



**CCAS CHINA NEWS**  
**by JAYADEVA RANADE**

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**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING MET GERMAN  
CHANCELLOR SCHOLZ IN BEIJING ON APRIL 16**

i) Xinhua (April 16) reported that Chinese President Xi Jinping met German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on April 16, in Beijing. The state-owned CCTV reported (April 16) that after their meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping took a walk with German Chancellor Scholz, and the two sides had in-depth exchanges on a wide range of issues. Scholz was accompanied by senior executives from many large German companies, including Siemens, Mercedes-Benz, Bayer and BMW.

ii) The Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily; April 16) published a lengthy report on the meeting, which said Xi Jinping pointed out that this is the 10th anniversary of the establishment of an all-round strategic partnership between China and Germany and that despite the great changes in the international situation over the past decade, China-Germany relations have always developed steadily, and cooperation in various fields has been continuously consolidated. Xi Jinping said "the world's changes that have occurred over the past century are accelerating and human society is facing increasing risks and challenges. To solve these problems, cooperation between major countries is indispensable. China and Germany are the second and third largest economies in the world. The significance of consolidating and developing Sino-German relations transcends the scope of bilateral relations and has an important impact on the Eurasian continent and even the entire world. The two countries should view and develop bilateral relations from a long-term and strategic perspective and work together to inject more stability and certainty into the world". Xi Jinping emphasized that "there is no fundamental conflict of interest between China and Germany and they do not pose a security threat to each other". He said both countries should continue to have close exchanges with an open mind and enhance strategic mutual trust. Xi Jinping pointed out that

the industrial and supply chains of China and Germany are deeply embedded in each other, and the markets of the two countries are highly interdependent., adding that mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Germany is not a "risk". He pointed out that "China's exports of electric vehicles, lithium batteries, photovoltaic products, etc. have not only enriched global supply and alleviated global inflation pressure, but also made great contributions to the global response to climate change and green and low-carbon transformation" and that China and Germany are both based on industry and support free trade and economic globalization. Both sides should be wary of the rise of protectionism and insist on looking at production capacity issues objectively. He said China and Germany have a lot in common on the issue of world multipolarity. Scholz said that currently, Germany-China relations are developing well, and the two sides have close exchanges at all levels and in all fields. He said in the past two days, representatives of the German business community and he "had visited Chongqing, Shanghai and other places and personally experienced the great achievements China's economic development has made in recent years and were deeply impressed by the close and good cooperation between the business communities of Germany and China. Germany is willing to work with China to continue to strengthen bilateral relations, deepen bilateral dialogue and cooperation in various fields, and promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges in education, culture and other fields, which are of vital importance to both Germany and China and the world. Germany is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China to jointly respond to global challenges such as climate change, is committed to safeguarding the multilateral international order, promotes world peace and development, and does not endorse confrontation and confrontation. Germany opposes protectionism and supports free trade" and "as an important member of the EU, Germany is willing to play an active role in promoting the sound development of relations between the EU and China". They had an in-depth exchange of views on the Ukraine crisis, opposed the use of nuclear weapons or attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities, and agreed to properly resolve international food security issues, and abide by international humanitarian law. Xi Jinping emphasized that under the current situation, in order to prevent the conflict from spiraling or even spiraling out of control, all parties should work together to restore peace as soon as possible. Xinhua said "The two sides also exchanged views on international and regional issues of common interest such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Both sides believe that UN Security Council Resolution 2728 should be implemented to prevent the situation from escalating and further deteriorating the situation, ensure barrier-free and sustainable humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip, and support

the early negotiation of the Palestinian issue on the basis of the "two-state solution". Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the meeting.

