

OPINION: RECOGNIZING BRI'S SUCCESS P.22 | FEATURES: MAY DAY SUPERCHARGES ECONOMY P.30

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AI: Problems and Promises

Will artificial intelligence (AI) replace my job? This is a question that lingers in the minds of many these days.

Similar concerns surfaced a couple of years ago when said technology narrowly defeated a champion of the game Go. At present, the application of AI robotics in a range of professional fields, as well as ChatGPT's abilities to write essays, solve complex problems, compose song lyrics, do school homework, and more, have heightened moral concerns.

The question today is: How should we, as humans, respond to the impact of AI? Should we embrace it or avoid it?

Optimists see AI as the ultimate cure for society's most fundamental problems, while pessimists fear that AI will overtake human intelligence. Underlying these two views is the assumption that AI is better and smarter than humanity and may ultimately replace human decision-making. But given the fact that technology is the product of human civilization, the challenge from AI is something we have created for ourselves as we keep pushing our own boundaries. In other words, AI's progress, functions and future direction are all determined by the human brain.

Before AI becomes a threat to humanity, the international community should reach a consensus on the role it is to play.

More importantly, related laws and regulations must ensure that AI will benefit society and prevent the possibility of the technology threatening human life or ethics. Robots, for example, are believed to acquire emotional intelligence sometime, referring to the ability of robots to recognize, understand and express emotions in a way that is similar to humans, but we must avoid AI copying human emotions. Without legal restrictions, AI becomes a social disaster waiting to happen.

The AI-driven new industrial revolution is irreversible. This, like previous ones, all of which introduced changes that had been unimaginable before, will certainly affect human employment. But it always turned out humanity was able to adapt to each industrial revolution and create new forms of employment. It's unnecessary to worry AI will replace our jobs.

While technology advances at a rapid pace, what we need to do is to embrace the AI era rather than block its unfolding for fear of the unknown. **BR**



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A CIRCLE OF CELEBRATION

People dressed in traditional clothing dance in celebration of the Miao Sisters Festival in Taijiang County, Guizhou Province in southwest China on May 2.

The festival, which falls on the 15th-17th day of the third month on the traditional Chinese calendar, is a celebration of love and considered the oldest version of Valentine's Day in Asia.

Main festival happenings include singing, dancing to the sounds of the *lusheng* (a reed instrument) and wooden drums, and exchanging gifts.



Fall In!

Locals enjoy an open day event at the barracks of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Garrison stationed on Taipa Island in Macao Special Administrative Region, on April 30. This was the 17th time the barracks had opened to the public since 2005, facilitating communication between the garrison and local residents.

Wildlife Protection

China's revised Law on the Protection of Wildlife, adopted by the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, in December last year, went into effect on May 1, as part of the country's efforts to better protect wildlife and their habitats.

The revised law has refined measures for the regulation of wildlife populations.

In view of the situation in which wild animals overflow and threaten people's property and safety, as well as the productivity of agriculture and animal husbandry, the law stipulates that isolation and protection facilities, together with safety warning signs, should be built based on the actual situation.

It also broadens the scope of national subsidies for losses caused by wild animals, expanding it from wildlife under state protection to terrestrial wildlife that

cause serious damage.

The existing law on wildlife protection was formulated in 1988, and the revision is the first overhaul since a 2016 modification.

Undersea Tunnel

An undersea road tunnel opened to traffic on May 1 in Dalian, a coastal city in Liaoning Province in northeast China.

The tunnel, accommodating a two-way six-lane urban expressway underneath Dalian Bay, is the first immersed tunnel in north China, Sun Zhu, deputy chief engineer of Dalian Bay Undersea Tunnel Co. Ltd., which is in charge of building and operating the tunnel, said.

The design traffic speed in the 5.1-km tunnel is 60 km per hour, Sun said. Construction of the tunnel took about four years.

The road connecting the tunnel became operational on May 1, linking the northern and

southern coasts of Dalian Bay, helping alleviate traffic congestion and expand space for urban development in Dalian.

Oil and Gas Well

China's largest petrochemical products supplier inaugurated the drilling of the deepest oil and gas well in Asia on May 1, in the country's northwestern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The well to drill, located at the edge of the Taklimakan Desert, is expected to register a depth of 9,472 meters, according to China Petrochemical Corp. (Sinopec).

