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#### Deal impact

Experts: US-Vietnam trade pact could strain Hanoi's regional ties

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VISIONARY PATHWAY | HISTORIC BLUEPRINT

# Xi pointed way for Xiamen's prosperity

Pioneering road map put environmental protection at heart of urban development

By XU WEI and HU MEIDONG in Xiamen, Fujian

At dawn, beside the lush, green Yundang Lake, joggers tread lightly along the lakeside path, newlyweds capture memories in wedding photos, and migratory birds skim the water's surface, sending ripples across the lake.

Today, the lake, with its sparkling waters and vibrant ecosystem, has become a "living room" for the coastal city of Xiamen and a green landmark.

However, more than 40 years ago, the scene was starkly different. At that time, the lake was still an inner bay fishing port, into which untreated domestic sewage and industrial wastewater were discharged for years. The lake became black, foul-smelling and devoid of aquatic life, and locals referred to it as a "dead lake".

In 1985, Xi Jinping, then 32 years  $\,$ old, arrived in Xiamen to serve as executive vice-mayor. From the outset of his tenure, he adopted a long-term vision.

The following year, he led the formulation of the 1985-2000 Xiamen Economic and Social Development Strategy, which laid out an ambitious blueprint for the city's develop-

ment over the next 15 years.

Personally spearheaded by Xi,

who is now Chinese president and general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the strategy was developed by a task force comprising over 100 experts, scholars and staff members from over 10 institutions. After 18 months of in-depth research and repeated deliberations, the team produced a systematic report of over 200,000 words.

The report placed environmental protection at the heart of urban development and issued a stern warning about pollution in Yundang Lake: "It must be given high priority and addressed urgently."

A striking line from the strategy reads: "Xiamen's ecological environment is truly superior. While developing the special economic zone, we must guard against pollution and maintain ecological balance, to preserve and create a beautiful living and production environment for the people of Xiamen and future generations."

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by scanning the code.



An aerial photo taken on Sept 4, 2024, shows the scenery of Xinglin Pavilion at the Xiamen Horticulture Expo Garden and Jimei New City in Xiamen, Fujian province. WEI PEIQUAN / XINHUA

### UNITED STATES' BIG, BEAUTIFUL BILL' POISED TO AFFECT MILLIONS OF LIVES

Concerns expressed over wealth inequality, excessive border security, impact on healthcare, national debt

By BILIN LIN in New York bilinlin@chinadailyusa.com

he "One Big Beautiful Bill" President Donald Trump's proposed mega law that involves billions of dollars to implement his great plans for the United States - is poised to affect millions of lives, for both good and bad, and has Inside

attracted heated debate nationally and Editorial, internationally.

Originally approved by the House of Representatives in May, and passed by a narrow Senate vote on Tuesday, the bill will go back to the House where both major parties



must agree on a unified version. The administration hopes to sign the bill into law by July 4.

It covers a broad range of issues, including tax cuts, reductions in social welfare, increased funding for border security and immigration enforcement, as well as ambitious plans for space-based defense, and is projected to add trillions of dollars to the US national debt.

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The aircraft carrier CNS Shandong, which is leading a fleet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy for a five-day visit to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, enters Victoria Harbour on Thursday, PU HAIYANG / XINHUA

## Aircraft carrier's visit sparks national pride in HK

Bv LI LEI in Hong Kong lilei@chinadailyhk.com

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region witnessed a historic display of national pride and naval power as China's first domestically built aircraft carrier, the CNS Shandong, arrived on Thursday, accompanied by a formidable escort fleet.

Officials and welcoming crowds said the fleet's entry — greeted by a ceremonial water salute and cheers from thousands of spectators showcased the nation's maritime strength and deepened patriotic sentiment among residents.

At around 8 am, the massive carrier, along with three escort ships the Yan'an (a Type 055 missile destroyer), the Zhanjiang (a Type 052D missile destroyer), and the *Yuncheng* (a Type 054A missile frig-- approached Victoria Harbour, attracting enthusiastic crowds along the waterfront.

Standing 20 stories tall with a flight deck spanning the length of two soccer fields, the Shandong displayed 12 carrier-based aircraft and a formation of 700 sailors spelling out the Chinese characters Guo An Jia Hao (secure country, sweet home).

This visit makes Hong Kong the only city in the world to have hosted two active Chinese carriers, following the Liaoning's 2017 visit to mark the 20th anniversary of the city's return to the motherland.



