

OPINION: THE SINO-BARBADIAN BOND P.20 | FEATURES: DEBATING DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS P.26

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NEW HEIGHTS

Scaling up ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau



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Cover Photo: A train travels through Damxung County, Tibet Autonomous Region, in June 2020 (VCG)

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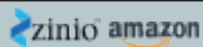
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Decoding contemporary China through ancient art



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Roof Repair

The law on ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, passed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, in April, will become effective on September 1.

Formulated to improve ecological conservation, control ecological risks and ensure ecological security on the plateau, the law is the latest addition to China's legislation for specific geographic regions, following the enactment of the Yangtze River Protection Law in 2020 and the Yellow River Protection Law and the Black Soil Protection Law in 2022.

The plateau covers the entire Tibet Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province, in addition to parts of Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu provinces and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, accounting for roughly a quarter of China's land territory. The highest one in the world, hence widely known as the Roof of the World, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is also nicknamed the Water Tower of Asia because its vast glaciers are the source of major Asian rivers. The quality and functions of the plateau's ecosystem directly affect China's biodiversity, water resources supply and overall climate system stability. But it's also one of the world's most climate-sensitive regions and its environment faces many challenges.

Grassland degradation remains a serious problem, the risk of glacier degradation resulting from climate change is increasing, soil erosion and land desertification threaten biodiversity, extreme weather events happen frequently, and climate and secondary disaster risks are increasing.

Addressing these challenges requires the strengthened protection of the plateau and the prevention of ecological security risks at the national legislative level. By adopting dedicated legislative measures to protect the ecosystem of this area, China aims to integrate programs targeting mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, deserts and glaciers. Problems relating to resource availability and the region's ability to support species, disaster risk prevention and methods of green development will be addressed to better balance ecological conservation and sustainable development and ensure humans and nature live in harmony.

The law on ecological conservation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is a top-level design, coming directly from Beijing, which demonstrates the importance the Central Government attaches to ecological conservation on the plateau. It will make the institutional design more coordinated, and give better play to the role of legislation in guiding, promoting and safeguarding conservation. **BR**



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DOCKING AND STOCKING

Screen image captured at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center on May 11 shows China's cargo spacecraft *Tianzhou-6* approaching the combination of the country's *Tiangong* space station before docking. The docking was accomplished later that day, the China Manned Space Agency said.

The cargo spacecraft has improved features compared with the previous Tianzhou craft. Increased effective loading volume makes it the world's largest of its kind in service.

In this mission, it carried more than 200 items, including daily supplies for taikonauts, or Chinese astronauts, as well as clothes, food and water.



All Going Swimmingly

Fishers harvest kelp in Rongcheng, Shandong Province, on May 8.

Expressway Construction

Guizhou Province will pour more investment into road construction during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period to bring its expressway mileage to 9,500 km.

The mileage of expressways in Guizhou has so far reached 8,368 km, according to a press conference held by the information office of the provincial people's government on May 9.

Mountainous and hilly areas account for 92.5 percent of the province's total land space.

Qiu Zhenguang, director of the provincial transportation department, said that 210,000 km of highways have been built across nearly 1.26 million hills in Guizhou. The province, which has almost half the 100 tallest bridges in the world, is now

home to 28,023 highway bridges stretching 4,400 km.

Qiu added that 17 million rural residents in nearly 200,000 villages have directly benefited from these highways and bridges.

Saving Trees

China's law enforcement officials have recovered and saved 530 time-honored and uncommon woody plants since a campaign targeting the trafficking of ancient and rare trees was launched in September last year, Xinhua News Agency reported on May 9.

Public security agencies have investigated and solved 135 criminal cases, leading to the arrest of more than 360 suspects for cases involving the illegal logging, destruction, purchase, transportation, processing and sale of ancient or rare trees, according to the Ministry of Public

Security.

The ministry co-launched the operation along with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Tough as Stele

A 502-year-old stele of an official has been discovered in Hebei Province, according to local authorities, Xinhua reported on May 8. In archaeology, a stele is a vertical piece of stone with writing cut into it, often used as a monument or a commemorative tablet.

Carved on a slab of blue-stone, the stele, dating to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), was found in Zhaopai Village of Xingtai City. It is 130 cm tall, 75 cm wide and 22 cm thick.

