

OPINION: NEW TOURISM MAGNETS P.26 | FEATURES: SPEEDING INTO THE FUTURE P.40

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.67 NO.20 MAY 16, 2024

北方周報 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



FUTURE-FOCUSED COOPERATION

Key takeaways from President Xi Jinping's visit to Europe

RMB9.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914246

邮发代号2-922·国内统一连续号: CN11-1576/G2

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Cover Photo: Chinese President Xi Jinping attends a China-France-EU trilateral meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the Elysée Palace in Paris, France, on May 6 (XINHUA)

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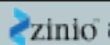
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A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

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Published every Thursday by
CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,
Beijing 100037, China

Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading

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Beijing 100044, China

Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)

Fax: 86-10-68412166

E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn

Website: <http://www.cibtc.com>

General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:

Peace Book Co. Ltd.

17/F, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK

Tel: 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly in the United States for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080. News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*, Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080

Teamwork Triumphs

During a trilateral meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the French capital of Paris, visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping reaffirmed a simple fact: China-EU cooperation is “complementary and mutually beneficial.” This is not mere diplomatic talk, but a pertinent characterization of their relations.

Xi’s trip to France, Serbia and Hungary from May 5 to 10 came at critical juncture. Some European quarters are skeptical about the benefits of economic collaboration with China. Washington is maneuvering to rally allies to “de-risk” from China. In addition, rhetoric concerning China’s so-called “overcapacity” in clean energy sectors has fueled protectionism in the West.

But the facts and figures reveal the real nature of China-EU economic and trade cooperation. France serves as a case in point. Over the past 60 years of Sino-French diplomatic relations, trade between the two countries has recorded an 800-fold increase to reach \$78.9 billion last year.

From 2019 to 2023, China’s imports from and exports to France grew by an average of 5.9 percent annually. France is a major supplier of aircraft and aerospace components to China, accounting for some 30 percent of the country’s

total imports over the past five years. A 2023 survey by the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China found that 47 percent of member companies were planning to further invest in China in the three years to come.

During Xi’s trip to France, the two countries signed about 20 documents on cooperation in areas such as green development, aviation, agrifood, commerce and people-to-people exchanges.

At the trilateral meeting with French and EU leaders, Xi rejected “overcapacity” claims. “China’s new energy industry has made real progress in open competition and represents advanced production capacity,” he said. China’s comparative advantage helps boost global supply. Indeed, to meet the target to limit global warming, the world must drastically increase renewable power capacity.

China’s sophisticated technology, coupled with its commitment to a green transition, will only contribute to making the world a better place to live in and open up new horizons for global cooperation. Protectionism does more harm than good. At a time when humanity faces daunting challenges, all nations are obligated to make the most of their abilities. A shared vision, teamwork and mutual benefit should become the order of the day. **BR**



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JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
TÜRKIYE.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位：中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位：中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）

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印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2024年 第20期 ISSN 1000-9140

国内统一连续出版物号：CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号：2-922

广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证733号

国内零售价：人民币9.00元



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WAVE OF PROGRESS

An aerial view of China's third aircraft carrier, the *Fujian*, during its maiden sea trials on May 7.

During the eight-day trials, the vessel's propulsion, electrical systems and other essential equipment passed testing. Following the completion of the trials, it returned to the Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard on May 8.

In the next phase, it will undergo follow-up tests.

Compared with the Chinese Navy's two operational aircraft carriers, the *Fujian*, unveiled in 2022, boasts larger dimensions and weight, a more expansive flight deck, and a smaller superstructure.



Spring Sentinels

A red-crowned crane guards its chick and egg at Zhalong National Nature Reserve in Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province in northeast China on May 7. The captive-bred red-crowned cranes there are in their breeding season. The reserve serves as a stopover and nesting area for a large number of bird species, especially red-crowned cranes.

Medical Service

China has seen a drop in cross-regional medical service demand as the country revamps its public hospital system to achieve high-quality development, according to an official from the National Health Commission (NHC).

