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US plan to revoke Chinese students' visas condemned

By ZHAO JIA
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China condemned on Thursday a United States' plan to "aggressively revoke visas of Chinese students", warning that such "politically motivated and discriminatory" actions would only further undermine the international image and national credibility of the US.

Inside Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning made the remarks after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced on Wednesday that the US State Department would work with the Department of Homeland Security to aggressively revoke visas of Chinese students, including those with connections to the Communist Party of China and studying in "critical fields".

According to a news statement, the US will also revise visa criteria to enhance the scrutiny of all future visa applications from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong.

"The move by the US, under the pretext of ideology and national security, to unreasonably cancel the visas of Chinese students seriously infringes upon their legitimate rights and interests, and disrupts normal people-to-people exchanges between the two countries," Mao said at a regular news briefing.

China, the second-largest source of international students in the US after India, sent approximately 277,000 students to the US during the 2023-24 academic year.

Beijing has lodged solemn representations with Washington, Mao noted, adding that such acts expose the hypocrisy behind the US' long-touted values of freedom and openness.

When asked whether it could have broader implications or spill-over effects on bilateral ties, Mao said that China's position on Sino-US relations is consistent and it hopes that Washington will take more constructive actions to promote the stable, healthy and sustainable development of the ties.

Rubio's announcement represents the latest and drastic move to curtail the number of international students studying in the US. It followed his order for US embassies worldwide to halt student visa appointments amid consideration

of enhanced social media vetting.

Scholars have expressed concern that the politicization of the visa policy reflects not only Washington's deep-seated anxiety over China's development but also a broader agenda of pressure and confrontation.

"Beyond intensifying pressure in the economic and trade arenas, the US has manipulated visa policies in an attempt to gain leverage in negotiations with China," said Lyu Xiang, a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "This reflects what the US sees as 'comprehensive pressure' in pursuit of greater strategic advantage."

Noting that the term "critical fields" mainly refers to high-tech sectors, Zhang Tengjun, deputy director of the China Institute of International Studies' Department for American Studies, said the US has increasingly weaponized educational and cultural exchanges, a trend that could expand and which warrants close attention.

Given the important role of youth in shaping the future of Sino-US relations, Zhang added that attempts to sever people-to-people exchanges through visa restrictions could deeply harm mutual understanding and trust between the two nations.

Repeated crackdowns by the current US administration on international students have drawn sharp criticism from legal experts and academics, amid concerns over the long-term damage to the global competitiveness, academic freedom and reputation of US higher education.

Politico, a US news outlet, quoted Stephen Orlins, president of the National Committee on US-China Relations, as saying: "If you go around Silicon Valley, you see thousands of Chinese students or former Chinese students who are making enormous contributions to the United States, to our entrepreneurship."

"Revoking their visas will cut off the pipeline and create long term damage to the United States."

During the 2023-24 academic year, a record 1.1 million international students studied in the US, contributing over \$50 billion to the US economy, according to a report released by the US-based Institute of International Education.

XINJIANG POWERS AHEAD AS NATION'S ENERGY DISTRIBUTOR

Advances in green technology, improved electricity transmission infrastructure help region achieve goals

