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Beijing, Teheran to enhance cooperation

Xi stresses need to uphold stability in Middle East region

By CAO DESHENG

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China will unswervingly develop friendly cooperation with Iran no matter how the international and regional situations evolve, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

Xi made the remark in talks with Ebrahim Raisi, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Raisi started a three-day state visit to China on Tuesday, his first since taking office in August 2021.

The two presidents pledged to enhance comprehensive cooperation between China and Iran, while hailing the countries' traditional friendship and the sound development of bilateral ties.

They agreed that the two countries should support each other on issues concerning their own core interests, strengthen communication on international and regional affairs and jointly oppose hegemony and bullying.

During the talks, Xi said that amid the profound changes in the international situation, China and Iran have constantly consolidated their strategic mutual trust and steadily advanced pragmatic cooperation. They have promoted their common interests and upheld international fairness and justice, writing a new chapter for China-Iran friendship, he added.

China supports Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national dignity as well as resisting unilateralism and hegemony, and opposes attempts by external forces



President Xi Jinping greets visiting President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday during a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing before their talks. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

to interfere in Iran's domestic affairs and undermine its security and stability, Xi said.

He expressed China's willingness to implement the China-Iran comprehensive cooperation plan, which was signed by the two countries in March 2021, and deepen pragmatic cooperation in trade, agriculture, industry and infrastructure.

China stands ready to continue promoting the joint building of the Belt and Road with Iran to enhance mutual connectivity, and the country is willing to increase imports of high-quality Iranian agricultural produce, Xi said.

He highlighted the importance of stability in the Middle East, saying that upholding stability

matters to the well-being of the countries and people in the region and also has great relevance to world peace, global economic development and the stability of energy supplies.

Noting that China appreciates Iran's willingness to actively improve relations with neighboring countries, Xi said that China

supports countries in the region in resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation to realize good neighborliness.

China is willing to continue to play a constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability, he added.

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WORLD WATCH

By Philip Hammond

UK, China should focus on common interests

In the context of the damage wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the changes brought about by Britain's departure from the European Union and the further deterioration in global trade and economic productivity, it is important for the United Kingdom and China to return to business as usual.

My predecessor as chancellor of the exchequer of the United Kingdom, George Osborne, ensured that the Treasury was effectively running UK-China policy during his tenure. It was an approach that I have to admit slightly grated on me when I became foreign secretary in 2014. But it was one that I was only too happy to endorse two years later, picking up the baton from him and continuing, I hope, strengthening and deepening the reinvigorated relationship that he had started.

The UK-China trade relationship does not, of course, exist in a vacuum, and the background noise to that relationship over the last three years has been challenging. But facts remain facts. China is the world's second-largest economy, as well as the UK's sixth-largest export market and its fourth-largest trade partner overall.

Here's another fact: Many of our global partners have been quietly increasing their share of trade with China while we've seen ours stagnate over the pandemic period. So it's time now to roll our sleeves up and get that market share climbing as business returns to normal.

Those of us who are committed to strengthening UK-China trade understand that two countries with such different histories, cultures, political systems and national aspirations are bound to have differences, sometimes major differences of view. But we also share common interests in free trade, promoting an interconnected global trading system, securing our vital shipping routes and ensuring our energy supplies.

Political differences have never been and must not become an impediment to Britain's strength. The UK's history is one of trade-led diplomacy — a trade-first approach. We are, after all, the nation that sold boots to the Napoleonic armies while we were fighting them and ultimately defeating them. You cannot get more trade-first with that. And, quite honestly, if we only trade with people with whom we have no political differences, we can close half our ports tomorrow.

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Chinese smartphones give big boost to Africa's digital economy

By RADING GERRO

in Nairobi, Kenya
For China Daily

The increasing availability of affordable, high-performance smartphones made in China has driven the growth of social medial content creation in Africa, with an increasing number of young people reaping the benefits.

"It's no doubt that Chinese smartphone brands have offered people like us a lifeline in content creation," said Ali Muslim, a former journalist for some of the leading media outlets in Nairobi, Kenya, who started his own YouTube channel and is known as Presenter Ali.

