REUTERS—AFP

A laugh in the lake

Three swimmers were among hundreds of people who took to the water of a lake in the eastern suburbs of Berlin, Germany, on Saturday. MAO YANYAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

African countries demand apology for Trump slur

US president accused of using vulgar term in meeting to discuss immigration

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Vulgar comments attributed to US President Donald Trump have caused outrage and demands for an apology across Africa.

Trump reportedly used the slur to describe African countries, Haiti and El Salvador while discussing immigration issues with US lawmakers on Thursday.

Trump issued a statement on Friday denying the vulgar words attributed to him, though he admitted to using strong language in the Thursday discussion.

Trump's alleged remarks have caused outrage across the world with officials in African, European, Latin American countries and the United Nations expressing condemnation and summoning US diplomats in protest.

The African Union issued a statement on Friday evening calling Trump's reported remarks outrageous and hurtful.

"While expressing shock, dismay and outrage, the African Union strongly believes there's a huge misunderstanding

of the African continent and its people by the current administration. There is a serious need for dialogue between the US administration and the African countries," said the AU statement.

It further called for the US president to issue an apology for the hurtful remarks not only to Africans but people of African descent around the globe.

"The African Union condemns the comments in the strongest terms and demands a retraction of the comment as well as an apology to not only Africans but to all people of African descent around the globe," further read the AU statement.

Nevertheless, aware the US is still a powerful military and economic power, the AU statement called for continued strategic partnership with the US. But it emphasized that such a partnership should be based on mutual respect and accepted international principles of respect of basic human dignity.

AU spokeswoman Ebba Kalondo pointed out the US

“There is a serious need for dialogue between the US administration and the African countries.”

African Union statement

role in the Atlantic slave trade, as an example of how African nations Trump described as "shithole countries" were exploited in a shameful manner.

She added the purported statement was particularly unfortunate coming from a leader of country that describes itself as a global example of a successful migrant nation.

The African group of ambassadors to the United Nations issued an extraordinary statement condemning Trump's "outrageous, racist and xenophobic remarks" and demanding a retraction and apology.

Former US ambassador to the UN Samantha Power

shared the statement on Twitter, saying: "Whoa. I've never seen a statement like this by African countries directed at the United States."

In South Africa, a senior official of the ruling African National Congress said Trump was "extremely offensive" in using the slur.

Developing countries do have difficulties but they are not as Trump described, said ANC Deputy General Secretary Jessie Duarte, calling the remarks "unfortunate".

"Ours is not a shithole country, neither is Haiti or any other country in distress," said Duarte.

Kenya joined the list of critics, with its second largest newspaper, The Standard, on Saturday carrying an editorial condemning Trump's language.

"While it can be argued that Trump's toxic language and Twitter rants towards his domestic opponents is not criminal because they are on opposing sides, it is wrong to imply that some developing countries such as those from Africa are in such worse state that they deserve such a derogatory moniker," it said.

XINHUA—AP

Art up for discussion as DPRK and ROK settle date for talks

SEOUL — The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea have agreed to hold working-level talks at the Tongil Pavilion on the DPRK side of the truce village of Panmunjom on Monday, the ROK's Unification Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

On the agenda will be the possibility of the DPRK sending an art troupe to the ROK-hosted Winter Olympics, the ministry said.

Seoul's delegation to Monday's meeting will include an official from the Culture Ministry, the head of the Korean Symphony Orchestra and its art director and an official from the Unification Ministry, the ministry said.

They will meet a delegation from Pyongyang headed by the director of the Arts and Performance Bureau of the Culture Ministry. A conductor and two other officials from a DPRK orchestra will also be part of the delegation.

Inter-Korean talks are held alternately at the Peace House, which is on the ROK side of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone, and Tongil Pavilion in the DPRK.

The ministry said earlier on Saturday that the DPRK had proposed holding talks on Jan 15 about the matter.

"In addition, the ministry also requested for a quick response for South Korea's proposal on Jan 12 to have working-level talks about the North's participation in Pyeongchang Winter Olympics," added the ministry.

Officials from both countries earlier this week said

they had agreed to hold negotiations to resolve problems and avert accidental conflict, after their first official dialogue in more than two years amid high tension over the DPRK's weapons program.

The ROK had also said that it is seeking to form a combined women's hockey team with the DPRK. The DPRK's International Olympic Committee official said the committee is considering the proposal, while the two sides will also have talks hosted by the IOC on Jan 20.

In a joint statement after 11 hours of talks on Tuesday, the countries said they had agreed to hold military to military talks and that the DPRK would send a large delegation to next month's Winter Olympics.

Meanwhile, the DPRK on Sunday continued its public relations offensive on the ROK, calling on Seoul to help create conditions for future national reunification.

The official daily Rodong Simmun said in an article that to realize national reconciliation and unity is key for creating an environment for national reunification in the future.

"To the Korean nation that has undergone the tragedy of division for many years, it is a vital demand which can no longer be delayed to end the history of confrontation," the Rodong Simmun said.

The daily called on Seoul to "lend an ear to the voices of the people", "remove all walls of confrontation" and "sincerely come out to the road" to better relations with the DPRK.

XINHUA—REUTERS—AP

Landing goes awry

An airplane carrying 162 passengers is seen stuck in mud as it skidded off the runway after landing in Trabzon Airport, Turkey, early on Sunday. All of the passengers and crew were safely evacuated. TUGBA YARDIMCI VIA GETTY IMAGES

Chinese among 16 injured in boat blaze

BANGKOK — A tourist speedboat carrying 31 passengers exploded in front of Phi Phi Le island in the southern Thailand province of Krabi on Sunday, injuring 16, mostly tourists from China, the Phi Phi police said.

The speedboat, named *King Poseidon*, was ferrying 27 Chinese tourists from the nearby resort island of Phuket to Phi Phi before its engine caught fire and exploded injuring 14 tourists and two crew members, the police said, adding that the authority is still investigating the cause of the explosion.

Out of the 16 injured, six are in a severe condition, Phi Phi hospital staff said, adding that seven people have been sent to hospitals in Phuket



Smoke pours from the boat that was carrying 27 Chinese tourists when it caught fire in southern Thailand. XINHUA

for further treatment and nine have been discharged.

The Chinese consulate in Songkhla said all the Chinese tourists have been helped ashore while the rescue team is still searching for the others.

China National Tourism Administration launched an emergency response and urged officials to help to treat the injured tourists and identify the cause.

Local media said there was a fuel leak. The captain went

to check the engine and it suddenly exploded. The fire quickly spread, prompting all the passengers to scramble for swimming vests and jump into the sea.

The cause of the incident is under investigation.

Beach resorts and islands in southern Thailand are major tourist attractions, particularly during the high season from November to March.

XINHUA—REUTERS

Abe kicks off Europe tour with DPRK on agenda

By CAI HONG in Tokyo
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Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe left Tokyo on Friday for Estonia, kicking off his official visit to Baltic and Eastern European states of Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania.

On his agenda is confirming coordination over imposing pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, among other issues such as expanding the borders of Japanese diplomacy.

But even US President Donald Trump suggested in an interview with The Wall Street Journal on Thursday that he has developed a positive relationship with the DPRK leader Kim Jong-un, but declined to say whether they have spoken.

In a telephone call on Wednesday, Trump told Republic of Korea's President Moon Jae-in that the United States was open to talks with

the DPRK "at the appropriate time, under the right circumstances".

On Tuesday, the two sides on the Korean Peninsula had their first high-level talks in two years, with the DPRK announcing its plan to attend the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in the ROK, which will open on Feb 9.

On Wednesday, Moon said he is open to a summit meeting with the DPRK's top leader.

At a press conference on Thursday, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga

said that the Japanese government has yet to decide whether Abe will attend the opening ceremony for the Olympics.

Japan's Jiji Press quoted sources as saying that Abe plans to skip it due to the ROK's demand for Japan's official apology for "comfort women", a euphemism for girls and women who were forcibly recruited to serve as sex slaves for Imperial Japanese soldiers before and during World War II.

It is still too early to predict how far the "comfort women"

issue will strain Japan-ROK relations and the trilateral ties of China, Japan and the ROK.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono may visit Beijing on Jan 27-28 for discussions with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on improving ties and scheduling the trilateral summit of China, Japan and the ROK, according to the Kyodo News. Japan is eyeing a meeting of Premier Li Keqiang, Abe and Moon in early April.

The trilateral leaders' meeting was last held in November 2015.

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Foreign firms, too, gain from Belt & Road

By teaming up with Chinese partners, MNCs strike gold in the B&R Initiative

By ZHENG XIN
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New facts appear to demystify the Belt and Road Initiative led by China, which aims to strengthen nations on and beyond the ancient Silk Road and Maritime Silk Road routes through trade and infrastructure networks across Asia, Africa and Europe.

For long, skeptics believed the B&R Initiative, which was launched in 2013, will ultimately benefit China and its companies more than others. There were even whisper campaigns that development is merely the ostensible goal of the initiative; the perceived truth was that it is China's covert attempt to emerge as a 21st-century hegemon.

Four years down the line, facts and figures clearly indicate even non-Chinese, non-Asian multinational companies are just as well positioned to benefit massively from the initiative.

Many of these MNCs are seeking to tap huge business opportunities spawned by the initiative. Some of them have already teamed up, or are teaming up, with Chinese partners in countries and regions covered by the B&R Initiative, angling for a slice of the gigantic trade and infrastructure cake.

For instance, Munich-based engineering and electronics giant Siemens AG is intensifying collaboration on B&R-related projects in various countries and regions.

According to Cedrik Neike, member of the managing board of Siemens, the company plans to cooperate more with Chinese partners under the framework of the initiative this year.

"With our experience and world-class project management, we have the potential to be bridge builders between Chinese players and international suppliers and customers, and together with our Chinese EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) partners we will focus on paving the road to success in these countries," he said.

"As one of the largest foreign-invested companies in China, Siemens has more than 32,000 employees working in numerous joint ventures and company operations spread across the country, and the Initiative will only help in tightening our relationships."

“We (can) be bridge builders between Chinese players and international suppliers ...”

Cedrik Neike, Siemens board member

Siemens is among the earliest foreign companies to partner with Chinese enterprises to explore overseas markets together. It started operations in China some 20 years ago, and its growth gathered momentum in recent years, after the launch of the B&R Initiative, and with the rapid development

of Chinese EPC enterprises in the global arena.

By 2016, Siemens had joined forces with more than 100 Chinese EPC players in exploring more than 60 overseas markets. Its partners include China National Petroleum Corp, the country's biggest oil producer, China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, and Power China.

According to Neike, EPC contracts bagged by Chinese firms are worth around \$125 billion.

Siemens expects the cumulative potential over the next 10 years will be over \$1 trillion.

"We see sweet spots in select countries where we can position Siemens as a high-value provider and partner of China," he said.

Like Siemens, many Western MNCs with leading technologies and a global

footprint have vouched support for Chinese companies seeking to go global and adapt to local markets overseas, in fields like power, oil and gas, chemicals, minerals and building materials.

Boston-headquartered General Electric or GE, one of the first MNCs to enter the Chinese market over a century ago, has decided to jointly explore new wind power opportunities in Pakistan by teaming up with Power Construction Corp of China.

This move is part of GE's more than 10 Pakistan power projects with Chinese EPC players in recent years.

John Rice, GE vice-chairman, said the B&R Initiative is a shining example of how GE can benefit from China's opening-up.

"In many cases, we are well equipped in being a great partner participating in the Belt

and Road Initiative and we can also benefit from that," Rice said during a previous interview during his trip to China as part of the business delegation accompanying US President Donald Trump on his state visit.

To date, GE has partnered with over 30 Chinese EPC companies in more than 70 markets across Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Europe. The company and its Chinese partners will further invest in power grids, new energy, oil and gas, in B&R countries and regions.

Honeywell International Inc, the US-based manufacturing and technology conglomerate, has also been immersed for years in supplying automation products and other technologies for infrastructure and energy projects, such as Cen-

See **MUTUAL** page 14

Siemens swears by local partnerships

By ZHENG XIN
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Siemens AG plans to open a Belt and Road Initiative office in Beijing this year to further pursue the opportunities the initiative provides.

The company describes the B&R Initiative as "the most important and impactful global infrastructure program with the potential to become the blueprint for a new world trade order".

Not elaborating on the specific responsibility or function the office will take, Siemens said the company would ramp up a company-wide effort to continue teaming up with Chinese EPC partners to jointly explore businesses in countries and regions participating in the initiative.

"As an innovator throughout the world, we look forward to working for and with Chinese companies operating in the Belt and Road countries," said Cedrik Neike, member of the managing board, Siemens.

It is one of the largest foreign-invested companies in China. It has more than 32,000 employees working in numerous joint ventures and company operations across China.

"With our experience and world-class project management, Siemens has the potential to be bridge builders between Chinese players and international suppliers and

customers," he said.

"Together with our Chinese EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) partners, we'll focus on paving the road to success in the countries involved with the initiative and we are committed to making continuous efforts for a business-oriented thought-leadership exchange."

Siemens has built a strong partnership with the Chinese government over recent years, which it believes will help it to seize further opportunities presented by the initiative.

It is also looking at cooperation in financial services. It is financing or co-financing strategic B&R projects as well as providing cooperation for development aid.

See **HELP** page 14



Talking Business

Blueprint for a new world trade order

By ZHENG XIN
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Japanese automobile giant Toyota is a latecomer to the China market, having entered it in 2000, compared to Germany's Volkswagen and US-based General Motors that entered China through local joint ventures in the 1980s and 1990s.

Early entry into the Chinese market, the world's largest producer and consumer in various fields, later proved to be a solid foundation for future development for VW and GM.

Their good performance in China in recent years suggests it may be a wise idea for foreign companies to enter and team up with Chinese companies as early as possible, to grab as much market share as possible, both in China and markets elsewhere, particularly in the wake of launch of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Many MNCs, including Rio Tinto, BHP, Honeywell, GE and Siemens, have expressed their interest in contributing to the success of the initiative.

They said they are willing to take advantage of their technologies and global footprint, team up with Chinese companies, and expand further in B&R markets, in fields like power, oil and gas, chemicals, minerals and building materials.

Such a strategy would likely offer them better connectivity in the long term. For these emerging markets will be further developed. Their improved infrastructure might give access to new markets and ultimately drive global economic growth.

In other words, MNCs that team up with Chinese companies might see their profits surge compared with latecomers.

A caveat here would be in order though. Joint exploration abroad is not risk-free.

In addition to the ever-fierce competition at the global level, Chinese companies exploring business in B&R countries and regions are facing various challenges, including geopolitical risks, financing, conflicts of culture and religion.

B&R-related infrastructure projects require cooperation across regions, companies and industries, considering their increasing complexity. Various projects in different fields are just as challenging, and their future is shrouded in uncertainty.

Hence, it is imperative for companies to not only adapt themselves to local environment and abide by local customs, traditions, laws and regulations, but make joint efforts with partners across regions and companies to achieve success.

Lothar Herrmann, CEO, Siemens Greater China, said companies focus on being local-minded, fast and geared for long-term partnerships.

"Being local" means this: respecting and abiding by local customs, traditions, laws and regulations; doing business in a compliant and legal way; taking quick and decisive action; timely deployment of resources; and thorough execution.

