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CIFTIS a sign of high-quality growth, Xi says

China ready to collaborate with all nations to share opportunities, jointly promote growth

By XU WEI, ZHONG NAN and LIU YUKUN

President Xi Jinping reaffirmed on Thursday China's commitment to advancing high-quality development through high-level opening-up and further opening its service market in an orderly manner, in a congratulatory message to the 2024 China International Fair for Trade in Services.

The CIFTIS, which has been successfully held for 10 years, is a vivid testament to the high-quality development of China's service sector and trade, the president said.

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themed "Global Services, Shared Prosperity", is seeing the participation of more than 80 countries and international organizations. The event has attracted over 900,000 exhibitors and participants from 197 countries and regions since its inception.

Xi stressed in his message that the nation will remain dedicated to improving the mechanisms for high-level opening-up, innovating and bolstering trade in services and proactively aligning with high-standard international economic and trade rules.

In doing so, China seeks to promote the interoperability and compatibility of regulations, standards and management in the services sector, while steadily expanding market access and enhancing platforms for open service trade, he said.

He also reiterated Beijing's emphasis on fostering a world-class business environment that is in line with market principles, the rule of law and international standards.

With this commitment, China aims to collaborate with all nations to embrace the trends of economic globalization, share opportunities and jointly promote growth, he added.

In a keynote speech delivered at the opening ceremony, Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang said the fact that Xi has delivered important video addresses or sent congratulatory letters for six consecutive years to the fair speaks volumes about the nation's unwavering commitment to promoting high-quality development through high-level openness.

Ding highlighted the nation's readiness to advance pilot programs for the expansion of openness in areas such as cloud computing, biotechnology and wholly foreign-owned hospitals, while promoting the integration of service trade with high-end manufacturing.

The nation will enhance the level

of openness in its free trade agreements and take proactive steps to further open up, and will open doors wider to the least-developed countries, he stressed.

Statistics from the Ministry of Commerce showed that the value of China's trade in services in 2023 reached 6.57 trillion yuan (\$922.65 billion), up 10 percent year-on-year.

This momentum continued in the first seven months of 2024, with the country's total value of service trade growing 14.7 percent year-on-year to 4.23 trillion yuan.

Jack Chan, chairman of EY China and regional managing partner of EY Greater China, said his company is taking part in the CIFTIS for the fifth consecutive year as it eyes digitalization and green transformation.

Knowledge-intensive service trade has increasingly become a key growth driver and focal point for the development of China's trade in services, he noted.

China's trade in services is evolving toward new and intelligent frontiers amid widening market access, and the country's series of opening-up policies and pragmatic steps are set to propel "Chinese services" to higher levels, Chan added.

Xu Shaofeng, senior vice-president of Schneider Electric, also a five-time CIFTIS participant, said: "Amid the new landscape of both opportunities and challenges, we will leverage the international platform of CIFTIS to explore new paths of service innovation with more partners, contributing to China's economic growth."

In addition to signing a service cooperation agreement with Hebei province-based Jingye Group during the CIFTIS this year, the French industrial and technology company announced the establishment of its China services hub during the grand event.

Mohammed Al Ajlan, chairman of the Saudi-Chinese Business Council, said he has witnessed tremendous changes and maintained long-term confidence in China's high-quality economic development and increasing openness, especially in the areas of trade in services and technology growth, since his company's entry into the Chinese market.

With closer China-Saudi political and business ties, cooperation between Saudi and Chinese companies will deepen and solidify, he said.

"We aim to facilitate the implementation of advanced concepts, technologies, products and services in Saudi Arabia through platforms such as the CIFTIS."

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President Xi Jinping visits a local community in Lanzhou, Northwest China's Gansu province, on Wednesday. Xi highlighted the need to improve the development pattern of the Yellow River basin while inspecting the region. YAN YAN / XINHUA

Efforts urged in ecological conservation of Yellow River

By CAO DESHENG caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for efforts to make new progress in the ecological conservation and green development of the Yellow River basin, and to make new achievements in the high-quality growth of the whole region, in order to improve people's livelihood.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks when convening a symposium in Lanzhou, Gansu province, on the implementation of the national strategy of ecological conservation and high-quality development of the Yellow River basin.

He pointed out the improvement in the conservation and high-quality development of the river basin over the past few years and highlighted

that many challenges remain that need to be further addressed.

Xi underlined the need to continuously improve the development pattern of the basin, featuring rigorous protection and strong synergy, to build a solid ecological barrier.

