

TOP NEWS

Importance of exchanges highlighted

Straits Forum stresses shared cultural, economic interests binding both sides

By ZHANG YI in Xiamen, Fujian
zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

The critical importance of cross-strait exchanges and cooperation was underscored at the 18th Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, as participants from both sides of the Taiwan Strait gathered over the weekend, overcoming obstructions from island authorities.

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The annual forum, which started in 2009, serves as a platform to promote mutual understanding and integration between the mainland and Taiwan, emphasizing the shared cultural and economic interests binding both sides.

Addressing the main conference on Saturday, Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, called for resolute opposition to "Taiwan independence" separatist activities and external interference, urging joint efforts to advance peaceful cross-strait relations and national reunification.

He emphasized that the mainland stands ready to share development opportunities with Taiwan compatriots, noting that the country's blueprint for the ongoing 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period will open up broader space for cross-strait integration.

At a meeting on Saturday on advancing the development of the demonstration zone for integrated development across the Taiwan Strait, Wang urged greater progress in advancing such integration during the 15th Five-Year Plan period.

He called for supporting Fujian in exploring new mechanisms, pathways and models for cross-strait integrated development. He also urged closer people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Under the theme of expanding people-to-people exchanges, this year's Straits Forum featured 58 diverse events covering grassroots, youth, cultural and economic exchange sectors.

Earlier, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party authorities elevated restrictions by banning island officials from attending the event, marking the first time the island's

grassroots officials were blocked from participation.

Addressing the forum despite these bans, Chang Jung-kung, vice-chairman of the Chinese Kuomintang party, said that despite twists and turns, the Straits Forum has always been committed to promoting exchanges and playing a critical role in cross-strait relations.

During the forum, mainland enterprises signed agreements with various businesses and trade associations from Taiwan, buying signature agricultural goods including atemoya and pomelos, as well as tea and fishery products from counties such as Taitung, Yunlin and Nantou. The contracts serve as a major step forward in implementing the 10 follow-up exchange policies introduced following the landmark cross-strait meeting between leaders of the CPC and KMT in April, focusing on the practical livelihood needs of grassroots families and small business operators.

Yao Ching-ling, magistrate of Taitung county, said via a live video link that the purchase agreements were an immense encouragement to local farmers. "Agricultural and fishery products carry the core livelihoods of countless Taiwan families," she said.

A range of prominent figures and grassroots representatives also stepped onto the stage during the conference to share their stories of cross-strait integration.

Su Heng, a Taiwan political commentary vlogger, said grassroots perspectives and livelihood statistics best reflect the truth that artificial barriers can never block the shared enthusiasm of compatriots from both sides.

A massive number of Taiwan residents still crossed the Strait for markets, business cooperation and career opportunities, Su added.

Lai Tsai-ta, co-founder and CEO of artificial intelligence pharmaceutical startup Metis TechBio Co, shared his journey on the mainland since 2019. Backed by over 10 million yuan (\$1.48 million) in subsidies and startup services in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, his company grew into a recognized unicorn before listing on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in May.

"The mainland offers sincere hospitality, strong policy backup, and a welcoming environment," Lai said, encouraging Taiwan youth to combine their professional skills with local industrial advantages to find their own perfect stage.



Visitors photograph an embroiderer at work during Cultural and Natural Heritage Day celebrations at the Panlongcheng ancient city site in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Saturday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Heritage day honors rich cultural fabric

By BAI SHUHAO and ZHOU LIHUA in Wuhan

To mark the nation's annual Cultural and Natural Heritage Day, which fell on Saturday, more than 7,000 exhibitions and cultural events, including 3,400 public service programs, have been held across China.

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According to the National Cultural Heritage Administration, China now has 60 UNESCO World Heritage sites, the highest number of any country, and 7,188 registered museums. Over half of the museums offer free admission, and together they recorded more than 4 billion visits in the past five years.

Rao Quan, head of the administration, said that China will complete its fourth national cultural heritage survey this year, while pilot programs for a second nationwide survey of movable cultural relics are already underway.

Rao said that conservation efforts are being carried out at a range of heritage sites, including grotto temples, major archaeological sites and traditional covered bridges, with digital technologies increasingly used in preservation and management.

Meanwhile, all 31 provincial-level regions have incorporated cultural relics protection into their annual government performance assessment systems, he added.