"Long-term partnership" means that companies need to see themselves not just as suppliers but as co-explorers of a new development path who will share success and challenges.

The B&R Initiative offers a blueprint for a new world trade order, and it's high time potential partners realize this and get on board.

GOING GLOBAL

Soft power from cultural exports

Publisher GPG uses B&R to boost cooperation between China and the world

By ZHENG CAIXIONG in Guangzhou
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Guangdong Provincial Publishing Group Co Ltd or GPG is highlighting a little known aspect of China's Belt and Road or B&R Initiative – that it is not only about building trade and infrastructure networks to connect countries and regions, but also about helping even culture-related companies to expand into new markets.

GPG publishes and exports more than 8,000 kinds of books and 200 types of e-books and audio-visual products annually. It is now tapping multiple channels to serve the world better in the wake of the B&R Initiative, according to its top executive.

Wang Guike, chairman of GPG, said, "The Belt and Road Initiative has helped create myriad opportunities and a huge space for cultural companies to increase their offshore sales in the coming years. And GPG will seize such opportunities and spare no effort to expand abroad."

"GPG is seeking to expand Sino-foreign cooperation, merge with, or acquire, overseas companies, entrust foreign distribution agents and introduce digital distribution to increase its presence in the world market in the years ahead."

Xiao Surong, GPG's publishing director, said the company's book exports will likely triple this year.

Demand for Chinese books and cultural products has been on the rise, particularly in the B&R-related countries and regions, as the country has been expanding its Sino-foreign exchanges and cooperation with the rest of the world, Xiao said.

"And that would certainly help GPG and other domestic cultural companies to further increase their overseas sales in the years ahead," he said.

But Xiao did not project how many books the company will be able to sell abroad annually in the years ahead.

Most of its books that were sold abroad mainly cover languages, culture, literature, economics and Chinese social customs.

Xiao said he is expecting to see more textbook exports in the following years. "Textbooks that are now representing only 15 percent of the



Wang Guike, chairman of Guangdong Provincial Publishing Group Co Ltd, explains how China's Belt and Road Initiative promotes cultural exchanges and people-to-people understanding at a forum in Brussels, Belgium, late last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Senior executives from Sanoma Group of Finland visit Guangdong Provincial Publishing Group Co Ltd in 2017. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

GPG's overseas book sales, have great potential," he said.

GPG signed a contract with a Malaysian company to promote a Chinese calligraphy textbook in the Southeast Asian country.

According to the contract, the calligraphy textbook, entitled *Immersion in the Chinese Calligraphy*, will be introduced in more than 1,000 Chinese-language schools in Malaysia in the coming months.

It will also be introduced in north African country Morocco in March.

GPG is also compiling more teaching materials, aimed at developed markets like the Unit-

ed States and Europe, Xiao said.

To meet growing global demand for Chinese books and cultural products, GPG is now talking with Singapore's World Scientific Publishing to set up a joint venture to publish and sell Chinese books and cultural products in Singapore and rest of Southeast Asia.

In July last year, GPG has signed a contract with a Belgium company in Brussels to establish GPG's Europe subsidiary to expand its presence in the European Union.

"The Belgium branch is now waiting for the final approval from the government departments concerned," said Xiao.

"The Singaporean and Belgian companies are just part of GPG's ambitious strategic development plan to explore the world market," Xiao said.

Meanwhile, more negotiations to establish special editorial offices in North America, Europe and Southeast Asia are underway. Many distributors are in talks with GPG for expansion of overseas sales, said Xiao, who is also in charge of the publishing department of Southern Publishing and Media Company Limited or SPM, a Shanghai Stock Exchange-listed company and a major subsidiary of GPG.

Upon listing in February

“The (B&R) Initiative has helped ... cultural companies to increase their offshore sales ...”

Xiao Surong, GPG's publishing director

2016, shares of SPM had hit the upper limit on 10 successive trading days.

Insiders attributed the stock's strong performance to the B&R Initiative, which helps domestic cultural companies to expand globally.

GPG has sold more than 1,300 kinds of books abroad since its founding in 1999. It has established cooperative partnerships with publishers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Greece, Japan, South Korea, India, Vietnam and Indonesia in recent years.

GPG has also actively participated in international book fairs in the US, France, Britain and Italy.

In July last year, Shen Haixiong, head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Guangdong Provincial Committee, led a cultural delegation to visit Belgium, Germany and Russia to expand cultural cooperation and exchanges between Guangdong and Europe.

Mutual: Benefits go to local and overseas firms

From page 13

tral Asia-China gas pipeline project.

Shane Tedjarati, president of Honeywell Global High Growth Regions, said the software and connected systems company is well-positioned to support the Belt and Road Initiative through its China growth strategy and portfolio.

Honeywell's high-growth regions consistently drive more than 80 percent of the company's growth. China accounts for the biggest chunk of that, he said, adding the country has been the company's second-largest market since 2013 and currently is the single-largest contributor to its global growth.

Experts believe the initiative creates business and growth opportunities for both Chinese and non-Chinese companies.

Belt and Road countries and regions account for about 30 percent of the global economy, according to the Mercator Institute for China Studies. Projects worth some \$900 billion are now either underway or on the drawing board, according to the China Development Bank.

Many Western firms are interested in contributing to the initiative, offering either technology or knowledge of local conditions, said Zhang Jianping, director of international economic cooperation at the National Development and Reform Commission.

Multinationals can also benefit from better connectivity in the long term as emerging Belt and Road markets will be further developed and their improved infrastructure might open up new markets and ultimately drive global economic growth, he said.

Stanley Jia, chief representative at the Beijing office of global law firm Baker McKenzie, was quoted by the South China Morning Post as saying there will be plenty of opportunities for Chinese and multinational companies to work together in the future.

“But focus must remain on adding value to the local customers and local people, no matter what.”

Lothar Herrmann, CEO, Siemens Greater China

It is still early days for the initiative and hence it may appear as if it is the preserve of Chinese State-owned enterprises, funded by Chinese banks and staffed by Chinese workers. All that will change sooner rather than later, he implied.

According to the law firm, Chinese companies and their partners could together pour some \$350 billion into Belt and Road-related projects in more than 60 countries and regions in the next five years.

Ren Hongbin, chairman of China National Machinery Industry Corp, known as Sinomach, said Chinese EPC firms are facing various challenges, including international competition, geopolitical risks, tricky financing, and conflicts of culture.

Lothar Herrmann, CEO of Siemens Greater China, said complexity in terms of geography, culture and religion of B&R countries might be difficult to grasp, while various projects in different fields, including transportation infrastructure, tourism, financial services and clean energy, are just as challenging.

"The complexity and uncertainty in some regions have made it imperative for companies to adapt to the local environment with the highest flexibility," he said. "But focus must remain on adding value to the local customers and local people."



An employee uses a robotic arm of Artis pheno angiography system on the assembly line of Siemens AG Healthineers factory in Forchheim, Germany. BLOOMBERG

Green energy excites big foreign companies

BELJING — China's push to clean up the environment is creating a huge renewable energy market, tempting global leaders of various industries.

Automakers, for example, are vying for a larger share of the world's fastest-growing new energy vehicle market.

US automaker Tesla is reportedly in talks with Shanghai to build a factory, and the company is "deeply committed to the Chinese market."

Ford recently announced a joint venture with Anhui Zotye Automobile to produce and sell electric cars in China, with plans to launch 15 models by 2025.

The growing interest comes with China's intensified efforts to ease pressure on the environment through tax exemptions and subsidies for new energy cars.

Bill Ford, executive chairman of Ford Motor Company, said China is taking the lead in the electric vehicle market as

there is a real government push to clear the air.

It is not just the automobile industry that sees opportunities in government initiatives. Companies from chemical producers to natural gas providers are thrilled by the push for long-term, sustainable growth.

Clariant, a Swiss chemicals company, is looking for Chinese partners to commercialize its "sunliquid," which converts agricultural residue such as wheat straw into ethanol. According to Markus Rarbach, head of biofuels and derivatives at Clariant, the company's technology could be in widespread use in 2018.

In September, the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration decided to increase use of bioethanol gasoline by 2020, and to build a facility that will produce 50,000 tons of cellulosic ethanol a year.

"Given China's huge population and growing economy,



Workers inspect the interior of a new electric car being built at the production line of a new energy vehicle manufacturer in Yunnan province in Southwest China. XINHUA

4,000

the number of coal-fired boilers used for winter heating that Beijing has shut down this year

our sunliquid technology can play a key role in helping the country make that important

fuel switch," Rarbach said.

The transition in fuel is also helping eliminate winter smog. This year, Beijing has shut down more than 4,000 coal-fired boilers used for winter heating, replacing coal with natural gas and electricity, prompting State oil companies to look overseas for new gas sources.

Sinopec will take the lead in the exploration of liquified

natural gas or LNG in Alaska, according to a deal signed during US President Donald Trump's visit to China late last year.

The project could create 70,000 new jobs in the United States, while helping China cut 80 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

In an interview with Xinhua, Governor Bill Walker of the US state of Alaska said the project could provide a long-term LNG supply at a stable price and meet China's rising demand.

"We have a tremendous opportunity in Alaska to bring liquefied natural gas to China on a very long-term basis," Walker said.

With the country's continued opening-up and better environmental protection in the years to come, more foreign firms can benefit from China's clean energy drive.

XINHUA

Help: EPC players given quality edge

From page 13

Chinese industry is becoming more and more global just like EPC players – and Siemens will help them enhance production efficiency and flexibility, product quality and shorten the time-to-market for new products, said Neike.

Siemens has had a series of cooperation agreements with Chinese industry players in recent years, including Baosteel Group Corporation, China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation, China Electronics Corporation and others to jointly work on intelligent manufacturing solutions.

According to Lothar Herrmann, CEO of Siemens Greater China, Siemens China was one of the earliest companies to partner with Chinese enterprises to explore overseas markets. This started about 20 years ago.

"In recent years, with the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the rapid development of Chinese EPC enterprises in the global arena, we are picking up the speed more quickly than expected," he said.

By 2016, Siemens had joined forces with more than 100 Chinese EPCs, including CNPC, Sinopec and Power China, in exploring some 60 markets overseas worldwide.

Siemens will continue to help China's companies adapt to local markets and expand their footprint worldwide in various fields, including power, oil and gas, chemicals, minerals and building materials, he said.

"We can help Chinese EPCs thrive in complex market environment overseas, increase project efficiency, and enter into mature markets."

Building smart mobility ecosystem

Lily Fu leads Motorola Solutions' efforts to strengthen China's critical communications sector

By FAN FEIFEI
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The China unit of Motorola Solutions Inc, the US-based multinational specializing in data communications and telecoms equipment, has been buzzing with hectic activity of late.

Motorola's local arm, led by Lily Fu, general manager, has been aligning itself with the country's economic transformation from an export-oriented manufacturing giant to a consumption-driven economy.

That meant Motorola had to figure out how its expertise in areas like two-way digital portable radios and related services could strengthen China.

Motorola products are used in a wide range of fields such as oil and petrochemicals, transportation, forest protection, hospitality and public safety. It was among the first technology MNCs to set up an office on the Chinese mainland in 1987.

Motorola's current avatar took shape in 2011 when US technology giant Motorola Inc bifurcated its business into the mobile phone division Motorola Mobility (later acquired by China's Lenovo from Google Inc) and the equipment division Motorola Solutions.

With innovation-powered fields like artificial intelligence, cloud computing and big data becoming industry buzzwords in China now, Motorola is exploring how it could plug into the current scene and continue to play.

"For a multinational, it is of great importance to learn the latest changes in local markets and the demands from local consumers, and then send the information to headquarters and mobilize resources, in order to support the needs of local markets," Fu said.

She is driving Motorola's China strategy as the country

“For a multinational, it is of great importance to learn the latest changes in local markets and the demands from local consumers.”



Lily Fu, general manager of Motorola Solutions China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

moves toward mobile intelligence. In the process, Motorola itself is transforming from a manufacturer of critical communications equipment to an integrated solution provider.

"In the past, we defined ourselves as a hardware equipment producer. Now, we are aiming to ensure people stay safer and we let them work more effectively in the critical

communications sector."

In the past, people used high-quality communication system in times of crisis, but with the rapid development of technology, Motorola is building an entire ecosystem focused on intelligent mobility, Fu said.

The current challenges are making Motorola bullish on China where it sees plenty of

opportunities, particularly from the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-20).

By 2020, the average compound annual growth rate for the digital mobile radio sector would reach 6 percent, she said.

"We are looking forward to providing a comprehensive end-to-end solution by integrating critical communication

technologies with big data, cloud computing, virtual reality and AI to help people forecast the potential risks actively, to reduce possible losses and enhance working efficiency," Fu said.

Toward this end, Motorola will continue to increase its R&D and innovation resources and enhance the features of its digital mobile radio portfolio. "R&D spending now accounts for about 10 percent of our revenue," she said.

Fu Liang, an independent telecom expert, said Motorola has traditional strength in the two-way radio field, but faces competition from local companies such as Huawei Technologies Co Ltd and ZTE Corp, which are making rapid strides in radio communication network technologies.

So, it is vital for Motorola to entrust its future development direction and strategy to the local team, and find suitable talent to strengthen it continuously.

This would mean underlining the idea of "putting people first," Fu said. "I love to work together with talented people, bearing in mind each person's distinct personality and gifts."

She is well placed to accomplish that challenge, given her more than 25 years of experience in both high-tech and communications sectors, and exposure to thousands of extremely talented professionals.

In the past, she held roles across sales, strategy, channels and business development at MNCs such as Avaya, Alcatel Lucent and Philips Lighting.

"In my spare time, I love to play tennis and golf. We need to be persistent and continue to strive for victory in our career too. I can learn these qualities from sports, and understand how to tackle setbacks and challenges," Fu said.

On the move

Taiping Insurance names Wang Sidong GM



China Taiping Insurance Group Ltd, the country's first insurance

group to start overseas operations, has appointed Wang Sidong (pictured), former deputy manager of China Life Insurance (Group) Co, as its new general manager and vice-chairman, in place of Li Jinfu, who was dismissed. Wang has over 10 years of experience in insurance. At China Life Insurance, he was in charge of investment management and information technology.

Alibaba appoints new heads for Taobao, Tmall

Alibaba Group has appointed Jiang Fan as president of its online shopping website Taobao and Jing Jie as president of Tmall, sister firm of Taobao that connects brand owners and authorized distributors with consumers. Both Jiang and Jing are young executives born in the 1970s and 1980s. Zhang Yong, CEO of Alibaba Group, said the group needs fresher insights from young managers. Taobao and Tmall, as major e-commerce platforms, needed an upgrade to achieve digitalization, he said.

Song Zhiping is president of world cement body

Song Zhiping, chairman of China National Building Material Group Co Ltd, was appointed as the new president of the World Cement Association. It is the first time that an executive from a Chinese organization has been appointed leader of the global cement body. His

appointment reflects the increasing importance of China in the global cement industry, said Emir Adiguzel, the WCA chairman. Adiguzel said it also showed the WCA's commitment to connect the global community of the cement industry. Song said he would endeavor to promote sustainable development of the global cement industry.