The landmark well is another example of China's leading position in ultra-deep well drilling technology, according to Sinopec.

Dam Tourism

The Three Gorges Dam resort at the world's largest hydropower

project has received over 10 million tourists in the past five years, according to the China Three Gorges Corp., Xinhua News Agency reported on April 30.

In the first quarter of this year, the Three Gorges Dam resort received about 450,000 people, an increase of 7.27 percent over the same period of 2019 and a record high.

The Three Gorges Dam is a major tourist site along the Yangtze River, the longest river in both China and Asia and third longest river in the world. Generating electricity since 2003, the dam first opened to the public in 2005.

Tibet-related Exhibit

A joint exhibition of Tibet-themed artifacts opened at the Palace Museum in Beijing on April 29, demonstrating the diversity and artistic charm of cultural relics related to Tibet Autonomous Region.

The exhibition displays more than 100 pieces or sets of artifacts, including a hand scroll depicting Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) receiving a Tibetan envoy.

A large number of collections are on display for the first time, such as a Manchu Buddhist canon from the Palace Museum and a portrait of Emperor Yongle (1360-1424) from the Potala Palace, Lhasa.

The exhibition, co-organized by the Palace Museum and cultural heritage authority of Tibet, will run until July 30.

Spreading Space Science

A science popularization exhibition on China's crewed space program and applications has opened to the public at the China Science and Technology Museum in Beijing, Xinhua reported on April 29.

It is the country's first science popularization exhibition centered on space science and its applications. The exhibition area is about 2,000 square meters, including five sections with more than 30 items on show.

On display for the first time are the original scientific experiment cabinet and *Arabidopsis thaliana* plants cultivated inside the *Wentian* lab module of China's *Tiangong* space station last year.

Through immersive and digital technologies, the exhibition offers visitors interactive experiences.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Technology and Engineering Center for Space Utilization under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the China Science and Technology Museum. It is open to the public free of charge from April 29 to June 15.

Sci-tech Facilities

Three major scientific and technological facilities in the fields of information, life sciences and new materials were put into use on April 27 in Guangming Science City in south China's hi-tech hub of Shenzhen.

The projects are two major scientific and technological pieces of infrastructure for synthetic biology research, brain

analysis and brain simulation, as well as a large scientific device platform for material genomics, according to the Guangming Science City Forum 2023, which took place in Shenzhen that same day.

"Large scientific facilities play the role of the 'cradle' in basic research, which is of great significance to breaking through the frontiers of science and promoting economic and social development. The next step involves strengthening the coordination of large scientific facilities, giving full play to their cluster effect and building a multidisciplinary research platform," Han Jiecai, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said.

Sandstorm Control

All sectors of society in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, including enterprises, will join forces to donate 100 million yuan (\$14.48 million) over the next three years to improving the local biodiversity of the Hunshandake Sandland, Xinhua reported on May 4.

Merely 180 km away from Beijing and among China's four major sandy areas, the Hunshandake Sandland has a fragile ecological environment due to natural causes and human



The Eye of the Dragon

Staff are sorting and packing freshly harvested longan fruits, also known as dragon's eyes, at the Xianglin vegetable and fruit base in Dongfang City, Hainan Province in south China, on April 30. In addition to supplying the domestic market, these fruits are also exported to Europe and the United States.

activities. Its grassland vegetation coverage has gradually decreased over the past decades, leading to frequent bouts of dusty and sandstorm weather. In 2018, China initiated a pilot afforestation project in the sandland.

The funds will be used for ecological restoration and protection of local forests and grasslands and improvement of desertified land. The practice is estimated to help inject more vitality into the development of

the local forest and grassland industry and increase the income of local farmers and herdsmen, the department said.

After years of ecological preservation and restoration efforts, the region has built a green belt which stretches 420 km, with a width ranging from one to 10 km, along the southern edge of the Hunshandake Sandland. The belt has effectively curbed the spread of the sandy land, the department added.



Never a Bridge Too Far

Defying dizzying heights, staff members work at the construction site of the Longmen Bridge in Qinzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in south China, on May 1. The cross-sea bridge, connecting coastal cities along the Beibu Gulf of Guangxi, will stretch roughly 7.6 km, with the main bridge measuring 1,198 meters in length. The construction of the bridge's upper structure is now in full swing.

