



CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023

Call for peace



People in Berlin, Germany, take part in a protest on Saturday against the country's supply of weapons to Ukraine and in support of peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. Friday marked the one-year anniversary of the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Similar protests were also held in London, the United Kingdom, on Saturday. CHRISTIAN MANG / REUTERS **See related stories, page 6**

YOUNG PEOPLE FIND THEIR NICHE IN LIFE

An increasing number stepping away from careers in traditional industries

By YANG FEIYUE
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Young people in China are increasingly choosing careers they have a passion for and that meet demands created by emerging niche markets. They are forsaking traditional industries, and even the academic world, to make a living by appealing to those who share their enthusiasm for the work they produce.

in-depth

Chen Qin, 31, from Chengdu, capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province, has always considered herself something of a free spirit who doesn't want a typical 9 am-5 pm desk job. In 2015, she opened a small bakery in Chengdu. From experimenting with recipes to acquiring baking skills by using various implements, Chen spent five years getting her venture up and running. "I don't make that much money, but it is enough for me to make ends meet and lead the life I want," she said.

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Selection of foreign astronauts for Tiangong space station to start soon

By ZHAO LEI
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China will start the selection and training process soon for foreign astronauts to participate in joint flights to the country's Tiangong space station, according to a high-ranking space official. Chen Shanguang, deputy chief planner of China's manned space programs, told China Central Television on Saturday that multiple countries have told China that they hope to send their astronauts to the Tiangong station. "We will soon begin to select candidates from those nations for joint flights to our space station, and they will be able to work with our astronauts to carry out scientific tasks in space," Chen said. Once the candidates pass the initial selection process, they will come to China to receive systematic and extensive training to learn how to operate Chinese spacecraft and live and work inside the Tiangong station, according to Chen. "We also hope that the foreign

candidates can gain some knowledge about Chinese culture because they will be onboard a Chinese space station. Moreover, we hope that the cultural exchanges between foreign and Chinese astronauts will help with their flight," he said. Pang Zhihao, an expert on space exploration technology and a renowned writer on spaceflight, said on Sunday that one of the most important criteria for the foreign candidates is their Chinese-language skill. "The work language on the International Space Station is English. Therefore, the language to be spoken inside a Chinese station is naturally Chinese," Pang said, echoing Chen's advice that those foreign astronauts should know about Chinese culture. Chen is not the first Chinese space official who has spoken about sending foreigners to the Tiangong station. Before him, Yang Liwei, the first Chinese in space and now a deputy chief planner of the country's manned spaceflights, and Hao Chun, head of the

China Manned Space Agency, have said that China is open to international cooperation on its space station, including flights jointly crewed with other nations. Nie Haisheng, a senior astronaut and commander of the Shenzhou XII mission crew, said in 2021 that he and his fellow Chinese astronauts would welcome having foreign peers on the Tiangong station. "We welcome our foreign counterparts, whom we will treat as friends, to join us at this 'space home'. We are determined to make our station a shared platform to advance science and technology to benefit all people around the world," he said. In August 2017, Samantha Cristoforetti of Italy and Matthias Maurer of Germany, both from the European Space Agency, participated in a sea survival exercise, which was organized by the Astronaut Center of China, in waters off the coastal city of Yantai, Shandong province. They were the first foreign astronauts to take part in spaceflight training in China.

China a dynamic partner of Latin America, Caribbean

According to the International Monetary Fund, China has been the biggest economy in terms of purchasing power parity since 2016, and it was about 116 percent the size of the economy of the United States last year. Comparing their GDP in 2022 in US dollar terms, however, China's economy is only about 71 percent that of the US. If the current trend continues, it may take about a decade for China to surpass the US as the world's largest economy. The performance of China's economy since its reform and opening-up, particularly its advances in technology, is increasingly worrisome

WORLD WATCH

By Enrique Dussel Peters

for the US and the club of developed countries that it leads. This preoccupation is also reflected in their concerns about the deepening of the relations between the Latin American and Caribbean region and China. In a recent article in Foreign Affairs magazine titled "China's Latin American Power Play", a scholar at the National Endowment for Democracy's Reagan-Fas-

cell Democracy Fellowship Program presents a set of arguments against China's presence in the region. The main argument of the author is contradictory in itself: While China's presence in the region is very recent and dynamic, it is generating massive socioeconomic implications in the region. You don't have to be a historian to understand that the massive presence of other countries in the region, such as European nations and the US for over 500 years, is much more significant to understanding the region's socioeconomic situation in 2023. Latin America and the Caribbean have suffered over 500 years of intervention by these countries, long before their rather recent encounter with China in the 21st century.

