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The Diplomatic Way

Throughout 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, cloud diplomacy, the use of technology by countries to facilitate communication on international affairs, has become the main mode of carrying out diplomatic functions effectively. In the past year, President Xi Jinping conducted 79 telephone calls with leaders of foreign countries and international organizations, and attended 40 major diplomatic events via video link, building consensus and promoting cooperation.

A return to the Cold War mentality, as seen from several countries over politicized notions such as “democracy” and “human rights,” divided the international community along ideological lines, resulting in challenge and confrontation. Yet China still holds high the banner of multilateralism in a global system with the UN at the core and its order underpinned by international law, and continues to champion diverse views. The country has also taken an active part in shaping the global governance system on climate, the environment, healthcare and digital development, offering up-to-date suggestions and solutions.

While some are seeking to sow division, China has been advocating humanity’s common values—peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom. It has underlined the

importance of furthering inclusiveness and respecting the explorations of populations worldwide to turn these values into reality.

China has continued international cooperation against the pandemic, always advocated the No.1 feature of vaccines to be global public goods, and supported waiving intellectual property rights on vaccine research and development. It launched the joint production of Chinese COVID-19 vaccines with other developing countries, providing more than 2 billion doses to over 120 countries and international organizations, accounting for one third of global vaccine use outside its territory. The country was among the first to conduct global origin-tracing cooperation with the World Health Organization and to reject politicization and stigmatization.

In 2022, China must proactively tackle the many challenges of the post-COVID-19 era, and deepen its global partnerships. This year marks the 50th anniversary of former U.S. President Richard Nixon’s visit to China, an ice-breaking event that ended decades of hostilities. Lessons from history remain relevant as people in the diplomatic community and beyond ponder how to get relations between the world’s two largest economies back on track. **BR**



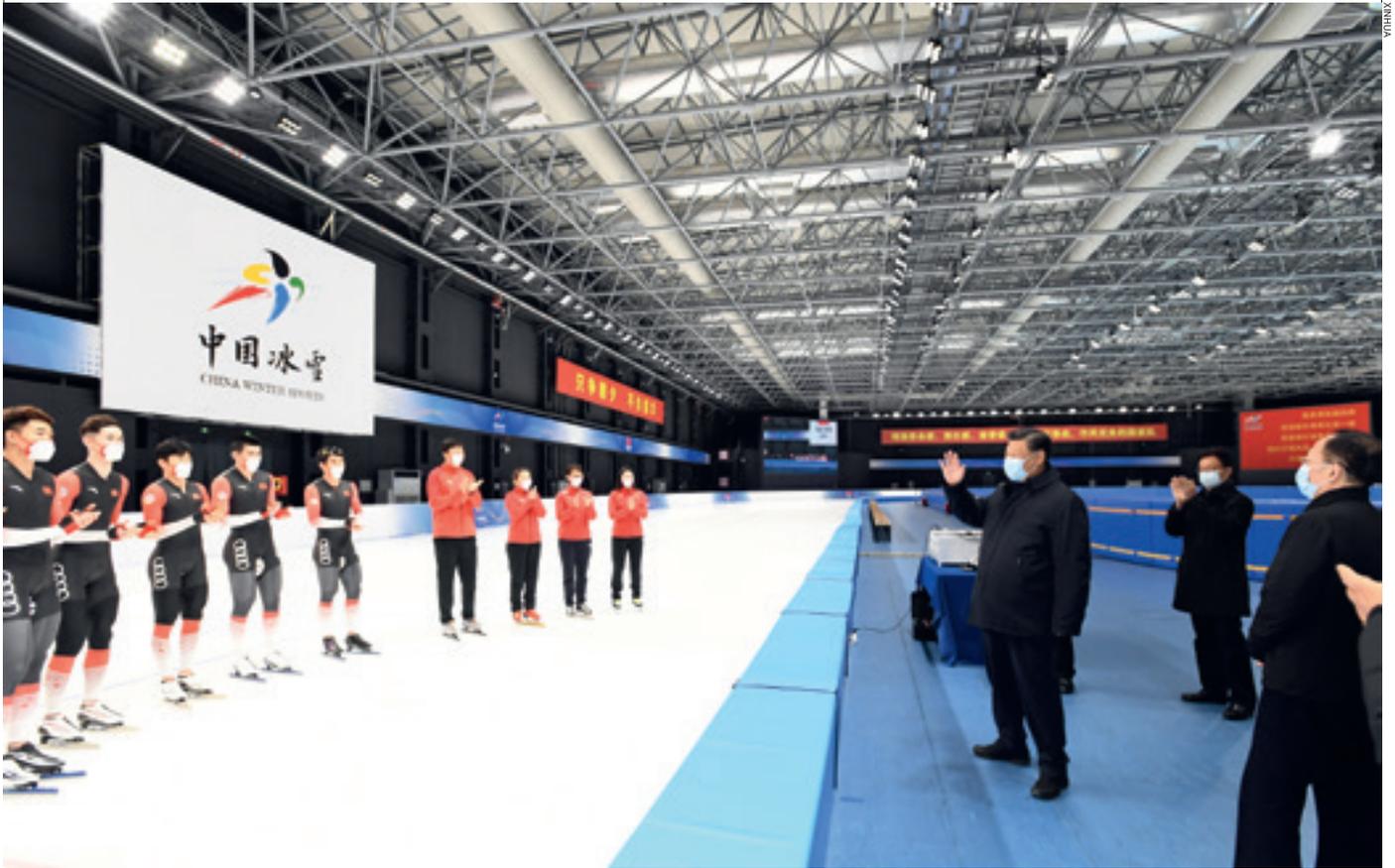
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All Set