Private Businesses

Some 2.039 million new private enterprises were set up across China in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023, up 10.7 percent year on year, official data showed.

By late March, the number of registered private enterprises had exceeded 49 million, accounting for 92.3 percent of the country's total tally, according to the State Administration for Market Regulation.

Regional development became more balanced during the period. From January to March, 519,000 new private enterprises were established in the country's central region, up 20.8 percent year on year. Some 441,000 new private firms were set up in the western region, up 30.2 percent year on year.

The hospitality plus food and beverages industry as well as the rental, leasing and business services industry, once hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, picked up in Q1. The number of newly established private enterprises in

these sectors grew 35.7 percent and 15.5 percent year on year, respectively, data also showed.

Pollution Reduction

Major steel companies produced less pollution in Q1, according to data from the China Iron and Steel Association.

The total amount of wastewater discharged by major steel companies fell 16.39 percent year on year and sulfur dioxide emissions dropped 15.75 percent during the period, the association said.

Energy efficiency in these steel companies also improved. Electricity and water consumption per ton of steel fell 3.05 and 6 percent year on year, respectively.

Farm Produce Trade

China's foreign trade of farm produce stood at \$83.38 billion in Q1, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Imports jumped 13.2 percent year on year to \$59.88 billion

during the period, while exports hit \$23.5 billion, up 7.4 percent from the same period in 2022.

The country's trade deficit for farm produce climbed 17.2 percent year on year to \$36.38 billion in the same period, the data also revealed.

Cross-border Trade

Chinese authorities have initiated a special campaign for 2023 to optimize the business environment at key ports and further advance the facilitation of cross-border trade.

The campaign, initiated by six government agencies including the General Administration of Customs of China, will run for five months in 17 cities of 12 provincial-level regions, including Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing.

Measures will be taken to ramp up construction of smart ports and the digital transformation of ports and to support the upgrading of the foreign-trade industry, as well as the healthy and sustainable development of emerging business forms.

Efforts will also be made to improve the safe and smooth operation of logistics and supply chains for cross-border customs clearance. Import and export compliance costs will be standardized and reduced.

In 2022, China launched a special campaign to facilitate cross-border trade in 10 cities. All 10 reform and innovation measures introduced in the campaign have been well implemented; the 501 policies issued by local customs authorities also achieved remarkable results.

Micro-Lending

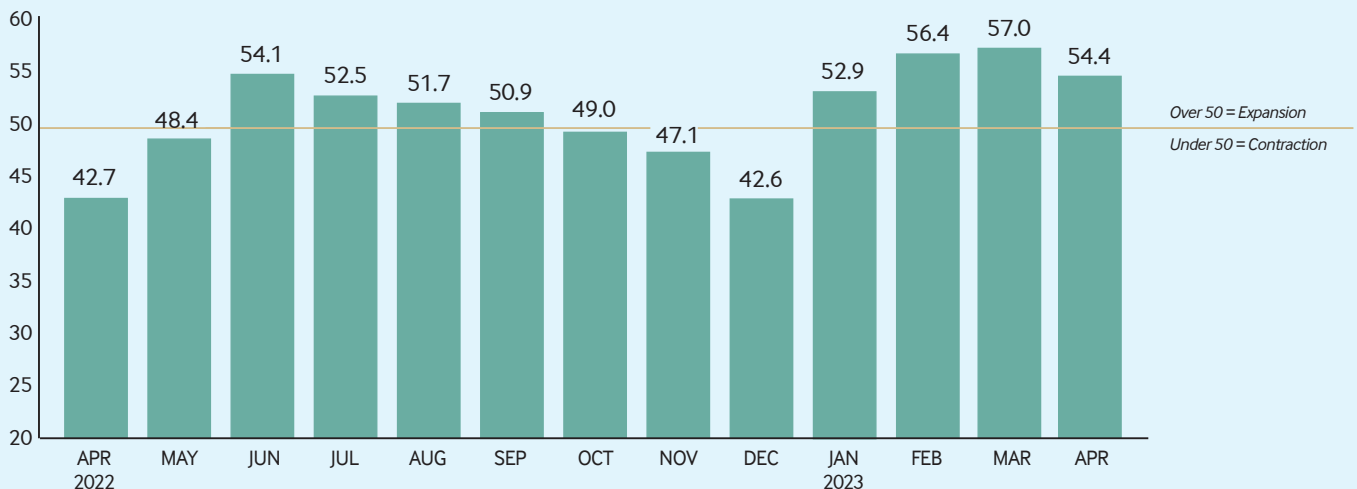
Outstanding loans extended by China's micro-credit companies stood at 872.2 billion yuan (\$126.2 billion) by late March, official data showed.