NHC official Zhu Hongbiao told a press conference on May 7 that the country has been pushing forward a new system for the high-quality development of public hospitals, with the establishment of national medical centers of 13 categories and over 230 regional medical centers.

Zhu said these projects have reduced the number of people seeking medical treatment across provinces or regions. He noted that efforts have been made to provide the public with integrated and continuous medical and health services, including disease prevention and treatment, rehabilitation,

and health promotion.

The country has provided support for the development of 961 key clinical specialties at the national level and another 3,800 at the provincial level.

Initiatives have been launched to improve the quality of medical services and promote patient-friendly measures such as appointment service, multi-disciplinary diagnosis and treatment, day surgery, and mutual recognition of examination and test results between medical institutions, Zhu said.

Environmental Inspections

The Ministry of Ecology and Environment announced on May 7 that China's central authorities will kick off a new round of environmental inspections.

Seven teams, conducting the

second batch of this third round of inspections, will be dispatched to Shanghai and Chongqing municipalities, and Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, and Yunnan provinces for about one month of inspections, according to the ministry.

The ministry urged related local government departments to coordinate inspection and rectification in an accurate and scientific manner and per the law.

Outstanding ecological and environmental problems exposed by the people should be effectively solved, the ministry said.

Problems should be solved per laws and regulations, practically and realistically, while avoiding "campaign-style" rectification, it said.

The first batch of the third round of inspections was launched last November, covering Fujian, Henan, Hainan, Gansu and Qinghai

provinces, according to the ministry.

Case Database

When hearing cases, Chinese courts have been urged to search for similar cases in a database and draw upon their judgments, according to a document released by the top court on May 7.

The database, built under the oversight of the Supreme People's Court, the country's top court, comprises publicly available cases provided by the Court as guidance, as well as cases reviewed and approved by it for reference.

Courts at all levels should look into the database, strictly abide by laws, judicial interpretations and regulative documents, and reference similar cases in the database to decide a ruling, the top court said.

It did, however, clarify that the rationale and key arguments presented in the case judgments can be considered and referred to, but should not serve as the basis for a ruling.

The database consists of criminal, civil and administrative cases, as well as cases involving national compensation, and the enforcement of court rulings.

Electric Bicycles

The number of electric bicycles has exceeded 350 million in China, where 42.28 million electric bicycles were manufactured last year, Xinhua News Agency reported on May 6.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, over 20 percent of new electric bicycles produced by the country's major brands are lithium-ion battery-powered models.

A set of compulsory safety standards for lithium-ion batteries used on electric bicycles will become effective nationwide this

November, said the ministry, which drafted the standards.

Safe and high-efficiency lithium-ion battery technology has been identified as the key to improving the country's electric bicycle industry in recent years.

City of Superchargers

According to local authorities, Shenzhen, a tech hub in south China, had 362 supercharging facilities as of April 30, surpassing its number of gas stations, Xinhua reported on May 6.

The city's number of superchargers, capable of charging an electric vehicle to 80 percent or above within 10 minutes, is expected to reach 1,000 by the end of this year, according to the Development and Reform Commission of Shenzhen Municipality.

The city in Guangdong Province last June launched a drive to build a "city of superchargers" to facilitate its growing fleet of new energy vehicles (NEVs), which had exceeded 970,000 units by the end of 2023 to account for about 60 percent of all vehicles.

In China, the term NEV is used to designate automobiles that are fully or predominantly powered by electric energy, which include plug-in vehicles, battery electric vehicles, plug-in

hybrid electric vehicles and fuel cell electric vehicles.

Most of the new superchargers are built upon existing public charging facilities and are distributed in large business complexes, bus stations and industrial parks, according to the commission.

Migrant Worker Income

Migrant workers from China's rural areas enjoyed higher incomes and better living conditions in 2023 than before, Xinhua reported on May 4.

In 2023, migrant workers in the country earned an average of 4,780 yuan (\$661.6) per month, an increase of 3.6 percent year on year, according to a report released by the National Bureau of Statistics.

Their per-capita living space in cities climbed 1.4 square meters to 24 square meters last year, stated the report.