Starting from Qinghai province, the Yellow River, deemed China's "Mother River" and "the cradle of Chinese civilization", stretches more than 5,400 kilometers through nine provinces and autonomous regions, covering a population of 420 million people.

Since ancient times, the river's natural and geological conditions have led to frequent flooding. Difficulties in protecting the Yellow River remain, due to challenges including the fragile ecological environment, the severe condition of water resources preservation, and the need to improve development quality.

Since the 18th National Congress

of the CPC in 2012, Xi has visited all of the provinces and autonomous regions in the Yellow River basin, attaching great importance to the high-quality development of the basin.

In October 2021, China released an outline for the Yellow River basin's protection and development through 2030. The outline serves as a guide for policymaking and the planning of engineering projects in the basin to address challenges.

During the meeting, Xi called for implementing the strictest system for water resources protection and utilization. He also emphasized the need to improve the system of disaster prevention and mitigation to ensure the tranquility of the Yellow River.

It is important to promote a comprehensive green transformation of the development mode in the basin and to build a modern industrial

system with distinctive advantages, the president said.

Xi urged the provinces and autonomous regions in the basin to deepen reform and expand opening-up to add impetus to high-quality development, and to actively take part in the construction of a unified national market and resolutely eliminate all forms of regional protectionism.

It is essential to coordinate the new type of urbanization and rural revitalization, steadily improve people's well-being and guide the coordinated development of large, medium-size and small cities as well as small towns, he said.

Noting that the Yellow River basin is an important birthplace of the Chinese nation and Chinese civilization, Xi said it is necessary to protect and promote the Yellow River culture, and strengthen the comprehensive and systematic protection of the cultural and natural heritage in the basin.

Xiangshan Forum: Dialogue for continuing world peace

WORLD WATCH
By Herman Tiu Laurel

The 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum is being held from Thursday to Saturday. Its enormously important theme of "Promoting Peace for a Shared Future" is an extremely timely opportunity to bring the Asia-Pacific and global majority community for dialogue and discussion to map the path to continuing world peace, progress and prosperity through common and indivisible security.

With 500 delegates from more than 100 countries and international organizations attending, and over 200 experts and scholars from home and abroad, exchanging analyses and views on how the world can move forward with the global peace agenda, and information from these discussions spreading and reverberating across the world's traditional and new media, mankind's awareness about the need for peace action will certainly be enhanced.

An atmosphere of tension and conflict has been rising in regions

around the world where the collective West led by the United States has been sowing strategic turmoil. It is no secret that the conflicts raging in the Eastern European and West Asian fronts, in Ukraine and Gaza, are workings of US proxy wars. It is also no secret, especially to us in the Philippines and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, that the US seeks to spread this strategy of tension to Asia.

The malevolent intentions of the Merchants of War could not be hidden from the global public in the May 31 to June 2 convening of the 21st Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore, an annual event sponsored by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, which has been described by many independent experts as a platform to stir up issues that create tension and conflict in Asia, as well as to bash China.

The 21st Shangri-La Dialogue was clearly made into a platform to project the US campaign to vilify China by highlighting the US' willing stooge in Asia today, Philippine President Marcos, as the keynote speaker of the event to expound on the US-scripted South China Sea grumblings that ASEAN and China have agreed to resolve respectfully and peacefully through dialogue and win-win strategies.

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DIGITAL WIZARDRY MAKES BROKEN BUDDHIST STATUES WHOLE AGAIN

Project creates authentic images of sacred artworks taken from grottoes in Taiyuan

By HOU CHENCHEN and ZHU XINGXIN in Taiyuan

With their heads removed and bodies broken into pieces to be sold around the world, Buddhist statues taken from sacred grottoes in North China are being made whole again, but in digital form.

The painstaking restoration work is being done with the remnants of statues located around the world, advanced digital art techniques, and a verification process involving scientists and academics from China and the United States.

Once the digital image of a statue is complete, it appears as it would have centuries ago in its



original setting — the Tianlong Mountain Buddhist Grottoes in Taiyuan, Shanxi province.

"The digital restoration of cultural relics preserves an accurate historical and cultural record for future generations, allowing more endangered ancient sites to be 'revived' and take their place in the world," said Zhao Hui, dean of the College of Art at Taiyuan University of Technology, one of the institutions involved in the project.

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A guest visits the kiosk set up by the Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan on Thursday at the 2024 China International Fair for Trade in Services at Shougang Park in Beijing. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

TO OUR READERS

We wish our readers a happy Mid-Autumn Festival. We will not publish the newspaper on Monday and Tuesday, Sept 16-17. The newspaper will be published again on Wednesday, Sept 18.

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