Harbour BioMed places Chen Xiaoxiang as VP

Global biopharmaceutical company Harbour BioMed announced on Jan 3 the appointment of Chen Xiaoxiang as executive vice-president and head of clinical development and regulatory science. Chen has over 20 years of clinical development experience, most recently as vice-president of Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals Inc. Wang Jingsong, founder and CEO of Harbour BioMed, said Chen would bring in a wealth of experience. Chen will be in charge of the company's clinical development in over 80 countries and regions.

Harvest Fund elevates Zhao Xuejun to chairman

Zhao Xuejun, former CEO of Beijing-based asset management company Harvest Fund Management Co Ltd, was appointed its chairman effective Dec 26, 2017. The company said Zhao would be empowered to exercise part of the CEO's authority. Zhao joined HFM in 2000 and became the longest-serving executive in the asset management industry of China. Under Zhao's leadership, the company established a number of subsidiaries, including Harvest Wealth and Harvest Capital Management Inc.

CHINA DAILY - AGENCIES

Fidelity to expand private fund

By JIANG XUEQING
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Daisy Ho, regional managing director for Fidelity Int'l

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Shanghai became the first global asset manager to register with the Asset Management Association of China as a private fund management company. This qualification allows Fidelity International to create onshore investment products in China for eligible Chinese institutional investors and high net worth individuals.

Four months later, the WFOE launched its first private fund in China to invest in Chinese onshore bond markets. Ho said Fidelity's perseverance helped secure the private fund license.

"During the last 10 years, we just kept our head down and continued to do what we believe in," she said. "If a firm has a long-term goal, knows exactly what it wants, stays focused and keeps building a solid foundation, people of the same trade will see."

According to the Asset Management Association of China, private funds in the country amounted to 10.9 trillion yuan (\$1.68 trillion) as of end-November 2017, with 64,633 private funds registered with the association.

Considering China's opening-up of its private fund market as the biggest opportunity lying ahead, the asset manager is aiming to expand its product portfolio in the country during the next one to three years.

"Private funds are just the beginning of a new journey," Ho said. "Our ultimate goal is to provide full retirement and asset management solutions for our clients in China."

She said the company hopes to participate in China's pension reform, based on its rich experience in offering retirement products in other markets including the United States and the UK, depending on the progress of relaxation of regulatory restrictions on foreign investments in this sector.

Starting with fixed-income products, the privately owned investment solutions provider will offer different asset classes in China. On Jan 2, Fidelity International's WFOE announced the launch of its first equity A-share private fund and its second fixed-income fund.

"We aim to accelerate our business development in the country over 2018 and beyond," Ho said.

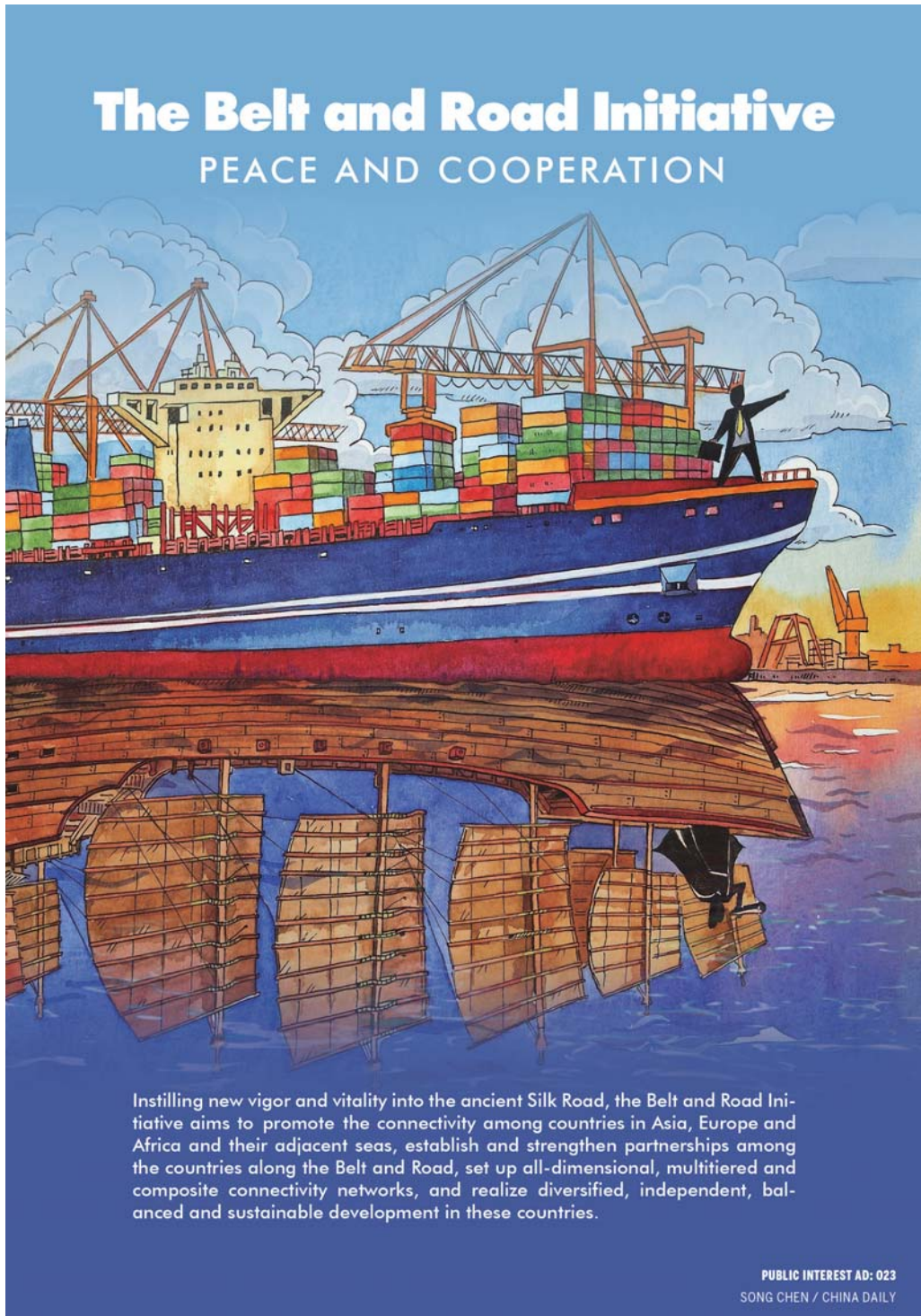
Going forward, the company will continue to build its research capabilities by expanding its research team in Shanghai, which is focused on China's A-share and bond markets.

Formed in 2011, the research team adopted a bottom-up investment approach that requires analysts to look for investment opportunities by reviewing corporate fundamentals, such as a company's management and profitability, in addition to analyzing the macroeconomic situation.

Like many commercial banks, the asset manager has invested in the development of financial technologies or fintech, such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics, to improve business efficiency, consistency and the level of customer service.

"Technological development will provide more market opportunities, and the Chinese mainland is at the forefront of internet-based finance," Ho said.

She noted that a growing number of fintech companies are competing in the market and they will help advance the asset management industry.



The Belt and Road Initiative
PEACE AND COOPERATION

Instilling new vigor and vitality into the ancient Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity among countries in Asia, Europe and Africa and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multitiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries.



An employee dresses a cat in winter clothes in Liaocheng, Shandong province. KONG XIAOZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

'Purrfect economy' sees roaring expansion as young people spend

Love of cats spawns multibillion-dollar business in a stunning range of products and services

By CHEN MEILING
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intelligent devices and cat teasers.

The world's most populous country is in love with cats. China's 59 million feline pets have spawned a "cat economy," a key sector of the overall pet industry that was worth 134 billion yuan (\$20.5 billion) last year, up from 100 billion yuan in 2016 and just 2 billion yuan in 2005.

The figure is expected to balloon to 188.5 billion yuan by 2020 with an annual growth of 30 percent, according to a report from Dog Network, China's online pet services provider.

While *nekonomics* describes Japan's cat economy, a new term — *maonomics* — may be required to indicate China's growing fascination with cats, industry insiders said. (*Mao* is Chinese for cat.)

Globally, in terms of number of pet cats, China now ranks second behind the United States, according to data of the National Bureau of Statistics.

It is a business that spans toys, nail clippers, fur care powder, anti-worm pills, balls, laser pens, soft tissue rolls, pooper scoopers, hygiene products, furniture,

These are all in addition to popular products like cat food, cat fashion, and services like veterinary centers, pet care hotels and cat-cafes (where patrons get to pet and cuddle freely roaming furry, purring, adorable feline beauties).

Not to forget funeral and internment services. That's not all. Exotic breeds sold as expensive pets figure among the range of 'products' that mark the 'purrfect economy'.

And images of real-life cats can spawn paid-for digital emojis and stickers for the virtual world. Blogs and videos about pet cats attract advertisers after gathering massive loyal readers/viewers.

Cat-related products and services could set back pet owners such as Huang Weixi by up to 15,000 yuan annually. However, the national annual per-pet spend tends to average out at about 5,000 yuan, according to a report on Dog Network.

Huang, 26, a book editor in Beijing, owns two cats. Last year, her pet bills included cat food worth 1,000 yuan per month, cat essentials, toys and the lot. She paid about 600 yuan to vets for services like washing pets' mouths

“Chinese people ... have begun to care more about their pets, and their care is similar to the way they treat their children.”

Wen Liang, owner of Maosheng Jixiang, a cat foster care service provider in Beijing

and brushing their teeth.

“I got used to the companionship of cats since I was very young,” she said. “There's no other reason. I just like them. Am not nuts about dogs or pups.”

Most of China's pet owners are young people with relatively higher income and quality educational background, who care for a lifestyle marked by shopping, fashion and entertainment, the Dog Network report said.

Wen Liang, owner of Maosheng Jixiang, a cat foster care service provider in Beijing, said, “With the increase in income, Chinese people now live a better life, so they have begun to care more about their pets, and that care is similar to the way they treat their children. The market is quite alluring.”

At Maosheng Jixiang, each cat has a “duplex home” with two floors, with a bedroom upstairs and one restroom downstairs.

Nekonomics, a term that originated in Japan in 2015, means consumers will pay for cat-related products and services irrespective of the state of the economy.

There are also wooden tower-like maze for cats to move from hole to hole, and fish in small ponds to cheer them up.

That's probably true. In a narrow lane off Beijing's Donggong street, Yuan operates a cat cafe that attracts customers well after 9 pm amid sub-zero temperatures.

Couples and groups lounge on European-style seating, sip cappuccino and chat, while cats circle their feet, rub against their legs or jump gently from one table and land softly on the next table in a heart-melting way.

This is Beijing's first cat cafe, founded in 2011. Yuan, 38, said he promised his family back then that the venture would at least make both ends meet. The business, he said, has vindicated him.

Compared with traditional cafes, a cat cafe entails additional expenses for owners, in terms of pet food and other necessities. Pet's monthly expenses may reach 10,000 yuan.

But cat-cafes make profit by selling aspirational or lifestyle foods and beverages to their customers, he said.

Besides, Yuan sells cute kittens through his Wechat

account. Each kitten could sell for 2,000 yuan to 3,000 yuan; some rare breeds may command price tags of 5,000 yuan to 6,000 yuan.

“Many of our customers are students and young professionals, who may want to unwind or de-stress here after a long or stressful work day,” he said.

Declining to share information like sales revenue and profit figures, Yuan said the cat business is not for everyone as entry barriers, in the form of specialization and limited supplies, are high. “By the way, I don't want more competitors,” he said in a lighter vein.

In the digital dimension, cats command fans and revenue. Loulou the cat, on which the lead character of an emoji package was based, had 680,000 fans online. When Loulou died in October 2017, more than 140,000 read and shared the news, and mourned the cat.

And then, there are bloggers who specialize in cat-related topics. A blogger nicknamed Xiaomajia boasts more than 29 million followers on Sina Weibo, China's Twitter-like social media. Each of his posts enriches him by about 20,000 yuan via advertisements.

“Such content resonates well with pet owners who gladly share it with their friends,” said Shao Yang, a blogger who previously earned about 1,000 yuan monthly by posting short videos of his pet cat.

Experts ponder risks to growth in 2018, seek ways to duck

BEIJING — While the world economy has seen a broad-based recovery in the past year, Chinese observers are wary that some “black swan” events could dampen growth prospects in 2018. Unique, eye-catching and hard to find, a black swan is as a metaphor to describe rare events with potentially catastrophic ramifications.

“One of the reasons behind economic strength last year was that we hardly saw any black swans,” said Zhang Ming, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

A report by the Institute of World Economics and Politics under the CASS predicted that the global economy would expand 3.5 percent in 2018 on purchasing power parity terms.

The rate is lower than previous estimates by international organizations, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which forecast in its World Economic Outlook in October that the global economy would grow by 3.7 percent in 2018.

“The lower prediction reflected our concerns over issues including asset price bubbles, high debt levels and geopolitical conflicts,” said Yao Zhizhong, another researcher with CASS.

According to Zhang, there are at least six potential black swans that observers should keep an eye on to cushion against their impact.

“The fact that risks did not happen does not mean that they do not exist,” Zhang said.

One of the major uncertainties comes from the political realm. The long-simmering rivalry between global and regional powers in the Middle East could become even more complicated, adding pressure to fluctuations in global crude oil prices.

Elections in Italy could also lead to black swan events such as the country leaving the Eurozone or defaulting on its treasury bonds, derailing the recovery in Europe, according to Zhang.

While anti-globalization sentiment did not deter major economies from benefiting from trade in 2017, any change in the trade policy stance of

the Trump administration could affect global growth.

The US economy has maintained mild inflation recently, but a sudden rise could speed up rates hikes and balance sheet reduction by the Federal Reserve.

Such incidents, though unlikely, could slow economic growth in the United States and have widespread spillover effects.

Another outlier would put an end to the nine-year-long bull market in the United States. The price-earning ratio of the US stock market is reaching historic highs, and some analysts worry that a downturn in the market could be sharp and long-lasting.

3.5 percent

the expected growth rate of the global economy this year, according to the Institute of World Economics and Politics under the CASS

“Once the US stock market takes a downturn, it could have a negative impact on asset prices in other countries, and curb consumer spending in the US, which was the most important driver for its recent recovery,” Zhang said.

Such black swans could also have interrelated effects, causing other rare events to happen, Zhang said.

Faster-than-expected rate hikes in the US, for example, would lead to a stronger US dollar that could possibly result in capital outflows and currency depreciation in some emerging economies, which enjoyed short-term capital inflows in 2017.

Other uncertainties, such as geopolitical and trade conflicts, could increase the size of such capital outflows, and even trigger balance-of-payments crises in some emerging economies, according to Zhang.

“If we could pay high attention to these potential risks and take measures to guard against them in advance, the impacts of black swans may not be as huge,” Zhang said.

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A pressman inspects a stack of uncut sheet of \$1 dollar notes at the US Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington. ANDREW HARRER / BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Co-working spaces go high-tech to be seen as service providers

By CHEN MEILING
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The business of co-working spaces has entered a new stage in China. Firms operating co-working spaces are seen as service providers equipped with intelligent tools. Such spaces can help promote smoother communication, higher working efficiency and better user experience among firms that use them, experts said.

Imagine this: when you approach the gate of the office building, the desk will adjust itself to the height that best suits you since it “knows” — or, the system will inform it — you have arrived.