The report also showed that China's migrant worker population stood at 297.53 million last year, an increase of 1.91 million over the previous year.

Veteran Employment

China made significant strides in 2023 in its efforts to boost



Panda Express

Passengers pose for photos as they are ready to board a "Panda Train" at Guiyang Railway Station on May 8. A tourist train, decorated with a myriad of panda(-related) images, linking Guiyang in Guizhou Province, Xishuangbanna in Yunnan Province and Laos, departed from Guiyang that same day.

employment prospects for veterans, by bolstering policy support and services, according to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs.

In 2023, the tax and fee reduction threshold for self-employed veterans was raised from 12,000 yuan (\$1,661) to 20,000 yuan (\$2,768) per year at the central level, with an additional 20-percent increase allowed at the discretion of local authorities, the ministry noted in a statement.

Additionally, 264,000 jobs were created exclusively for demobilized military personnel through agreements with 69

enterprises in both the public and private sectors, aimed at facilitating veteran employment.

The ministry also highlighted a growing trend in veteran entrepreneurship. As of late 2023, demobilized military personnel had established nearly 5.87 million business entities, marking an 18-percent increase from the previous year.

In 2023, the ministry actively supported 267,000 veterans in pursuing academic education and provided over 420,000 training opportunities for demobilized military personnel to enhance their employability.



Threads of Opportunity

A merchant from Egypt selects products at the Keqiao Textile Expo (Spring) in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, on May 6. The three-day expo kicked off on that day, attracting more than 600 exhibitors.

SOE Revenue

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) posted increased revenue in the first quarter (Q1) of this year, according to official data released on May 6.

These SOEs generated 19.81 trillion yuan (\$2.7 trillion) in operating revenue in the period, up 3.2 percent from a year earlier, data from the Ministry of Finance showed.

The combined profits of SOEs increased 2.8 percent year on year to 1.08 trillion yuan (\$149.5 billion) in Q1, the ministry said.

SOEs saw their debt-to-asset ratio reach 65 percent as of late March, up 0.3 percentage points from the previous year, according to the ministry.

These figures, which exclude financial firms, were collected from SOEs in provincial-level regions and those administered by the Central Government.

Growing Confidence

A survey of more than 600

foreign-funded companies, conducted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, revealed the companies' growing confidence in the Chinese market in Q1 of this year.

More than 70 percent of the companies surveyed were optimistic about the development prospects of the Chinese market over the next five years, an increase of about 3.8 percentage points compared with the previous quarter.

More than half of the enterprises surveyed believed that the Chinese market had become more attractive, up 2.9 percentage points from the figure recorded in the previous quarter.

In addition, more than half of the companies expected that investing in China would generate increased profits over the next five years. Of these companies, 60 percent were from Europe.

The Chinese market still enjoys prominent comprehensive advantages in attracting foreign investment, said Zhao Ping, a spokesperson for the council,

citing favorable policies and a favorable investment environment, as well as China's high-quality opening-up endeavors.

Green Loans

China's green loans logged an increase of 3.7 trillion yuan (\$512.3 billion) in Q1 of 2024, hitting an all-time high, the People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank, said.

According to data from the PBC, the balance of China's green loans in local and foreign currencies stood at 33.77 trillion yuan (\$4.7 trillion) at the end of Q1—up 35.1 percent year on year.

The growth rate was 25.9 percentage points higher than the overall figure for all forms of loans, the central bank added.

Specifically, green loans allocated to projects directly or indirectly contributing to carbon reduction amounted to 11.21 trillion yuan (\$1.6 trillion) and 11.34 trillion yuan (\$1.6 trillion), respectively. Together, they accounted for 66.8 percent of total

green loans.

Outstanding green loans for green infrastructure upgrading came in at 14.57 trillion yuan (\$2 trillion), climbing 31.4 percent year on year, while those for clean energy stood at 8.72 trillion yuan (\$1.2 trillion), an increase of 39.4 percent, PBC data showed.