The stele was erected at the tomb of a local official

named Zhao Siming. It bore 854 Chinese characters on one side detailing Zhao's study and work experiences, as well as the filial piety—one of the most important traditional moral beliefs in China—shown by three generations of Zhao's family, from his parents to his son.

On the other side of the stele was the lineage atlas of the Zhao family, who had moved to Hebei from nearby Shanxi Province.

According to local culture and history expert Lan Jianhui, the stele was relatively well-preserved and its discovery would benefit the study of politics, culture, history and customs in the area during the mid-Ming Dynasty.

Language Model

China's leading artificial intelligence (AI) and intelligent speech company iFLYTEK unveiled its AI-powered large language model dubbed Spark Desk on May 6.

The multitask model covers key capabilities including AI-generated content, multi-language understanding, logical reasoning, mathematics and coding, Chairman of iFLYTEK Liu Qingfeng said.

The model has been applied in diverse fields, including education, office systems and the automobile industry.

According to Liu, the first batch of over 3,000 enterprises from 36 industries will deploy the Spark Desk model to jointly build the AI ecosystem.

"We hope to develop Spark Desk into an innovation accelerator, an inspiration trigger and everyone's AI assistant, bringing people a bigger sense of fulfillment in their work and life," Liu said.

Tourism Routes

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) has unveiled

10 travel routes ranging across different themes by marshaling world-class cultural and tourism resources along the Yangtze River international golden tourism belt, Xinhua reported on May 5.

The themes include cultural origins tracing, world-level heritage, Communist revolutionary heritage, nature and ecology, rural revitalization, intangible cultural heritage and urban recreational tours, according to the MCT.

These travel routes are designed to comprehensively exhibit the real, multidimensional and ever-developing image of the Yangtze River and elevate the global appeal and competence of the tourism belt.

The MCT has also launched a travel itinerary of the tourism belt, to further translate the themed routes into market products and meet the real demand of tourists.

Box Office

Buoyed by strong holiday ticket sales, China's 2023 box office hit the 20-billion-yuan (\$289 billion) milestone on May 7, earlier than last year, according to film data platforms Maoyan and Beacon.

China hit this milestone after recording the third highest-grossing May Day holiday, from April 29 to May 3 this year, when around 1.52 billion yuan (\$219.4 million) was

generated over the five days. The holiday success was largely driven by the comedy *Godspeed* and action film *Born to Fly*, a dramatic depiction of China's elite pilots testing new fighter jets.

Back in January, the Spring Festival holiday—usually one of the most lucrative moviegoing periods in China and running from January 21 to 27 this year—was the second highest-grossing to date. It raked in a whopping 6.77 billion yuan (\$977.2 million) as crowds flooded theaters following China's adjustment of its COVID-19 response late last year.

So far, this year's top five earners were all released during the Spring Festival holiday.

Hainan Durian

Hainan Province is anticipating its first durian harvest this summer after years of cultivation, *China Daily* reported on May 10.

A durian plantation in the Sanya Yuchai Ecological Zone has yielded its first fruit on a large scale, with the crop expected to be ready for market soon.

"Due to lower temperatures in Hainan this year, the maturity of the fruit originally expected to hit the market in May or June has been delayed to the end of June or early July," Du Baizhong,



A Tasty Test

Chefs whip up local specialties during a culinary competition in Xianju County of Taizhou in Zhejiang Province.

General Manager of Hainan Youqi Agricultural Company, said, adding the company's planting base in the zone is expected to produce a maximum of 50,000 kg of durian this year.

According to the Sanya Agriculture and Rural Affairs Bureau, the city began planting durian four years ago. The trees began bearing fruit on a large scale this year.

Sanya has planted more than 660 hectares of durian in various districts, and more of the fruit is expected to enter the market.

Hainan sought to grow du-

rian back in the 1950s. At first, the almost tropical province planted seeds directly in the ground, but with this method, the trees took more than 10 years to bear fruit. Now, by taking a branch from a tree that is already bearing fruit and grafting it onto one that is growing, farmers can yield fruit within three years.

The global market for durian is driven almost exclusively by supplies to China. The successful cultivation of the tropical fruit in Hainan means that durian lovers in China can enjoy a fresh local variety, according to the bureau.