The volume shrank by 38.5 billion yuan (\$5.57 billion) in Q1, according to data from the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

By late March, the number of micro-credit companies in

NUMBERS

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



China came in at 5,801, the data showed. These companies are defined as non-financial commercial enterprises whose purpose includes the granting of micro-credit on a non-exclusive basis such as nongovernmental organizations, associations and foundations.

Micro-lenders largely target small companies and low-income groups in need of capital. In recent years, China has tightened regulations for the sector to rein in related financial risks.

Gold Output

Production of China's gold enterprises has returned to normal in Q1 with output recovering to pre-pandemic levels, according to industry data.

As COVID-19 impacts waned, the output of domestic mines operated by big gold enterprises reached around 32.72 tons in the first three months, accounting for nearly half of the country's total, data from the China Gold Association showed.

Central banks globally maintained net purchases of gold in Q1. The People's Bank of China increased its gold holdings for five consecutive months from November 2022 to March this year, including a total increase of 57.85 tons in Q1.

China's gold reserves had reached 2,068.38 tons by late March, the association data showed.

Culture Sector Rebound

Combined revenue of major enterprises in the culture sector and related businesses hit 2.88 trillion yuan (\$416.7 billion) in Q1, up 4 percent year on year, at a pace of 3.1 percentage points faster than the entire year of 2022, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Total profits of these firms surged 38.1 percent from the same period in 2022, with that for digital content and Internet information services seeing rapid growth, the

data revealed.

During the same period, the cultural, entertainment and leisure services sector experienced the highest revenue growth among the nine categories in the culture industry, indicating a significant rebound in businesses that rely on social interaction and gathering.

Specifically, revenue expansion of tourist and entertainment services both topped 50 percent year on year; that related to sightseeing tours stood at 28.8 percent.

Canton Fair

The second five-day phase of the 133rd China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair), concluding on April 27 in the southern city of Guangzhou, saw much traffic and business.

By late April 26, visits to the venues stood at 815,000 in the second phase, while export deals worth over \$4.5 billion had been signed, Shu Jueting, a Ministry of Commerce spokesperson, told a

press conference.

The first phase, running from April 15-19, had focused on electronics, household appliances, lighting equipment, vehicle and accessories, machinery, hardware tools, chemical products, building materials and new-energy resources.

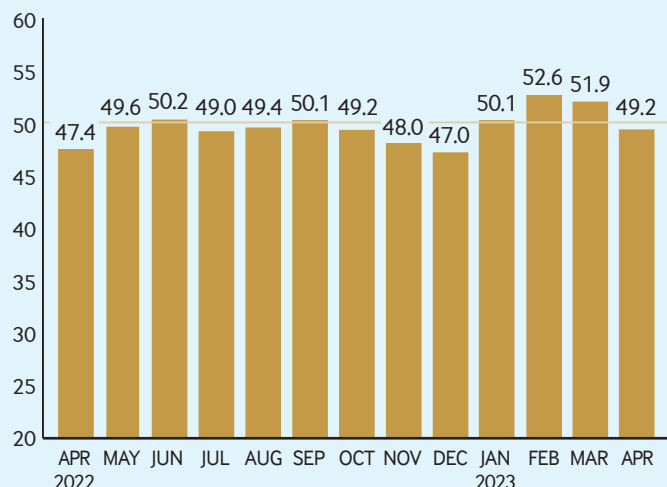
The second phase, housing more than 12,000 firms, exhibited nondurable consumer goods, gifts and home accessories. Low-carbon products stole the limelight, with some items selling for over \$1 million in a single deal.

This year's new section of maternal and infant products saw better-than-expected outcomes, with deals reaching \$110 million as of April 26, the data showed.

