

WORLD

Relics bolster ties between China, France

Leaders pen prefaces for Paris display, stressing bilateral cultural exchanges

By WANG QINGYUN wangqingyun@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron have respectively written a preface to an exhibition of Chinese cultural relics from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), highlighting the role cultural exchanges play in China-France ties.

The exhibition, titled *Tang China — A Cosmopolitan Dynasty (7th-10th Century)*, was inaugurated at the Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts in Paris on Monday.

Noting that this year marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and France, Xi said that during his visit to France in May, the two sides reached an agreement to hold an exhibition of artifacts from the Tang Dynasty at the museum.

The president said he was pleased to see the exhibition was launched as scheduled.

The Tang Dynasty was the most prosperous dynasty in China's history, with its culture influencing other parts of Asia and spreading to Europe through the Silk Road, he said, adding its artistic achievements, such as poetry, painting, and gold and silverware, have been praised by people to this day.

Xi said he believes the exhibition will allow French and European audiences to obtain a more vivid understanding about the splendor, confidence and openness of the Tang Dynasty, as well as the distinctive



Visitors admire the exhibition *Tang China — A Cosmopolitan Dynasty (7th-10th Century)* at the Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts in Paris on Monday. GAO JING / XINHUA

charm of the Chinese civilization.

Both the Chinese and French nations enjoy a long history and splendid culture, and the two peoples have long appreciated and been attracted to each other, he said, adding friendly exchanges between the two countries date back a long time.

Xi called for both sides to seek inspiration from history and culture, deepen exchanges and mutual learning in the field of humanities, and deepen cooperation on cultural heritage protection to build a more solid and vigorous China-France comprehensive strategic partnership.

Macron, for his part, said the exhibition is held to celebrate the 60th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties and the Year of Culture and Tourism between the two countries, which was launched in January.

The Tang Dynasty holds a special status in the history of Chinese civilization, featuring brilliant culture and incredible creativity, he said.

The exhibition is of historic significance and demonstrates once again the vitality of cultural exchanges between the two countries, which will continue to play an important part in the development of bilateral ties, he added.

The exhibition, directed by the Chinese National Cultural Heritage Administration and the French Ministry of Culture, displays more than 200 sets of artifacts from 32 cultural institutions and museums in China.

Israel, Hezbollah trade fire as truce hopes rekindled

BEIRUT/GENEVA — An Israeli airstrike killed five people in central Beirut on Monday, Lebanon's Health Ministry said, the second day in a row Israel has hit a target within the capital as it presses its campaign against the armed group Hezbollah.

Smoke was seen rising from the strike in the densely populated Zuqaq al-Blat neighborhood, near the central Beirut district where the Lebanese government is headquartered. Two people were missing after the strike and another 31 were wounded, the ministry said.

Israel has intensified its bombardment in and around the Lebanese capital over the past week, and Hezbollah has kept up missile fire into Israel.

Rocket sirens sounded across Tel Aviv and much of central Israel on Monday evening.

Falling shrapnel from an intercepted missile hit a main street in a Tel Aviv suburb, the Israeli military said. The blast wounded six people, according to Israel's ambulance service.

Hezbollah said in a statement it launched a salvo of drone attacks at "sensitive military sites" in Tel Aviv.

On Tuesday, UNICEF spokesman James Elder said more than 200 children have been killed in Lebanon in the less than two months since Israel escalated its attacks targeting Hezbollah.

"Over the last two months in Lebanon, an average of three children have been killed every single day," he added.



Civil defense teams and civilians take part in a search and rescue operation after an Israeli attack on a building in the al-Jala neighborhood of Gaza City on Monday. DAWOUD ABO ALKAS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Meanwhile, Lebanon and Hezbollah have agreed to a US cease-fire proposal and made some comments on the content, a top Lebanese official told Reuters on Monday, describing the effort as the most serious yet to end the fighting.

Ali Hassan Khalil, an aide to Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, said Lebanon delivered its written response to the US ambassador in Lebanon on Monday.

Hezbollah has endorsed Berri to negotiate a cease-fire, Reuters reported.

"All the comments that we presented affirm the precise adherence to (UN) Resolution 1701 with all its provisions," said Khalil.

The success of the initiative now depends on Israel, Khalil said. If Israel does not want a solution, "it could make 100 problems", he added.