If you click “export” in Singapore, the document will appear on the printer to reach your colleague in Beijing.

The so-called intelligent elevating desk and cloud printing

are parts of the intelligent services that Ucommune, China's co-working space unicorn with market value of 9 billion yuan (\$1.39 billion), offers at many of its offices, according to the company.

The initial version of shared office was meant for companies to share the same space in order to save rental cost, said Yan Quhai, senior board director of Cushman and Wakefield, global estate services provider, at a news conference in late December.

Then, more areas were separated to house different functions. Now, co-working space has evolved into a service provider where all the basic demands of the settlers, including clothing, dining, entertaining and accommodation, can be satisfied, he said.

In the upgraded offices of Ucommune, customers can buy snacks and beverages, store per-

sonal goods, and use garment trial rooms or laundry rooms all by themselves, make cashless payments via facial recognition technology, without help from staff members not far away, according to the company.

“What people in modern times want is convenience and time-saving,” said Mao Daqing, founder and CEO of Ucommune. “New technologies can make office space more diverse and intelligent.”

The change also significantly helped save the cost of human resources, said Shi Nan, public relations manager of the company.

“For office space with an area of less than 1,000 square meters, we used to need one managing staff. Now, no more than eight employees are needed to take care of a 20,000-square-meter office,” she said.

Co-working spaces will



Ucommune, China's co-working space unicorn, offers many conveniences at its facilities. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

make up 30 percent of the office market in China by 2030, according to Colliers International Group Inc, the US-based real estate services provider.

With more startups springing up in emerging industries

amid the country's stress on innovation and entrepreneurship, demand for flexible office space will keep growing, said Yan from Cushman and Wakefield.

Competition has become

“New technologies can make office space more diverse and intelligent.”

Mao Daqing, founder and CEO of Ucommune

fiercer among the many co-working space brands in China since customers now have more choices, he said.

“The key for brands to strive in the market is to improve experience with innovative technologies and services with high quality.”

At the co-working space operated by KrSPACE at Xujiahui in Shanghai, each meeting room is equipped with an

intelligent electronic screen for attendees to scan the QR code and download the content therein on their cell-phones, without having to take notes using paper and pen, according to the company.

The indoor environmental monitor can adjust the air conditioner to ensure an ideal temperature and humidity. The lights can turn off themselves if nobody else is in the office to save energy, it said.

Hu Tao, manager of its intelligent hardware products, said the company is considering if it should add some social function to the intelligent facility.

“For example, when the first employee of a company comes to the office, he or she will receive a red packet (cash e-gift) on the phone,” Hu said.

Motoring

中國日報 CHINA DAILY

Tech firms explore future of transport beyond the car

LAS VEGAS — The latest in mass-produced Carless commuting is cruising into the fast lane at the Consumer Electronics Show, with companies showing off electric bicycles, scooters, skateboards and more aimed at making the internal combustion engine a thing of the past.

As the ranks of people around the world living in cities has grown, so too has the cost of car ownership as well as traffic congestion.

Nowhere was this more apparent than at the annual tech gathering in Las Vegas, where some 170,000 conference goers jammed the streets.

"In a lot of big cities, cars aren't tenable anymore," said tech analyst Jack Gold of J. Gold Associates.

An AFP journalist testing the car-free concept through the week at CES, by relying on a freshly released GenZe electric bicycle, consistently sailed past clogged traffic near the convention center and on the famed Las Vegas Strip.

Riders too tired or lazy to pedal, meanwhile, can twist a throttle to glide along at close to local street speed limits.

GenZe spokesman Tom Valasek, a former auto industry marketing executive, said that several car makers had come to check out the company's CES exhibit.

"There is a lot of curiosity right now about where things are heading," Valasek told AFP.

"I know a lot of people in the auto industry who are quite worried that car ownership is going away."

Driverless cars

The popularity of smart-phone-summoned rides from services such as Uber and Lyft are playing into the trend, with technology giants investing heavily in self-driving capabilities that could soon see automated vehicles available on-demand.

"We believe car ownership makes no sense in the future," Lyft Chief Executive John Zimmer said at a CES dinner event.

Zimmer doubted that his daughter, now a young child, will want to own a car when she is of age. Instead, he said: "she'll want access to

transportation." A boom of autonomous cars would likely prompt vehicles to evolve to be more akin to rooms on wheels: sleeper cabins in trains, or private offices, Zimmer added.

A shift away from owning and relying on cars was also expected to result in traffic and parking becoming less of a priority in urban design.

GenZe, a US-based division of the Mahindra Group in India, this week announced its e-bikes will be added in April to a Ford GoBike ride-share program in San Francisco.

The e-bikes should "help to make San Francisco more livable and reduce congestion," said Metropolitan Transportation Commission deputy executive Alix Bockelman in a release.

Leading online social network Facebook has a fleet of 100 GenZe bikes for employees to get around its Silicon Valley campus, and they are also used by delivery services DoorDash and Postmates, according to Valasek.

Scoot, skate, ride

Despite negative publicity about hoverboards a few years ago — centered on their tendency to explode — the manufacturer Swagtron was at CES with some of those devices, along with skateboards and bicycles boosted by electric motors.

"We are seeing with personal mobility that some people like to skate; some people like to scoot, and some people like to ride," said Swagtron Chief Operating Officer Andrew Koven.

Koven saw alternatives to cars as an "absolute necessity" that was part of a "systemic shift" toward getting around in ways that are economical as well as socially and environmentally responsible. "If I am commuting a short distance to work, do I really need a car?" asked analyst Jack Gold.

Cities are already eyeing autonomous shuttle services.

A self-driving electric shuttle built by Navya was introduced here last year, in a test that segued into a program providing rides on a route in downtown Las Vegas.

AFP



Employees check cars on Great Wall Motor's Tianjin production line. JIA CHENGLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Sector predicts slower moving sales growth in current year

Manufacturers association says road to expansion made more arduous by purchase tax

By LI FUSHENG and HAO YAN

Car sales in China edged up to a record 28.88 million units last year — but the growth rate plunged to a meager 3 percent year-on-year, the lowest point in six years — according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The association also expects the growth rate to hover at a similar level in 2018.

"The growth rate in 2017 fell short of our 5 percent estimate, mainly because the purchase tax discount is losing its effect and China's adjustments to its new energy car policies at the start of the year affected sales to some extent," said Chen Shihua, an assistant to the secretary-general of the association.

Introduced in late 2015 to buoy up weak market demand, the 50 percent discount on the usual 10 percent purchase tax on cars with engines no larger than 1.6 liters, one of the most popular segments in China, once worked like magic.

In 2016 it conjured up 21.4 percent growth year-on-year for sales of cars eligible for the discount, which brought about a nearly 15 percent growth in passenger cars sales overall but sapped some market demand in 2017.

As a result, passenger cars, which take up the lion's share of total car sales, totaled 24.72 million units last year, up 1.4

percent year-on-year, the lowest point since 2008, Chen said.

A breakdown showed that sedan sales dipped 2.5 percent to 11.84 million against the previous year, MPV sales fell 17 percent to 2.07 million and minivans slumped 20 percent to 547,000.

SUVs were a rare and consoling exception. Their sales grew 13.3 percent year-on-year to 10.25 million units in 2017, most of which were produced by Chinese carmakers.

A report by the CarBingo Academy found SUVs are the top choice for a majority of car owners considering a second vehicle for the family, a sentiment that sustained the segment's high-speed expansion in past years.

"For those families who already own sedans, SUVs offer a different feel and use, despite a riding experience that isn't as comfortable," said Xu Gang, a Shanghai-based partner of Boston Consulting Group.

He said SUVs also appealed to first-time car buyers with their trendy silhouettes and commanding views.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers estimated that in the current year SUV sales would lose their momentum a little, with their growth rate falling by 2 percentage points to 11 percent year-on-year.



Chinese carmakers responded fast to local market trends like SUVs, so they could develop fast in the past decade."

Li Qingwen, president of CarBingo Academy

One thing that may serve as a harbinger is that Great Wall Motor, China's largest SUV producer, saw its sales fall 0.4 percent in 2017. Its small-sized H1 model nosedived in sales by nearly 73 percent, and even its best-selling compact H6 fell more than 12 percent.

An annual survey in 40 cities by the China Automotive Technology & Research Center found that Chinese customers were getting less satisfied with micro and small-sized SUVs available in the market.

"It's a timely warning to the carmakers. Customers buy small-sized cars, but that does not mean they are less demanding about what they buy," said Fu Lianxue, an official at the center.

His words were echoed by Li Qingwen, president of CarBingo Academy.

"Chinese carmakers responded fast to local market trends like SUVs, so they could develop fast in the past decade," Li said.

"But they have to elevate their product quality to meet future challenges. There won't be a clear distinction between customers' expectations for Chinese and foreign volume brands."

Despite an overall sagging market, premium brands were unscathed. In fact, most of them made remarkable progress last year.

Daimler AG sold more than 610,000 Mercedes-Benz and smart-branded cars last year in China, up 25 percent year-on-year. Jaguar Land Rover sales grew 23 percent to 146,399 cars, accounting for nearly a quarter of its global sales. The British carmaker also expects to further improve its market performance in 2018.

China has become the largest retail market for Cadillac, the premium arm of General Motors, where its sales soared 51 percent to 175,489 cars last year, beating its home country the United States.

Another highlight of the Chinese market is new energy cars. A total of 777,000 new energy cars were sold in 2017, a 53.3 percent surge year-on-year, according to statistics

from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Xu Haidong, an assistant to the association's secretary-general, expected their sales would grow at around 40 percent to exceed at least 1 million in 2018 — as the cars continued to gain wider recognition among the public and the authorities pushed their development.

China has built the largest public charging network worldwide, according to Liu Kai, an official at the China Electric Car Charging Technology and Industry Alliance.

Liu said by the end of 2017, China was home to 213,903 public charging poles and 231,820 private ones.

The alliance estimated that by the end of December China had more than 1.72 million new energy cars on the road, of which nearly 1.5 million were electric. It has been the largest market for such cars since 2015.

Yang Jing, an official at the China Car Consumer Research and Testing Center, said currently buyers of new energy passenger cars were primarily well-educated residents in tier-one and tier-two cities, with the majority of them aged between 30 and 40.

Contact the writers at lifusheng@chinadaily.com.cn and haoyan@chinadaily.com.cn



A cutaway display of a Hyundai NEXO fuel cell car is shown at the Las Vegas Convention Center during the 2018 CES in Las Vegas. STEVE MARCUS / REUTERS

World auto industry set to descend on Shanghai for annual trade expo

By LI FUSHENG

Officials and delegations from around 100 countries will seek business opportunities at the China International Auto Products Expo to be held in Shanghai later this year, according to its organizers.

The guests will hold talks with representatives from around 100 Chinese cities at the annual automotive products trade expo and hopefully reach all-round cooperation, according to the Ministry of

1

million

new energy cars are expected to be sold in 2018

Commerce and China General Technology (Group) Holding.

Scheduled to run from Sept 20 to 22, the expo will have a special focus on new energy vehicles as the sector is one of

the fastest growing auto segments in China.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers has estimated that about 1 million new energy autos will be sold in 2018. There were more than 1.6 million of such vehicles on the nation's roads as of the end of November.

The organizers said the expo will also cover sections dedicated to parallel-import cars, spare parts, 3D printing, smart manufacturing & robotics, recreational vehicles,

motor vehicles as well as automotive financing, insurance and car rental services.

During the expo, a summit will be held for dealers in the automotive industrial chain, a forum on car consumption in China, an after-sales forum as well as press conferences for new products and technologies.

Last year the annual expo attracted more than 1,103 exhibitors, and the figure is expected to rise even higher this year, said the organizers.



A driver charges a new energy vehicle in Xianju county, Zhejiang province. WANG HUABIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Country's oldest car marque to rise again, launch next era

Once setting the standard for luxury travel, Hongqi is seeking to stage a big comeback

By LI FUSHENG
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Hongqi, China's oldest luxury car marque once famous for its state limousines and parade cars, is planning to stage an ambitious comeback.

The goal of Hongqi, which literally means red flag, is to become the No 1 auto brand in China and a renowned brand worldwide, said Xu Liuping, chairman of Hongqi's parent company FAW Group Corp, when he unveiled the brand's plan last week.

"To realize the goal, Hongqi will strive to have annual sales of 100,000 units by 2020, 300,000 units by 2025 and 500,000 units by 2035," Xu said.

To accompany this new goal is a brand new logo, which Hongqi said is inspired by a flying red flag, as well as an ambitious product plan utilizing its global research and development system.

Xu said Hongqi will launch 17 brand-new cars by 2025. Currently it only sells the L5, which costs over 5 million yuan (\$766,550), and H7 sedans.

FAW Group will "mobilize the best resources, select the best suppliers and build top-class manufacturing facilities for Hongqi," the automaker said in a statement.

China's oldest passenger car marque also plans to ride the tide in popularity generated



A futuristic concept car from Hongqi, China's oldest luxury marque, that is planning a comeback. PHOTOS PROVIDE TO CHINA DAILY



Xu Liuping, chairman of FAW Group Corp, unveils Hongqi's development plan last week in Beijing.

by new energy vehicles, a segment that is growing fast in China.

Hongqi said it will release its first electric car this year.

It is also building a bespoke electric car platform. Models built on the platform are expected to have a range of up to 600 km on one charge

when they hit the market in 2020. By 2025, Hongqi will have 15 models of electric vehicle available on the market.

Another highlight of the brand's strategy will be autonomous driving.

Mass-produced models with eyes-off functions will roll off the assembly line in 2019 and fully-autonomous cars will drive into the market around 2025, according to the marque.

Hongqi has been working to build a sales network of 100 experience centers and 300 dealerships around the country to better serve its customers.

The marque said it will also provide what it calls "extreme" customer service.

"All Hongqi cars will enjoy life-long after-sales service free of charge," Xu said.

In the future, the brand has pledged to offer customers high quality mobility and living experiences by building smart mobility circles, green and smart towns.

Short Torque

GAC Honda model hits the market

GAC Honda launched a small-size hatchback on the Chinese market with an upgraded exterior and interior. The suggested price ranges from 73,800 yuan to 102,800 yuan (\$11,350 to \$15,815). Among its newly launched latest models, GAC Honda also offers two special editions, Sport and Sport+, with an exclusive cerulean body color option. The orange front spoiler, side skirts, 15-inch wheels and the chrome exhaust tips give the Sport editions their identity. Their interiors feature orange stitching on the sides of the seats.

Calls to boost battery quality

A survey by Shanghai's quality watchdog on the satisfaction levels of electric car owners last year, found drivers complained of low battery performance, despite being satisfied about the quality of services. Ouyang Minggao, automotive academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said e-car power batteries still faced challenges at low temperatures due to low power output and high consumption of heating systems. Another senior auto expert, Chen Qingtai, said he expected electric vehicles would resolve a price-to-quality ratio issue.

PSA aims to offer US car sharing

French auto giant PSA hopes to launch a car-sharing service in 2018 in the US, its latest baby step back after Peugeot exited the market in 1991. In October PSA launched Free2Move in Seattle, a smartphone application that aggregates

car-sharing programs for users. Car-sharing apps allow users to rent vehicles for short periods of time, in contrast to traditional rental companies.

