



CCAS CHINA NEWS
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CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING ATTENDED VOLUNTARY TREE PLANTING CEREMONY IN BEIJING ON APRIL 3

Chinese President Xi Jinping attended a voluntary tree planting activity in a forest park in Beijing's Tongzhou District on April 3 and called for nationwide efforts in afforestation to jointly build a beautiful China. Xi Jinping accompanied by Chinese Premier Li Qiang and PBSC members Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, and Ding Xuexiang and CDIC Secretary Li Xi and Vice President Han Zheng, arrived at the site in the morning and planted trees with local people.

ii) CMC Vice Chairmen Zhang Youxia and He Weidong participated in voluntary tree planting activities in Chaoyang District, Beijing on April 1. Politburo member and Beijing Party Secretary Yin Li participated in the tree planting activity.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: LATEST ISSUE OF QIU SHI PUBLISHED ARTICLE AUTHORED BY CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

The Party's leading theoretical fortnightly journal Qiu Shi (Seeking Truth; 2024/07 dated March 31) published an article authored by Chinese President Xi Jinping captioned 'We must insist on putting people first'. The article contained excerpts of 25 speeches delivered by Xi Jinping between November 2012 and December 2023.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING PRESIDED OVER POLITBURO MEETING ON DISCIPLINE INSPECTION IN BEIJING ON MARCH 28

People's Daily (March 30) reported that Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the Politburo's meeting on March 29, to review a comprehensive report on the second round of disciplinary inspection missions of the CCP's 20th CC. The meeting noted that the two rounds of disciplinary inspection missions carried out by the CCP CC since the 20th Party Congress had covered all centrally-administered enterprises. It said Party-building work in centrally-administered enterprises and relevant departments had been strengthened, with new achievements in terms of the Party's full and rigorous self-governance. The Politburo stressed the "need to use the inspections and rectifications as powerful measures to promote high-quality development and the Party's full and rigorous self-governance" and underscored "strengthening supervision over rectification of problems identified in the inspection, and establishing an accountability system for rectifying problems". The Politburo meeting reiterated that "state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are important material and political foundation of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and they should uphold and strengthen Party leadership, and guard against and defuse risks to safeguard high-quality development". It said "SOEs should further advance the exercise of full and rigorous Party self-governance, remain tough in cracking down on corruption at all times, and resolutely remove the conditions for corruption". Other matters were also deliberated at the meeting.

(Comment: This Politburo meeting has confirmed the important position of SoEs in China's economy and politics. It implied also that discipline inspection, or anti-corruption, work would be made more stringent.)

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING AND KAZAKH PRESIDENT TOKAYEV SEND MESSAGES TO OPENING CEREMONY OF KAZAKHSTAN TOURISM YEAR IN CHINA

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Kazakh counterpart, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, sent congratulatory messages on March 29 to the opening ceremony of the Kazakhstan tourism year in China in 2024. The Kazakhstan tourism year in China in 2024 was launched in Beijing on

March 29 under the auspices of China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Kazakhstan.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CPPCC CHAIRMAN PRESIDED OVER CPPCC FORTNIGHTLY CONSULTATION SESSION ON LAW-BASED BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

CPPCC Chairman Wang Huning presided over the CPPCC's fortnightly consultation session to discuss promoting a law-based business environment in Beijing on March 29.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE VICE PREMIER ZHANG GUOQING INSPECTED TIANJIN MUNICIPALITY ON APRIL 1-2 AND URGED EFFORTS TO DEEPEN REFORMS OF SoEs

Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing inspected Tianjin Municipality on April 1 -2. Zhang Guoqing called for continuous efforts to deepen the reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and vigorously promote the development of "little giant" firms. He urged central SOEs to improve their mechanisms for scientific and technological innovation, strengthen work to build up their technological capacities, strive to strengthen their main businesses, actively develop emerging and future industries, and constantly optimize the structure and allocation efficiency of state-owned capital.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE VICE PREMIER DING XUEXIANG INSPECTS BEIJING'S FANGSHANG DISTRICT AND ZHOZHOU CITY IN HEBEI PROVINCE

Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, during his research tour (March 30-31) in Fangshan District in Beijing, and Zhuozhou city, Hebei Province, called for sound implementation of projects supported by the country's additional government bonds for post-disaster reconstruction, and strict supervision over the use of the fund. He stressed excellence and integrity in the projects to win people's approval.

CHINA-SENIOR APPOINTMENTS: WU XI APPOINTED NEW DEPUTY HEAD OF TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE OF STATE COUNCIL AND HUO XIAOGUANG AS VICE PRESIDENT OF XINHUA

The State Council announced (April 4) the appointments of: Wu Xi as Deputy Head of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council; and Huo Xiaoguang as Vice President of Xinhua News Agency.

CHINA-SECURITY: MoSS RELEASED REPORT ACCUSING U.S. AND U.K. OF SLANDERING CHINA AND AS THE MAIN SOURCE OF CYBER ATTACKS

The Ministry of State Security (MSS) on April 2, released a report (in Chinese and English) condemning the US for slandering and cyber-attacking China. The report responds to recent US and UK accusations of Chinese cyberespionage. The MSS accused the West, led by the US, of spreading disinformation and politicizing cybersecurity to infringe on China's rights. The report says that the US is the main source of cyberattacks globally and criticizes the US and UK for their militarisation of cyberspace. It seeks to expose the US and UK's behavior to the international community and calls for cooperation based on equality and mutual respect. The MSS report highlighted the hypocrisy of US and UK actions, pointing out that while they accuse China of cyberattacks, they themselves engage in widespread cyber intrusions and espionage. Emphasising China's commitment to constructive cooperation in cyberspace, the report urged the US and UK to stop their malicious cyber activities.