Private Fund Managers

China had 21,098 private fund managers as of late March, according to data from the Asset Management Association of China.

Of the total, 8,328 were private securities investment fund managers, and 12,526 were private equity or venture capital fund managers.

By the end of March, funds totaling 20.29 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion) were under management in China, according to the data.

Trade in Services

China's trade in services totaled nearly 1.82 trillion yuan (\$252

NUMBERS



billion) in the first three months of this year, up 14.7 percent year on year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Services exports came in at 744.2 billion yuan (\$103 billion) in the January-March period, rising 9.4 percent from the same period of last year, and services imports jumped 18.7 percent year on year to over 1.07 trillion yuan (\$148.2 billion), resulting in a deficit of 328.34 billion yuan (\$45.5 billion).

Imports and exports of travel services totaled 480.08 billion yuan (\$66.5 billion) in Q1, a significant increase of 42.2 percent year on year.

Trade in knowledge-intensive services, such as legal, financial and information technology services, rose 5.6 percent year on year to 733.26 billion yuan (\$101.5 billion), the data revealed.

Energy Storage Capacity

By the end of March, China's installed new-type energy storage capacity

had reached 353 gigawatts, 21 times the figure achieved during the same period last year, according to the National Energy Administration (NEA).

At the beginning of this year, the NEA released a list of 56 new-energy storage pilot demonstration projects, including 17 lithium-ion battery projects and 11 compressed air-energy storage projects. Some of these projects have already been connected to the grid, effectively promoting the application of new technologies, the administration said.

Intellectual Property Trade

China's intellectual property trade expanded last year, demonstrating the country's steadily improving international competitiveness in the field, official data showed.

From 2013 to 2023, the average annual growth rate of China's total trade in intellectual property royalties stood at 9.4 percent, according to data from the State Administration of Foreign

Exchange.

Last year, total trade volume of intellectual property royalties reached \$53.7 billion. Among the total, exports stood at \$11 billion, an increase of nearly 70 percent compared with 2019, the data showed.

In 2023, China's intellectual property trade accounted for about 6.1 percent of the total trade in services, an increase of 0.6 percentage points over that of 2019, according to the data.

More than 70 Chinese companies earning intellectual property royalties in 2023 had an annual cross-border income of more than \$10 million, the data showed.

Auto Data Security

A Chinese industrial association has published a list of 76 models of intelligent connected vehicles that meet the country's auto data security requirements, including those from Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer BYD and U.S. EV giant Tesla.

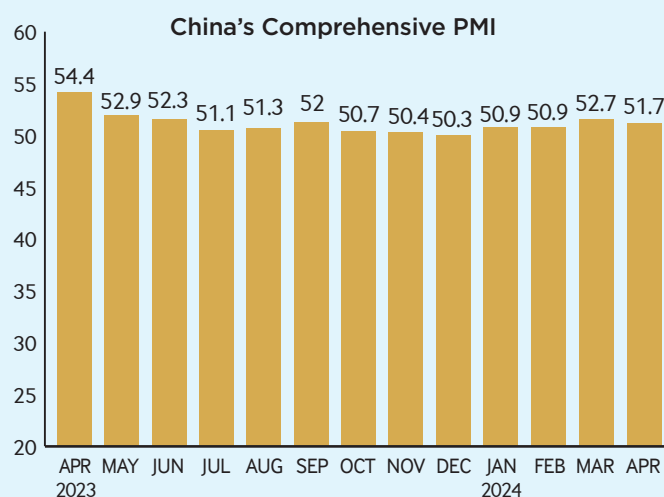
The list was released after security tests jointly conducted by the China Association of

Automobile Manufacturers and the National Computer Network Emergency Response Technical Team/Coordination Center of China. Models from Li Auto, Lotus, Hozon New Energy Automobile, and NIO were also on the list.

In tests that started last November, cars were assessed to determine if they met four compliance requirements: anonymizing facial and other information collected from outside the car, not collecting in-car data by default, processing in-car data appropriately, and providing clear notification of personal information processing.

The tests were carried out per the related laws and standards, and the carmakers submitted their models on a voluntary basis, according to the association.