Chinese President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, talks with athletes and coaches at a winter sports training base in Beijing, on January 4. On that day, he conducted a tour of inspection regarding preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. In addition to the winter sports training base, he also visited the National Speed Skating Oval, Main Media Center, Athletes' Village, and the Games-time Operations Command Center.

The Beijing 2022 Games will unfold from February 4 to 20, followed by the Paralympic Winter Games from March 4 to 13.



Mars Image

Photo released on January 1 by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) shows the surface landscape of Mars taken by the *Zhurong* rover. On that same day, China released a group of new images of the red planet, taken by the *Tianwen-1* probe. The probe, consisting of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, was launched on July 23, 2020.

New Yangtze Bridge

The construction of a new road-rail bridge over the Yangtze River, China's longest river, began in Anhui Province on January 4.

The 11.88-km bridge in the city of Tongling will have a six-lane expressway with a designed maximum speed of 100 km per hour on its upper deck, and four railway tracks on its lower deck.

Two of the tracks will be reserved for passenger trains with a designed maximum speed of 250 km per hour, and the other two will accommodate freight trains.

"The bridge, with a major span of 988 meters, is designed with a cable-stayed and suspension structure, with functional requirements and economic factors taken into account," said Qiu Feng from the China Railway Major Bridge Reconnaissance & Design Institute Co. Ltd., which is in charge of the design of the bridge.

Compared with single-structure bridges, cable-stayed

and suspension bridges have longer spans and are safer, allowing the smoother passage of high-speed trains.

Construction is expected to be completed in 2025.

Security Review

A newly revised Chinese regulation requires online platforms with more than 1 million users to undergo a cybersecurity review when they seek initial public offerings (IPOs) in overseas markets, Xinhua News Agency reported on January 4.

Operators of critical information infrastructure that purchase network products and services, as well as network platform operators that conduct data-processing activities, will undergo a security review if their activities affect or may affect national security, the regulation says.

Regulators will assess whether the public listing of a company may lead to key

information infrastructure, core data, important data or a large amount of personal information being affected, controlled or maliciously used by foreign governments, according to the new rule.

According to a statement issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), if the IPO does not affect national security, it may proceed; if the IPO is found to affect national security, it will not be allowed.

The statement also noted that the move is intended to further ensure cyberspace and data security, and safeguard national security.

Reaffirming that opening up is China's basic state policy, the statement said that the country has always supported domestic enterprises in making reasonable use of overseas capital markets in accordance with laws and regulations.