iii) Shangguan News (April 15) disclosed that Chen Jining, Shanghai Party Secretary met German Chancellor Scholz during his visit to Shanghai and briefed him on Shanghai's economic and social development. He said "Shanghai is following President Xi Jinping's strategic planning, focusing on the important mission of building the "Five Centers", accelerating the establishment of a modern socialist international metropolis with world influence, and striving to advance Chinese-style modernization". He said Shanghai would further expand cooperation and exchanges between the two countries at the local level using the sister cities established by Shanghai and Hamburg as a link and that more German companies are welcome to seize the opportunities of Shanghai's accelerated industrial transformation. Scholz said that he was very happy to visit Shanghai and was deeply impressed by the city's economic development and open vitality. He added that he looks forward to taking this visit as an opportunity to further promote economic and trade exchanges between Germany and China and jointly address global challenges such as climate change and green transformation and support more German companies to develop in Shanghai, strengthen practical cooperation in scientific and technological innovation, green and low-carbon and other fields, and better achieve win-win development. Wu Ken, Chinese Ambassador to Germany, and Shanghai leaders Li Zheng and Hua Yuan attended the meeting.

iv) A Tongji University student asked Scholz in Shanghai whether he would have to smoke marijuana if he studied in Germany because marijuana is not legal in China. Scholz told them they did not.

(Comment: In his interactions with Chinese officials during his 3-day tour, Scholz treaded gently during his visit to China and seemingly raised no contentious issues. It reflects Germany's unwillingness, unlike the EU, to take a firm stance against China. The presence of 5,000 German companies active in the Chinese market and dependence of Germany's automobile industry on the Chinese market would have been the consideration.)

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: LATEST ISSUE OF QIU SHI (SEEKING TRUTH) PUBLISHED ARTICLE ON CULTURE BY CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING**

An article by Chinese President Xi Jinping captioned 'Strengthen the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture' on preserving and passing on cultural heritage and carrying forward fine traditional Chinese culture was published in the latest issue of the CCP's leading theoretical fortnightly magazine Qiu Shi (Seeking Truth; 2024/08; dated April 15) on April 16.

(The article is a compilation of 22 paragraphs culled from Xi Jinping's speeches since August 2013 till September 2023.)

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER LI QIANG SPEAKS AT SYMPOSIUM AT 135TH CHINA IMPORT AND EXPORT FAIR (CANTON FAIR) IN GUANGZHOU ON APRIL 18**

People's Daily (April 19) reported that Chinese Premier Li Qiang visited the 135th session of the China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair) in Guangzhou on April 18, 2024, and said it should play a bigger role in expanding China's high-level opening up and promoting the building of an open world economy. At a symposium with representatives of Canton Fair participating firms, Li expressed hope that foreign trade-oriented enterprises would make more efforts to explore the international market, raise the quality and added value of their products, and partake in the formulation of international standards. He also encouraged enterprises to continuously improve their research and development capabilities, and strive for digital, intelligent and green transformation.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER CONVENES STATE COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 12**

Chinese Premier Li Qiang presided over a State Council executive meeting on April 12, to study the work on accelerating the rise of the central region and measures to improve the long-term mechanism for resolving payment arrears to enterprises. The meeting also heard reports on energy conservation and carbon reduction work and discussed rectification of potential safety hazards in electric moped scooters. It said the central region should make more efforts



to promote deep integration between scientific and technological innovation and industrial innovation and strengthen regional coordination. It also called for efforts to comprehensively improve the safety level of production, sales, use, parking, charging and recycling of electric moped scooters to ensure the safety of people's lives and property.

### **CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CPPCC CHAIRMAN WANG HUNING PRESIDES OVER 17TH BIWEEKLY CONSULTATION MEETING WHICH EMPHASISED FOOD SECURITY**

PBSC member and CPPCC Chairman Wang Huning presided over the CPPCC's 17th biweekly consultation session on April 12, to discuss consolidating the foundations of food security. Noting that food security is among the country's most fundamental interests, Wang Huning called on political advisors to focus on long-term problems and trends and address "difficult issues affecting the enthusiasm of grain farmers and major grain-producing areas" and form a "social atmosphere that cares about agriculture, rural areas, and farmers". Nine political advisors, two farmers and an expert spoke at the meeting. They said it is necessary to motivate farmers and major grain-producing areas, strengthen policy support, improve the agricultural insurance system, and build a modernized grain-industry system. Officials from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs gave briefings on pertinent matters.