CHINA-CCP: RELATIVES AND DESCENDANTS OF VICTIMS OF NANJING MASSACRE GATHERED AT MEMORIAL HALL OF VICTIMS OF NANJING MASSACRE ON APRIL 4 IN APRIL

The People's Daily (April 4) said relatives of victims of the Nanjing Massacre, as well as survivors, the descendants of survivors and student representatives, gathered at the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders on April 3, to pay tribute to those who lost their lives 87 years ago. April 4 is Qingming Festival, or Tomb-Sweeping Day, a traditional Chinese festival during which people to pay tribute to the dead and worship their ancestors.

CHINA-CCP: CENTRAL PARTY BUILDING MEETING REVEALS THAT PARTY DISCIPLINE STUDY AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN WILL BE HELD FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2024

Xinhua (April 3) disclosed that the Central Party Building Leading Group held a meeting on April 3 "to study and implement the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches and important instructions on party discipline study and education, listen to reports on the preparations for party discipline study and education, and study and deploy party discipline study Education career". Politburo Standing Committee member and leader of the CCP CC Party Building Leading Group, Cai Qi presided over the meeting and delivered a speech. PBSC member Li Xi attended the meeting and delivered a speech. The meeting stated that with the approval of the Party Central Committee, party discipline study and education will be carried out throughout the party from April to July 2024. Recently, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the "Notice on Carrying out Party Discipline Study and Education throughout the Party." Li Ganjie, Li Shulei and Jiang Xinzhi attended the meeting. Members of the Central Party Building Leading Group attended the meeting.

CHINA-AVIATION: CHINA'S CIVIL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION SAYS CHINA HAS 1.27 MILLION REGISTERED DRONES AND THE GROWTH OF ITS DRONE INDUSTRY WILL BE ACCELERATED

China's Civil Aviation Administration disclosed (March 29) that the total number of China's registered drones reached 1.27 million as of the end of 2023, increasing by 32.2 percent year-on-year. The People's Daily (March 30) quoted Wang Yanan, Chief Editor of the Beijing-based Aerospace Knowledge magazine, as telling Global Times on March 29 that the rapid growth of the drone industry in China will be a long-lasting trend and is expected to be accelerated in the future. He added that the types of civil drone will be further segmented and used in more industries. He also said, "China's leading manufacturing capability can produce nearly every type of drones, and can support the rapid growth of the industry." Referring to the recently concluded NPC plenary session, the People's Daily noted that the Government Work Report of 2024, had stated that "China will develop new quality productive forces including fostering new growth engines in fields such as the low-altitude economy and underlined the development path of the drone industry".

CHINA-S&T: CHINA'S MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY YIN HEJUN EMPHASISED THAT THE MINISTRY WILL FURTHER REFORM S&T SYSTEM

The People's Daily (March 31) published a lengthy interview with Yin Hejun, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group and Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology. titled 'Strengthen scientific and technological innovation to cultivate new driving forces for the development of new productive forces'. Yin Hejun, claimed "Xi Jinping's important exposition on new productivity has profoundly revealed the intrinsic relationship between technological innovation, industrial upgrading and high-quality development. It is an innovation and development of Marxist productivity theory and deepens the understanding of the regularity of technological innovation in promoting the development of productivity". He said to develop new productive forces, it is essential to "grasp the "source of living water" of scientific and technological innovation, accelerate future technological breakthroughs, and build first-mover advantages in future industries. He said it is important to first "strengthen research and judgment on trends in cutting-edge technologies and disruptive technologies. Pay close attention to the breakthrough directions and latest trends in technological frontiers such as integrated circuits, artificial intelligence, quantum technology, biotechnology, and advanced energy, strengthen the analysis of transformative and emerging trends in science and technology." He said, in conclusion, that "in accordance with the deployment of the Party Central Committee, the Ministry of Science and Technology will further deepen the reform of the science and technology system."

CHINA-S&T: SASAC LEADERSHIP WANTS CENTRAL SOES TO SPEND MORE ON INNOVATION AND FUNDAMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

A meeting of the leadership of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), which controls the State-owned Enterprises (SoEs), in Beijing on March 29 indicated it wants SoEs to spend more on innovation. It called for reforms to evaluate SOE investments in innovative and fundamental technologies over a medium-to-long-term – rather than short-term – horizon, and tweak SOE key performance indicators to guide investments toward developing crucial technologies and resolving supply chain bottlenecks, in line with national strategic and industrial upgrading objectives. Because of the structural slowdown in growth and US-led restrictions on critical technologies, Beijing is relying increasingly on central SOEs to drive technological innovation and industrial upgrading. In

2023, central SOEs' combined investments in strategic emerging industries (SEI) surged by 45.3% y/y, reaching RMB 2.18 trillion.