The revision of the cyber-

security review regulation was made by 13 central agencies, including the CAC, following the promulgation of the data security law.

A set of key elements in assessing national security risks were also specified in the revised regulation.

The revised regulation will enter into force on February 15, replacing the current 2020 version.

Air Quality Record

Beijing made a breakthrough in its air pollution control and the city reached the national air quality standard, local authorities said on January 4.

The city's average concentration of PM2.5 was 33 micrograms per cubic meter in 2021, the lowest level since records began in 2013, Yu Jianhua, Deputy Director of the Beijing municipal ecology and environment bureau, told a press briefing.

The PM2.5 reading is a gauge

monitoring airborne particles of 2.5 microns or less in diameter, which can penetrate deep into people's lungs.

The metropolis also saw its average ozone concentration decreasing to 149 micrograms per cubic meter in 2021, marking the first time the readings for PM2.5 and ozone of the city reached the level-II national standard simultaneously.

The average concentrations of PM10, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide in Beijing were respectively 55, 26, and 3 micrograms per cubic meter last year, said Yu.

The city saw 288 days of good air quality last year, up by 112 days from 2013, and only eight days of heavy air pollution.

Soybean Plantation

Heilongjiang Province will increase its soybean planting area by about 666,667 hectares in 2022, local authorities said.

The soybean yield is expected to increase by 1.3 billion kg, according to the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The decision aims to optimize the planting structure in the province, and enhance the supply of important agricultural products, the department said.

Heilongjiang is China's major soybean production base, ranking first in the country in terms of both planted area and output.

Nuclear Unit

China's second nuclear power unit using Hualong One, a domestically designed third-generation nuclear reactor, has begun generating electricity, paving the way for commercial operation.

The No. 6 unit in the city of Fuqing, Fujian Province, began operation and was connected to the power grid at 10:35 p.m. on January 1, according to the China National Nuclear Corp. (CNNC).

On-site staff confirmed that the unit was in good condition, and all the technical indicators met the design requirements.

According to CNNC, every nuclear power unit using Hualong One has an installed capacity of 1.16 million kW. It is expected to generate nearly 10 billion kWh of electricity annually, equivalent to reduction of 3.12 million tons of standard coal consumption and 8.16 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Both the first Hualong One unit globally and the first unit overseas were put into commercial use in 2021, in Fuqing and Pakistan, respectively.



Frozen River

The frozen surface of the Yellow River in Shizuishan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on December 30, 2021. The section of the river began to freeze over on December 29, 2021, as temperatures dropped.

Gas Transmission

China's West-East Gas Pipeline Project has boosted natural gas supply across the country and facilitated the low-carbon transformation of the country's energy consumption structure, reported Xinhua News Agency on January 2.

The project has sent more than 700 billion cubic meters of natural gas to east China since it was officially put into operation in 2004, according to its operator, PipeChina.

In previous years, the project has reduced the use of approximately 932 million

tons of standard coal and cut carbon dioxide emissions and dust by 1.02 billion tons and 508 million tons, respectively, equivalent to adding 3.18 billion hectares of broad-leaved forests.

It has helped increase the share of natural gas in China's primary energy consumption to 8.4 percent in 2021 from around 2.4 percent in 2003, benefiting nearly 500 million residents nationwide.

In 2021, the annual volume of natural gas transported by the pipeline for the first time exceeded 100 billion cubic meters, according to PipeChina.



Underwater Highway Tunnel

A vehicle inside the Taihu Tunnel in Jiangsu Province, on December 30, 2021. The Taihu Tunnel, China's longest underwater highway tunnel, opened to traffic that day. The 10.79-km-long, 7.25-meter-tall tunnel runs under Taihu Lake, China's third-largest freshwater lake. It is part of the 43.9-km Changzhou-Wuxi Highway, which also opened to traffic that day.

Largest Port

The container throughput of Shanghai Port exceeded 47 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2021, ranking first globally for 12 consecutive years despite the COVID-19 impact on the shipping industry, port data showed.