By MAO WEIHUA,
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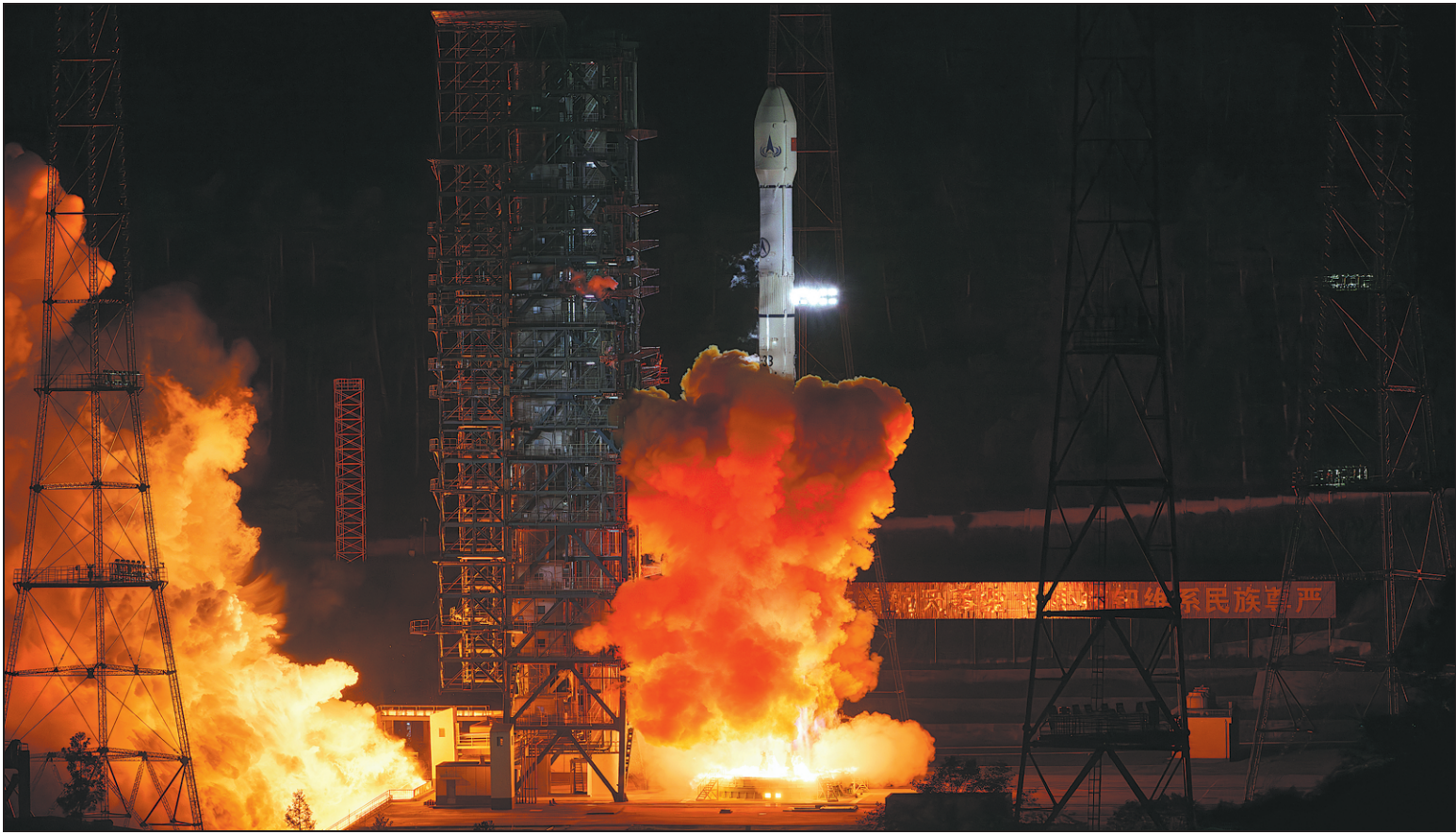


emissions and 2.21 million tons of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Xinjiang's development comes at a crucial time. Eastern coastal regions face growing electricity shortages coupled with land constraints and environmental pressures that limit further coal power expansion.

Meanwhile, the rapid growth of artificial intelligence has triggered a substantial surge in electricity demand. As AI systems grow more sophisticated, their computational requirements have escalated exponentially, leading to massive energy consumption, particularly from power-hungry data centers running complex machine learning algorithms and large language models.

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A Long March 3B carrier rocket blasts off from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province at 1:31 am on Thursday, sending the Tianwen 2 probe into a transfer orbit from Earth to the asteroid 2016 HO3 about 18 minutes later. CAI YANG / XINHUA

Tianwen 2 mission to retrieve asteroid samples, explore comet

Project to develop key technologies, obtain data to study origins, evolution

By ZHAO LEI in Xichang, Sichuan
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China launched its first asteroid sampling mission early on Thursday morning, aiming to explore a small, near-Earth asteroid and retrieve samples from it for scientists.

Carrying the Tianwen 2 robotic probe, a Long March 3B rocket blasted off at 1:31 am from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province.

Inside After flying for about 18 minutes, the rocket successfully deployed the Tianwen 2 into a transfer trajectory toward its destination, an asteroid called 2016 HO3.

The probe's solar arrays then unfolded smoothly, marking the launch phase's success, according to the China National Space Administration.

Shan Zhongde, director of the CNSA and head of the Tianwen 2 mission headquarters, said after the launch that Tianwen 2 is opening a new chapter in China's interplanetary exploration endeavors.