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Value of Xi's security vision rises with times

Peace, stability, common prosperity achievable via nation's alternative paradigm, analysts say

By YANG HAN
and JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong

As confrontation and conflicts widen the world's deficits in security and peace, analysts said President Xi Jinping's vision for building a community with a shared future for mankind is essential as people of all countries seek to achieve common security. Moreover, as the need for more international collaboration and mutual respect continues to grow, China is seen as being fully committed to peace efforts at the global level, including through the Global Security Initiative, which has won the support of more than 80 countries and regional organizations since it was proposed by Xi in April.

Xi's vision is "the concept of the 21st century," said Irfan Shahzad Takalvi, president of the Eurasian Century Institute, a think tank in Islamabad, Pakistan. Takalvi told China Daily that the vision is the most potent, pertinent and purposeful concept of the century, and it responds to global security and related challenges in a holistic way. The most important problem in the existing global security architecture is that it is built on the foundation of serving the interests of the powerful, with war becoming big business, Takalvi said. China's vision presents an alternative paradigm that contributes to finding solutions by which peace and stability are achievable. Dipankar Banerjee, president of Chanakya Chakra, a New Delhi-based independent forum on foreign and security policies, said, "It is important for the rest of the world to join this endeavor of 'building a human community' that will be more peaceful and lead to common prosperity for all countries."

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Xi's proposal of a community with a shared future for mankind. In his report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October, Xi said, "Only when all countries pursue the cause of common good, live in harmony and engage in cooperation for mutual benefit will there be sustained prosperity and guaranteed security. "China is committed to building a world of lasting peace through dialogue and consultation, a world of universal security through collaboration and shared benefits," he added.

Xi's vision has received positive responses. Peter Thomson, president of the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, told Xinhua News Agency in 2017 that "building a community of common destiny for mankind to me is the only future for humanity on this planet". Banerjee said that the world is at a crossroads "as perhaps never before in history", and choosing the right path will be critical for the survival of mankind. Muhammad Faisal, a former research fellow at the China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, said that in the current international environment, insecurity has spread due to the "sharpening great power competition and resurgence of regional conflicts". This has been compounded by the revival of bloc politics, NATO's expansion to Russia's doorstep and permeation into Asia, and the establishment of new arrangements between countries, such as AUKUS, formed by Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or QUAD, involving the US, Japan, Australia and India, he said. In addition, on Feb 13 and 14, NATO and the Republic of Korea held their first military talks in Seoul, according to Yonhap News Agency. "In this era of sharpening alignments, international peace and security can only be safeguarded through open communication and pursuing confidence-building measures between all sides," said Faisal. Woo Su-keun, head of the Institute of East Asian Studies of Korea in the ROK, said countries must be more open and supportive when interacting with others to build a human community with a shared future and work on the Global Security Initiative. China's path to universal security has been highlighted by the GSI. While addressing the opening of the Boao Forum for Asia via video link in April, Xi said, "It is important that we stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and work together to maintain world peace and security." At the Lanting Forum in Beijing on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Qin Gang said that security is a legitimate right of all countries and "should not be monopolized by certain nations".

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Derailment aftermath



Bottled water is provided to residents in East Palestine, Ohio, on Saturday. A Norfolk Southern train carrying toxic chemicals derailed on Feb 3 in the region, causing an environmental disaster. The impact of the derailment has gone beyond health issues for local residents and become a political issue, with finger-pointing by both Republicans and Democrats. MICHAEL SWENSEN / GETTY IMAGES **See story**, page 7

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Larger middle-income group to ensure common prosperity

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TOP NEWS

Socioeconomic growth goals high on agenda

Experts to watch how laws, policies planned during meetings boost market confidence

By CAO DESHENG
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The spotlight will be on Beijing as the two sessions, China's biggest annual political event and a window to observe the country's development, get underway on Saturday.