Last year, the port handled 32 million TEUs of containers in foreign trade and 6.3 million TEUs in domestic trade. The throughput of international transit containers at the port exceeded 6 million TEUs for the first time, or a year-on-year increase of 13.4 percent, according to the Shanghai International Port Group Co. Ltd.

Technological support such as automatic terminals and intelligent heavy trucks has played an important role in achieving the growth amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the company said.

The port is speeding up its digital upgrading and the

transformation of its production modes to improve operation potential and ensure the stability of the industrial and supply chains.

Railroad Input

Fixed assets investment in railways amounted to 748.9 billion yuan (\$117.4 billion) in 2021, China State Railway Group Co. Ltd. said.

A total of 4,208 km of new rail lines were put into operation in the year, including 2,168 km of high-speed tracks.

By the end of 2021, the operating length of the high-speed railway network exceeded 40,000 km.

Upward Trend

The electronic information manufacturing industry maintained stable growth in the first 11 months of 2021, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) showed.

The added value of manufacturers with annual operating revenues of at least 20 million yuan (\$3.1 million) expanded 16.2 percent year on year during the period. The growth rate went up 9 percentage points from the same period a year ago, the MIIT said.

The export delivery value of major enterprises increased 12.6 percent year on year, while fixed assets investment in the sector jumped 21.4 percent.

According to the MIIT data, the electronic information manufacturing sector raked in 679.7 billion yuan (\$106.6 billion) in total profits, surging 29.8 percent year on year. Its operating revenue totaled 12.49 trillion yuan (\$1.96 trillion), up 14.7 percent year on year.

Futures Market

The futures market posted strong growth in both trading volume and turnover in 2021, according

to data from the China Futures Association.

Total turnover surged 32.84 percent year on year to 581.2 trillion yuan (\$91.24 trillion) in 2021, the data showed.

The trading volume also registered double-digit growth, up 22.13 percent year on year to over 7.5 billion lots.

In December 2021 alone, the trading turnover hit around 44.74 trillion yuan (\$7.02 trillion), down 18.76 percent from a year earlier. On a monthly basis, the figure fell 11.91 percent, the association said.

External Debt

China's outstanding foreign debt stood at approximately \$2.7 trillion at the end of September 2021, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) showed.

It was \$16.7 billion, or 0.6 percent, higher than that seen at the end of June, according to the

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.37 yuan)

Foreign-Funded Enterprises in China in January-November 2021

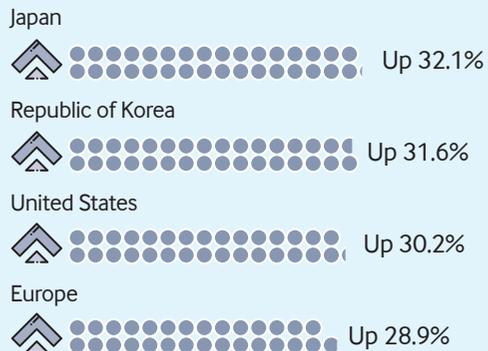
(All growth rates are y.o.y.)

Number of foreign-funded companies newly established in China



Up 29.3%

Number of companies funded by investors from



administration.

The volume of China's foreign debt maintained general stability and the structure improved in the third quarter of 2021, Wang Chunying, a spokesperson for SAFE, said.

The proportion of medium- and long-term debt was 47 percent, up 3 percentage points from the end of June, she said, stressing that the increase further enhanced structural stability.

Foreign investors increasing their holdings of yuan-denominated bonds reflects the achievements of China's bond market opening up and investor confidence in China's economic outlook, Wang concluded.

Duty-Free Sales

Offshore duty-free sales in the island province of Hainan reached 60.2 billion yuan (\$9.4 billion) in 2021, an increase of 84 percent year on year, the

provincial department of commerce said.

The number of shoppers totaled nearly 9.7 million, with about 53.5 million items purchased, up 73 percent and 71 percent year on year, respectively.

Three more duty-free shops opened last year in Hainan, raising the total number to 10. The shops hosted more than 720 brands in a total shopping area of 220,000 square meters.