"With less than \$200, you can acquire a good smartphone with better cameras that we can use to make videos for our online followers," said Muslim, whose channel now has more than 250,000 subscribers.

This would not have been possible a few years back, when the cheapest reliable smartphones cost at least \$400, which made them unaffordable for up-and-coming content creators, he said.

Muslim said he thought about starting his own social media business a few years ago, but the high cost of renting a video camera and hiring a crew to make videos prevented him from doing so.

But with the availability of Chinese smartphones, "the cost is no longer a problem, and all one needs is a good smartphone and you are ready to go," he said, holding up his Realme smartphone from China.

Muslim added that young Africans are very choosy about smartphones and look for affordable phones with high-end features, such as good cameras.

Chinese smartphone brands are increasingly popular in African countries. For example, in Nigeria,

The high uptake of e-commerce and content creation in Kenya is largely driven by the availability of smartphones that are affordable to youths."

Mildred Agoya, marketing manager for Realme, a Chinese smartphone brand, in Kenya

the continent's largest economy, Chinese smartphones accounted for around 80 percent of the smartphone market last year. In Kenya, Chinese brands such as Oppo, Huawei, Xiaomi and Tecno are among top sellers.

With the increasing availability of

affordable, good-quality smartphones, the digital economy has developed rapidly in many African countries. In Kenya, one of the continent's fastest-growing markets for smartphones, the number of content creators has risen quickly, bringing the number of Kenyan channels on YouTube to more than 400.

Mildred Agoya, a marketing manager for Realme in Kenya, said Chinese smartphone manufacturers conducted research in Africa so they could understand the needs of consumers, which gave them an advantage over competitors.

According to International Data Corp, many affordable Chinese brands sell for less than \$200 and continue to dominate Africa's smartphone market. It said smartphones that sell for between \$100 and \$200 have seen the biggest increase in sales.

Agoya said that "the high uptake of e-commerce and content creation

in Kenya is largely driven by the availability of smartphones that are affordable to youths, who are always hungry for the new technology that comes with a smartphone."

"By bringing affordable smartphones, we are creating an enabling environment for youths to access quality tools of work to capture photos, videos and podcasts that offer a source of employment for many youths," she said.

Chinese smartphone manufacturers are also creating employment opportunities for local people, including James Irungu, who is among Kenyans employed by Chinese smartphone maker Vivo. "This is the second Chinese firm that I have worked for. I started with the Oppo brand, and it was an eye-opener for me, especially coming from the newsroom background," said Irungu, a former reporter who is now Vivo's head of brand and corporate communications in Nairobi.

NATION'S CIVILIAN GROUPS QUICK TO JOIN QUAKE RESCUE WORK

Teams touched by support offered in Turkiye and from home

By HOU LIQIANG

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When Wang Kaibo learned that a magnitude-7.8 earthquake had hit Turkiye and Syria on Feb 6, he was being involved in a charity activity sending oxygenators and health packs to elderly people living alone, as part of COVID-19 prevention work.

"My first reaction was that I needed to head home to pack my emergency equipment," said the 41-year-old from Xining, capital of

Qinghai province, who is a member of Blue Sky Rescue, China's largest nongovernmental humanitarian organization.

"Since joining BSR 15 years ago, I have taken part in all its major operations, so I had to join this one," he said.

After an emergency consultation, 127 BSR members from throughout China assembled in

two cities with direct flights to Turkiye — Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, and Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province — and flew to the country on Feb 8. Wang was one of about 60 members of the group who assembled in Wuhan.

China's official 82-strong rescue team arrived in Antakya, one of the cities worst affected by the quake, at 4:30 am local time that day.

A second quake of magnitude 7.5 struck nine hours after the first, bringing more devastation.

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Cyclone batters New Zealand



A fallen tree blocks a street on Tuesday in Hastings, New Zealand, after a cyclone hit the country's northern region. New Zealand declared a national state of emergency on Tuesday after Cyclone Gabrielle swept away roads, inundated homes and left around 225,000 residents without power. AFP

INSIDE

EU, US need to join China on climate efforts

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