### **CHINA-LEADERSHIP: POLITBURO MEMBER AND HEAD OF CCP CC UFWD SHI TAIFENG INSPECTED HUBEI PROVINCE FROM APRIL 15-17**

Politburo member and Head of the CCP CC United Front Work Department (UFWD) Shi Taifeng undertook a research trip to Hubei province from April 15 to 17 and urged further efforts to promote the implementation of the responsibility system in work related to the united front. Visiting a university, Shi Taifeng said efforts should be made to strengthen theoretical and political guidance for intellectuals who are not CCP members in institutions for higher education. During his visit to a private company, he said that guidance for people from the non-public sector of the economy should be enhanced so they think and act in accordance with the scientific judgments on China's development situation and the decisions and plans of the CCP Central Committee. A symposium was also held during the trip, when Shi Taifeng stressed that the Party's overall leadership throughout all areas and processes of the united front work should

be strengthened, and the primary responsibilities of local governments and relevant departments must be specified.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE POLITBURO MEMBER AND VICE PREMIER HE LIFENG INSPECTS (APRIL 13-14) ZHENGZHOU, HEBEI**

During an inspection tour (April 13-14) of Zhengzhou, Hebei, Politburo member and Vice Premier He Lifeng said the delivery of good-quality homes on time will help stabilize expectations and promote the steady and healthy development of the real estate market. He said active financing support should be extended to compliant real estate projects to ensure that homes are delivered on time to buyers to protect their legitimate rights and interests.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: ARTICLE BY RETIRED CCP CC OFFICIAL ON LATE CCP CC GENERAL SECRETARY HU YAOBANG'S 35TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY BANNED ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

Radio Free Asia (RFA; April 15) disclosed that on April 15, the 35th anniversary of the death of late CCP CC General Secretary Hu Yaobang citizens in Beijing and across the country were instructed not to stage commemorative gatherings and an article titled "Hu Yaobang's greatest achievement is the liberation of 100 million political untouchables - commemorating the 35th anniversary of the death of the great humanitarian", which was circulated online on April 14, was brought down. The article praised Hu Yaobang for rehabilitating many Party cadres. The author of this article is Yan Huai, a retired senior official from the Youth Cadre Bureau of the CCP CC Organization Department in the 1980s.

**CHINA-SENIOR APPOINTMENTS: ZHANG CHUANJIANG APPOINTED GENERAL MANAGER OF CHINA DATANG GROUP CO. LTD**

The official website of Datang Group, on April 15, announced that the CCP CC Organisation Department announced the decision of the CCP Central Committee to appoint Zhang Chuanjiang as the General Manager of China Datang Group Co., Ltd. and Deputy Party Secretary of China Datang Group Co., Ltd.

(Comment: The China Datang Group Co., Ltd. was established on December 29, 2002. It is a state-owned large-scale energy enterprise directly managed by the central government, with a registered capital of 37 billion yuan. Its main business covers electric power, coal and coal chemical industry, finance, Environmental protection, trade logistics and emerging industries. Affiliated companies include 5 listed companies, 42 regional companies and professional companies.)

### **CHINA-CCP: CCP ANNOUNCES BEGINNING OF THIRD ROUND OF DISCIPLINARY INSPECTIONS OF 34 ECONOMIC WORK UNITS**

The People's Daily (April 19) disclosed that as of April 17, fifteen teams of disciplinary inspectors have been stationed at 34 economic work departments and financial agencies to carry out discipline inspection. This new round of disciplinary inspection will focus on the performance of Party organizations in the targeted units regarding promoting high-quality development, fending off and defusing major risks, promoting in-depth reform and high-quality opening up, and other issues. It said the inspection teams will stay at the assigned units for around three months, during which hotlines and mailboxes will be set up to solicit reports on the breach of discipline and other problems involving Party officials and personnel in key positions in these units. It added that the inspectors will receive complaints from the public until July 12, 2024.

(Comment: This is the third round of routine disciplinary inspection launched by the 20th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee.)