The two sessions are the meetings of the National People's Congress, the nation's top legislature, and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body. While looking back at achievements made in the past years, policymakers will use the two sessions to set development goals for the year ahead and unveil new policy priorities.

Against the backdrop of the lingering effects of COVID-19, all eyes are on China and how it formulates its 2023 socioeconomic development goals after announcing on Feb 16 that it had secured a "major, decisive victory" in fighting the virus.

Observers are also watching how policymakers respond to people's concerns over issues such as employment, education, housing and healthcare, as well as how the legislation and policies unveiled at the two sessions boost market confidence both at home and abroad.

Gao Ruidong, chief macroeconomist at Everbright Securities, said the key phrases for this year's two sessions will be "stabilizing growth" and "boosting high-quality development". The focus will also be on what measures are unveiled to stimulate consumption and expand investment, particularly in the infrastructure, manufacturing and real estate sectors, he said.

In the past three years, China's average economic growth maintained a hard-won 4.5 percent year-on-year, Gao said, adding that the growth rate is expected to be higher this year given the good momentum and the rapid recovery of both consumption and investment.

The resilience of the Chinese economy can be seen in official statistics. In January, the country's manufacturing sector started to expand again after shrinking for three consecutive months, with the purchasing managers' index reaching 50.1, up from 47 in December, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

As China has optimized its epidemic prevention and control measures, the flow of people, goods and information has brought much vitality to the country.

The rebound of the Chinese economy has not just attracted global attention, but has also sparked interest among international investors. Foreign direct investment in the Chinese mainland, in actual use, expanded 14.5 percent year-on-year to 127.69 billion yuan (\$18.4 billion) in January, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

After international investment banks and financial institutions, including Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Barclays and Natixis, upwardly revised their 2023 forecasts for China, the International Monetary Fund also lifted its fore-

cast of China's economic growth rate for this year. "Growth in China is projected to rise to 5.2 percent in 2023, reflecting improving mobility," the IMF said in an update to its World Economic Outlook report. The updated number was 0.8 percentage points higher than the October 2022 forecast.

Seen as an embodiment of Chinese democracy, the NPC session will bring together some 3,000 lawmakers from across the country to discuss major laws and regulations, and approve several key documents, including the Government Work Report and the national budget.

More than 2,000 political advisers will participate in discussions of the documents and put forward their suggestions at the session of the CPPCC National Committee.

While shaping the political and economic agendas for the year ahead, the two sessions are also likely to announce plans for military, diplomatic, trade, environmental and other policies.

The sessions are very significant this year as 2023 marks the start of the country's new journey to realize the Chinese-style modernization — a goal that the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October set in order to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects by the middle of this century.

As this year marks the 45th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up, the two sessions might send messages to the world on the fresh moves to further deepen reform and opening-up, while emphasizing coordination of both development and security, analysts said.

The tone-setting Central Economic Work Conference in December made it clear that China will promote a new round of all-around reforms and adhere to high-level opening-up. A proposal for the reform of Party and State institutions was discussed at the meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on Feb 21.

Yang Changyong, a researcher at the Beijing-based Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said that amid the complex international environment, it is necessary to pay attention to the traditional security issues in opening-up, such as trade frictions and export restrictions.

One of the important agendas of the two sessions is deciding on or electing the new leadership for State institutions, including the president, vice-president and premier of the State Council.

The list of candidates for leading positions in State institutions to be recommended to the first NPC session and the list of candidates for the CPPCC National Committee leadership to be recommended to the first session of the CPPCC National Committee are expected to be discussed at the three-day second plenary session of the CPC Central Committee, which started in Beijing on Sunday.



West Bank clashes

People (background) from the Israeli Bracha settlement, who reportedly set fire to cars, hurl rocks during clashes on Saturday with Palestinian youths in Burin village in the occupied West Bank. High-level Palestinian and Israeli delegations were due to meet in Jordan on Sunday in an attempt to reduce surging violence ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

JAAFAF ASHTIYEH / AFP

Nations urged to join efforts for energy security

By YANG HAN and JAN YUMUL
in Hong Kong

As the changing geopolitical landscape continues to threaten energy security, countries need to work together to secure energy supplies and promote new energy, experts said.