GM to mass-produce autonomous car

General Motors says it is making the first mass-produced autonomous car without a steering wheel or pedals. The US automaker says it has filed a petition with the federal government seeking permission to put the vehicles on the road sometime next year with no human backup drivers. GM's Cruise Automation unit has announced plans to carry passengers in self-driving cars that won't have a backup driver in 2019. Where the services will take place has not been revealed. GM spokesman Kevin Kelly says that currently the first of the autonomous Chevrolet Bolts is being tested.

New auto test center unveiled

China Automotive Consumer Research and Testing Center was unveiled last week. As the first of its kind in the country, the institution aims to build a car assessment system based on customer reviews and testing results in an effort to offer objective and scientific information for consumers. It said there are around 760 car models available in the market but what buyers primarily rely on are relatively simple reviews by some car websites. The center said it mainly assesses cars that are launched within a year and have monthly sales of 3,000 units or more.

MOToring - AGENCIES

Advertorial

Art-inspired flagship models create new high in China auto market

By HAO YAN
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Lexus China's art-inspired top luxury flagship models are poised to set new benchmarks in the premium D segment with a fresh sensual experience created in line with customers' unique lifestyles.

The premium auto maker launched its dual flagships, all-new Lexus LS and LC, whose brave designs, "Takumi" craftsmanship, imaginative technologies, and exhilarating performance step aside from the European peers.

The all-new Lexus LS 350 is offered at 888,000 yuan (\$140,000) or 1,038,000 yuan, while the suggested prices for hybrid LS 500h range from 958,000 yuan to 1,288,000 yuan. All-new Lexus LC 500h is sold at prices start from 1,268,000 and top at 1,386,000 yuan.

All-new Lexus LS and LC feature as many as possible original art-inspired designs that have never appeared in the Chinese market, to create an unparalleled luxurious feel at the customers' first sight.

Kevin Chen, general manager of the marketing and communications division of Lexus China, shared the brand philosophy and brand essence in an innovative way at the ceremony, instead of presenting the product specifications in numbers.

"The Lexus LS and LC illustrate the all-new design language that communicate our understanding of the future and the thoughts on the luxury lifestyle," said Chen.

As one of the flagships, the all-new Lexus LS reflects a strong, uniquely oriental identity and a new approach inside and out to creating trim elements again turned to Eastern culture, combining traditional aesthetics.

The luxury sedan is bestowed with a more elegant silhouette, more rejuvenating and vigorous driving experience and coupe-level control, drawing everyone's attention on the go or standing still.

Inspired by nature, the spindle grille in the all-new LS was forged with 5,000 facades under different lighting after months of CAD modeling and manual adjustment, showcasing unparalleled and sophisticated texture with refined grid variation.

Superior ambient interior lighting inspired by "Andon" lanterns and armrests that appear to float next to the door panel create luxurious feel to help a customer remain in a comfortable, cozy and peaceful mood.

The decorative horizontal chrome lines connecting both ends of the dashboard resemble strings of Zheng, a Chinese musi-



Lexus' senior executives and guests pose with the two latest models on Thursday at the launching ceremony in Shanghai.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Above: Kevin Chen, general manager of the marketing and communications division of Lexus China.

Left: The all-new Lexus LS has advanced manufacturing techniques.

cal instrument, bringing artistic and stylish atmosphere to the interior.

Built to oriental aesthetics, the all-new Lexus LS has advanced manufacturing techniques applied to perfectly illustrate the brand's innovative elegance through "Takumi" craftsmanship. This is reflected in

signature touches, including "Kiriko" glass ornamentation, reflecting gorgeous radiance and "Origami" handcrafted pleats presenting sophisticated textures, which are available on the door trim in the top configured Executive version.

Besides exemplifying a true handcrafted

approach, the latest models offers innovative Lexus Multi-stage Hybrid System with a refreshed interpretation of luxury enjoyment, besides a perfect balance between performance and efficiency.

Thanks to the Lexus Multi-stage Hybrid System, Lexus LS' exhilarating and smooth

power output and passionate eco-friendliness leaves the other racers in dust.

The world's first electric transmission, simulated 10-speed shift, pushes the performance of a 3.5-liter twin-turbo V6 engine to a new extreme.

The even sharper and more refined luxury flagship, the all-new Lexus LC coupe, presents a special Launch Edition featuring a Structural Blue exterior and Breezy Blue interior, to deliver sensual experience integrating a passionate driving with the senses of hearing, touching and feeling.

New luxury lifestyle

The two flagship models set the pace for Lexus brand innovation and evolution in the all-new brand chapter marked with the slogan "Experience Amazing".

Lexus is undergoing a metamorphosis into a luxury lifestyle brand that generates more emotional brand experience that has temperature, and creates a lifestyle filled with high-quality and passion for the customers.

The upgraded brand philosophy not only appears in Lexus model designs, but also conveys the critical essences through the entire value chain including production and operation to fulfill the ever-changing needs of the customers, dubbed "Experiential Masters".

Producing incomparable value in luxury lifestyles, enriched experience, and emotional feel, Lexus has successfully driven up its brand recognition and reputation that result in a remarkable annual sales volume and growth rate in the Chinese market.

"For us it's not about 'speaking the Chinese language' in China — Lexus is the only premium car brand rooted in Eastern culture," said Chen. "It's more about presenting the essence of Oriental aesthetics in contemporary styles and striking a chord with Chinese."

Chen's team, in charge of branding of Lexus in China, masterminded or sponsored a string of tasteful art programs last month from a finale of the touring exhibition featuring the new Chinese craftsmanship spirits, to Men's Uno Young annual party and award ceremony.

A three-day seminar was also organized for experts and elites exchanging ideas on "new art of luxury" represented by all-new Lexus LS and LC in Beijing from Dec 8 to 10, 2017.

Looking back, the company has registered a new sales record last year with a total of 132,864 cars delivered to the local customers, 22 percent more than the amount in 2016.

Exhibition explores Fab Four's India visit

LONDON — The 50th anniversary of the world-famous Beatles traveling to Rishikesh in India is to be marked with a new exhibition in their home city of Liverpool.

The exhibition, *Beatles in India*, at the award-winning The Beatles Story museum will open on Feb 16 and run for two years. It will look at what was a key and relatively secretive part of the lives of the four-strong band comprising John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr.

The exhibition at the historic British city will feature never-seen-before memorabilia, imagery and personal accounts from the people who visited India with the band in 1968.

A sitar used by Ravi Shankar will go on display at the immersive exhibition, loaned to The Beatles Story by the Ravi Shankar Foundation. As George Harrison's mentor, Shankar's influence on him ultimately helped to popularize the use of Indian instruments in 1960s' pop music.



It really was a special, magical time; forming many memories and, of course, an abundance of great Beatles music."

Pattie Boyd, first wife of the late George Harrison

Other exhibits will also include photography from Paul Saltzman, a sound engineer for the National Film Board of Canada at the time, who photographed the Beatles during their stay. He is responsible for some of the most iconic and intimate images of the Fab Four in India.

A spokesman for The Beatles Story museum says: "The exhibit will look at the groups' inspiration for the trip, their introduction to transcendental meditation, and the songs they worked on in advance of the famous Beatles' *White Album*."

Pattie Boyd, former wife of George Harrison, and her sister Jenny Boyd, who were among the star-studded list of attendees in India, will also be providing their personal insight into the trip.

"It really was a special, magical time; forming many memories and, of course, an abundance of great Beatles music. I look forward to sharing thoughts and memories of India as part of the exhibition," Boyd says.

The Beatles Story museums' Diane Glover visited Rishikesh in April to meet with government officials and went to the Maharishi's Ashram, which recently opened as a tourist attraction.

She says: "It's a magical place and as we walked through the remains of the Maharishi's Ashram, it is clearly a place of peace and seclusion."

The 1968 visit was an important time of reflection for The Beatles as their manager, Brian Epstein, had died unexpectedly in the summer of 1967, prompting them to escape from their fans and the media in search of spirituality.

XINHUA

MONK AND THE ROSE

Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts will present the French opera *Thais* as its first production of the year. **Chen Nan** reports.

The National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing will stage *Thais* as its first opera of the year.

The three-act opera to be performed over Feb 2-6 was composed by Jules Massenet, with the libretto by fellow Frenchman Louis Gallet.

The opera was inspired by an old French novel by Anatole France, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1921.

Premiered in 1894 in Paris, the opera's story follows that of the book — the journey of a monk named Athanael who lives in 4th-century Alexandria, Egypt, and tries to convert a courtesan called Thais to Christianity, only to find himself succumbing to her charm.

"For a long time, *Thais* was one of the most popular operas. But from the middle of the 20th century, it slowly sank into oblivion," says NCPA opera consultant Giuseppe Cuccia.

But in recent years, the work has seen a revival with many major opera houses including it in their repertoire once again.

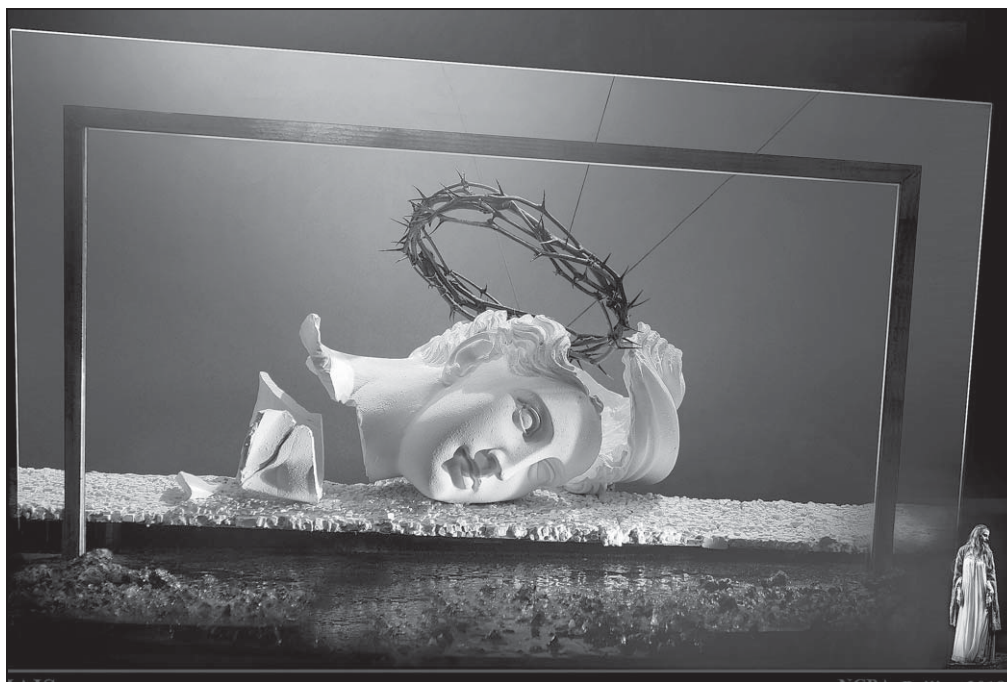
"It is hard to imagine an opera that is more in line with the times, with its hunger for luxury, striving for beauty and longing for eternal youth on the one hand, and its religious asceticism and fanaticism on the other hand," Cuccia says.

The creative force behind the NCPA's version of *Thais* is Argentine director Hugo de Ana, who is also the set and costume designer.

Known for his spectacular sets and a regular guest at the world's most prestigious opera houses, De Ana has previously directed NCPA's other productions such as Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Macbeth* and Antonin Dvorak's opera *Rusalka*.

He uses symbolic elements such as the statue of the Roman goddess Venus with a broken face, a crown hanging in the air and a sloping section of stage made up of broken pieces of wood.

"The opera follows the monk's journey. So we use multimedia to show the



The opera *Thais* features spectacular sets of symbolic elements, such as the statue of the Roman goddess Venus. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

If you go

7 pm, Feb 2-6, 2 West Chang'an Avenue, Xicheng district, Beijing. 010-6655-0000.

moving scenery," says the director. "For the audience, watching the opera is also like experiencing a journey (both) about the salvation of the soul and earthly lust."

De Ana says the music of the opera is "extraordinarily beautiful, whether depicting religious austerity or the inner struggles of the characters".

Among the scores, *Meditation* for solo violin and orchestra is the most famous piece, which is also often performed by individual musicians at concerts.

Placido Domingo, a veteran artist from Spain, will play the lead role of Athanael.

He has performed in NCPA



Placido Domingo will play the lead role in the opera *Thais*. WANG XIAOXI / FOR CHINA DAILY

productions since 2010, including Verdi's operas *Nabucco* and *Macbeth*.

In 2012, Operalia, an annual international voice competition, which was

founded by Domingo in 1993 as a platform to help launch the careers of many of today's opera stars, held its 20th edition at the NCPA in Beijing. Among its winners

were Chinese soprano Sun Xiuwei and mezzo-soprano Yang Guang.

"Over 70 years old, Domingo is still pursuing new challenges and we are excited to



"... watching the opera is also like experiencing a journey (both) about the salvation of the soul and earthly lust."

Hugo de Ana, Argentine director of *Thais*

have him in *Thais*," says Zhu He, head of program production at the NCPA.

Besides Domingo, the main cast members include Albanian soprano Ermonela Jaho and soprano Davinia Rodriguez who was born in Las Palmas, Spain. Chinese singers Li Yi, Zhang Wenwei and Dong Fang will also perform in the opera. French conductor Patrick Fournillier will take the baton, collaborating with the NCPA's in-house orchestra and chorus.

Since it was established a decade ago, the NCPA has produced 58 operas, including original works.

Thais is the fourth French opera production by the NCPA after *Carmen* by Georges Bizet, *The Tales of Hoffmann* by Jacques Offenbach and *Samson and Delila* by Camille Saint-Saens.

This year, the NCPA will produce another French opera — Charles Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Contact the writer at chenman@chinadaily.com.cn

Former den of suicide bombers now a cultural hub

CASABLANCA, Morocco — "Teaching young people to dream again" is the vision of a Moroccan cultural center in a run-down district of Casablanca, once home to a group of suicide bombers who killed 33 people in 2003.

Based in a white building next to a tramline and opposite a mosque, the Stars Cultural Center in Sidi Moumen regularly hosts more than 300 young people for classes in music and music theory, classical dance, hip-hop, English and French.

"When we tell young people that violence is not a means to express themselves, we must find them other means," says filmmaker Nabil Ayouch, who co-founded the center with artist Mahi Binebine.

Ayouch's connection with the district began with his film *Horses of God*, which looked at how young people in the neighborhood were becoming radicalized.

When he organized a screening of the film in Sidi Moumen, Ayouch realized something: "Even in an area



Moroccan children attend music and dance classes at the Stars Cultural Center in Casablanca. AFP

without rights, there is the right to hope."

That seed of an idea eventually led him to set up the center in the district that was home to 12 suicide bombers, who carried out the May 2003 terrorist attacks in Casablanca.

Yacine, 14, is studying piano and music theory and hopes that one day he can become a concert musician and perform with an orchestra.

"The training is much better than at the Casablanca

Conservatoire," he says.

Students' families pay for the lessons but those on limited means receive subsidized rates.

The center offers free film screenings, hosts foreign artists and gives shows that attract spectators from far and wide.

"Back in 2014, there was nothing — no culture, no cinema," says the center's assistant manager, Soumia Errahmani.