### **CHINA-CCP: 'INSPECTION MOBILISATION MEETINGS' BEGIN IN VARIOUS MINISTRIES/OFFICES TO EMPHASISE LEADERSHIP OF CCP**

i) China's Finance Minister Lan Fo'an addressed an 'Inspection mobilisation meeting' in the Ministry of Finance on April 16, where he said the Finance Ministry "is a political organ under the leadership of the Central Committee, with political attributes being its primary characteristic, and political considerations as the foremost requirement".

ii) The People's Bank of China (PBoC) also kicked-off its 'Inspection mobilisation meeting' on April 16, when PBoC Governor Pan Gongsheng vowed to "more consciously and firmly follow the path of developing finance with Chinese characteristics".

iii) The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development held its 'Inspection mobilisation meeting' on April 16, when its Minister Ni Hong said: "inspection should be regarded as an opportunity to ... deepen strict Party governance, integrating it with.. stabilizing growth, benefiting people's livelihoods, preventing risks, and transformation in the field of housing..."

iv) At an 'Inspection mobilisation meeting' of China's Ministry of Commerce on April 16, Commerce Minister Wang Wentao said: "regard accepting and cooperating with inspection supervision...to promote high-quality development in commerce and better serve the overall work of the Party and the country".

v) The China Securities Regulatory Commission held its 'Inspection mobilisation meeting' on April 16, when Wu Qing exhorted cadres to: study Xi's speeches on inspection and financial work, educate people in Party discipline to "promote the high-quality development of the capital market on the basis of strong supervision and risk prevention".

### **CHINA-CCP: MOSS PUBLICISES 10 MAJOR ESPIONAGE CASES ON NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION DAY**

On National Security Education Day, China's Ministry of State Security (MoSS) highlighted 10 major espionage cases on April 16, focussing on those involving the staff of scientific research units who proactively betray core secrets. It listed the case of one Huang Yu, who served in the PLA and had received foreign espionage training in Hong Kong and Bangkok, and betrayed the core secrets he had illegally retained while working in the unit. It said he also deceived his wife, who worked in the same unit, to copy confidential materials in exchange for more rewards.

### **CHINA-CCP: CYL HELD ENLARGED CYL SECRETARIAT MEETING ON APRIL 15 FOR PARTY BUILDING AND CLEAN GOVERNMENT**

The Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily; April 15) reported that the Communist Youth League (CYL) Central Secretariat (Enlarged) Meeting and the Leading Group (Enlarged) Meeting for Party Building and Party Style and Clean Government Construction were held on April 15, to study the "Notice of the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Carrying out Party Discipline Learning and Education in the Whole Party". The meeting focussed on the "Implementation Plan for Party Discipline Learning and Education by Organs Directly Under the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League",



and party discipline learning and education work. A Dong, First Secretary of the Secretariat of the League Central Committee, presided over the meeting and delivered a speech. The meeting pointed out that "carrying out party discipline study and education throughout the party is a major decision-making arrangement made by the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core".

**CHINA-CCP: LATEST ISSUE OF HONGQI WENGAO (RED FLAG MANUSCRIPT)  
AVAILABLE ONLINE FROM APRIL 11**

The latest edition of Hongqi Wengao (Red Flag Manuscript) came online on April 11. Its highlights include essays on drawing wisdom from the Party's history, the 10th anniversary of comprehensive national security, cultural construction, and new productive forces theory.

**CHINA-CCP: PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE ON NATIONAL  
SECURITY EDUCATION DAY EMPHASISES THAT PARTY LEADERSHIP IS  
VITAL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY**

On the occasion of China's National Security Education Day on April 15, Xinhua (April 15) published a report which was reproduced by the People's Daily on April 16. The People's Daily said "Over the past decade, guided by a holistic approach to national security, China has navigated drastic changes in the international landscape and kept itself well-positioned in the pursuit of development and security. The country's national security has been comprehensively reinforced and the Peaceful China Initiative has been pushed to a higher level, providing a solid guarantee for the endeavour to build China into a strong country and realize the great cause of national rejuvenation". Quoting the Work Report presented at the 20th Party Congress, it exhorted "We must resolutely pursue a holistic approach to national security and promote national security in all areas and stages of the work of the Party and the country, so as to ensure national security and social stability". It claimed that "through the holistic approach, both the scope and reach of national security have been enlarged unprecedentedly, covering various areas including politics, military, homeland security, economy, finance, culture, society, sci-tech and cyberspace. The article asserted that "Upholding the Party's absolute leadership over national security work is vital to safeguarding national security and social stability".