"The rise of protectionism and unilateralism is steering global politics away from multilateralism and the rules-based international system, leading to a deterioration in the notion of peace and people-centric development," said Thong Mengdavid, a research fellow at Asian Vision Institute, a think tank based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The traditional use of fossil fuels and increasing energy prices triggered by the Russia-Ukraine conflict underscore the need to shift away from nonrenewable energy sources toward greener and cleaner energy sources, Mengdavid said.

Noting that the spirit of the China-proposed "building a community with a shared future for mankind" is based on openness, inclusiveness, mutual respect and concerns for the Earth, he said this is crucial because there can be no respect for oneself without respect for the planet we live on.

President Xi Jinping first presented the concept of "building a community with a shared future for mankind" to the world during his visit to Russia in March 2013.

"Mankind, by living in the same global village in the same era where

history and reality meet, has increasingly emerged as a community of common destiny in which everyone has in himself a little bit of others," Xi said in his speech, which marked the debut of the concept.

In January, Zhao Chenxin, vice-chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that China has upheld the vision of a human community with a shared future, has always been a major participant in, contributor to and torchbearer of the global movement for building an eco-friendly civilization, and has contributed its wisdom and strength to global sustainable development.

"China is among the countries with the fastest reduction in energy intensity," Zhao said at a news conference during the release of a white paper on "China's Green Development in the New Era".

The proportion of clean energy sources in total energy consumption increased from 14.5 percent in 2012 to 25.5 percent in 2021, and the proportion of coal decreased from 68.5 percent to 56 percent over the same period, according to the white paper.

China has also been cooperating with other nations to enhance energy security and advance sustainable development worldwide.

For example, during the first China-Arab States Summit held in December in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, both sides agreed to make all-out efforts to build a China-Arab community with a shared future.

In an outline of the comprehensive cooperation plan between the two sides, a total of 182 cooperation measures in 18 fields, including energy security, were covered.

Chen Dongmei, a research fellow at the Riyadh-based King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center, or KAPSARC, said that clean energy technology "is playing a crucial role" in achieving global net-zero emission targets.

"Major economies are stepping up their efforts to expand their use of green energy, low-carbon fuels, and carbon capture and storage, with the aims of advancing net-zero transitions, strengthening energy security and competing in the new energy economy," Chen said.

"The bilateral platform established under the Sino-Saudi high-level joint committee for the Belt and Road Initiative, alongside their cooperation on energy, can help deepen their cooperation on a circular carbon economy," Chen added.

According to the researcher, it could also help the Gulf Cooperation Council members build a regional hub for carbon capture utilization and storage, and hydrogen.

A case in point is how Riyadh-based ACWA Power has benefited from its widely established partnerships with Chinese entities in power generation and water desalination, Chen said.

ACWA Power is a leading developer, investor and operator of a portfolio of power generation, renewable energy and desalinated water pro-

duction plants in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Amid heightened awareness that geopolitics will continue to threaten energy security, developing countries have not lost sight that securing dependable and affordable supplies of energy continues to be a major policy goal for almost all countries.

This was part of the opening message of KAPSARC President Fahad Alajlan at the 44th International Conference of the International Association for Energy Economics, held in Riyadh from Feb 4 to Feb 9, the first such event to be held in the Middle East and North Africa region.

"Securing demand at stable prices also constitutes the central policy aim of energy exporters. So, we have both energy importers and energy exporters looking at issues of supply and demand security," Alajlan said.

Mengdavid from the Asian Vision Institute said that China, a world leader in the development and use of new energy, has been playing a pivotal role and actively participating in the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Environment Programme.

"To advance the global economy, multilateralism and free trade, China's numerous initiatives to promote economic development through Belt and Road, green economy, and hard and soft connectivity are crucial," he added.