The association said the test aims to help regulate auto data processing, protect the rights of car users, and build a sound environment for auto data security and the automotive industry at large.



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



JAPAN

People hold up signs bearing messages of peace in a rally outside the Tokyo Rinkai Disaster Prevention Park on May 3. Over 30,000 people gathered as the country marked the 77th memorial day of its pacifist post-World War II constitution



MALAYSIA

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (third left) visits the China Defense Pavilion at the Defense Services Asia Exhibition and Conference 2024, Asia's biggest defense and homeland security show, in Kuala Lumpur on May 6



BRAZIL

A man stands on a fence in São Leopoldo in the state of Rio Grande do Sul on May 7. As of May 9, massive flooding in the state had left at least 90 people dead and more than 130 missing



THE PHILIPPINES

People walk under the scorching sun in Quezon City on April 30. A government official announced the country is considering cloud seeding as a solution to alleviate the persistent drought



RUSSIA

Military planes fly over the Red Square during a rehearsal for the Victory Day military parade, which marks the 79th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War (1941-45) in Moscow on May 5



AFGHANISTAN

People attend the funeral of victims killed in a shooting at a mosque in Gozara District, Herat Province, on April 30. Six people were shot dead and another was injured in an attack by gunmen on April 29

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ NINGXIA ARTIST GOES GLOBAL

Zuo Wenjun, a Chinese painter with cerebral palsy, had his work exhibited at the three-day La Lumiere exhibition in the Louvre in Paris, France, in April.

The painting, *Mount Kangrinboqe*, depicts a mountain in Xizang Autonomous Region. Admitting he hadn't been to Xizang, Zuo said that the work was based on his observation of photos and philosophical thinking.

The 34-year-old was born into a working-class family in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when he was a child. Despite his hardships, Zuo found his passion in art and became a student at Ningxia University majoring in art in 2010, before beginning further studies at the Chinese National Academy of Arts in Beijing two years later.

In 2017, Zuo donated more than 400,000 yuan (\$55,420) earned from his artworks to help children living with disabilities afford medical operations.



New Super Nannies

Rednet.cn
April 28

Over the past few years, the Chinese job market has seen the rise of a new class of childcare professionals made up of young college graduates. This trend is most evident on the popular Chinese lifestyle and e-commerce app Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book), where scores of Chinese youths are seeking well-paid nanny jobs.

Not long ago, the domestic childcare workforce was primarily made up of middle-aged or senior women from rural areas. This traditional preference for age and experience, however, is being replaced by a new parental style that privileges knowledge and expertise in early childhood care. Today's young

Chinese parents want their nannies to be well-educated, thoroughly trained, tech-savvy and fluent in English. These qualities, they believe, can help their children foster both physical growth and mental development.

This nascent market is part of a phenomenon attracting growing attention in China: young people trading sedentary, nine-to-five office life for a wide range of non-desk career options, including food delivery, farming, home decluttering and organization, and even funeral care. Faced with potential pay cuts, layoffs and an ultra-competitive work culture, Chinese youths are picking up blue-collar and service jobs, as well as a host of newly emerged professions not only as a means to stay afloat but also a medium for self-exploration.



Preserving Paradise

Outlook Weekly
April 8

Xizang Autonomous Region is located on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, the world's highest and largest plateau which is dubbed "the world's third pole" and known for its mass reserves of glaciers, permafrost and heavy snow, feeding a vast network of major waterways including the Yangtze Yellow and Yarlung Zangbo rivers.

Home to a wide spectrum of alpine ecosystems, from forests, shrubs and meadows all the way to desert steppes, the region is also home to a vast number of species, including endangered animals like Tibetan antelopes,

"With your participation in the Olympic Games, you will demonstrate the human potential for resilience and excellence. This will send a message of hope to the more than 100 million displaced people around the world."

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, during a livestreamed ceremony on May 2, announcing a Refugee Team will compete in 12 sports during the Paris Games

"The international community urgently needs to negotiate and conclude a new outer space treaty."