## **CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: FORMER CHAIRMAN OF CHINA EVERBRIGHT GROUP 70-YEAR-OLD TANG SHUANGNING CONVICTED ON APRIL 12**

The Paper (April 12) reported that Tang Shuangning, the 70-year-old former Party Secretary and Chairman of China Everbright Group, was indicted on corruption and bribery charges. It said he was convicted after a 5-year investigation for corruption involving "a particularly huge amount". He was formally arrested in January 2024.

## **CHINA-S&T: CHINA UNVEILS PLANS TO TRAIN PEOPLE IN NEW DIGITAL ECONOMY LIKE AI, BIG DATA, IC ETC.**

China Daily (April 17) disclosed that nine departments, including China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, jointly released plans to boost the supply of digital talent to support the development of its fast-growing digital economy by 2026. According to the plan different types of support will be provided to help digital talent be more innovative and increase the number of high-quality digital talent in three years. Training will be provided to digital technicians in the new sectors of big data, artificial intelligence, intelligent manufacturing, integrated circuit and data security. National occupational standards will also be specified for new occupations in those sectors. It said targeted training will be provided to workers at different industries so they can become experts in both industrial and digital technologies.

## **CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA'S NSB FIGURES REVEAL DROP IN NEW HOME PRICES IN CHINA**

Reuters calculated, based on China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data, that China's new home prices dropped 2.2% year-on-year in March, marking the biggest decline since August 2015, and worse than a 1.4% fall in February. Sino Market said there are 57 cities out of 70 with decreases in sales prices of new homes and 69 decrease in second-hand, compared to 59 and 68 in February respectively.

## **CHINA-ECONOMY: REPORT HIGHLIGHTS RISE IN PRICES OF WATER AND ELECTRICITY IN CHINA**

A report posted on Weibo on April 14, in Guangzhou by the Associated Press of Finance reported that many places have recently released natural gas price increase plans. It said residential gas prices in Shenzhen, Fuzhou, Zhenjiang and other places have all increased and that according to statistics from Tianfeng Securities, 125 cities and counties have issued price adjustment notices. It said after the Chongqing Gas Company replaced natural gas meters, residents' natural gas bills doubled and many citizens in many districts and counties in Chongqing have complained. It added that Chongqing officials have said if the income is incorrect due to various reasons, the company will be urged to refund it. It revealed that on April 3, the Guangzhou Development and Reform Commission released the "Guangzhou Central Urban Tap Water Price Reform Plan" and proposed two sets of hearing plans for comparison. It explained that tap water in Guangdong is charged on a tiered basis. Generally, the price of ordinary water does not exceed 26 cubic meters, which is 1.98 yuan. The more you use, the higher the charge. Now the upper limit of the water volume of the ladder will be reduced from 26m<sup>3</sup> and 34m<sup>3</sup> to 21m<sup>3</sup> and 27m<sup>3</sup> respectively, and the price will also increase. The report said that the price of water and electricity had started to increase last year, and the price increase was very large, with the highest reaching more than 30%. It anticipated that the prices of downstream products and services will inevitably gradually increase in the future and the cost of eating out will also increase accordingly, and the price of going out to drink a cup of milk tea will also be more expensive than before. It attributed the increases to the reduced revenue from land sales. The report said because of reduced revenues from land sales, China has suspended plans to build subways in major, medium and small cities. "The development path that everyone was accustomed to in the past has changed".

## **CHINA-SHANDONG: FAN BO APPOINTED SECRETARY GENERAL OF SHANDONG PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Shandong Daily News (April 16) disclosed that on April 15, a meeting of leading cadres of the General Office of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee was held to announce relevant decisions of the central and provincial Party committees. Provincial Party Committee Secretary Lin Wu presided over the meeting and delivered a speech. It said Fan Bo was appointed as a member of the Shandong Provincial Committee and Standing Committee and

as the Secretary-General of the Provincial Committee. In his speech Lin Wu emphasized that the General Office of the Provincial Party Committee, "as a political organ, must always maintain a high degree of consistency with the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core in terms of ideology, politics, and actions, constantly improve political judgment, political understanding, and political execution". He said "We must take a clear-cut stand in politics, strengthen theoretical arming, be good at planning and promoting work politically, control political junctures, firmly support the "two establishments" and resolutely achieve the "two maintenances" with practical actions. It is necessary to better serve the overall situation, resolutely implement the decisions and arrangements of the Party Central Committee, focus on the key tasks of building a modern and powerful province, think more about reform strategies, and seek innovative measures".