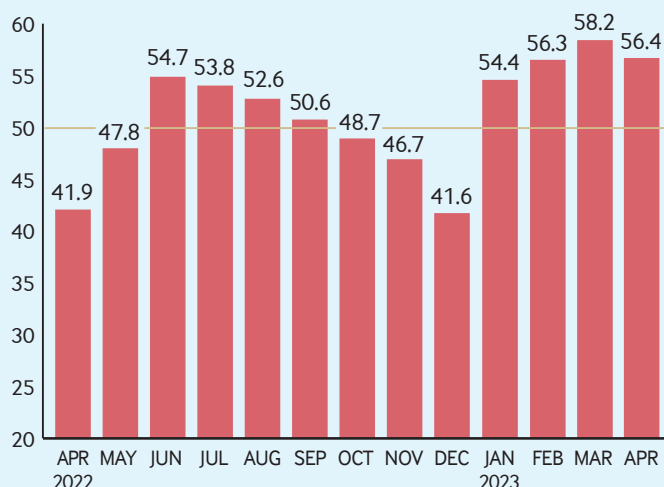
Over 390,000 buyers had attended the online fair by that same day, with 91 percent from overseas.

The third phase of the Canton Fair took place from May 1 to 5 and showcased apparel, footwear, stationery, foods and medical products.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



BELARUS

Emergency response personnel attend a flower-laying ceremony in Minsk on April 26 to commemorate the 37th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, the explosion of a reactor at the Soviet Union's Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986



BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the Web Summit Rio in the city on May 1. The four-day event gathered people and companies redefining the global tech industry



SINGAPORE

Military and defense delegates attend the International Maritime Defense Exhibition Asia 2023 on its opening day inside the Changi Exhibition Center on May 3





QATAR

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres speaks during a press conference following a two-day closed-door multilateral meeting on Afghanistan in Doha on May 2. He warned that Afghanistan faces “the largest humanitarian crisis” in today’s world, while calling for more funding for the UN humanitarian response plan



MEXICO

Dancers perform in celebration of International Dance Day in Mexico City on April 29



UNITED STATES

A client enters a First Republic Bank branch in Millbrae, California, on May 1. That same day, banking group JPMorgan Chase announced it had acquired the substantial majority of assets and assumed the deposits and certain other liabilities of First Republic Bank from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

ALIBABA FOUNDER TAKES UP TEACHING POSTS

Ma Yun, main founder of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. better known as Jack Ma, has joined Tokyo College at University of Tokyo as a visiting professor. He began the new position on May 1. The term will end on October 31.

Ma, 58, is expected to contribute to several areas including conducting research projects in sustainable agriculture and food production. He will also give seminars on entrepreneurship and innovation.

Ma spent his early professional years as an English teacher in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, before establishing Alibaba in 1999. Since handing over the reins to colleague Zhang Yong in 2019, Ma has focused on educational activities and philanthropy.

In April, Ma accepted an appointment as honorary professor at the University of Hong Kong to conduct research on finance and agriculture.



Casual Companion

Eastday.com
April 28

In the run-up to this year's May Day holiday, a five-day break from April 29 to May 3, Chinese social media platforms were inundated with posts looking for travel buddies. This quest was in fact not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a wider social trend called the *dazi* culture, or companion culture, which is about finding someone on the Internet to accompany an individual to a particular event.

This new type of companionship embodies a widely shared desire among

the country's Gen Z for adventures and connections. Typically, through a brief exchange of messages, two strangers agree to meet at a specific destination, travel together and share all costs.

The fact these travel buddies are complete strangers adds an element of surprise to the travel experience. For many young travelers, finding a *dazi* is like opening a mystery box. At the end of the journey, they may proceed to become friends or simply drift apart without seeing each other ever again.

Either way, what these young Chinese are primarily seeking is not a deep emotional bond, but a physical and supportive presence that drives away the feeling of loneliness.



Pedal Power

Lifeweek
May 1

Once the dominant form of transportation in China in the 1980s and early 1990s, cycling has made a major comeback in recent years as a hot recreational trend among the country's young urbanites.

Compared to their parents, for whom bicycles were the only available means of daily commute, young cyclists nowadays have different types of bikes to choose from, a wide range of cycling routes on which to practice and advance their skills, and

“The Chinese military is always the guardian of the people and a strong force to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and to serve the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.”

Tan Kefei, a spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, commenting on April 29 after the completion of evacuation operations that helped 1,171 people, including 940 Chinese citizens, leave Sudan following the outbreak of armed conflict there

“The [Chinese] market is not only resilient. It's actually a market that is very innovative. And the Chinese consumer has always been a very innovative and forefront consumer.”