There was no immediate com-

ment from Israel on Lebanon's latest assessment of the diplomacy.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel in October last year in support of Palestinians in Gaza.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said on Tuesday that at least 43,972 people have been killed in more than 13 months of the Palestine-Israel conflict.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Chinese students 'very much welcome': US official

By CHANG JUN in San Francisco junchang@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese students are "very much welcome" in the United States and the country is making concerted efforts to continue attracting them, US officials and educators said as the latest industry figures were released on Monday.

In the 2023-24 period, the US hosted more than 1.1 million international students, who comprised 6 percent of the whole US higher education population and contributed more than \$50 billion to the US economy last year, according to the US Department of Commerce.

The record number was also up 7 percent from the previous academic year, according to the Open Doors 2024 Report on International Educational Exchange.

India surpassed China by sending the most students — 331,602 — to pursue higher education in the US in the 2023-24 academic year, a 23 percent year-on-year increase.

China sent 277,398 students to the US in the 2023-24 school year. It remained the top country for sending undergraduates and nondegree

students to the US, numbering 87,551 and 5,517, respectively.

Chinese students pursuing the Optional Practical Training program, which provides temporary employment directly related to the major area of study of those with an F-1 visa, increased by 12 percent to 61,552.

Despite a 4 percent overall decline from the previous year, China "makes up a substantial portion" of the international student population in the US and its students "are welcome here", said Marianne Craven, who works in educational and cultural affairs at the State Department.

The US has tightened student visas for Chinese applicants majoring in "sensitive" high-tech fields, with a few universities issuing presidential proclamations targeting Chinese nationals.

Florida State University in June imposed visa and entry restrictions for "certain students and researchers from China" who currently are or used to be involved at or on behalf of any entity in China that is accused of being connected to the so-called military-civil fusion strategy.

Referring to student-visa restrictions in recent years for Chinese

applicants majoring in "sensitive" high-tech fields, amid concerns over strained US-China relations, Craven said: "I want to confirm that we very much welcome students from China to the US. We have the largest number of Chinese students studying outside of China here. We do know that US universities are continuing to value Chinese students."

Alice Zhang, a graduate student majoring in material science at Beihang University in Beijing, said: "Some policymakers in the US government are making groundless accusations. My F-1 visa application was rejected twice because of my major. I was considered a 'possible thief' who would 'acquire and divert foreign technologies, specifically critical and emerging technologies, to incorporate into and advance' China's military capabilities."

Zhang, 23, had to give up her plans to study in the US and is temporarily continuing her graduate research at her undergraduate alma mater. "I might seek opportunities from the United Kingdom or Germany next year," she said.

Allan Goodman, CEO of the Institute of International Education,

said: "They (Chinese students) are welcome here. They have been welcome here all through periods of hot and cold, good and bad relations. The flow is going to continue."

Henry Lee, a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, said he has met several Chinese-speaking peers in a week to practice his Mandarin.

"They are open-minded, friendly and very knowledgeable," he said, adding that all the Chinese students choose science, technology, engineering and mathematics as their majors. "They are super cool and super bright."

According to the IIE, the US states of California, New York and Texas host the most international students. California hosts 140,858 international students, with China, India and South Korea the top originating countries.

Craven said there is strong bipartisan support in the US Congress for academic exchange and collaboration and "it has been a priority for both governments at the highest levels to encourage these people-to-people ties, encouraging students traveling back and forth".

Resilience and innovation key to e-commerce success

By RENA LI in Los Angeles renali@chinadailyusa.com

Chinese entrepreneurs are reshaping cross-border e-commerce through resilience and innovation amid geopolitical tensions, according to latest industry analysis.

Jeff Chien, a senior vice-president at the Plug and Play company, emphasized the enduring strength of the entrepreneurs during a recent panel discussion in Los Angeles.

"Post-COVID, we've seen Chinese startups venturing abroad with remarkable optimism," Chien told the forum.

"As investors, we are drawn to three main startups: gaming, e-commerce infrastructure and traditional businesses. These areas are proving resilient, offering strong cash flows even in turbulent times."

Gaming was a natural forte for Chinese entrepreneurs, long before its wave of global expansion, Chien said.

"China's expertise in e-commerce infrastructure — ranging from logistics optimization to advanced payment systems — provides a competitive edge. Meanwhile, the success of traditional businesses underscores the adaptability of Chinese entrepreneurs in catering to local tastes while maintaining operational efficiency."