CHINA-S&T: CHINESE EXPERTS RELEASE DRAFT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE LAW OF PRC

On March 16, the "AI Good Governance Forum Prospects for Artificial Intelligence Legal Governance" seminar was held at the Beijing Friendship Hotel, Beijing. The meeting released the "Artificial Intelligence Law of the People's Republic of China (Draft of Scholars' Suggestions)". The drafting expert group comprised the Chinese Data Rule of Law Research Institute of University of Political Science and Law, School of Law of Northwest University of Political Science and Law, China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, Beihang University of Law School, Digital Rule of Law Research Institute of East China University of Political Science and Law, Science and Technology Law Research Institute of Southwest University of Political Science and Law, Intellectual Property Research Center of Central South University of Political Science and Law and experts from home units. Experts and scholars from more than 20 universities across the country, including Peking University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University of China, People's Public Security University of China, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, University of International Business and Economics, and Beijing Institute of Electronic Science and Technology, attended the meeting. The Expert group members were: Associate Professor Zhao Jingwu, Associate Professor Han Xuzhi, Associate Professor Xu Xiaoben, Senior Engineer Cheng Ying, and Professor Zheng Zhifeng.

CHINA-EDUCATION: SIXTH TONE SAYS THERE IS AN EXPLOSION OF 'SCHOLAR STUDY TOURS' IN CHINA

The People's Daily subsidiary publication Sixth Tone (March 28) published a report on the growing popularity of Xueren Youxue or "Scholar Study Tours". Quoting industry insiders it said the pay of the guides is good and in addition to travel expenses, even ordinary academics earn anywhere from 5,000 to 6,000 yuan a day (\$700 to \$800). The paper added that it is not just the money and some of the most sought-after guides, who are "one-time public intellectuals" or former professors, have largely withdrawn from the public sphere in recent

years and the tours offer them a chance to earn a substantial sum of money, interact with fans and other like-minded people in safe, controlled settings and see the world.

CHINA-ECONOMY: FINANCE MINISTRY ISSUES NOTICE TO ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO LIVE FRUGALLY

The state-owned CCTV (March 28) telecast a notice issued by China's Ministry of Finance on March 27, directing central departments and local finance departments to 'get accustomed to living frugally in party and government organs for strengthening budget constraints. It urged all regions and departments to live frugally without relaxation. It said when party and government organs spend one less penny, more funds can be allocated to people's livelihoods. The CCTV report recalled that in recent years, the finance departments have strictly implemented the requirement of living frugally. In 2023, the budget for "three public expenses" at the central level was reduced by 20% compared to the pre-epidemic year of 2019; expenditures in key areas such as education funded by various levels of finance increased by 25.5% compared to 2019. To implement getting used to living frugally, the Ministry of Finance has clearly defined multiple measures this time. The notice emphasised the strict strengthening of the management of "three public expenses" and recommended stringent quotas. It stipulated that administrative and public institutions are not allowed to use non-budgetary funds to arrange for official overseas expenses; it is strictly forbidden to lease luxury cars above standard for official use vehicles, reducing the operation and maintenance costs of vehicles; and it is strictly prohibited to incur excessive expenses for official receptions by falsely reporting the number of people or increasing the number of accompanying personnel in violation of regulations. It also emphasised that central departments should take the lead in significantly reducing activities such as forums, festivals, and exhibitions. Meetings, training, and other official activities should prioritize the use of internal venues such as meeting rooms and auditoriums, and encourage the use of online methods such as video, telephone, and the internet to conduct official activities. The notice clearly stated that budget constraints and supervision will be made more stringent. Further budget reviews will be conducted to curb problems such as high estimation and false claims in project applications; online monitoring will be intensified for irregular and abnormal expenditure and impulsive spending behaviour, and daily checks will be conducted for discovered doubts; and regular financial fund clean-up will be carried out.

The notice also required strict expenditure management, ensuring the bottom line of the "three assurances", emphasizing the establishment of a comprehensive hierarchical responsibility system for the bottom line of the "three assurances" at the grassroots level, and requiring all regions to adhere to prioritise stable financial resources for the "three assurances". It said budget performance management should be stricter and there should be pre-evaluation of major policies and projects, and tighter management of performance targets. Serious financial discipline will be enforced, and strict investigation and punishment of violations of financial discipline will be enforced, and maintaining a high-pressure situation of financial supervision. Relevant officials of the Ministry of Finance stated that the Ministry of Finance will resolutely implement the requirement of getting used to living frugally in party and government organs in the next step. The central finance will take the lead in fulfilling its responsibilities, continuously improve institutional measures, make living frugally a conscious principle for budget arrangements and execution, achieve "generous spending for major matters and thriftiness for minor matters" and create a good atmosphere of long-term frugality.

CHINA-ECONOMY: SOUTHERN WEEKLY NOTED CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S STRESS ON BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS AND DELEGATIONS

China's Southern Weekly (March 29) observed that on March 27, Chinese President Xi Jinping met representatives of the U.S. business community and strategic academia, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, and Sri Lankan Prime Minister Gunawardena respectively and that in all three meetings, President Xi Jinping mentioned the topic of business environment. Clarifying the importance of the business environment, the Southern Weekly described the business environment "as the soil for the survival and development of enterprises" and said that "when choosing investment locations, business leaders would rather trade higher land and labour costs for a better business environment than go to areas with a relatively lagging business environment". It emphasised that China believed in economic globalisation.