Since July 1, 2020, Hainan has raised its annual tax-free shopping quota from 30,000 yuan (\$4,707) to 100,000 yuan (\$15,690) per person. The duty-free purchase limit for cosmetics has been raised from 12 items to 30.

The province has also rolled out a range of policies such as flexible pick-up services to provide a better experience for customers.

China released a master

plan in June 2020 to transform Hainan into a globally influential and high-level free trade port by the middle of the century. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the province has grown into an attractive shopping destination for domestic consumers.

Tibet's GDP

Tibet Autonomous Region's GDP surpassed 200 billion yuan (\$31.4 billion) in 2021, according to data from the regional government on January 4. It represented a year-on-year growth of roughly 7 percent.

Per-capita disposable income of rural residents went up 14 percent, while that of urban residents rose 13 percent.

The region added 52,000 urban jobs in the past year, with the surveyed urban unemployment rate staying below 5 percent.

The regional government set Tibet's GDP growth target for

this year at about 8 percent. The per-capita disposable income of urban and rural residents is expected to improve over 8 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Car Rental Market

China's car rental market is about to enter a phase of rapid expansion, with its value estimated to top 150 billion yuan (\$23.5 billion) by 2025, according to a report jointly issued by Boston Consulting Group and the research institute of eHi Car Services on January 4.

The car rental industry has achieved 30-fold growth over the past two decades, reaching nearly 90 billion yuan (\$14 billion) by 2020, the report said.

It forecast that the market will see hastened development amid China's regular epidemic prevention and control measures, adding that the future will be driven by the evolution of new technologies.

Number of new foreign-funded enterprises

In the manufacturing sector



In the service sector



In the hi-tech sector



Accounting for



of the total



(Source: Ministry of Commerce)



UNITED STATES

Visitors tour the 2022 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) venue in Las Vegas on January 4. The CES, also known as the world's premier tech show, ran from January 5 to 7, pulling in more than 2,200 exhibitors



SAUDI ARABIA

Camels are seen during the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in the ad-Dahna Desert outside the capital of Riyadh on January 5. The annual cultural, economic, sports and entertainment event kicked off on December 1, 2021



RUSSIA

Soldiers board a military transport aircraft at the Chkalovsky airfield on the outskirts of Moscow on January 6. They were dispatched to Kazakhstan as part of a peacekeeping mission organized by the Collective Security Treaty Organization





AUSTRIA

The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of conductor Daniel Barenboim performs during the annual New Year's Concert in Vienna on January 1



GERMANY

A light installation is projected onto the building of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt on January 2, marking the 20th anniversary of the euro, Europe's joint single currency



NEW ZEALAND

People enjoy some Auckland beach time on January 4. Many places in New Zealand hit record-high temperatures in the first days of the New Year



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Zhang Yimou, 72, won Best Director at the 34th Golden Rooster Awards for his thriller *Cliff Walkers*. This is his 10th Golden Rooster trophy since 1985, when he won Best Cinematography for *Yellow Earth*.

The movie marked Zhang's first foray into the spy genre. Set in 1930s northeast China, in the lead-up to World War II, the film follows special agents from the Communist Party of China as they try to complete a secret mission.

"A director is just a craftsman. Thank you to the great actors and scriptwriters who help us accomplish the directorial task," Zhang said.

Zhang, one of China's most renowned directors, also unveiled the first-ever winner of the Golden Rooster inaugural international film award: French director Florian Zeller's *The Father*.

Dating back to 1981, the prestigious awards are given out annually. This year's ceremony took place in Xiamen, Fujian Province.



Tutoring in Disguise?

Qianjiang Evening News

January 4, 2022

As winter vacation is around the corner, many worry that despite the new policy easing the burdens of excessive homework and additional training for students in compulsory education issued in 2021, tutoring will still emerge in new forms that might dodge the current restrictions.

But why does the demand for additional coaching linger? The root cause is that senior middle schools and universities both recruit students based on their academic performance. As long as overall scores remain the fundamental

requirements for entering the "good" schools, off-campus tutoring, in one form or another, will keep popping up.