Pedal Power

People visit the 31st China International Bicycle Fair in Shanghai on May 5. The fair, which ran from May 5 to 8, saw more than 1,200 enterprises participate.

THIS WEEK ECONOMY

NEV Sales

Nationwide retail sales of new-energy vehicles (NEVs) jumped 85.6 percent year on year in April, data from the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA) showed.

More than 500,000 NEVs were sold that month, down 3.6 percent from March, according to the CPCA.

Major domestic brands accounted for 70.5 percent of the country's total NEV sales, the data also revealed.

China exported 91,000 new-energy passenger vehicles in April, jumping 1,028.5 percent year on year and up 29.4 percent from March.

In the first four months of the year, retail sales of NEVs in China rose 36 percent year on year to top 1.84 million units, the CPCA said.

Foreign Trade

China's total imports and exports expanded 5.8 percent year on year to 13.32 trillion yuan (\$1.92 trillion) in the first four months of the year, the

General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) said. The growth rate accelerated by 1 percentage point from the pace recorded in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023.

Exports grew 10.6 percent year on year while imports rose 0.02 percent in the first four months, it added.

From January to April, the growth rate of China's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union stood at 13.9 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively. Trade with Belt and Road Initiative partners jumped 16 percent year on year to 4.61 trillion yuan (\$665.6 billion) during the period.

In particular, the country's trade with five Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—surged 37.4 percent, partly making up for the weak demand in traditional markets.

Private enterprises saw a fast growth rate as imports and exports increased 15.8 percent to 7.05 trillion yuan (\$1.02 trillion) in the first

four months, accounting for more than half of the country's total.

Exports of mechanical and electrical products expanded 10.5 percent to account for 57.9 percent of the total outbound shipments.

In April alone, foreign trade increased 8.9 percent year on year, according to the GACC.

Forex Reserves

China's foreign exchange (forex) reserves amounted to more than \$3.2 trillion at the end of April, up 0.66 percent from the amount recorded in late March, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange said.

The forex regulator attributed the rise to currency translation and asset price changes.

The U.S. dollar index, a measure of the value of the U.S. dollar relative to six major currencies, fell and the prices of global financial assets climbed in April, affected by global macroeconomic data and monetary policies of major

economies, the administration said.

China's forex reserves are expected to remain generally stable as the country has been promoting high-quality development and its economy has shown a positive development trend, according to the regulator.

Express Growth

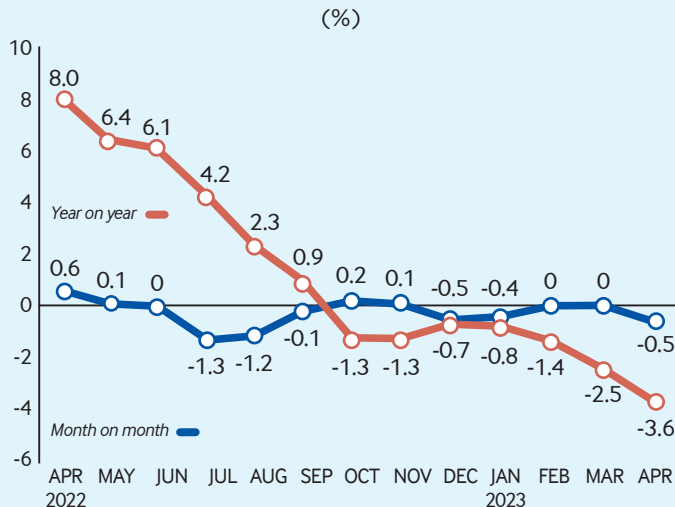
The monthly express delivery development index came in at 356.4 in April, up 47.7 percent year on year, according to the State Post Bureau.

The sub-index for the development scale grew 35.1 percent from a year earlier, the sub-index for development capacity picked up 25 percent and the sub-index for development trend went up 18.1 percent.