CHINA-PLA: CHINA'S SOUTH CHINA SEA STRATEGIC SITUATION PROBING INITIATIVE ISSUES REPORT ON U.S. ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA AND AROUND CHINA

The South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative (SCSPI) published 'An Incomplete Report on US Military Activities in the South China Sea in 2023' on March 21. Giving a press briefing at the Beijing Post & Telecom Conference Center on March 22, SCSPI Director Hu Bo, Vice Director 雷筱璐 Lei Xiaolu, Professor of China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies (CIBOS), Wuhan University, Vice Director 闫岩 Yan Yan, Director of the Research Center of Oceans Law and Policy in the National Institute for the South China Sea Studies, and Dr. 陈永 Chen Yong, Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, answered questions from the media. The main points in the report are: In 2023, the US deployed three Carrier Strike Groups (CSGs), namely USS Nimitz (CVN-68), USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76), and USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70), for a total of six activities accessing the South China Sea. The duration of activities increased, with a preference for entering and exiting through the Bashi Channel; In 2023, the US also successively dispatched two Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs), USS Makin Island and USS America, for activities in the South China Sea. Additionally, USS America, USS Makin Island and the 13th MEU conducted integrated operations in the Western Pacific, demonstrating the capability to implement operational concepts such as “Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations” (EABO); Also in 2023, the US Navy deployed at least 11 nuclear attack submarines plus two ballistic nuclear missile submarines for strategic cruise missions in the Western Pacific including the South China Sea; in addition the US Air Force conducted 30 B-52H or B-1B bomber sorties in the Western Pacific in total. The bombers, though deployed mainly at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam also operated from multiple allied and partner countries’ airports; In 2023, the US military conducted around 1,000 sorties in various types of large reconnaissance aircraft from bases such as Kadena in Okinawa, Osan in South Korea, Andersen in Guam, and Clark in the Philippines for reconnaissance missions in the South China Sea and, of them, about 100 sorties approached the airspace near the Chinese mainland and Hainan Island, most being within 30 nautical miles of the baseline of the territorial sea. The US reconnaissance aircraft frequently disrupted the normal exercises and drills of the PLA and led to close encounters with Chinese alert forces; In 2023, US reconnaissance ships such as ocean surveillance ships and oceanographic survey ships proceeded with more targeted routine

operations in the South China Sea and kept intensified reconnaissance in the triangular area between the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, and the Bashi Channel, as well as the east and west lanes in the South China Sea, accumulating a total of 314 ship-days. Babuyan Channel, Verde Island Passage and Mindoro Strait, as frequently used maritime passages by US CSGs in recent years, have also seen intensive reconnaissance operations by US oceanographic survey ships; there was an increased frequency of the US military's island-intrusive FONOPs in the South China Sea, rising to six times, in 2023; Throughout 2023, US warships transited the Taiwan Strait six times, suggesting a significant decrease compared to previous years, while there was a substantial increase in the frequency of the USN P-8A aircraft flyover. On June 21, the USCG Stratton transited the Taiwan Strait, which is the first solo transit of the Taiwan Strait by a US Coast Guard vessel after 2019; the report referred to the US' Joint Operations with the Philippine, Japan, Australia; in 2023, the US military conducted a total of 107 large-scale exercises and drills in the South China Sea and its surrounding areas, an increase in both quantity and scale compared to 2022.

CHINA-TIANJIN: HENG XIAOFAN APPOINTED NEW SECRETARY OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION OF TIANJIN

"Tianjin Daily" reported that on April 3, a meeting of leading cadres of Tianjin municipal political and legal units was held. Tianjin Party Secretary Chen Miner attended the meeting and delivered a speech. Zhou Derui, member of the Standing Committee of the Municipal Party Committee and Director of the Organization Department of the Municipal Party Committee, presided over the meeting and read out the decision of the Municipal Party Committee. The Tianjin Municipal Party Committee decided to appoint Heng Xiaofan as Secretary of the Political and Legal Committee of the Municipal Party Committee.

CHINA-HUNAN: HUNAN GOVERNOR CONVENES TWO MEETINGS IN THREE DAYS TO PROMOTE 'LARGE-SCALE EQUIPMENT RENEWAL AND TRADE-IN'

Hunan Daily reported that on April 3, Hunan Governor Mao Weiming attended and spoke at a video conference on promoting large-scale equipment updates and trade-in of consumer goods. The paper said this was Mao Weiming's second meeting in three days to deploy and promote large-scale equipment updates and trade-in of consumer goods. On the afternoon of April 1, Mao Weiming presided over a special meeting of the provincial government to study and

deploy the promotion of large-scale equipment updates and trade-in of consumer goods. The Hunan Daily said that "promoting large-scale equipment renewal and trade-in of consumer goods is becoming an important local task".

CHINA-HUNAN: HUNAN DISCIPLINE INSPECTION COMMISSION BRIEFS 140 SPOUSES OF SENIOR OFFICIALS ON CORRUPTION

As part of a recent nationwide anti-corruption campaign, the provincial discipline inspection commission and supervisory commission of Hunan Province invited the spouses of 140 senior officials from provincial government agencies, state-owned enterprises and universities to an anti-corruption themed event on April 2.