The only way out of this conundrum is for schools to continuously improve their educational quality and after-class services. Teachers must devote themselves to their students by carefully reviewing their homework and helping them understand any content they may be struggling with. When supply meets demand, the need for after-school tutoring will naturally evaporate.

Meanwhile, education watchdogs should also remain alert for any cloaked tutoring undertakings to make sure students get some real rest and relaxation over the winter vacation period.

Courier Insurance

Workers' Daily

January 4, 2022

Several provinces in south China have recently adopted new policies demanding their express delivery companies offer their couriers work-related injury insurance.

"The United States should abandon its hypocritical double standards and stop interfering in China's domestic affairs in the name of freedom."

Zhao Lijian, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, on December 30, 2021, in response to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's slanders of Hong Kong's press freedom

"In the past 30 years, Kyrgyzstan and China have successfully established their comprehensive strategic partnership; their cooperation in various fields has yielded remarkable achievements that have attracted worldwide attention."

Kyrgyz President **Sadyr Zhaparov** in a congratulatory message celebrating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties on January 5

Express delivery companies in China usually require their couriers to buy personal accident insurance, providing essential coverage against accidental injuries. The insured amount is generally very limited and, in most cases, couriers themselves have to cover the fees. The new regulations in these provinces, however, require companies to pay for work-related injury insurance. Some express delivery businesses are reluctant to recognize the labor relations between company and courier as to reduce their operational costs.

Others argue that some couriers may be doing more than one job and thus already have acquired said insurance for or from their other professional placements. However, in reality, an insurance policy only covers one particular job and does not extend to undertakings in third places. Consequently, local governments have decided this type of company reasoning no longer holds up.

Clearer and sounder protection can better ensure legitimate courier interests in the event of any professional mishaps. Better-regulated security practices will also ensure the healthier and more sustainable development of the express delivery industry by large.

Favorable Incentives

Economic Daily
January 4, 2022

According to the latest national finance work conference, China will further its tax and fee cuts in 2022. This arrangement is expected to help market entities out of financial disarray and resume production more efficiently. Although the Chinese economy is getting back on its feet following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it still struggles with the pressures of shrinking demand, supply shock and waning expectations. Small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as private businesses, in particular, have been dealt a blow. For them,

sharper tax and fee cuts are tantamount to charcoal during a snowy winter.

In the short run, these new slashes will diminish the government's fiscal revenue, and even expand the gap between fiscal revenue and expenditure, but they will help tangibly improve the business environment, invigorate commercial entities, and promote corporate performance, which will in turn uplift government tax revenue.

Many hope the combination of favorable taxation, financial and employment policies will lead the vast majority of Chinese businesses out of the current dire straits and onto a path of stable and rapid growth.

SKIER CLAIMS WORLD CUP VICTORIES

Gu Ailing, 18, claimed two victories within three days at the World Cup competition, launching her self-styled "Beijing girl" breathtaking freestyle skills into China's digital stratosphere.

On January 1, Gu claimed the gold in the second half-pipe competition at the 50th FIS Freestyle Ski World Cup in Calgary, Canada, with 92.8 points, beating out local athlete Rachael Karker and American skier Hanna Faulhaber.

This was Gu's second win in Calgary, following her victory in the first half-pipe competition on December 30, 2021.

Gu, known as Eileen in the U.S., was born in San Francisco to a Chinese mother and American father. She has been competing for China since 2019. With the Beijing 2022 Games just around the corner, Gu is maintaining top momentum, ready to pursue her Olympic dream.



"As the most important platform for building international consensus, addressing global challenges and practicing true multilateralism, the role of the UN has become even more irreplaceable than ever before."

Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, on January 4, extending his congratulatory remarks to UN Secretary General António Guterres for starting his second term on January 1

"China is our key market and the hub of our supply chain. It's also an integral part of the global aviation industrial ecosystem, a country with talented people, innovation vitality and good potential."

Michel Tran Van, Chief Operating Officer of Airbus China, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency



COVER STORY

DIPLOMACY IN 2021 AND BEYOND

By Zhong Cheng