Paul Zhang, head of business development at e-commerce platform AliExpress, highlighted the importance of localization in reshaping

the global retail landscape.

"Our strategy is simple — adapt to the unique needs of each market," Zhang said. "We collaborated with local celebrities and brands to build trust. In the United States, quick delivery is paramount, so we're enhancing our logistics network to ensure five-to-eight-day delivery times."

The localization strategy has positioned AliExpress as a key industry player. According to a report by research firm eMarketer, the platform holds a 15 percent market share in cross-border online retail, making it a go-to choice for millions of international shoppers.

Max Liang, senior business development director at Zyla, a subsidiary of fintech major Ant Group, stressed the critical role of compliance with local laws in achieving long-term success in cross-border e-commerce.

"To us, the first thing is compliance in this market," Liang said. "We have been diligent in securing all required licenses to operate in the US and ensuring that our business aligns with local regulations."

Liang highlighted the company's transition from a China-centric operational model to a decentralized approach.

"We've built a local team that reflects the diversity of this market — Americans, Chinese Americans, and different backgrounds. This ensures we can better understand and respond to local needs," he said.

Innovation in digital payments

has played an important role in the field. Liang discussed Zyla's pioneering blockchain solutions, enabling real-time dollar-renminbi payments for cross-border merchants.

"Blockchain is revolutionizing this space by making transactions faster, cheaper and more transparent," he added.

Digital payment platforms such as Zyla are being seen as critical in supporting China's growing presence in global e-commerce.

China processed more than \$67 trillion in mobile payments in 2022, reflecting the country's technological edge in fintech, according to data compiler Statista.

Global presence

John Xiao, vice-president of Hikvision, a leading provider of video surveillance products, offered suggestions on how to navigate the complex US regulatory environment while maintaining a global presence. "Technology is often ahead of regulation," Xiao said. "However, regulation is crucial to safeguard fairness, transparency and security, especially in protecting personal data and intellectual property."

He pointed to Shanghai as an example of technology enhancing urban safety and quality of life. "At the end of the day, technology benefits people's lives. While regulations may pose temporary headwinds, they ultimately align with fostering sustainable innovation."

Xiao underscored the broader challenge for Chinese tech companies operating in the US market. Despite increased scrutiny under measures such as the US CHIPS Act and restrictions on certain exports, companies such as Hikvision demonstrate how compliance and innovation can coexist.

Anna Yu, chief growth officer at Thunder International Group, a third-party logistics provider, stressed the crucial role of logistics in supporting cross-border e-commerce.

"Chinese brands are shifting from B2B (business-to-business) and B2C (business-to-consumer) models to M2C (manufacturer-to-consumer) models, but they face challenges such as language barriers, regulatory compliance and trademark issues," Yu said.

To overcome those obstacles, the company launched a new platform that connects sellers with tailored logistics and warehousing solutions.

"We serve as a bridge, helping Chinese brands optimize their supply chains and navigate the complexities of international markets," Yu said.

The China-US e-commerce market has emerged as a powerful driver of economic exchange. According to a report by the US International Trade Commission, cross-border e-commerce grew at an annual rate of 16 percent in 2015-22, with China accounting for a significant share of US imports in the sector.

Ride to safety



Residents ride a tractor through the Muara Angke area, which is inundated because of tidal waves, in North Jakarta, Indonesia, on Monday. The weather agency has urged coastal residents to stay alert for high waves and tides. EKO SISWONO TOYUDHO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Briefly

ITALY
Meloni suffers blow in regional elections

Italy's Premier Giorgia Meloni suffered election setbacks in two regions as the opposition Democratic Party won a tight race in the central Umbria region and deepened its control of the traditional left-leaning stronghold of Emilia-Romagna. The results of the two-day voting that ended on Monday were a clear victory for Democratic Party leader Elly Schlein, who called the outcome "extraordinary".

UNITED STATES
Boeing announces almost 2,200 layoffs

The US aviation giant Boeing sent out its first redundancy notifications on Monday as part of a previously announced plan to cut its global workforce by 10 percent. Starting Dec 20, Boeing intends to cut 2,199 jobs in the state of Washington, which is home to many of its oldest factories, according to a statement released on Monday.

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