Attendees were briefed on corruption cases from recent years, specifically on nepotism; family corruption; encouraging their sons to seek favours from other officials; some children opening family businesses through corruption; etc leading the whole family into an abyss.

CHINA-JIANGSU: LIU JIANYANG APPOINTED HEAD OF JIANGSU PROVINCE ORGANISATION DEPARTMENT

Beijing Daily (March 30) disclosed that the CCP CC Organization Department had on March 29, approved the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee's decision to appoint Liu Jianyang as the Minister of the Organization Department of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee.

CHINA-XINJIANG: XINJIANG APPOINTED PAN XUE AS ITS NEW DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SECURITY

The Xinjiang Daily (April 1) said the ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Fourteenth People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on March 31, 2024, approved the resignation of Chen Mingguo as Vice Chairman, Director of Public Security Department of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and appointed Pan Xi as Director of Public Security Department.

China-GANSU: GANSU PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE HOLDS CADRES ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION MEETING

“Gansu Daily” reported that the 2023 provincial leadership team and leading cadres assessment and evaluation meeting was held in Lanzhou on March 29. Gansu Party Secretary Hu Changsheng attended and delivered a speech. Ren Zhenhe, Deputy Party Secretary and Governor, presided over the meeting. At the review meeting, the Gansu Provincial Department of Finance, Yumen City, and Linze County made speeches, and the Provincial Academy of Social Sciences and Tongwei County made “reflection” speeches.

CHINA-TAIWAN: FORMER TAIWAN PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU TO MEET CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING IN BEIJING ON APRIL 8

Taiwan's former President Ma Ying-jeou's 11-day visit to Mainland China includes trips to Shenzhen (April 1), Guangzhou (April 2) and Xian (April 3-7). He is scheduled to travel to Beijing on April 7 and meet Xi Jinping in Beijing on April 8 and return to Taiwan on April 11. Taiwan's United Daily (March 29) said Xiao Xucen, CEO of the Ma Ying-jeou Foundation, said on the 25th that Ma Ying-jeou will lead young students to Guangdong, Shaanxi and Beijing from April 1 to 11 to visit Chinese cultural and historical attractions and enterprises. He will also visit Sun Yat-sen University and Peking University with young students. Let students from both sides of the Taiwan Strait communicate.

CHINA-TIBET: TAR AUTHORITIES COMMEMORATE CHINA'S TAKE-OVER OF TIBET WITH CELEBRATIONS IN BORDER DEFENCE VILLAGES

China, which is building numerous villages in Tibet close to its borders with India and Bhutan, held celebratory events in these new border villages to commemorate China's takeover of Tibet, according to official media reports. The events included participation by border troops and the local population. The state-run Global Times highlighted the commemoration of the day in the new border villages built along the borders of India and Bhutan. It said, “Today's Xizang sees continuous, rapid development in its border areas, with 624 border well-off villages fully established.” Yan Jinhai, TAR Deputy Secretary and Chairman of the People's Government of TAR, while highlighting the connectivity of the region with 100 per cent of broadband and 4G signals, said Tibet will persist in balancing troop stationing with civilian settlement and

emphasising both border consolidation and development. It said n Yadong county, intersecting with India and Bhutan, eight celebration events were held across its townships from April 2-4. The celebrations were also held in Medog county in the south of Nyingchi, at the China-India border besides the newly built Cona city.

CHINA-INDIA: CHINA AND INDIA HELD THE 29TH SESSION OF THE WMCC IN BEIJING ON MARCH 27

India and China convened their 29th session of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border affairs (WMCC) in Beijing on March 27. The Indian delegation, led by a Joint Secretary from the ministry of external affairs (MEA), co-chaired the meeting alongside the Director General of the Boundary & Oceanic Department of the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs. The official release stated: "The 29th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border affairs (WMCC) was held on 27 March 2024 in Beijing. Joint Secretary (East Asia) from the ministry of External affairs led the Indian delegation. The Chinese delegation was led by the Director General of the Boundary & Oceanic Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on how to achieve complete disengagement and resolve the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector of India-China border areas." The Ministry of External Affairs added that "In the interim, both sides agreed to maintain regular contact through diplomatic and military channels and on the need to uphold peace and tranquillity on the ground in the border areas in accordance with existing bilateral agreements and protocols".

CHINA-INDIA: ARTICLE ON WEIBO SUGGESTS CHINA'S OPPOSITION TO INDIA GETTING A SEAT ON UNSC

A post in Weibo (March 27) disclosed that the issue of India's application to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council has sparked heated discussions in Beijing. It said Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, met the two co-chairs of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly's intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Mr. Baniayi, the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, and Mr. Matzek of Austria. Wang Yi expressed China's position on the issue of Security Council reform. He emphatically stated that China fully supports the reform of the Security Council,