Hong Kong middle school students pose on Thursday on the deck of the missile frigate Yuncheng during a visit to the vessel, which is part of the fleet that also includes the missile destroyers Yan'an and  $\mathit{Zhanjiang}$ . DUAN ZHENJUN / XINHUA

The visit by the *Shandong* also coincides with the 28th anniversary of Hong Kong's return; 28 years of the People's Liberation Army's presence in the city; and the fifth anniversary of the implementation of the Hong Kong SAR National Security Law.

At a welcome ceremony at Ngong Shuen Chau Barracks, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu called the timing "inspiring", saying that the *Shandong* — which was commissioned in 2019 — reflects the nation's rapid advancements in defense technology and maritime

With the visit coming ahead of

80th anniversary of China's victory in the Chinese People's War of Japanese Resistance Against Aggression (1931-45), Lee said it also highlights the nation's wartime resilience and today's hard-won prosperity and stability.

The fleet's five-day visit follows July 1 celebrations of the 28th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland in 1997

On social media, residents eagerly shared viewing tips as the fleet passed through the scenic East Lamma Channel before docking.

The PLA Hong Kong Garrison distributed 10,000 free tour tickets - 2,000 for Saturday tours of the

Shandong near Victoria Harbour, and the rest for Sunday visits to the Zhanjiang and Yuncheng at Stonecutters Island.

Additionally, Hong Kong students will enjoy a special tour on Friday morning.

Lee said the tours offer an immersive experience to learn about national defense and strengthen patriotic identity.

Named after the East China province, the *Shandong* ushered in China's "dual-carrier era", joining the Liaoning, which was commissioned into the PLA Navy in 2012.

The escort fleet highlights China's shipbuilding prowess — such as the *Yan'an*, featuring stealth and hypersonic missile capabilities, although that vessel was not open to public visits this time.

A deck reception was held on Thursday night, attended by Hong

Kong and Macao community leaders. Captain Wu Kang, overseeing the visit, called the fleet a "fully equipped, highly capable and visually impressive" naval force which has sailed vast oceans.

He said that during their stay, naval officers will engage in soccer and tug-of-war matches, and cultural exchanges with the Hong Kong Garrison and SAR government disciplinary forces, which include the police and fire services.

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# China, EU stand ready to strengthen partnership

By ZHANG ZHOUXIANG in Brussels zhouriang@chinadaily.com.cn

China and the European Union are poised to deepen dialogue and cooperation, as this year marks the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, with senior officials from both sides emphasizing the importance of mutual respect, open engagement and a shared commitment to global stability.

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At the 13th round of China-EU Highlevel Strategic Dialogue held on Wednesday in Brus-

sels, Belgium, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas agreed to deepen mutual understanding and work together to get well prepared for the upcoming leaders' meeting for enhancing cooperation.

Wang, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, noted that over the past five decades, China-EU relations have weathered many challenges and continued to grow stronger, with cooperation serving as the anchor for both sides.

China and the EU should work as partners, rather than act as rivals, he said, calling for both sides to properly handle their differences through dialogue.

Wang said that China and the EU share extensive common interests and have no fundamental conflicts of interest, adding that both sides support multilateralism, uphold the central role of the United Nations and are committed to resolving disputes peacefully through dialogue.

Amid growing global uncertainty and instability, China and the EU, as two major powers and economies, should enhance exchanges and advance cooperation to safeguard the international order and provide the world with much needed certainty, he emphasized.

China stands ready to work with the EU to ensure that the upcoming

China-EU summit is productive and better guides their bilateral relationship, he said

Wang noted that China's diploma cy is rooted in the harmonious traditions of Chinese civilization, which advocates peace, inclusiveness and cooperation. China is not the United States, and its path should not be viewed through the lens of the US' historical trajectory, he said.

The differences between China and the EU in terms of history, culture and values should not warrant rivalry, nor should their disagreements necessitate confrontation, he said.

Wang said that China firmly supports European integration and the EU's pursuit of greater strategic autonomy. He urged the EU to respect China's core interests, including the Taiwan question. He called on the EU to earnestly uphold the one-China principle as set out in Resolution 2758 of the UN General Assembly.

Kallas said the EU and China are partners with shared responsibilities

on issues such as maintaining the international order and upholding the UN's central role.

The EU remains committed to the one-China policy and stands ready to work with China to ensure that the upcoming leaders' meeting sends a positive signal for stronger ties and fairer economic cooperation, she said.

Bart Dessein, a professor at the Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations in Belgium, said that Europe's purchasing power makes it an important partner for China, especially as market access challenges grow elsewhere.

"We are each other's top trading partners and our welfare is interdependent. Constructive dialogue can help shape a fairer, stronger part-nership for both sides," he said.

Bernard Dewit, chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, said that despite geopolitical challenges, EU-China collaboration remains vital in trade, technology, climate and culture.