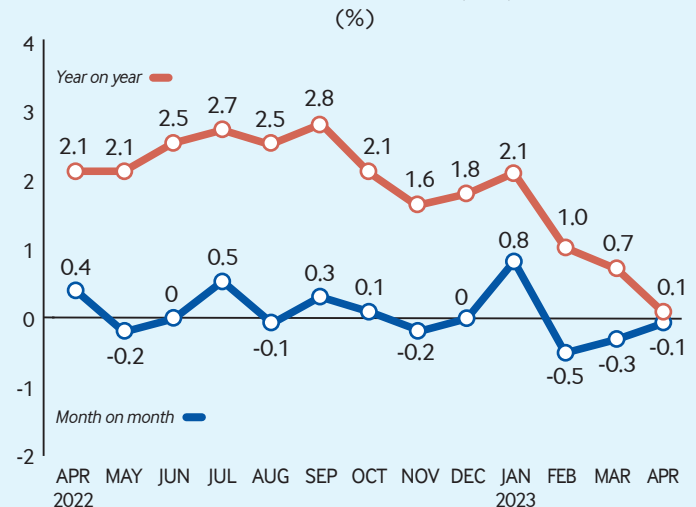
The monthly volume of parcels delivered went up an estimated 37 percent, while express delivery revenue was expected to have climbed 31 percent in April.

Compiled on the basis of data from major logistics firms'

China's Producer Price Index Growth



China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth



operating delivery services, the development index reflects the overall business activities and trends in the country's courier sector.

Port Deal

China Harbor Engineering Co. Ltd. (CHEC) secured a contract from a Cambodian firm on May 5 to construct a multi-purpose seaport in southwest Cambodia's Kampot Province.

The contract was inked in the capital of Phnom Penh between CHEC-Cambodia office's managing director Lan Qiuli and Meas Thom, President of the Kampot Logistics and Port Company, in the presence of Cambodian Minister of Public Works and Transport Sun Chanthol.

The 600-hectare Kampot Logistics and Port project began in May last year, with Shanghai Construction Group and China Road and Bridge Corp. both among its contractors.

Chanthol said the 15-year proj-

ect is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion, and construction has been divided into three phases.

The first phase from 2022 to 2025 is expected to cost \$200 million, he said.

The 15-meter deepwater port will be able to accommodate vessels weighing up to 100,000 tons and capable of handling 300,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of containers in 2025 and up to 600,000 TEUs in 2030.

"This mega-project includes a container terminal, a special economic zone, a free trade area, a logistics hub, an oil refinery and a terminal for tourist vessels," he said.

The minister said it will be the third largest port in the Southeast Asian country after the Sihanoukville Autonomous Port in the coastal city of Sihanoukville and the freshwater Phnom Penh Autonomous Port in Phnom Penh.

Accounting Regulation

Chinese authorities required further

regulation of state-owned enterprises and listed companies to hire accounting firms, according to the Ministry of Finance on May 4.

The regulation, recently released by the Ministry of Finance, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, and the China Securities Regulatory Commission, aimed to promote fair competition in the certified public accountant profession and improve audit quality.

Both state-owned and listed companies should employ recruitment methods such as, for example, competitive bidding to fully grasp the competence of the accounting firms, according to the regulation.

The financial departments could, under the law, take regulatory measures such as ordering the accounting firm that violates the provisions to rectify its misconduct, summoning the firm for talks, issuing an inquiry or warning letter, and demand-

ing a public explanation, the regulation added.

Marine Economy

China's gross marine product grew 5.1 percent year on year to 2.3 trillion yuan (\$332.1 billion) in Q1, accounting for 8.2 percent of GDP, data from the Ministry of Natural Resources showed.