emphasizing the importance of enhancing the representation and voice of developing and small countries in the Security Council. He stressed the need to allow more countries to participate in the decision-making process and ensure that all members of the United Nations family can benefit from the reform. At the same time, "he cleverly conveyed a message to India, which has been eager for a permanent seat: the key lies in promoting equal participation of all countries in global decision-making. India has long coveted a permanent seat on the Security Council and there seems to be a new change in the situation this year". Apart from China, the four traditional permanent members of the Security Council, namely the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France, all seem to be inclined to support India. "At the G20 summit, the U.S. and Russia reached a rare consensus on this issue and were busy lobbying other member states. Subsequently, the UK and France followed the footsteps of the United States and extended an olive branch to India. Although India has now gained support from the four major powers, whether it can truly occupy the seat of a permanent member still depends on China's attitude. During talks between President Biden and Indian Prime Minister Modi, President Biden expressed support for UN Security Council reform and agreed to India's accession to permanent membership. However, although the United States has previously expressed support for India's accession, it has also warned India not to consider using the veto". The article said in order to increase its chances of accession, India has made efforts over the years. It has not only strengthened its relations with other major powers but also actively participated in international peacekeeping missions. "Additionally, India has proposed many plans in the discussions on Security Council reform that cater to its own interests. Meanwhile, the Indian media has also been vigorously promoting the atmosphere of public opinion that "India is qualified to be a permanent member." Looking back over the past decade, India has made six attempts to become a permanent member, but has failed each time. Now, with the United States and Russia showing friendly gestures one after another, India seems to see a glimmer of hope. However, during talks between Foreign Minister Wang Yi and senior UN officials and representatives of various countries, it was explicitly stated that the core goal of Security Council reform is to increase the voice and influence of developing countries and small countries in decision-making, striving to achieve a broader consensus. This is encouragement to small and medium-sized countries like Kuwait and Austria, as well as a signal to India - China hopes to see a Security Council where every country can participate equally in decision-making, reducing privileges and enhancing fairness. "At the same time, despite demonstrating a certain level of strength and influence internationally, India still faces many thorny issues domestically, such as severe class divisions, entrenched caste systems,

human rights issues that need improvement, a lagging education system, insufficient infrastructure development, and the need to strengthen political stability. Even the United States, which has long supported India's accession, has been frank about its existing problems. Therefore, for India to truly cross the threshold of becoming a permanent member, it not only needs understanding and support from the international community, especially the five permanent members of the Security Council but also needs to solidify its basic skills in its own backyard, comprehensively enhance its national comprehensive strength and social management level and demonstrate the responsibility and courage of a world power. At present, India's path to its seventh application for permanent membership seems clearer than ever before, after all, it has won explicit support from the United States and Russia. However, as one of the existing permanent members of the Security Council, China has always maintained a cautious attitude towards the issue of new permanent members. It particularly emphasizes the contributions and roles of candidate countries in global governance. From China's perspective, the primary task in the UN reform process is to uphold the authority of the United Nations, advocate multilateralism, actively promote Security Council reform towards a more just and reasonable direction, and ensure that the voice of each member country is fully respected and responded to. For India, achieving the dream of permanent membership requires not only external assistance but also the tempering of internal strength and the enhancement of international image!"

CHINA-INDIA: WEIBO POST QUOTES INDIAN DEFENCE MINISTER SAYING PEOPLE OF POK WANT MERGER WITH INDIA AND INDIA WILL RESPOND TO ANY THREATS FROM CHINA

A post (March 27) on Weibo referred to Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh's statement during an interview that the people of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir "voluntarily seek to merge with India," and he is "confident" about this prospect. In February, political activist Amjad Ayub Mirza criticized the elections in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, stating that "the people of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir have had enough of Pakistan and are demanding integration with India." Singh also asserted that "India will not attack any country, nor has it occupied an inch of other's territory; Kashmir has always been a part of India." Additionally, regarding the India-China border issue, Singh emphasized that India will actively respond to any "threats" from China, while also stating that "India maintains good relations with all its neighbouring countries."

CHINA-BHUTAN: CHINESE ACADEMIC APPREHENDS INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO BHUTAN WILL ADVERSELY IMPACT ON CHINA-BHUTAN BORDER TALKS

Referring to the award of Order of the Druk Gyalpo, or Dragon King, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Bhutan on March 22 from Bhutanese king and the newly appointed Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay's visit to New Delhi, a week earlier, Lin Minwang, Deputy Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said these developments could have "obvious and direct" impact on Chinese-Bhutan border talks. The South China Morning Post (March 29) quoted him saying "We have seen some momentum since 2020 and the negotiations have achieved significant progress." "The two sides are (a)waiting for an opportunity of breakthrough but now I think there could be some changes".

CHINA-PAKISTAN: LENGTHY BAIJIAHAO ARTICLE ACCUSES INDIA'S R&AW OF ATTACKS ON CPEC AND CHINESE NATIONALS IN PAKISTAN

A lengthy article in Baijiahao (March 27) alleged that "According to the Pakistani investigation, this was a suicide attack, with the attacker ramming a car filled with explosives into a bus convoy carrying Chinese nationals. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Qureshi stated that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of India and the subsequently ousted Afghan National Security Agency were the masterminds behind it, and it was specifically carried out by the Swat branch of the Pakistani Taliban (known as 'TTP'). It said " the Research and Analysis Wing of India was the mastermind behind two incidents last year. One was the assassination attempt against the Canadian Sikh religious leader in June last year. It later led to a serious diplomatic crisis between Canada and India! Another incident was in November last year, when the US Department of Justice said that Indian agents went to New York to assassinate Sikh separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, but they were caught red-handed by the US authorities. Of course, faced with irrefutable evidence, the Indian side shamelessly denied it as usual." Referring to the attacks on Chinese personnel by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in May 2017, November 2018, May 2019, August 2021 and April 2022, it said the Pakistani government has repeatedly stated that BLA and other extremist organizations are colluding with third-country forces to incite them to attack Chinese targets and provide military and intelligence support. It identified the third countries as the United States and India! It added