The main heritage day celebration was held on Saturday at the Panlongcheng ancient city site in Wuhan, Hubei province, under the theme "Cultural Relics Belong to the People and Serve the People".

Explaining the theme, Rao noted that serving the people has always been at the heart of cultural heritage work. "Protecting and passing on cultural heritage is about safeguarding the collective memory

and shared spiritual home of the Chinese people," he added.

Widely regarded as one of the most significant Xia Dynasty (c.21st century-16th century BC) and Shang Dynasty (c.16th century-11th century BC) settlements discovered in the Yangtze River Basin, the Panlongcheng site is considered a vital source of Wuhan's urban development.

A special exhibition, *Tracing Xia and Shang*, opened at the site on Saturday. Bringing together 163 cultural relics from 35 museums and cultural institutions, the exhibition highlights historical exchanges between the Yangtze River Basin and the Central Plains, reflecting the diversity and unity of China's development.

During the opening ceremony, 20 exemplary cases of high-quality development in the cultural heritage sector were unveiled, and 10 grassroots cultural relic guardians were recognized for their outstanding contributions to heritage protection.

The ceremony also marked the launch of "Cultural Heritage: Global Call for Submissions", an initiative jointly launched by the National Cultural Heritage Administration and China Daily. The program invites photo and video submissions from around the world on cultural heritage themes.

Rao said that cultural relics serve as a powerful bridge for telling China's stories. They are also important carriers of cultural confidence and platforms for cross-cultural exchanges.

To further promote public understanding of cultural heritage, a range of new media projects, including films, documentaries and lecture series, were introduced during the event.

In addition to the opening ceremony, a forum themed "Cultural Relics Belong to the People and Serve the People" and the Sixth Cultural Relics and Technology Innovation Forum were held at the main venue. Participants shared the latest

findings from the Chinese Civilization Origins Project, which has further confirmed China's more than 5,000 years of continuous civilization and established a chronological framework for archaeological cultures across different regions from 3500 BC to 1500 BC.

Li Deren, an academician of both the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering, delivered a keynote speech titled "Spatiotemporal Intelligence Empowering Cultural Heritage". He introduced his team's innovative integrated surveying solutions, which combine both aerial and ground-based technologies and indoor and outdoor data collection. The technologies have already been applied at heritage sites across China and are starting to gain international recognition.

Experts and representatives from cultural heritage institutions nationwide also shared practical experiences and technological approaches to heritage protection.

Since its launch in 2006 and its renaming in 2017, Cultural and Natural Heritage Day has become a key platform for promoting heritage conservation and public awareness. Every year, museums and cultural institutions across China organize a range of activities to encourage public participation in preserving the nation's rich cultural legacy.

On a related note, the "Cultural Heritage: Global Call for Submissions" is open until Sept 30. Interested participants can send their works to culturalheritage@chinadaily.com.cn.

Contact the writers at baishuhao@chinadaily.com.cn



Online

Scan the code for details of the submission.



A young performer of Yingge dance, a traditional Chinese folk dance, shares the stage with humanoid robots during the 18th Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, on Saturday. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Talks: Iran takes more cautious approach

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"Our duty is to pursue this diplomatic process with pessimism," Baghaei said at a news briefing.

"The experience of a year-and-a-half of negotiations with the American side, along with their broken promises and crimes during previous talks, requires us to take every step cautiously and with great foresight," he added.

The spokesman also said that the immediate priority in this phase is securing a cessation of hostilities across all fronts, including Lebanon. Both the US and Iran

had agreed not to address the nuclear issue at this phase.

Abbas Aslani, a senior research fellow at the Center for Middle East Strategic Studies, told Al Jazeera that Iran's negotiating team is taking a more cautious approach in its dealings with the US based on past experiences.

He said that Tehran wants an assurance that any agreement reached will be genuinely useful, which is why a range of entities and organizations are weighing in on the negotiations.

He suggested that the institutional process, rather than an

individual decision, is part of why progress is "slow".

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a post on social media platform X on Saturday that they were close to a deal.

"We are closer to a peace deal than ever before. With finalization likely expected in the next 24 hours, Pakistan is preparing for the electronic signing of the peace deal immediately after, followed by technical level talks next week," Sharif said in a post on X on Saturday.