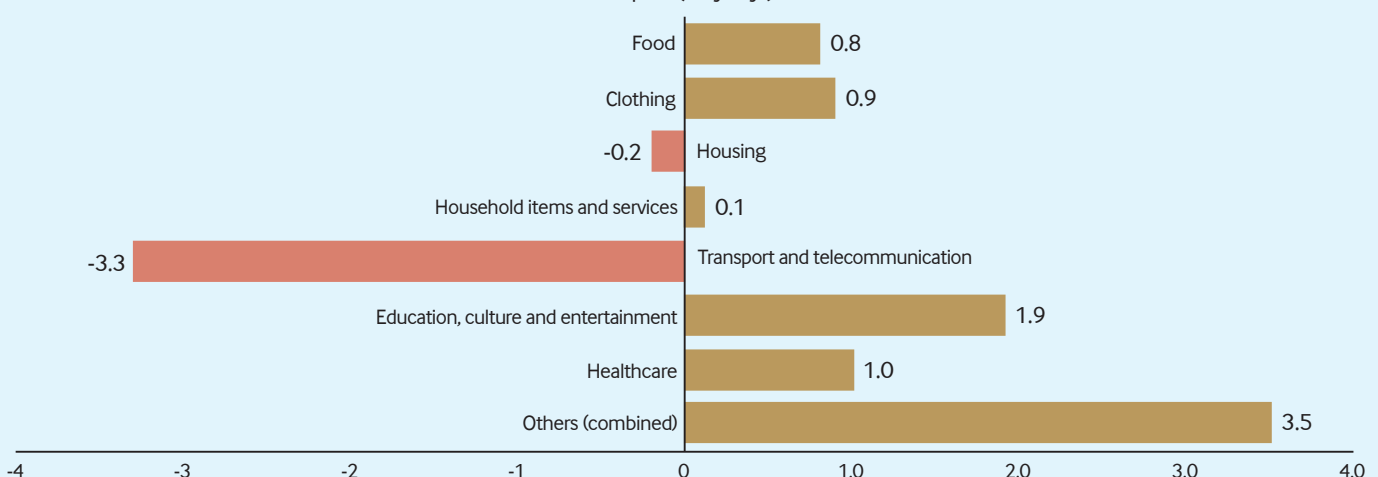
The output of offshore crude oil and natural gas in the first three months increased 3.8 percent and 6.5 percent from a year earlier, respectively.

The traditional marine industry saw steady development in Q1, supporting the rebound of the marine economy, Cui Xiaojian, Deputy Director of the National Marine Data and Information Service, said.

China's marine economy is expected to sustain its upward momentum in the second quarter, as policy effects will become more visible and industrial transformation and upgrading will pick up their pace, Cui added.

China's CPI Growth by Type

April (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK WORLD



UNITED KINGDOM

King Charles III and Queen Camilla wave to the crowds from the Buckingham Palace balcony following their coronation ceremony in London on May 6



EGYPT

An Arab League extraordinary meeting takes place in Cairo on May 7, deciding to restore Syria's membership of the league after a 12-year suspension due to the country's civil war



UNITED STATES

Protestors hold up signs during a demonstration in New York on May 6 demanding justice for Jordan Neely, a 30-year-old black man who died after being placed in a chokehold by 24-year-old white U.S. Marine Corps veteran Daniel Penny on a subway on May 1



INDONESIA

Leaders attending the 42nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit pose for a group photo outside the venue in the town of Labuan Bajo on May 10. At the summit, Indonesian President Joko Widodo urged for ASEAN unity and economic integration



RWANDA

A man looks at a house damaged by flash floods and landslides in Rubavu District, Western Province, on May 4. The death toll from flash floods and landslides in Rwanda had reached 130 as of May 11



BELGIUM

Vendors and buyers talk at a bread festival in Brussels on May 6. The event showcased a wide range of products from all over Europe for visitors to sample and buy



↓ PROMINENT SCHOLAR DONATES TO PEKING UNIVERSITY

Archaeologist **Fan Jinshi** donated 10 million yuan (\$1.45 million) to Peking University to promote its research of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu Province, on May 4.

Fan graduated from Peking University as an archaeology major in 1963 and has worked for the Dunhuang Academy for over four decades. The academy is a national institution for the conservation, management and research of the ancient grottoes. Fan is currently the academy's honorary president.

The Mogao Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site along the ancient Silk Road, are renowned for their statues, murals and manuscripts in 492 grottoes. The site is a treasure trove of Buddhist art from the fourth to the 14th century.

Fan's donation comes from the proceeds of awards she has won and from her personal savings.



Curbside Commerce

Shenzhen Special Zone Daily
April 7

Once considered an embarrassing eyesore that betrays the city's humble beginnings, sidewalk stalls selling street food, cheap clothes, jewelry and all kinds of curious items are returning to Shenzhen, an ultramodern tech hub grown from a small town in Guangdong Province. The city has recently announced its plan to allow street vendors to operate in designated urban areas from the start of September.

Despite their constant associations with poverty and backwardness, street stands

are in fact very responsive to the latest trends and capable of remaining current. The city's once modest food carts have now taken on many forms, which include night markets, curbside trunk sales, and online-offline hybrid fairs where young entrepreneurs sell coffee, bubble tea, perfume and artworks that showcase their own brands.