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Vision: 'More profound role' seen for China-proposed GSI

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China's vision and the GSI focus on dialogue and cooperation instead of the military deterrence and conflict often used by security alliances like NATO, said Zhang Yun, an associate professor of international relations at Niigata University in Japan and a senior guest researcher at the Free University of Berlin.

"Building a human community with a shared future is an inheritance and extension of the security wisdom of East Asia," Zhang said, adding that as countries become more dependent on each other, it

is important to treat conflicts properly and avoid military confrontation. "In this regard, I think the Global Security Initiative has a more profound role to play,"

Umer Karim, an associate fellow at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, said a human community with shared goals of prosperity and development is key to global peace.

However, Karim sees the emergence of competition between great powers as seriously jeopardizing global peace. The conflict in Ukraine, he said, is part and parcel of this "wrangling between great

powers in order to shape a new and favorable world order."

Woo, the ROK researcher, who is also president of the Korea-China Global Association in Seoul, said the causes of issues like the Russia-Ukraine conflict, nuclear threat and rising hegemony are greed and a lack of trust.

Thus, based on the spirit of respecting differences and living in harmony, the main method to a shared future is that "we can communicate and form sincere dialogues," he said. "We should keep in mind that it is not wrong for other countries to think and act differently from us."

Zhang, the professor, said, "If you look at the Global South, many countries have their distinct perspective on international affairs. ... But in general, I think they all want a stable international order, because only when the world is stable can they develop their economy."

Military deterrence cannot provide long-term solutions for regional security issues, Zhang said, so it is necessary to replace collective defense with common security, which promotes peaceful dialogue for resolutions of such issues.

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Winter storms hit California



Snow is removed with a blower at the Big Bear Mountain Resort, California, on Saturday. Rare winter storms swept the US state causing mass power outages, flooding and the closures of motorways and beaches. More than 120,000 people — many of them in the Los Angeles area — were without electricity on Sunday after days of fierce winds. GEORGE FREY / AFP

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The Foreign Affairs magazine article acknowledges that China has important advantages in terms of economic incentives for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the world, in terms of investments and infrastructure projects, and thus highlights that the West should concentrate on human capital to prevent China's "undermining democratic norms, institutions and the rule of law in Latin America".

Some clarifications are in order. First, in 2023, there is no debate in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding China "against the West". The European Union, Japan, the US and other parts of the world have experienced substantial differences in their relationship with China in the past decade. China has also differentiated its relationship with these and other countries through a

huge portfolio of instruments including free trade agreements and regional initiatives. The West versus China, as such, is an ideological abstraction that does not benefit Latin America and the Caribbean.

Second, in the past decade, China's leadership has acknowledged its increasing global presence through the concept of a process of globalization with Chinese characteristics. In contrast to the globalization process since the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944, China has proposed a modernization process in which people and high-quality development are at the center. The country has not only become a significant economy, but also eradicated extreme poverty in the country, in addition to realizing substantial upgrading in terms of productivity and innovation.

Third, the relationship between the region and China in 2023 allows for exchange possibilities. For

example, it is important to understand the increasing complexity and broad dimensions of the LAC-China socioeconomic relationship.

Furthermore, technical cooperation in renewable energy, the establishment of special economic zones and industrial parks, research and development efforts are all of particular relevance for Latin American and Caribbean countries and could become the basis for substantially improving the knowledge of China in the region in the long run.

Fourth, China's global financing power has so far not been sufficiently understood. The Foreign Affairs article alleges several times that Chinese credit in the region poses a threat, as, according to the article, it will result in Chinese political intervention and overall "control in the region" — repeating the US allegations of a "debt trap". However, analysts such as Stephen B. Kaplan, an

associate professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, have been emphatic in highlighting that China's credit to the region is based on commercial rationality, rather than on Western countries' pursuit of political and macroeconomic changes to permit the service of debt.

Finally, it would not be fair to make China responsible for Latin America and Caribbean countries' socioeconomic limitations in 2023. Plenty of countries in the West are responsible for over 500 years of impositions on the region, while China is offering concrete incentives for eradicating poverty and improving the quality of life for people in the region.

The author is a professor at National Autonomous University of Mexico and coordinator of the university's Center for Chinese-Mexican Studies. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.