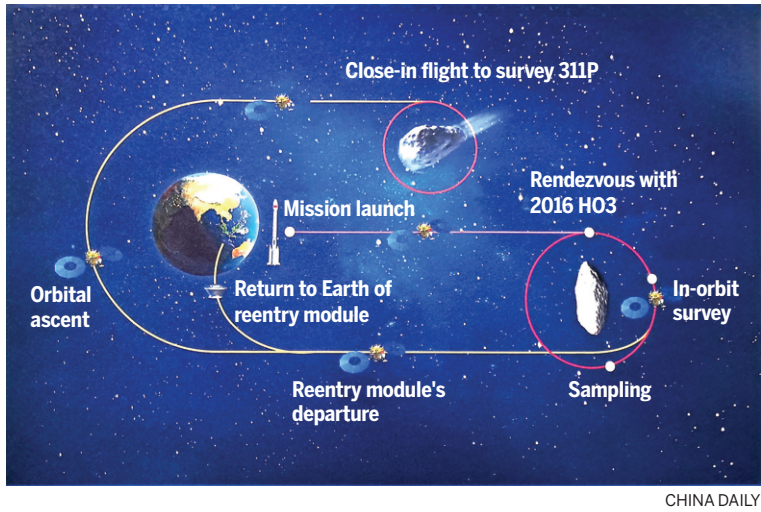
"This is a lengthy, complex and

challenging expedition. We hope it can fulfill each and every task in accordance with our plan, so it will bring about scientific feats, help us unravel more mysteries about the universe and enrich humanity's knowledge," he said.

The CNSA said the Tianwen 2 mission is expected to accomplish multiple objectives through a single expedition, including the collection of samples from 2016 HO3 and flyby exploration of the main-belt comet 311P. Main-belt comets exhibit comet-like activity and asteroid-like orbits within the asteroid belt.

The administration said that mission planners want to accomplish two major engineering goals through the Tianwen 2 project. The first is to develop and demonstrate key technologies needed for gathering samples from weak-gravity celestial bodies, and for making high-precision autonomous navigation and control, as well as other crucial maneuvers. The second is to obtain data and samples to facilitate studies about the origins and evolution of asteroids.

Planners hope the spacecraft can measure the multiple physical parameters of both 2016 HO3 and



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311P, covering their size and shape, orbital traits, rotation patterns and thermal radiation characteristics, which will allow for research on their orbital dynamics. Researchers will also analyze their external features, material compositions, internal structures and possible ejecta, which is the material thrown out from a crater during an impact event.

After the samples are sent back to Earth, they will be distributed to scientists, who will examine their physical properties, chemical and mineralogical content and isotopic composition, contributing to studies

on the formation and evolution of asteroids and the early solar system, according to the CNSA.

The asteroid 2016 HO3, also known as 469219 Kamo'oalewa, was first spotted in April 2016 by an asteroid survey telescope at the Haleakala High Altitude Observatory in Hawaii.

The celestial body orbits the sun, so it remains a constant companion of Earth. It is too distant to be considered a true satellite of Earth, but it is the best and most stable example to date of a quasi-satellite.

See **Probe**, page 3

Festive treat



Children display their handmade zongzi (sticky rice dumplings) at a kindergarten in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, on Thursday. With the approach of Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on Saturday, the kindergarten launched a themed educational activity to mark the festival and help the children better understand Chinese culture. During the activity, the children learned to make zongzi, a traditional Chinese delicacy for the festival. CHEN HAIWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY See story, page 5

Landmark sukuk ETF debuts in Hong Kong

By WU MENGLEI in Hong Kong
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Asia's first investment-grade government sukuk exchange-traded fund (ETF) was listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Thursday, marking a significant step in the special administrative region government's efforts to expand into Middle Eastern capital markets.

The Premia BOCHK Saudi Arabia Government Sukuk ETF tracks the performance of Saudi government bonds, providing Asian investors with a new avenue to access Saudi Arabia's burgeoning markets.

"The ETF's uniqueness is its single-country focus on Saudi Arabia government sukuk," said Mara Dobrescu, a senior principal and director of manager research at Chicago-based financial services firm Morningstar.

"Other ETFs available cross-bor-

der, such as the iShares \$ Sukuk UCITS ETF or the HSBC Global Sukuk UCITS ETF, are globally diversified, and most include corporate sukuk as well," Dobrescu said.

"In terms of management fees, the newly listed ETF's management fees are 0.35 percent per annum. As for those more-diversified sukuk ETFs, in the case of HSBC and iShares, their management fees are 0.40 percent," Dobrescu said.

The launch took place at the second Capital Markets Forum Hong Kong, co-organized by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd and the Saudi Tadawul Group on Thursday and Friday. The event attracted over 500 financial leaders, regulators, investors, and corporate representatives to discuss the evolving landscape and opportunities in Asian and global capital markets.

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