### **CHINA-LIAONING: SUI QING APPOINTED MINISTER OF LIAONING'S UNITED FRONT WORK DEPARTMENT**

The Liaoning Daily (April 15) disclosed that the Liaoning Provincial Committee United Front Work Department held a meeting of its cadres to announce the CCP CC's decision to appoint Sui Qing as member of the Liaoning Provincial Committee and Standing Committee and Minister of the United Front Work Department. Liaoning Party Secretary Hao Peng attended the meeting and delivered a speech.

### **CHINA-TIBET: LHASA PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU ISSUES NOTICE HERALDING A CRACKDOWN ON 'CULTS' IN TAR**

On April 8, the Lhasa Public Security Bureau issued a document on repressing "xie jiao," (or 'cults'). The document instructs Tibetans to inform on the activities of the "xie jiao" promising monetary rewards. An informant told "Bitter Winter" that Tibetans have been harassed and detained for having been found in possession of portraits of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, taken before he was kidnapped by the Chinese at age 6 in 1995. He said, "The police told me that those who honor and respect the real 11th Panchen Lama and reject the usurper Gyaincain Norbu are part of a cult."

(Comment: The CCP installed Gyaincain Norbu as its choice for the 11th Panchen Lama in 1995)

## **CHINA-INDIA: CHINESE WEIBO POST OBJECTS TO INDIA BUILDING SASOMA-DBO ROAD**

A post on Weibo (April) pointing to the 'threat' from India constructing the road to Daulet Beg Oldi (DBO) from Sasoma. It said "In recent years, in order to eliminate the strategic threat of the DBO-DS road close to our (China) border, the Indian army has worked hard to build the "Second Road" from Sasoma (萨索玛) in the Nubra Valley (奴布拉河谷) to DBO via the Sasil Pass (萨西尔山口). Once repaired, the lifeline of DBO will no longer be directly threatened by my China at the mouth of the Galwan River (加勒万河口) and the Tiannan River Valley (天南河谷河口).

## **CHINA-BHUTAN: HEAD OF SAKYA TIBETAN BUDDHIST SECT PAYS FIRST VISIT TO BHUTAN, STAYS 10 DAYS AND MEETS KING AND QUEEN OF BHUTAN**

The 41st His Holiness Kyabgon Gongma Trichen Rinpoche (The Sakya Trichen) made an unprecedented visit to Bhutan on April 9, 2024, and stayed for about ten days. On April 10, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Gyatso and Her Majesty Queen Jetsun Pema met the 41st Sakya Trinzin at Lingkana palace. After meeting the king and the queen of Bhutan, the 41st Sakya Trinchen said "they are great persons but still they are so humble, so kind and so nice to us. I really felt they are the real Dharma king." Over 20,000 people attended his religious teaching on April 11, where the Sakya Trinchen told the people that this is his first visit to Bhutan, and that he is greatly impressed by Bhutan's impeccable maintenance of religious traditions, the presence of old and holy monasteries and the religiosity of the people. He also commended and attributed the modern development of Bhutan to both the current king Jigme Khesar and his father and the previous king Jigme Singye. He urged the public to pray for the long life of the king and his family, and said, he will pray for them, too. On April 15, the 41st Sakya Trinchen, Dagmo Tashi Lhakyi Sakya along with niece and nephews of the Khyentse Rinpoche went to visit several monasteries in Bumthang including Chime Lhakhang and the Great Terma Tashi monastery, said to be the ancestral home Master Pema Lingpa who was a Tibetan Buddhist teacher and spiritual leader who founded the Dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. On April 17, the 41st Sakya Trinchen, Dagmo Tashi Lhakyi Sakya,



Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and his nieces and nephews visited the Tiger Cave monastery (Parotaksang).

(Comment: Interestingly, the Sakya Trinchen's first visit to Bhutan and his audience with the Bhutanese King was not covered in any of the main Bhutanese and Tibetan newspapers except by the Voice of America Tibetan Service. It is interesting that the 41st Sakya Trinchen used the word "Dharma king" when he said the current king of Bhutan truly is a Dharma (religious) Raja/Dharma King, who is committed to exemplary devotion to upholding and promoting Buddhist principles, teachings and values. Historically, the title Dharma King was given to prominent Sakya figures like Drogon Phakpa and Sakya Pandita Kunga by Mongol rulers like Kublai Khan and Godan Khan in the 12th and 13th centuries.)