Stefan Hartung, Chairperson of the Board of Management of German engineering giant Robert Bosch GmbH, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency during the Auto Shanghai 2023 expo in April

a dazzling array of bike accessories and gadgets to build their personal styles. To these young enthusiasts, cycling is no longer a necessity forced upon them, but an ultramodern lifestyle that integrates fitness, sustainability, social interaction and city tours.

The new cycling craze has transformed the physical appearance of the country's landscapes. Many of its major thoroughfares, including Chang'an Avenue in Beijing, an east-to-west street that runs through the centuries-old heart of the city, and Binjiang Avenue in Shanghai, a promenade that stretches along the Huangpu River, are now thronged with troupes of cyclists. Bicycle stores have been turned into city clubs, where cool urban bikers gather to shop bicycle gear, sip coffee and exchange the latest trends and news in the cycling world.

For this generation of young cyclists, the sport comes with a speed that is neither too fast nor too slow. At a medium speed, they can explore their surroundings, sometimes wander off the beaten tracks and enjoy a sense of control as well as a feeling of freedom.

'Stay-at-Home Children'

Yangcheng Evening News
April 28

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new generation of Chinese young adults labeled the "stay-at-home children," a term for unemployed young people who live with their parents and do housework, which provides them with a means to earn their parents' financial support. On Douban, an interest-based social networking platform, 3,291 "stay-at-home youngsters" have come together to form an online community, where they can share their experiences of managing household affairs.

This phenomenon has drawn mixed reactions, with some accusing these

youngsters of living idly, and others interpreting the practice as a freely chosen lifestyle and a dignified job that deserves the same respect as other occupations.

In fact, everyone's story is different when it comes to becoming a "stay-at-home child." Some young adults are preparing for postgraduate entrance or civil service exams, while others simply hope to take a year or two off work to pursue personal growth or have more quality family time.

Although China's rapid economic growth has afforded some youths the means to choose not to work, policymakers and researchers should delve deeper into the larger social forces at play to better understand today's young adults.

↓ WINNER OF CHINA'S FIRST MEN'S WORLD CHESS TITLE

Ding Liren has become the first Chinese male player to win the world chess championship, after defeating Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi at the 2023 International Chess Federation World Championship in Astana, Kazakhstan, on April 30.

The victory made Ding, 30, the 17th world chess champion in the tournament's 137-year history. His triumph also means China holds both the men's and women's world titles, with the current women's champion being Ju Wenjun.

Born in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, Ding started playing chess at the age of 4. Less than two years later, he won first place in the under-6 group of a national championship. In 2009, he became China's youngest national chess champion at 17.



"More than a quarter of a billion people are now facing acute levels of hunger and some are on the brink of starvation. That's unconscionable."

António Guterres, UN Secretary General, in the latest *Global Report on Food Crises* released on May 3

"Films can reflect and inspire various aspects of human life, making them a universal language that resonates with people across the world."

Sun Xianghui, Director of the China Film Archive, at a forum during the 13th Beijing International Film Festival in April



COVER STORY

THE RABBIT HOLE

Will the latest staggering AI advancement turn the world upside down?

By Lu Yan

A visitor takes a closer look at a robot at the Sixth World Intelligence Congress on June 24, 2022

“As an artificial intelligence (AI) language model, my purpose is to assist and augment human capabilities rather than replace them. While I am capable of processing and generating human-like language, my abilities are still limited and guided by the data that I was trained on,” ChatGPT answered when asked

whether it will surpass or replace humans. “It is unlikely that ChatGPT or any other AI language model will surpass or replace humans.”

However, concerns, or even fears, from many have been hard to quell. In March, nearly four months after ChatGPT, the AI-based chatbot developed by San Francisco-based startup OpenAI, stepped into the spotlight, the nonprofit Future of Life Institute released an open letter, calling for a six-month pause in the training of AI models more powerful than GPT-4, the latest language model released by OpenAI, in order to develop new safety protocols for AI design.

The mission of the U.S.-headquartered institute, as stated on its website, is to “steer transformative technologies away from extreme, large-scale risks and towards benefiting life.” The letter has so far collected more than 30,000 signatures, including from cofounders and CEOs like business magnates Elon Musk and Steve Wozniak, researchers at Meta, Google and universities, as well as