Fu Cong, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, during a UN General Assembly open debate on May 6 on a draft resolution concerning outer space security

Himalayan blue sheep and snow leopards.

However, Xizang is also recognized as one of the world's regions most sensitive to global warming. Recent research has indicated that climate change has triggered gradual warming and humidification in the region, increasing the risks of natural disasters such as landslides and torrential floods. With its massive influence over atmospheric circulation and the global climate system, the warming of Xizang not only puts China's ecosystems at risk, but also poses a huge threat to the global climate system.

To address this issue, the Chinese Government has established a system of nature reserves in the region. So far, Xizang has built 47 nature reserves covering a total area of about 410,000 square km, which accounts for more than one third of the region's total area.

To better understand the complex ecological conditions of Xizang, China has launched the Second Comprehensive Scientific Expedition to the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau since 2017. Under the project, hundreds of scientists have been conducting research on water, ecology and human activities in the region. The ongoing expedition is of great importance in studying the local impacts of climate change and optimizing environmental strategies not only in China but also across the world.

Scrapping Facial Scans

Beijing Evening News
April 28

In recent weeks, a number of major Chinese cities including Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen have issued notices requiring local hotels to stop performing biometric facial scans as part of the check-in process. Shanghai took the matter one step further by announcing that facial recognition is "strictly prohibited" if customers have already provided a valid ID.

Facial scans were initially installed in hotels to facilitate verification for guests who forget to bring their ID cards. Over time, these scans have become a nationwide mandatory check-in procedure seen as enhancing

convenience and security.

Guests, however, have been complaining about the many risks and inconveniences posed by facial recognition technology. First and foremost is the danger of biometric data breaches, which can lead to unauthorized access to sensitive information like bank accounts and government records. In the event of a system breakdown or weak network connection, facial scans, instead of making the process more efficient, can cause great delays and long waiting times.

The ban on facial scans in hotels is part of China's continuous efforts to step up protection of consumers' personal data. Hopefully, this new hotel policy will set a great example for other industries on the importance of safeguarding data security.

FORMER CHINA UNICOM EXECUTIVE SENTENCED FOR BRIBERY

Li Guohua, former executive of one of China's big three telecom carriers, on May 7 was sentenced to 16 years in prison and fined 6 million yuan (\$830,000) for taking more than 66 million yuan (\$9.1 million) in bribes and abusing his power. Li has already surrendered all the bribe money he had previously accepted.

The 63-year-old was placed under investigation in February 2022, nearly two years after he retired as general manager of China Unicom, which ranked 267th on the *Fortune* 500 list of the world's largest companies. He became general manager of the company in July 2018.

The court found that between 1998 and 2022, Li took advantage of his previous positions in the post and telecommunications sectors to offer assistance to others concerning project contracting, business operations and personal promotions.



"We are now in a phase where China is finding its place in the world economy and trying to find a balance with everybody else."

Alexander Geiser, CEO of public relations company FGS Global, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

"Many Sinologists I met in Europe were excited about *The Three Body Problem*. They told me that the work has sparked an enthusiasm for studying the Chinese language."

Wu Yan, a professor of sci-fi literature at the Southern University of Science and Technology, commenting on the Hugo Award-winning work at the Eighth China Science Fiction Convention held in late April



COVER STORY

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

President Xi conveys message of joint progress during visit to Europe

By Ma Miaomiao

Although the name Orient Express still evokes the famed adventures across the European continent created by world-renowned British detective fiction writer Agatha Christie, people today generally desire swifter

and more efficient travel options. This is especially true in Hungary and neighboring Serbia, where rail travel between their respective capitals, Budapest and Belgrade, still takes almost eight hours.

The original monorail linking Belgrade and Budapest dates back to 1883, when the Orient Express traveled between Paris and what is now known as Istanbul in Türkiye at an average speed of

about 40 km per hour. The speed on the entire line remained at that level before a revamp of a section in Serbia was launched in 2017.

However, trips in the region may soon become less exhausting with the completion of the line's upgrading to an electric railway,