Contact the writers at jan@chinadailyjapac.com

Grouping: Cooperation has produced tangible results

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The SCO was initially established to address shared security challenges. Over time, it has remained steadfast in its commitment to fostering a peaceful and stable environment that supports the development of all its member states.

Xi has always emphasized the need to enhance the connection of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with development strategies of SCO countries and regional cooperation initiatives, as well as efforts to facilitate trade and investment and

keep industrial and supply chains stable and smooth.

Such cooperation has produced tangible results. Official data showed that China has achieved, ahead of schedule, the target of bringing its cumulative trade with other SCO countries to more than \$2.3 trillion, while nearly 14,000 kilometers of international land transport routes have been in operation among member states.

Yang said China's role in the SCO lies not only in putting forward ideas and building mechanisms, but also in providing public goods and

platforms that help translate shared consensus into practical outcomes.

Such efforts reflect China's emphasis on practical results, as it links its own development with the growth of the SCO, he said.

At last year's Tianjin summit, China announced a series of measures, including plans to implement 100 "small and beautiful" livelihood projects in SCO member states where needed, provide 2 billion yuan (\$295.7 million) in grant to SCO member states within the year, and build 10 Luban Workshops in member states over five years.

A youth trends report released in May also pointed to positive perceptions of China's role among young people in SCO member states, with more than 90 percent of respondents outside China saying that cooperation with China could have a positive impact on their countries' development and modernization.

Extended role

Beyond regional cooperation, the SCO's role has also extended to global governance.

At the Tianjin "SCO Plus" meeting last year, Xi said that the SCO, guided

by the Shanghai Spirit, has increasingly become a catalyst for the development and reform of the global governance system.

He put forward the Global Governance Initiative at the meeting, calling on the organization to set an example in practicing the initiative, contribute SCO strength to world peace and stability, and demonstrate SCO responsibility in promoting global openness and cooperation.

The organization's growing reach has also drawn attention beyond its region. A March report by Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute said the Tianjin summit marked a strengthening of relations between Southeast Asia and the SCO, with some countries in the region viewing

Mega IPO: \$250 billion attracted in subscriptions

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Financial intelligence company CFRA gave a sell rating for the company and a \$115 price target — roughly 15 percent lower than the IPO price. It said that profits generated by Starlink, the satellite internet company, are being devoured by the other two major business units of xAI and Starship, while its AI business lacks differentiated competitiveness.

Investment research company Morningstar valued the company at less than half the IPO price. Danish pension operator Akademiker Pension said it will not take a chance on SpaceX because it is "grossly valued" and has a "catastrophic governance structure" — referring to Musk's 85 percent voting rights.

However, the mega IPO has attracted \$250 billion in subscriptions from investors worldwide.

Ipek Ozkardeskaya, a senior analyst at Swissquote, said that this will likely create a significant liquidity vacuum. To absorb that amount of supply, investors — both institutional and retail — may have to sell existing holdings to free cash for SpaceX allocations. This could partly explain the recent sell-off across chipmakers, she said.

"The company could eventually be valued less as a space company and more as a next-generation AI infrastructure giant. In that case, its name will continue to reflect the dream of a faraway future," said Ozkardeskaya.

Meanwhile, SpaceX has directed its underwriters to reject orders from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong for its IPO, citing US International Traffic in Arms Regulations for national security reasons.

Dai Guanchun, a senior capital markets lawyer based in Beijing, said that this reflects excessive politicization of technological exchanges by the United States, disrupting the normal flow of international capital. But Chinese companies should not be conservative but rather seek more cooperation in other markets in such a global context, he said.

Liu Chunsheng, an associate professor of international economics at the Central University of Finance and Economics, considered this a typical case of capital decoupling in cutting-edge technology sectors driven by geopolitical competition.

In the short term, this could lead to higher fundraising costs and fewer opportunities in commercial operations for US companies, as they will receive less Asian capital. If sustained for a longer term, it could impair global capital supply, constraining the R&D expansion of capital-heavy aerospace projects, he said.

However, SpaceX's IPO will provide a crucial valuation benchmark for commercial space firms globally, especially those in China, said Li Chao, an independent analyst who has been closely following the global commercial aerospace industry for more than eight years.

Zhou Lanxu contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at shijing@chinadaily.com.cn