### **CHINA-IRAN: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI TALKS TO IRANIAN COUNTERPART ON APRIL 15, ON CURRENT SITUATION**

Beijing Daily (April 16) reported that Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke over telephone on April 15, with Iranian Foreign Minister Abdullahiyan at the latter's request. Abdullahiyan briefed Wang Yi on Iran's position on the attack on the Iranian embassy in Syria, saying that the United Nations Security Council did not make the necessary response and Iran had the right to respond in self-defense to the violation of its sovereignty. He said the current regional situation is very sensitive and Iran advocates an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Wang Yi said China appreciates Iran's emphasis on not targeting regional countries and neighbouring countries and its reaffirmation of its continued pursuit of good-neighbourly and friendly policies. We believe that Iran can grasp the situation well and avoid further instability while safeguarding Iran's sovereignty and dignity. Wang Yi described the current situation as the spill over effect of the escalation of the conflict in Gaza adding that the top priority is to implement Security Council Resolution 2728 as soon as possible, achieve a ceasefire and an end to the war in Gaza. Stating that China and Iran are "comprehensive strategic partners", he added that China is willing to work with Iran to steadily advance practical cooperation in various fields and promote greater development of China-Iran relations.

## **CHINA-EU: EU CHAMBER PRESIDENT WARNS AGAINST RISING TREND OF PROTECTIONISM BECOMING A FULL TRADE WAR**

Reuters (April 17) reported that a day after German Chancellor conveyed European concerns to Beijing, Jens Eskelund, President of the European Chamber in China observed that "China and Europe face a "slow motion train accident" as a rising tide of protectionism threatens to become a full trade war". He said that while some worries about trade in both countries were legitimate, there was a risk of unproductive decoupling if European and Chinese leaders did not increase dialogue. He said "We need our leaders to sit down and explore the ways that we can avoid that this becomes a full-blown trade war. And I think it's getting a little bit urgent." Eskelund said the recent high-level meetings were encouraging.

(Comment: The European Union has launched several investigations into whether Chinese manufacturers were dumping subsidised goods such as electric vehicles on its markets.)

## **CHINA-EU: EU CHAMBER DELEGATION MET SHENZHEN PARTY SECRETARY ON APRIL 16**

On April 16, a European Chamber delegation led by President Jens Eskelund met with Shenzhen Party Secretary Meng Fanli and other local leaders. Eskelund presented the Chamber's Position Paper 2023/2024, and discussed issues including business confidence, the implementation of tax incentives for foreign nationals, the green energy transition, innovation and digitalisation. He emphasised the pivotal role of consistency in incentives and transparency in policy implementation. He also expressed the potential for deeper cooperation between the European Union (EU) and China in sustainable development. In addition, Eskelund highlighted issues such as talent shortages in engineering and research and development, as well as the need for more clarity in cross-border data transfer policies.

## **CHINA-US: CHINA'S MINISTRY OF COMMERCE CASTIGATES U.S. FOREIGN AID AS HYPOCRITICAL**

The Beijing Daily (April 19) published a lengthy 4-part report posted on April 19, on the official website of the Institute of International Economic and Trade Cooperation of China's Ministry of Commerce titled "The Hypocritical Nature and the Truth of U.S. Foreign Aid". In

addition to the Introduction, the report comprised four parts sub-headed: Selfish U.S. Aid: Self-interested Motives; Arrogant U.S. Aid: Interventionist Acts; Hypocritical U.S. Aid: The Truth About Blank Checks; and the ugly US aid: the nature of hegemonism. It also had a 'Conclusion' section. The report said "The United States has always regarded itself as the world's largest foreign aid donor. But in fact, U.S. foreign aid has always been based on maximizing U.S. interests as its fundamental starting point and goal. It ignores the practical interests and long-term development of the vast number of recipient developing countries, is selfish, arrogant, hypocritical and ugly, and arbitrarily interferes in other countries".