But funded by private donations and foreign cultural institutes, the center has shown that "there are also stars and not only terrorists" in the district, she says.

The 24-year-old says the project had taught her that "if you want, you can".

She herself signed up for a class because she had "always dreamed of playing guitar and percussion".

She put together a band, Africa Vibes, and stayed. Now

she manages student registrations at the center and works to "reassure parents".

In Morocco's conservative society, "the relationship with art in general, and with dance in particular, is very difficult," she says.

But today, "parents come to see the shows, they are proud of their children," she says. "Mothers, who were worried about seeing their daughters dancing, come to ask for advice."

Ayouch, who grew up among the tower blocks of the working-class Paris suburb of Sarcelles, says the center aims to break down the "invisible walls" both mental and geographical, which "confine culture to the city center".

In November, he opened a similar center in the Beni Makada district of Tangiers, a neglected, overcrowded neighborhood known for drug-dealing and police raids.

Director Annafs Azzakia Ben Sbih says the center aimed to "show that there are also young talents" and change the way people see a neighborhood many would previously have avoided.

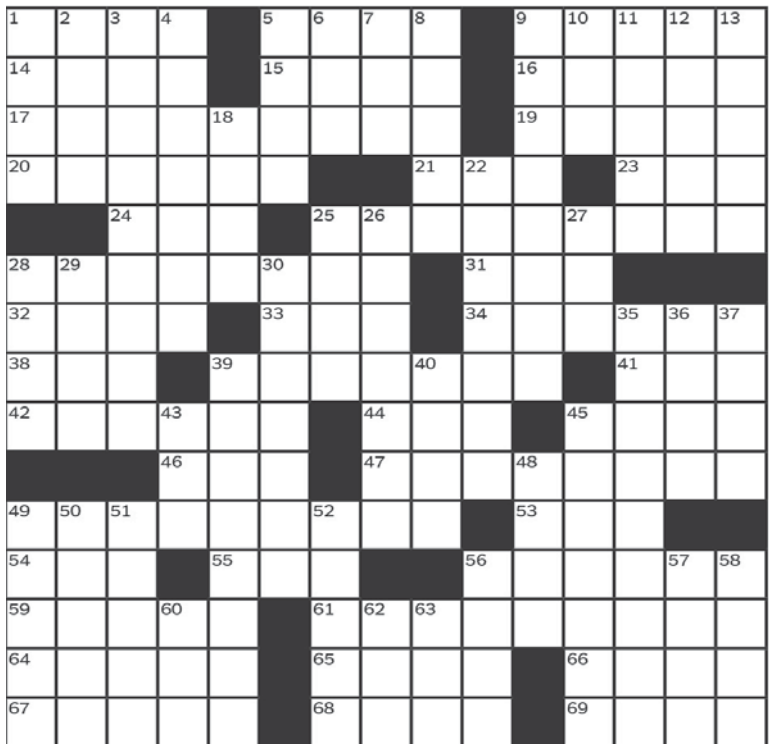
Further centers are planned in disadvantaged districts of Marrakech and Fez.

Ayouch says the idea is to create "a network with similar and shared programs, with passionate teachers who are well-trained and rewarded, who can open doors for young people to take advantage of".

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The New York Times

Crossword



- Across
1 Puts on TV or radio
5 Ending on several central Asian country names
9 Meanie in Jack and the Beanstalk
14 US weather agcy
15 Zeus' wife
16 ___ and wiser
17 1990s TV series about a murder in a town in Washington
19 Film director Kurosawa
20 Made smooth, as wood
21 Part of the conjugation of the French "avoir"
23 And others, for short
24 Bump fists
25 K-K-K-5-5, eg, in poker
28 Exhibit in an anatomy class
31 Guided
32 Is sick
33 Four-baggers: Abbr
34 Like favorite stations on a car radio
38 Pie ___ mode
39 Result of failure to comb the hair after sleep, maybe... or a feature of 17-, 25-, 49- or 61-Across?
41 School grp
42 Young male viewed as a sex object
44 Black ___ (cover doings)
45 ___ ficonderoga
46 Apr 15 mail addressee
47 Place to pull over on an interstate
49 English monarch with a "lace" named after her
53 ___-rock (music genre)
54 Land between Can and Mex
55 Inits at the start of a memo
56 "You ready?"
59 Drilling tool
61 Hooded snake
64 Thin pancake
65 Place for a banjo in Oh! Susanna
66 Exposition
67 NBA star ___ Irving
68 Freezes, with "over"
69 Worry
11 French farewell
12 "Rats!"
13 Use a stencil on
18 Amorous cartoon skunk
22 "No thanks"
25 President after Nixon
26 Like a sheep with all its wool
27 Praiseful poem
28 Onetime Volvo competitor
29 K, in the NATO alphabet
30 "According to conventional wisdom ..."
35 Place to drink lined with TVs
36 French "to be"
37 "So long!"
39 Joy
Adamson book about Elsa the lioness
40 Fencing sword
43 Coat and ___
45 Decrease
48 Soft mineral
49 Phony doc
50 Unscrupulous moneylending
51 Rarin' to go
52 Republican pol Haley from South Carolina
56 Gets 16-Across
57 Buffalo's lake
58 Sour
60 Prefix with dermis
62 Monsters, ___ (2001 movie)
63 Word before a maiden name

Friday's solution



Down

- 1 Picnic pests
2 State that produces the most corn
3 Weather-related stoppage in baseball
4 Beach footwear
5 Tool building
6 Lipton offering
7 Genesis vessel
8 Word before congestion or spray
9 Job that might involve watching the kids?
10 Variety

Comics

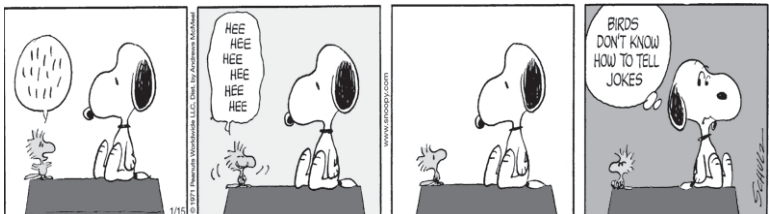
DILBERT



F-MINUS



PEANUTS



DRABBLE

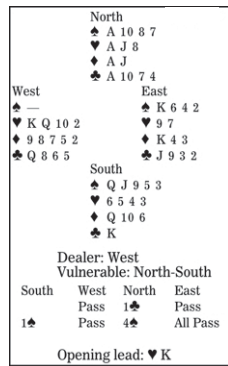


Horoscope

- Capricorn (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)
Aquarius (JAN. 20-FEB. 19)
Pisces (FEB. 20-MARCH 20)
Aries (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)
Taurus (APRIL 20-MAY 20)
Gemini (MAY 21-JUNE 20)
Cancer (JUNE 21-JULY 22)
Leo (JULY 23-AUG. 22)
Virgo (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)
Libra (SEPT. 23-OCT. 23)
Scorpio (OCT. 24-NOV. 22)
Sagittarius (NOV. 23-DEC. 21)

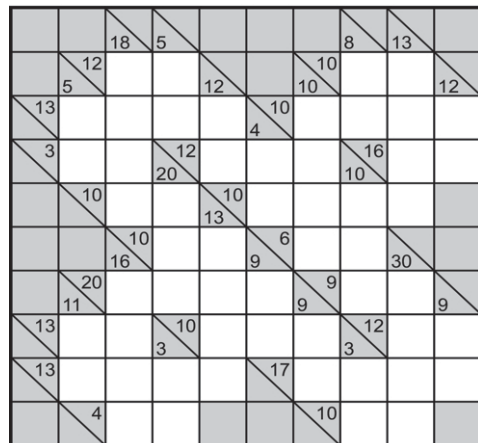
Bridge

Today's deal is tough to get right in the real world. South is in four spades, and West leads the heart king. How would you tune the cards? The North hand has 18 points and four aces, but it contains a surprising seven losers: two spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs. As aficionados of the Losing Trick Count will know, this makes the hand worth only a single raise of one spade to two spades! However, you have to let high point-count overrule the LTC.



North just has to shoot out four spades. The natural play is to win the first trick with the heart ace, cross to the club king and take the spade finesse. Here, though, you get the bad news when West discards the diamond two under the spade queen. Then, to make matters worse, East wins with the spade king, leads a heart to partner's queen and ruffs the next heart. A moment later, the diamond king is the setting trick. The only way to get home is to duck the first trick to cut the communications between the defenders' hands. In a 16-table duplicate, two Norths did raise to two spades, but got only a little over average because five declarers were allowed to make four spades and one was in the unbeatable three no-trump after never bidding spades.

Kakuro



A Kakuro consists of a playing area of filled and empty cells similar to a crossword puzzle. Some black cells contain a diagonal slash from top left to bottom right with numbers in them, called "clues". A number in the top right corner relates to an "across" clue and one in the bottom left a "down" clue. The object of a Kakuro is to insert digits from one to nine into the white cells to total the clue associated with it. However, no digit can be duplicated in an entry.

Table with 10 columns and 10 rows showing the solution for the Kakuro puzzle.

Language tips

BETTER CHINESE

- 上扬 shàng yáng Rise; go up
例: 股指大幅上扬, 报收于4900点。
gǔ zhǐ dà fú shàng yáng, bào shōu yú sī qiān jiǔ bǎi diǎn.
The stock index rose sharply to close at 4,900 points.
神 shén Supernatural; magical; amazing
例: 这件事太神了, 没人会相信。
zhè jiàn shì tài shén le, méi rén huì xiāng xìn.
This thing is too amazing. Nobody will believe it.
瘦身 shòu shēn 1. Lose weight; slim down
例: 最近人们发现, 成功瘦身的她比以前漂亮了不少。
zuì jìn rén men fā xiàn, chéng gōng shòu shēn de tā bǐ yǐ qián piào liàng le bù shǎo.
Recently, people are discovering that she has become more beautiful since she slimmed down.
2. A metaphor for streamlining an administration structure or downsizing an organization
例: 裁员成了各大企业瘦身的首选方式。
cái yuán chéng le gè dà qǐ yè shòu shēn de shǒu xuǎn fāng shì.
Laying off employees has become the primary way for companies to slim down.
帅呆了 shuài dāi Handsome; outstanding
例: 他在电影中的形象简直帅呆了, 难怪那么多人喜欢看这部电影呢!
tā zài diàn yǐng zhōng de xíng xiàng jiǎn zhí shuài dāi le, nán guài nà me duō rén xǐ huān kàn zhè bù diàn yǐng ne.
He has such a handsome image in this film, no wonder so many people want to see it.

China Daily with contributions from New Slang of China, New World Press

BETTER ENGLISH

世卫组织或将“游戏障碍”列为精神疾病

世界卫生组织将于今年更新国际疾病分类名单, 此次名单修订拟将“游戏障碍”列为精神疾病的一种。

The World Health Organization is considering adding "gaming disorder" to the list of mental health conditions in its next update of the International Classification of Diseases, according to a draft document.

世界卫生组织拟在更新版的国际疾病分类草案中, 将“游戏障碍”列为精神疾病。

在该草案的描述中, 沉迷游戏的行为需符合以下三个特征才可能被归为“游戏障碍”(gaming disorder):

- 1. 对游戏行为失去控制力 (if a person loses control over their gaming habits);
2. 游戏为先, 其他的爱好和活动都为游戏让路 (if they start to prioritize gaming over many other interests or activities);
3. 出现明显的负面影响后, 仍然坚持玩游戏 (if they continue playing despite clear negative consequences).

而且, 这样的游戏行为在个人、家庭、社交、教育、职场及其他重要领域产生了严重的不良影响 (to result in the serious impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational and other important areas), 才会被归为精神疾病 (mental health problem)。

对于游戏成瘾是否该被归为疾病在心理学界一直都有争论。最大的问题是, 花很多时间打游戏和游戏成瘾这两种行为很难界定 (hard to distinguish between simply spending a lot of time playing games and actual addictive behavior)。

而且, 有些抑郁症或者焦虑症患者可能会用打游戏或者酗酒等方式缓解抑郁症状。因此, 这其中的利弊也要根据实际情况来判定。

此前也有研究显示, 玩游戏可以帮助释放压力, 提升解决问题的能力以及眼手协调能力 (enhance eye-hand coordination)。

相关词汇

精神疾病 (mental health problems)

国际疾病分类 (International Classification of Diseases, ICD)

成瘾行为 (addictive behavior)

药物滥用 (drug abuse)

瘾君子 (drug addict)

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Down Under's upward momentum

More Chinese are visiting Australia, following a slew of tourism promotion activities. **Yang Feiyue** reports.

More flights, relaxed visa policies and promotional events are bringing up the number of Chinese visitors heading Down Under.

About 1.3 million Chinese visited Australia over the 12 months leading up to Sept 30. Their spending increased by 13 percent to AUD\$10.3 billion (\$7.9 billion) during the period.

"China is our increasingly important market, and we expect it would become our most important market globally by 2020," Tourism Australia's president Bob East says.

China and Australia launched the Year of Tourism in Sydney on Feb 5, 2017, paving the way for over 100 activities to boost mutual tourism.

Chinese visitors have been able to get 10-year, multi-entry visas since the end of 2016. And the entire application process can be done online in Chinese.

"Australia has been marketing its tourism experiences to Chinese travelers for close to two decades, after becoming one of the first countries to be granted Approved Destination Status back in 1999. But this year has been exceptional, with an unprecedented program of activities to celebrate the strength of our tourism partnership with China," Tourism Australia's managing director John O'Sullivan said at a ceremony in Guangdong province's Guangzhou in mid-December to mark the end of the Year of Tourism.

"During the year, we have hosted a range of initiatives — from trade missions and events to the first-ever AFL premiership match in China — while also announcing



Australia's accessible world-class natural beauty, coupled with its sophisticated cities and exceptional food and wine, remain key attractions for Chinese travelers. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

actor Wu Xiubo as a Friend of Australia to help share the tourism experiences of our country with his huge following of fans, and supporting broadcasts of visits to Australia by popular shows, such as *We are in Love*."

Australia's accessible world-class natural beauty, coupled with its sophisticated cities and exceptional food and wine, remain key attractions for Chinese travelers.

These experiences are increasingly being packaged into more personalized independent holiday itineraries rather than organized group travel.

Sydney and Melbourne remain popular among Chinese travelers. But they're also warming up to a few other scenic spots, including

Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef and the Northern Territory.

Cairns is renowned for its relaxed, tropical climate and laid-back ambience. It boasts some of the best of Australia's tropics, with islands, rainforests and reefs.

Visitors can swim, snorkel, dive and sail at the Great Barrier Reef — a UNESCO World Heritage Site — and hike the forest.

They can also hop aboard the scenic railway to the tranquil, butterfly-filled village of Kuranda and cruise among colorful parrots, platypuses and freshwater crocodiles.

The Northern Territory abounds with aboriginal history and rugged, natural beauty. And it's home to an array of wildlife, colorful outback characters and awe-inspiring landscapes. Travelers can enjoy

rainforests, aboriginal rock art and outback gorges, plus the iconic wonders of Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kings Canyon.

The number of individual Chinese travelers visiting Australia has also increased significantly.

Many drive to such destinations as the Yarra Valley and the Great Ocean Road, says East.