The city's new policy will also allow restaurants and stores to place picnic benches and street stands outside. However, the lifting of these curbs does not mean negligence. Local authorities and street vendors alike should make sure that these streetside sales are clean, safe and always within the regulatory limits.



A Treasure Trove of Plants

Oriental Outlook
April 20

April 18 was the first anniversary of the China National Botanical Garden, a park located in the northwestern outskirts of Beijing. It is the country's first state-level botanical garden. Three months after it opened, the South China National Botanical Garden opened in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province. Together, the two gardens form a crucial step in China's endeavor to preserve

“There are certain sectors like healthcare or professional services that are going to grow faster than average, where foreign firms have a competitive advantage.”

Tomas Casas Klett, Director of the China Competence Center at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, talking about investment opportunities from China's long-term growth in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“Any cooperation that is truly beneficial to the African people will naturally prevail.”

Mao Ning, spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at a regular press briefing on May 5 in response to a U.S. House subcommittee's accusations regarding China's economic activities in Africa

its biodiversity.

China is home to more than 38,000 higher plant species, which account for 10 percent of the world's total. To preserve these species, China has deployed two major conservation methods. The aforementioned botanical garden is a facility for ex-situ conservation, or off-site conservation, which is the process of removing a portion of a species from a threatened environment to protect it in a new location. The country's vast network of nature reserves is built upon the concept of in-situ conservation, or on-site conservation, which is the preservation of wild species in their natural habitats.

These botanical gardens and nature reserves are also ideal sites for educational programs. In July 2022, the China National Botanical Garden live-streamed the flowering of its three titan arums, a gigantic, highly endangered plant species known for its corpse-like odor and its extremely rare blooms that emerge once every seven to 10 years. On February 26, the South China National Botanical Garden showcased a play adapted from *Duck Says Don't!*, a picture book by British writer Alison Ritchie.

The continuous rise of ever more creative and fun ways to interact with plants has made more and more people come to appreciate their wonder and beauty.

Preventing Piracy

Ce.cn
April 27

On April 20, the much-anticipated feature film *The First Slam Dunk*, had its first screening in China. The film is based on *Slam Dunk*, an iconic Japanese anime series that aired from 1993 to 1996, which, for many people born in the 1980s and 1990s, has become an integral part of their memories of youth.

However, the widely felt sense of nostalgia has been drowned in a heated online debate over whether viewers should be allowed to record the film from their seats in cinemas. The debate led to a public statement released by the film's official account

on Weibo, China's Twitter equivalent, asking the audience to stop these recording activities.

The Film Industry Promotion Law strictly forbids the sound or video recording in any form of a cinematographic work without the permission of the copyright owner. It also mandates that online posts about a film only use officially created or approved pictures and videos. However, the practice of illegal recording in cinemas has persisted despite the law's clearly stated legal boundaries.

Therefore, while the audience must refrain from recording films with their cellphones, more energy should go into educating the public on the importance of copyright protection.

↓ SCIENTIST WINS GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY PRIZE

Gu Baojing, a professor of environmental and resource sciences at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, won the Frontiers Planet Prize on April 27.

Established by the Frontiers Research Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Lausanne, Switzerland, the prize celebrates breakthroughs in sustainability science. Gu was awarded for a research article published in the academic journal *Science* in 2021.

His research focused on global nitrogen management, which he said is not only a matter of food security but also one of the most vulnerable parts of Earth's planetary biome.

Gu, who won the prize with three other scientists of different nationalities, said at the award ceremony in Montreux, Switzerland, that the Frontiers Planet Prize inspires scholars around the world to protect the health of Earth's environmental system through scientific inquiry.



"I declare COVID-19 over as a global health emergency."

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization, at a virtual press conference on May 5

"In addition to previously described ancestral sources in Siberia, Australo-Melanesia and Southeast Asia, we show that northern coastal China also contributed to the gene pool of Native Americans."

Li Yuchun, a molecular anthropologist at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, as his team published a new genetics study in the scientific journal *Cell Reports* in early May



COVER STORY

CONSERVATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

Conserving the Roof of the World enshrined into law

By Lu Yan