that the US NGO “Friends of Balochistan” and Baloch exiles in Europe have opposed the CPEC. It claimed that the leader of the “Baloch Nationalist Army,” who surrendered to the Pakistani government, revealed that India had been secretly supporting terrorist activities in Balochistan Province and providing funds to separatist forces in Balochistan Province. It said the US and India want to "deal with Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, disrupt the construction of the “Belt and Road” initiative, block China’s access to the Indian Ocean, and prevent China from saving transportation costs and developing overseas. At the same time, the development and growth of Pakistan pose a threat to their Asia-Pacific strategy and India’s “South Asian hegemony” status. Therefore, regardless of the fact that terrorism is the enemy of all mankind, the US and India are deliberately destroying the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor." It listed the purpose of this attack as:

1. Pressure the Pakistani government to demand that it not be so harsh on terrorist organizations.
2. Expand influence and strengthen the power of extremist organizations.
3. This hydropower station is equivalent to Pakistan’s “Three Gorges Dam.” After completion, it will generate approximately 12 billion kWh of electricity annually. By obstructing the construction of the dam, the Pakistani government will not obtain economic benefits and improve people’s livelihoods, thus reducing the breeding ground for terrorism.
4. Disrupt the normal progress of Sino-Pakistani.

CHINA-PAKISTAN: CHINESE WORKERS ON THREE HYDROPOWER PROJECTS OF CPEC STOP WORKING AFTER RECENT TERRORIST ATTACKS

Pakistan's Daily Excelsior (March 29) disclosed that two more Chinese companies have stopped work on hydropower projects three days after five Chinese nationals were killed in a suicide attack in Pakistan’s restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It said after the Tarbela project, the Chinese companies have now suspended civil work at the Dasu and Diamer-Bhasha dams due to security concerns and about 1,000 Chinese engineers working on both the projects have stopped operations. The local staff for both the projects has been directed to stay home till further orders, An official working on the Dasu dam project confirmed that the Chinese company stopped work and local staff was asked to stay at home. The project employed around 741 Chinese and 6,000 locals. Asim Rauf, General Manager of the 4,800 MW Diamer-Bhasha Dam (DBD) Nazakat Hussain also confirmed that the Chinese company had stopped work and said around 500 Chinese nationals were engaged in DBD but the Frontier Works Organisation staff, of about 6,000 locals, continues to work. However, he said, 250 Chinese engineers are

still working on the Mohmand Dam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding “The Chinese have shown satisfaction over the security situation in the project area, and they are working on the site.”

CHINA-NEPAL: NEPAL FOREIGN MINISTER SHRESTHA VISITED CHINA AND TIBET

Nepal's Republica (March 30) said during his visit to China, Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha urged the Chinese for cooperation in addressing issues facing the residents along the Nepal-China borders. During his meeting with TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng, on March 30, Shrestha sought cooperation to make arrangements for the use of pastureland along the bordering areas, to provide entry pass for Nepali containers and for electrification in Nepal's highlands. He recalled an agreement to resume 14 Nepal-China traditional transits during his meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in Beijing. He also invited the TAR government, investors, and the business community to the Nepal Investment Summit that Nepal plans to host on April 28-29. He also asked China to make provisions for resuming the Kathmandu-Lhasa Bus Service. ording to the Minister. Acknowledging the Chinese assistance to Nepal's development so far, he said the support from China during crisis in Nepal is unforgettable. Shrestha recalled his meetings with CPPCC Chairperson, Wang Huning, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing and said the meetings were focused on further strengthening the bilateral ties. Asserting that Nepal strongly adheres to One-China Policy, he expressed commitment not to allow its soil to be used for any activities against China. He reiterated that Nepal and Tibet have had long-standing relations and have cultural, commercial and intimate relations. Their bilateral relations are based on Panchasheel. TAR Party Secretary Wang Junzheng committed to provide all necessary support to Nepal, including for Nepal's infrastructure development and operating the Lhasa-Kathmandu bus service again. He assured that the 14 traditional check points would be reopened gradually, and arrangements for the unhindered movement of the locals of border areas would be made. Shrestha met Nepali Ambassador to China, Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, Joint-Secretary at the Foreign Ministry, Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Consul General of Lhasa, Navaraj Dhakal, Deputy-Chief of Mission, Beijing-based Nepali Embassy, Surendra Kumar Yadav, DPM's Personal Secretary, Suresh Kaji Shrestha from Nepal were present in the meeting. Foreign Minister Shrestha directed Nepali officials in Lhasa to ensure effective implementation.

(Comment: During his 9-day visit Shrestha also met the Vice Minister of the CCP CC ILD Sun Haiyan, Party Secretary of Chingqing Yuan Jiajun, and the Governor of Sichuan Huang Qiang. He also discussed the Trans-Himalayan Multi Dimensional Connectivity Network (THMDCN) to be developed under the BRI. The Kathmandu Post (April 1) published a detailed interview with Shrestha.)