"Many national forests and some wine-brewing areas are also attracting ever-increasing Chinese tourists," he adds.

Australia also appeals to wealthy Chinese with the fine dining, fresh seafood and quality wine.

"You can sit in fancy indoor restaurants, enjoying the gourmet food, or find an outdoor chateau and chat with the owner over distinctive local cuisine," East says.

In a related development, the country has worked with Australian chefs in China and Chinese new media to promote its food. Australian eateries are also competing for the World's 50 Best Restaurants designation.

Explaining what prompted Australia's food promotion strategy, East says, "We found many Chinese tourists would discover certain restaurants on their own and then recommend them to people around them by word of mouth, which would make the restaurants quite popular."

A number of eateries are preparing special meals for the upcoming Chinese Spring Festival, as many Chinese will fly to Australia during the weeklong holiday.

Australian has worked with vari-

ous airlines to open direct flights connecting China to Australian cities.

A total of 11 new flights were launched in 2017, and another two should be operational by the end of January 2018, East says.

"The number of seats has increased by 40 percent as compared with last year," he adds.

The flight from Guangzhou to Cairns that opened on Dec 3 cut travel time to seven and a half hours. Direct flights connecting Beijing and Brisbane began in December.

Many second-tier Chinese cities, such as Shandong province's Qingdao, Hubei province's Wuhan and Henan province's Zhengzhou, have launched direct flights to Australia.

Meanwhile, Australia has introduced special training for travel-industry workers to better cater to Chinese needs. And it has produced multilingual brochures, maps and signage.

Cairns' Skyrail Rainforest Cableway in Queensland, for instance, has been providing cultural-awareness training for its staff, with annual refreshers. It has also printed Chinese-language signs and brochures.

The official tourism year's conclusion isn't an end but a new beginning, says East.

"The yearlong efforts have strengthened our relations with the travel industry in China and helped us to optimize travel products in Australia," he says.

"And we have confidence that we can maintain the momentum in the future."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Ethiopia: Ancient churches, mysterious towers and Lucy

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Ethiopia has always held me in thrall.

It is a cradle of prehistoric humankind. It embraced Christianity long before the missionaries arrived. Its people carved subterranean churches out of solid rock and built mysterious towers of stone.

The country's mythology included serving as keepers of the Ark of the Covenant (the legendary chest containing the Ten Commandments) and the biblical story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

And, in the modern era, it was the only African nation to repel a European colonial invasion (by Italy in 1896). I was born and raised in Africa but had never visited Ethiopia.

The chance came last fall when my wife Eva and I were in Israel, a mere four-and-a-half hours by air from Addis

Ababa. Ethiopian Airlines flew us, arranged all-inclusive tours, and for six days, by plane or car, we toured the north of the country from the source of the Blue Nile to the stone obelisks of the vanished empire of Axum.

After our first night in Addis Ababa, the huge and crowded capital, we flew to Bahir Dar, a pleasant town on the shore of Lake Tana, and were driven south to see the Blue Nile, a tributary of the Nile River.

It had rained overnight, and the trip was a slow and slithery affair on an unpaved road.

Then we hiked for about a mile through bright green fields, across a wobbly wooden footbridge, and through patches of shoe-swallowing mud. We encountered women herding cattle and a man working his small plot with a plow harnessed to a bull.



A colorful display of wares at the Merkato, a main market of Addis Ababa. The word merkato was borrowed from Italian, a vestige of Italy's short-lived colonization of Ethiopia in the 1930s. AP

Then the sun shone, and we were looking at a wall of white water thundering over a cliff: the Blue Nile at its first great cataract on a journey to Khartoum in neighboring Sudan to merge into the White Nile and continue

north to the Mediterranean. Back in Bahir Dar, we traveled by boat across Lake Tana, one of the largest lakes in Africa. Its islands are dotted with monasteries and churches, one of them a circular chapel

with a richly thatched roof. The ecclesiastical art on the inner walls was exuberantly colorful. But my favorite touch was a boulder suspended from a tree branch which, when struck, sounded like a gong, summoning the faithful to prayer.

The next morning, after waking to a sunrise that streaked Lake Tana in gold, we set out on a three-hour drive north to Gondar, a past capital of Ethiopia whose highlight is a royal compound of 17th- and 18th-century palaces and castles.

Gondar was also once home to Ethiopia's Jewish minority until they emigrated en masse to Israel in the 1980s and 1990s.

We did, however, bump into a high-spirited party of Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers on a visit to the place their families

had come from.

Next stop, the mysterious kingdom of Axum (or Aksum) in northern Ethiopia.

It's a junction of early Christian, Muslim and Jewish civilization in the Horn of Africa. Although the Axumite Empire lasted hundreds of years, little is known about it. But it was clearly advanced for its time, judging by its most visible highlight, the obelisks. These so-called stelae, some roughly 10 stories high, with intricately carved stone, are thought to have demarcated royal burial places.

The largest weighed 520 tons and still lies where it collapsed. Others survive upright.

Another flight took us to Lalibela and its 12th-century churches — my other reason for wanting to visit Ethiopia.

They are magical, baffling,

awesome. Defying all conventional rules of architecture, they were carved out of soft volcanic rock and are seen by looking down into the light-filled crevices that surround them.

The churches are decorated with religious art and other ornamentation. Attesting to the religious mix that makes Ethiopia so interesting, we spotted a Christian cross inside a Jewish Star of David.

Finally, to get a sense of proportion after all the antiquity we had encountered, we stopped at the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa to see Lucy, whose bones were discovered in northern Ethiopia in 1974.

At 3.2 million years, she's the most famous human ancestor.

AP

SOCCER

Chelsea running on empty, claims Conte

LONDON — Antonio Conte believes Chelsea's grueling schedule and a lack of squad depth are to blame for the Premier League champion's recent struggles.

Conte's side lacked energy and drive as they were held to a 0-0 draw against 10-man Leicester City at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

For the first time in the club's history, Chelsea has recorded three successive goalless draws after an FA Cup stalemate at Norwich and a League Cup blank against Arsenal.

Even the 68th-minute sending-off of Leicester defender Ben Chilwell couldn't lift the lethargic Blues, who were outplayed in the first half and couldn't make their numerical advantage count at the end of the second period.

With an FA Cup replay against the Canaries looming in midweek, Blues boss Conte is concerned by the signs of fatigue following the hectic Christmas schedule.

"We played with tiredness. We suffered a lot in the first half and at the start of the second half," Conte said.

"We played with a lot of effort against Arsenal on Wednesday, then to play a really good team in good physical form like Leicester was difficult.

"We played with almost the same players as against Arsenal. I saw a lot of players very tired. I saw Eden (Hazard) was very tired so he came off.

"When I decided to put fresh energy on with William and Pedro, the game changed. We created chances to score but at the end the result was fair."

Conte hinted Chelsea's energy levels are affecting results because he doesn't have the quality players in reserve to keep his team fresh and performing at a high level.

The Italian has spent much of the season grumbling about the club's lack of signings since he led Chelsea to the title last season.

"I'm doing rotations. Against Norwich I made nine changes, against Arsenal I made 10 changes," he said.

"To face all competitions is not simple. You must have a big squad to do this, otherwise you take risks to lose against teams like Leicester."

Misfiring Morata

Regardless of its fitness problems, Chelsea is also suffering from a lack of cutting edge, with striker Alvaro Morata one of the worst offenders in front of goal.

The Spaniard has netted only three times in 14 appearances, with no goals in his last five matches.

But Conte is adamant Morata isn't the only one to blame for his team's profligacy.

"The problem is for the team, not only for Morata," said the Italian.

"Compared to last season we are conceding less, we are showing great solidity defensively. At the same time we're showing not great quality in our finishing. We have to improve."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Chelsea boss Antonio Conte roars instructions to his team. ACTION IMAGES VIA REUTERS

WINTER SPORTS

Reveling in a winter wonderland

Public embracing ice, snow pursuits in Beijing and beyond

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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Most outdoor sports venues in North China lie idle during winter — not so the National Stadium in Beijing which has been bustling with activity over the past week.

The landmark 2008 Summer Olympics arena, aka the Bird's Nest, has been attracting throngs of people to the annual Happy Ice and Snow Carnival, an interactive gala event featuring all sorts of winter sports fun, including ice slides, skating rinks and ski slopes.

Organizers believe the event's increasing visitor numbers are evidence of the growing public passion for winter sports in the capital leading up to the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

"It's obvious that more and more people are interested in coming out for fun on ice and snow in the city as we have to upgrade our facilities and expand the site every year," said Guo Runsheng, the carnival's project manager.

"As a venue built for the Olympics, we feel like we are obligated to help promote winter sports in the new Olympic cycle."

Started in 2009 as one of the venue's post-Olympic projects, the carnival has attracted over 1.6 million visitors, with another 300,000 expected to visit this year's event, which will operate until early March.

The carnival offers over 20 types of wintry activities such as ice hockey, curling, skating, snow biking and sliding — all spread across three zones which span 60,000 square meters both in and outside the stadium, which will be refurbished to host the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2022 Winter Games.

To the north of the stadium, a ski slope laid with man-made snow has been extended (150 meters long, 56 meters wide) to accommodate 400 skiers at any given time.

The facility, which is staffed by a coaching team led by former national cross-country skiing champion Xu Wenlong, is ideal for beginners,

especially kids.

Playing on the snow in the city — even though it's man-made — really intrigues kids," said housewife Wang Jing who brought her seven-year-old son to the event on Saturday.

The carnival is open from 10am to 6pm every day. Adult tickets cost 120 yuan (\$18) on weekdays and 160 yuan on weekends, but kids aged 15 and under can enter for free — a policy aimed at encouraging more youth participation.

With preparations for the 2022 Olympics revving up, the winter revelry is not just consigned to the capital, however.

China has set a target of getting 300 million people involved in winter sports ahead of the Games — some of those could be found enjoying the fun at Haibao Park skating rink in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region in the northwest of the country.

With temperatures regularly dipping below freezing, Ningxia is a haven for ice and snow pursuits.

Yu Wei, who is in his 60s,



A child skis down a man-made slope at the Happy Ice and Snow Carnival at the Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing last week. XINHUA

has been taking his four-year-old granddaughter to the rink, which is a lake in the off-season, almost every weekend this winter.

"I made this skating chair by myself two years ago," explained Yu. "Since then, I have been taking her out for skating whenever the weath-

er is not that cold."

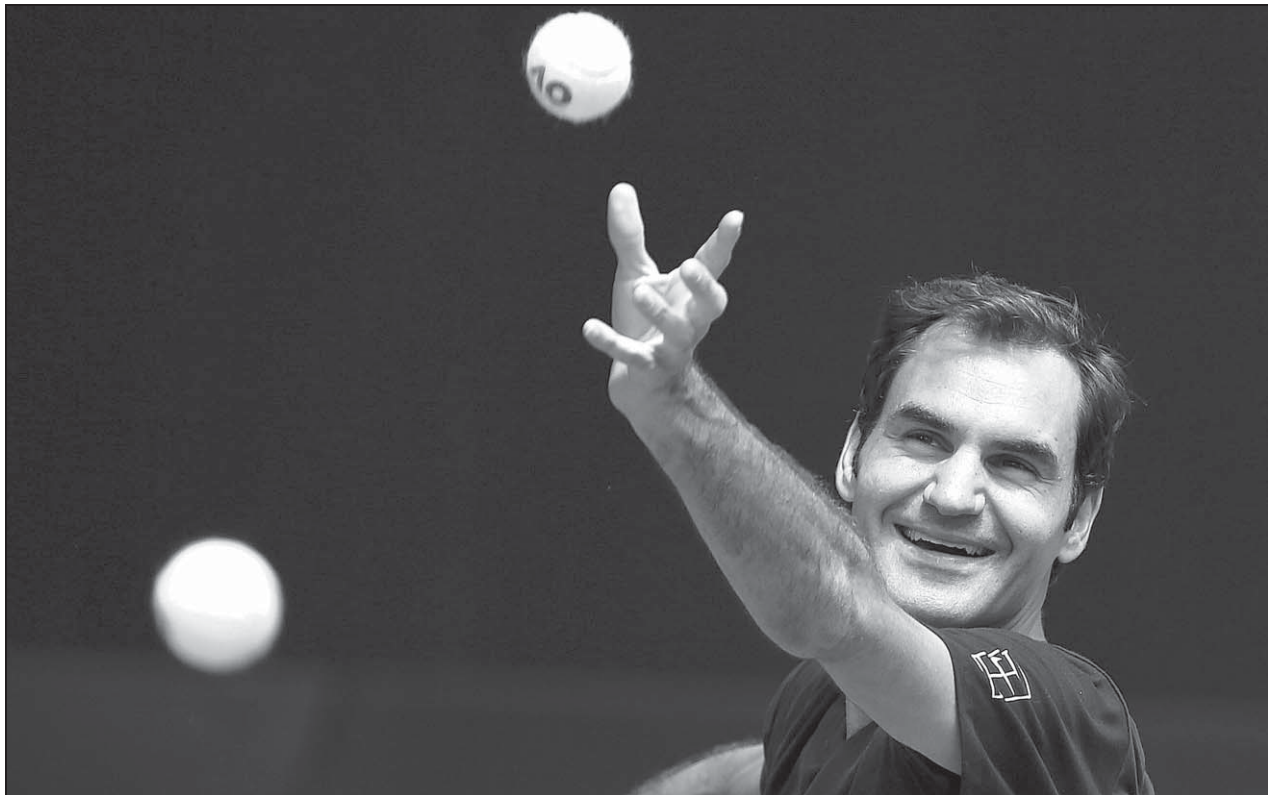
Yu added that he was a big ice-skating fan when he was a child and at that time there was little else to do in winter.

Around 200 others were also out on the ice, skating with all sorts of contraptions including tricycles, tandem bikes and even dodgem cars.

One young mother summed up the appeal of the rink, and in winter sports in general, saying: "Playing in nature is so much better than watching TV or playing mobile games at home."

Xinhua contributed to the story

AUSTRALIAN OPEN



Roger Federer cuts a relaxed figure during a weekend practice session ahead of the Australian Open in Melbourne. TORU HANAI / REUTERS

Ageless Federer still feeling the love

MELBOURNE — After two decades of high-intensity tennis, nonstop travel and the commitments that come with being a superstar, Roger Federer is still loving what he does.

The 36-year-old, who is gunning for a 20th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, said on Sunday he was enjoying it as much as ever, if not more.

This is despite the Swiss describing the lead-up to the opening major of the year as "intense," with feverish interest from sponsors and media in one of the world's most marketable athletes.

On top of this, Federer, who

opts for less competitions nowadays, says he finds staying in shape during his off-season tougher than playing tournaments.

But he wouldn't have it any other way as he enters the final years of a glittering career.

"I've always enjoyed it, you know. Do I enjoy it more now? It's unfair if I say yes, because I felt like I loved the time when I was coming up and playing my heroes from TV," he said.

"I mean, that was extremely cool. It was like a little boy in the candy store back in the day.

"When I was number one in the world, winning all these

tournaments, that was a lot of fun, too. That was OK."

He seems to be getting more out of it now than ever before, traveling with four children — two sets of twins — in tow and conscious that it will not go on forever.

"Now it's different," he said on the eve of his 72nd Grand Slam. "Now I have a big family. I have a lot of friends that travel the world with me.

"I get to see familiar faces again at all these events because I've made so many friends over the course of my career. I'm so happy to come back to Melbourne, see all my friends that live here in Mel-

bourne. It just seems that it's nice that it's never actually gone away, the fun aspect of actually enjoying the travel, coming back to Australia."

Although arriving in Melbourne — where he won his 18th major last year — as a title favorite, Federer is staying humble.

"With age, I feel like I play down my chances because I don't think a 36-year-old should be a favorite of a tournament. It should not be the case," said Federer, who begins his defense against Slovenia's Aljaz Bedene on Tuesday.

"That's why I see things more relaxed, you know, at a

later stage of my career."

Federer says the likes of six-time champion Novak Djokovic and Stan Wawrinka, both returning after lengthy injury breaks, could benefit from the same mindset he arrived with in Melbourne last year, when he was just back from a six-month hiatus.

At last year's tournament, Federer beat old rival Rafa Nadal in an epic five-setter to claim his first Grand Slam in five years. A few months later, he took his major tally to a record-extending 19 by winning Wimbledon.

AFP/REUTERS

Zverev confident his grand plan is taking shape

MELBOURNE — Giant German Alexander Zverev has been widely tipped for greatness but has so far failed to go beyond a Grand Slam fourth round — something he plans to fix at the Australian Open which starts today.

The 20-year-old heads into the year's first major ranked fourth in the world, courtesy of five titles last year.

His progress has marked him out as the most likely of the current crop of youngsters to translate his talent

into major titles.

While he made the fourth round at Wimbledon last year, he is yet to push on further.

"I think improving the Grand Slam performances," he said at Melbourne Park when asked what his key goal was for the year.

"I mean, the furthest I've got was to the fourth round of Wimbledon. A lot of times not because I played bad, but because I played very good opponents.

I lost to (Milos) Raonic in Wimbledon. Every time in five sets. That's nothing to worry about too much. But obviously that's one goal for me this year."

Zverev was one of just four men to beat Roger Federer in 2017 when he defeated his idol in the Montreal final.

The Swiss great has said the German has the "full package" and Zverev is determined to live up to the hype Down Under.

"I've showed on multiple occasions over the year that I

can play and beat the best guys in the world. I mean, I'm number four in the world for a reason," he said.

"I'm not trying to sound cocky or anything, but I've always said that I've always been working hard physically, I'm always trying to improve the performance at the Grand Slams. Hopefully I can do so this week."

At stake is the opportunity to become the youngest Grand Slam men's singles champion in a decade — a record current-

ly held by Novak Djokovic who was 20 years and 250 days when he won the Australian Open in 2008.

Zverev opens his 2018 campaign against 28-year-old Italian Thomas Fabbiano, ranked 72 in the world, with a potential third-round clash against his older brother Mischa awaiting him.

"Hopefully we can get there. It will be an interesting day," said Zverev.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Walking wounded

An unusually long list of injuries and illnesses could take their toll on the Australian Open, which begins on Monday. Serena Williams and Andy Murray have already withdrawn, while plenty of other big names have been struggling in the lead-up to the first Grand Slam of the year:

Novak Djokovic
Six-time Melbourne champion has been sidelined since Wimbledon in July with a right elbow injury. Admits it is still not 100 percent, but at a level where he can play. Appeared at the Kooyong exhibition tournament last week.

Rafael Nadal
A knee injury forced the Spanish world No 1 out of the warm-up Brisbane International, but he said on Saturday he "feels good" after intensive practice sessions in Melbourne.

Stan Wawrinka
The 2014 champion only made the decision to play the Australian Open on Saturday as he returns from two operations on a knee cartilage injury. The Swiss said the knee was holding up well but he was still feeling pain.

Garbine Muguruza
World No 3 retired from Brisbane after collapsing with severe leg cramps. Also pulled out of the Sydney International last week with a thigh injury, but said it had responded well to treatment.

Sloane Stephens
The US Open champion withdrew from Brisbane to rest a troublesome knee and was knocked out of Sydney in the first round. Insisted the knee was now "all good".

Petra Kvitova
The two-time Wimbledon champion pulled out of Brisbane with a viral illness and was knocked out of Sydney in round two. She missed last year's Australian Open after being attacked with a knife near her Czech home.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SPORTS

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Winter Olympics

China-based
Brule key for
NHL-less
CanadiansBy MURRAY GREIG
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With NHL superstars like Sidney Crosby and Jonathan Toews unavailable, Team Canada will rely heavily on one of the top pros in China in its quest for a third straight gold medal in hockey at next month's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang.

Canada won gold in Vancouver in 2010 and four years later in Sochi, Russia, with teams led by future Hall of Famers Crosby and Toews, who have each won three Stanley Cups with the Pittsburgh Penguins and Chicago Blackhawks respectively.

The NHL had participated in every Winter Games since 1998, with the International Olympic Committee paying for the costs associated with travel, insurance and accommodation for the players and their guests. But last year the IOC announced it would not pick up the tab for the 2018 tournament, and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said the league would not suspend games for three weeks to allow its players to participate.

The NHL's absence has opened the door for 31-year-old center Gilbert Brule, the top scorer for China-based Kunlun Red Star of the Kontinental Hockey League, who was named to Team Canada on the weekend. General manager Sean Burke drew from seven leagues across Europe and North America to fill out his 25-man roster.

Brule, who leads Red Star with 14 goals and 31 points in 40 games, will likely line up alongside former Red Star teammate Wojek Wolski, who was recently traded to Metallurg Magnitogorsk, and

37-year old Chris Kelly, who won the 2011 Stanley Cup with the Boston Bruins and now plays in the American Hockey League.

Derek Roy, who notched 424 points in 738 NHL games and currently plays for Linköping in Sweden's national league, is another experienced veteran on a Team Canada roster that features 13 KHL players. They include former Edmonton Oilers goalie Ben Scrivens, who has posted a 2.29 goals-against average and .918 save percentage in winning 19 of 31 starts for Russian team Ufa Salavat Yulayev this season.

Team Canada opens training camp on Jan 28 in Riga, Latvia, where it will play exhibition games on Feb 4 and 6 before opening its gold medal defense against Switzerland on Feb 15. Canada has won nine gold medals and 13 overall since hockey debuted at the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium.

Meanwhile, Team USA's lineup in Pyeongchang will also feature several KHL players, including Ryan Zapsolski, who is expected to be the starting goalie. Zapsolski has a 1.61 goals-against average and .937 save percentage in 34 games for Jokerit this season.

The OAR team ("Olympic Athletes from Russia") will feature KHL stars Pavel Datsyuk, Ilya Kovalchuk and Andrei Markov, whose combined experience includes nine NHL All-Star selections and 11 Olympic appearances.

The KHL begins a 32-day Olympic break on Jan 25, returning to action on Feb 26. Kunlun Red Star resumes its season on Feb 27, hosting Barys Astana in Shanghai.



Gilbert Brule of Shanghai-based Kunlun Red Star is one of the most experienced players in a Canadian Olympic team shorn of its NHL stars. ALEXEY KUDENKO/SPUTNIK



Akiko Suzuki of Japan performs at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. The now-retired figure skater has revealed her struggles with anorexia. REUTERS

Eating disorders weigh heavily
on the world of figure skating

Growing number of athletes revealing struggles with debilitating psychological issues

TOKYO/MOSCOW — Japanese figure skater Akiko Suzuki was struggling with jumps when her coach said losing a kilogram could help. Instead, in two months she lost nearly a third of her body weight, putting her career — and her life — in danger.

Too weak to skate, she was diagnosed with the eating disorder anorexia nervosa. Her weight had fallen from 48 kg to 32 kg on her 160cm (5-foot-3) frame.

"There were all these younger skaters coming along with good

proportions, and I started wishing for longer legs. I got a real complex," she told Japan's NTV network.

"But since there was no way I could grow, the only thing I could do something about was my weight."

Eating disorders have long been an issue in figure skating, where lighter weights make performing easier and aesthetics dominate. But this year the toll has been higher.

US skater Gracie Gold, citing

psychological issues and an eating disorder, is taking a break for treatment and will almost certainly miss the Olympics, while Sochi Olympics team gold medalist Yulia Lipnitskaya, 19, shocked the skating world by quitting altogether after treatment for anorexia.

"Anorexia is a disease of the 21st century," Lipnitskaya said on the Russian Skating Federation website. "It is quite common. Unfortunately, not everyone is able to cope with it."

Even those who can cope feel pressure.

"I try to approach my relation to my body as responsibly as possible, because, yes, now I can't eat after 6 pm like I used to," Evgenia Medvedeva, a two-time world champion who will be favorite for gold if she is able to compete in Pyeongchang, told reporters in Moscow.

"Sport itself is discipline," she added. "You have to control yourself every day, and when you give in to weakness you hate yourself. I think everyone knows that feeling."

Hurtful slurs

That sort of drive, essential for sporting glory, can also lead to eating disorders. But what pushed some to success and others toward illness was complicated, said Aya Nishizono-Maher, a professor at Shiraume Gakuen University in Japan.

"Perfectionism, the inability to feel one's feelings or verbalize them to other people ... and maybe the parents are very competitive or pressurize the daughter — usually it's girls — to highly achieve," she said.

"In some clubs, the coaches weigh you before practice. And still some call the girls 'pig' or 'fat' when they gain."

Suzuki had always watched her weight. But when she became ill, she was under new pressure to advance at the senior level, and had also just left home for university in a distant city.

Successfully treated, she eventually made it to the 2006 and 2010 Olympics, but it took a year before she was strong enough to jump.

Two-time US Olympian Johnny Weir told Reuters that the world of high level sports, where the weight of one day and one competition can be huge, is "not the most mentally healthy place to live" and it can be easy to step over the line.

But he also warned about blowing the issue out of proportion since diet is so important for elite athletes in all sports — and there are real reasons for a skater to weigh less.

"When I was competing I knew I didn't get to have cake, or chicken fingers, or eat a big Thanksgiving dinner because if I ate too much I would pay for it for three days," he said.

"When you're coming down with 100 times the force of your body weight on landing a jump, it hurts," he added.

"When I go skate and it's been a little while and I've put on weight, you can feel every fiber of your knees and ankles reacting to this extra weight."

Weir thinks things may actually be getting better. In the past, there was more emphasis on specific body types — and nobody talked about the problem.

"I do think it's very brave for Yulia Lipnitskaya and Gracie Gold to be open about this," he said. "Their telling about it will keep parents on guard, will keep coaches on guard."

REUTERS

Leading the way in fight against cheats

Anyone who still cares about the Olympic ideals of "excellence, respect and friendship" should applaud the pioneering efforts by the China Anti-Doping Agency (CHINADA) to eliminate drug cheating through education, vigilance and punishment.

Over the past several months, instead of merely ramping up testing ahead of the upcoming Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, Chinese authorities have greatly expanded the innovative Anti-Doping Qualification Program, which requires all national team athletes and coaches to attend lectures and pass written examinations in order to make the final cut.

Beijing-based CHINADA was founded in 2007 with a mandate to bring forward fair, impartial and transparent anti-doping management initiatives.

A big part of its program is aimed at constantly updating would-be Olympians about common medications on the list of banned substances — an area where other nations could follow China's lead.

In many national Olympic programs, the onus is on individual athletes and coaches to keep abreast of ever-changing regulations, which can lead to unintentional breaches.

Olympians spend years planning and training for the chance to win a medal, but risk losing it all by taking something as seemingly innocuous as a common

cold medication.

Since the 2010 Vancouver Games, the list of prohibited substances includes not just performance-enhancing drugs like steroids and EPO (erythropoietin, which can increase the amount of red blood cells in the body), but some medications for ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and even flu remedies like Sudafed, which contain pseudoephedrine, a powerful stimulant.

By combining stringent anti-doping education and efficient monitoring with a zero-tolerance policy, CHINADA is setting the standard for reining in what has become the most insidious problem in international sports.

The recent decision to expel speed skater Shi Xiaoxuan from the Chinese team for two years for "dining out without permission" might sound harsh, but after she tested positive for the banned fat-burning substance clenbuterol, the evidence pointed to a contaminated meal. Another speed skater, 2016 Winter Youth Olympics champion Li Yanzhe, was handed a four-year suspension after traces of a steroid were found in his samples 10 months ago.

With Beijing set to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, CHINADA's efforts should go a long way toward distancing the Games from the embarrassment of Sochi 2014.

On Dec 4, the International Olympic Committee banned the



Murray Greig

Russian Federation from competing in Pyeongchang because of a massive post-Sochi doping scandal that revealed more than 100 urine samples were tampered with to conceal evidence of steroid use — something IOC president Thomas Bach described as "an unprecedented attack on the integrity of the Olympic Games and sport."

As a result, more than two dozen Russian athletes have been retroactively disqualified from the Sochi standings and IOC officials are still sorting through the tainted results and rescinding medals. A total of 43 Russians were handed lifetime suspensions, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport will hear their appeals the week of Jan 22.

At Pyeongchang, the Russian hockey team and individual athletes who have proved themselves innocent will compete under the OAR banner ("Olympic Athletes from Russia"), but will not be allowed to fly the nation's flag or play its anthem.

It's not all bad news, however. For the first time this century, the OAR contingent and every other athlete competing in Pyeongchang will be able to kick back and unwind from the pressure of the Games by drinking coffee — now that caffeine is no longer on the banned list.

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Authorities step up
anti-doping campaign

One month before the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea, China is stepping up its anti-doping campaign.

Taking a zero-tolerance stance on the issue, Chinese sports authorities are tightening up their doping controls on competition-bound teams in addition to their routine tests.

The number of tests conducted by the China Anti-Doping Agency (CHINADA) now annually exceeds 10,000.

"The national winter sports teams have been given over 400 doping tests since September last year and more than 200 athletes took the tests in December alone," said Dong Daning, a member of the anti-doping staff at the government's Winter Sports Administrative Center.

"I think doping tests can be used as a tool to crack down on drug cheats and at the same time be seen as a preventive measure and an educational opportunity for the athletes," Dong added.

Education is regarded as another important measure to keep athletes away from drugs.

Over the years, CHINADA has developed a system called the Anti-Doping Qualification Program. All athletes and coaches are required to take written anti-doping exams before they can compete at the Olympic Games, world championships and national championships.

Punishments for offenders

are severe.

Earlier this month, the national speed-skating team banned 500m racer Shi Xiaoxuan for two years after she tested positive for the banned substance clenbuterol. The team suggested the 21-year-old accidentally ate contaminated food.

It was the second expulsion in the team within a month. The 2016 Youth Olympic Games 500m champion Li Yanzhe was banned for four years after traces of steroids were found in his samples in February.

Li and Shi's cases are among the 70-plus doping violations discovered by CHINADA last year, 25 more than in 2016. CHINADA deputy head Chen Zhiyu considers this proof of his organization's effective work.

"In the past year we improved a lot, including testing methods, test plans and management," he said. "Better planning led to more effective control, so we found more positive cases last year."

"We will keep on improving. We plan to set up a database and use big data to help our controls."

The total number of doping tests in 2017 exceeded 17,000, a 40 percent year-on-year increase. The testing returned 132 positive results, an increase of around 50 percent on 2016.

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