CHINA-NEPAL: AMID INCREASING CHINESE PRESSURE ON NEPAL'S GOVERNMENT TIBETANS IN NEPAL STAGE NO PROTEST TO MARK 'SERFS EMANCIPATION DAY'

A reliable report from Kathmandu said in Nepal there were no events, protests or demonstrations held by Tibetans in observation of Serfs' Emancipation Day. It added that many of the Tibetans living in Nepal lacked information about this day. Stating that every year the sentiment with which Tibetans observe these events to show their nationalism and sense of patriotism seem to be fading, it noted that the situation has changed since the pressure from Chinese embassy keeps increasing to remind the Nepalese government to stick to the 'One China Policy'. Therefore, Tibetans are restricted from even staging a peaceful demonstration to show their solidarity spirit in Nepal during these important events. There were no policemen and armed forces deployed in Tibetan populated areas in Kathmandu and Pokhara. But messengers in plain clothes, numbering over 100 in Boudha and about 15 in Swoyambhu were seen keeping vigilance on the day's event. There were no cases of detention or arrest of Tibetans in Nepal on March 28.

CHINA-US: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING AND U.S. PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN HAVE 2-HOUR LONG TELEPHONE CONVERSATION ON APRIL 2

During the 2 hour-long telephone conversation (April 2) between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden, Xinhua said Chinese President "Xi Jinping stressed that the Taiwan issue is the first insurmountable red line in China-U.S. relations. We will not sit idly by in the face of separatist activities by "Taiwan independence" forces and external indulgence and support. We hope the U.S. side will implement President Biden's positive stance of not supporting "Taiwan independence" into actions. The U.S. has continuously imposed trade and technology suppression measures against China, and the list of sanctioned Chinese companies is growing longer. This is not "de-risking" but creating risks. If the U.S. side is willing to carry

out mutually beneficial cooperation and share the dividends of China's development, China's door is always open; if the U.S. side insists on suppressing China's high-tech development and depriving China of its legitimate right to development, we will not stand by." The US readout said Biden "raised concerns over the PRC's support for Russia's defense industrial base", which has been interpreted as a clear sign of the growing concern that while not providing weapons directly to Russia the PRC is playing a key role in keeping Russia's defense industrial base operating. The Wall Street Journal (April 2) said it was a warning" to China.

ii) According to Xinhua, Xi Jinping addressed US-China relations directly. He said, "The China-U.S. relationship is beginning to stabilize...[but] the negative factors of the relationship have also been growing." He then outlined three principles to guide China-US relations in 2024: (i) Peace must be valued to prevent conflict and confrontation.; (ii) Stability must be prioritized.; and (iii) Credibility must be upheld, and commitments must be acted upon.

CHINA-US: U.S. TREASURY SECRETARY JANET YELLEN STARTED VISIT TO CHINA ON APRIL 4 -- OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS TO INTERACT WITH CHINESE COUNTERPARTS THIS MONTH

i) U.S. Treasury Secretary Yellen arrived in Guangzhou on April 4 at the start of her visit (April 4-9) to China. According to the US readout she will meet Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Vice Premier He Lifeng and former Vice Premier Liu He, and she will among other things underscore the "global economic consequences of Chinese industrial overcapacity".

A Xinhua commentary (April 2) just prior to Yellen's visit said "while it is just basic economics that surplus products naturally seek out markets elsewhere once domestic demand is met, and Western nations have been doing that for centuries, when it comes to China, it becomes an "overcapacity problem" threatening the world...This new variant of "China threat" theory is just a pretext for certain Western countries to poison the environment for China's domestic development and international cooperation and take more protectionist measures for their own industries."

ii) U.S. Secretary of State Blinken may visit by the end of the month, and US Secretary of Defense Austin is likely to soon have a call with Chinese Minister of Defense Dong Jun.

CHINA-US: XINHUA COMMENTARY URGES TIGHTENED BONDS BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF U.S. AND CHINA

The People's Daily (March 31) published the third Xinhua commentary in a series captioned 'Tightening the bonds between people and public opinion - Promoting the sustained, stable and healthy development of China-U.S. relations', which referring to Xi Jinping's recent meeting with US business leaders, academics and strategists said "The past was written by the people, and the future must be created by the people". It urged people from all walks of life to have more contacts and exchanges, enhance trust, eliminate all kinds of interference, and inject more stability into the world. It ended with the plea that "The more difficulties Sino-US relations encounter, the more necessary it is to tighten the bonds between the people and enhance people-to-people communication".

CHINA-NETHERLANDS: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING WARNS NETHERLANDS PRIME MINISTER RUTTE AGAINST CREATING TECH BARRIERS

The South China Morning Post and Politico (March 28) quoting sources said that during their meeting (March 24) Chinese President Xi Jinping warned Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte against creating "tech barriers," following the Dutch decision to impose export controls on microchips gear. Xinhua said he told Rutte that "Artificially erecting tech barriers, and severing industries chains and supply chains, would only lead to division and rivalry. No forces could stop the pace of China's technological development and progress." He also offered to import more from the Netherlands and to ramp up cooperation in areas such as artificial intelligence. Rutte is visiting China with the country's Foreign Trade minister, Geoffrey van Leeuwen.