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## Xi, Putin cite group's 60 years of service

By WANG QINGYUN wangqingyun@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin sent congratulatory messages on Monday to the Russia-China Friendship Association on the 60th anniversary of its founding.

Xi said in his message that over the past six decades, the association has adhered to the principle of friendship in managing relations with China, actively carried out people-to-people exchanges, and contributed significantly to promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

Calling the association an important force in cementing and developing China-Russia ties, Xi stressed that the key to sound relations between states lies in amity between the peoples.

China-Russia relations have reached a new historical starting point, Xi said, expressing his hope that the association will open up a new chapter in promoting exchanges between peoples of the two nations and make greater contributions to strengthening people-to-people bonds, fueling the development of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination at a high level.

## Xi and Putin have met four times this year to lead the two countries in deepening political mutual trust.

In the message released by the Kremlin, Putin said: "The association was there through almost the entire modern history of Russian-Chinese relations, which have now reached the level of all-embracing trusting partnership and strategic cooperation."

The two congratulatory messages have "demonstrated fully" the great importance the two leaders attach to China-Russia ties, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on Tuesday.

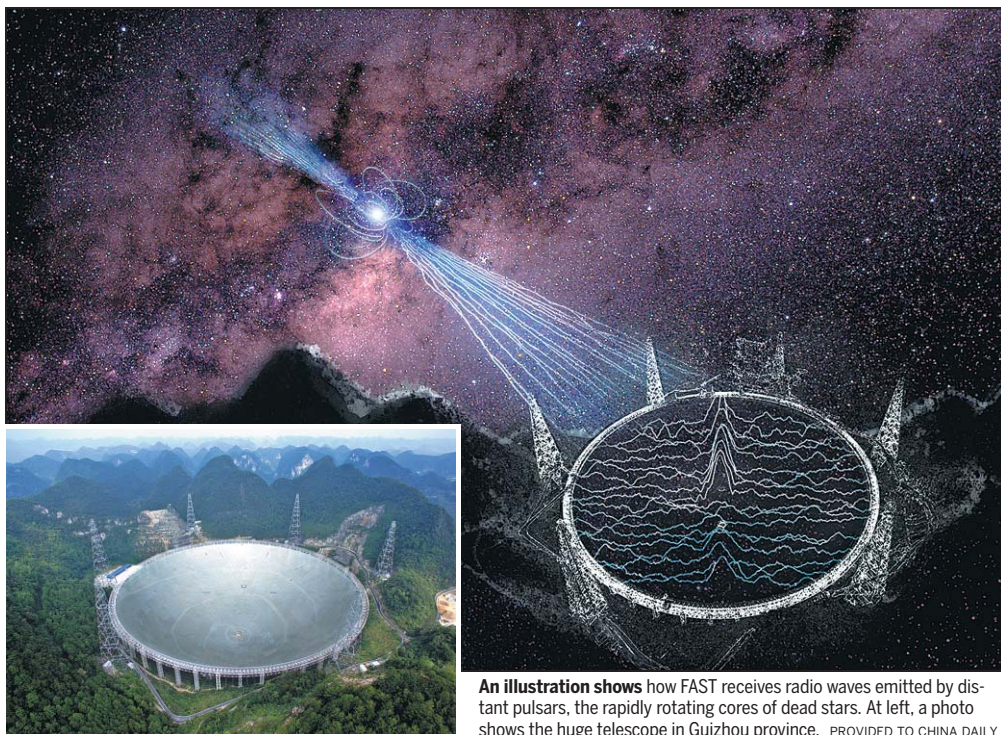
The China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is proceeding at a high level, and bilateral ties are stronger than they ever have been, Hua said at a daily news conference in Beijing.

She noted that Xi and Putin have met four times this year to lead the two countries in deepening political mutual trust and promoting pragmatic cooperation, as well as exchanging views in time over major international and regional issues.

Li Jianmin, a researcher at the Institute of Russian, Eastern European, Central Asian Studies with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said people-to-people exchanges are important, as they help the public of the two countries better understand bilateral ties.

The two sides should continue working closely to promote such exchanges among young people and lay a strong foundation for friendship in the future, Li said.

Xinhua and Zhou Jin contributed to this story.



An illustration shows how FAST receives radio waves emitted by distant pulsars, the rapidly rotating cores of dead stars. At left, a photo shows the huge telescope in Guizhou province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## World's largest telescope finds new pulsars

By ZHANG ZHIHAO zhangzhihao@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese researchers have discovered six pulsars, which are superheavy remnants of massive stars, using its Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope, known as FAST.

It is the first time Chinese scientists have discovered pulsars using the world's largest single-dish radio telescope, thus opening a "new era of Chinese original space discovery," Yan Yun, director of the National Astronomical Observatories of China, said on Tuesday.

The first two pulsars, named J1859-01 and J1931-01, were discovered in August and were confirmed in September by the 64-meter radio telescope at Parkes Observatory in Australia.

J1859-01 is 16,000 light years from Earth and rotates once every 1.83 seconds, while J1931-01 is 4,100 light years away and rotates once every 0.59 seconds, according to scientists.

Since its completion in September 2016, FAST has discovered two dozen highly possible candidates for pulsars, said Li Di, the telescope's deputy chief engineer.

Last week, FAST also confirmed four new pulsars, but their details are still being analyzed.

"Pulsars are superdense cores of massive stars that went supernova and died, hence they have incredible mass, extremely strong magnetic fields, and they spin like a clock and shoot out strong beams of electromagnetic radiation," Li said.

"The conditions on a pulsar are far more extreme than any lab simulation on Earth. Examining them and seeing how they interact with other stars can help us tackle major scientific issues, such as the origin and evolution of the universe, finding gravitational waves and navigating spacecraft."

Li said FAST is set to be fully operational by the end of 2019. In the meantime, scientists there will continue to test FAST and cooperate with foreign scientists on space exploration.

Located in a natural depression in Guizhou province, FAST consists of 4,600 triangular panels that form a receiving dish about the size of 30 soccer fields.

Apart from its massive size, it also has unmatched accuracy and sensitivity, allowing scientists to find previously hidden stars, Li said. "When we first received the pulsar signals, you can hear their frequency signals beep like the beating of a baby's heart," he said.

Moreover, FAST is capable of surveying the night sky for multiple scientific data at once, ranging from galaxy structure to star explosions, while other telescopes can only manage one task at a time, he added.

George Hobbs, a research scientist from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization in Australia, said, "The world's most exciting radio astronomy projects are happening in China with FAST, and it is a great honor for the Australian science community to be part of the process."

Hobbs was also the leading scientist for the Parkes Pulsar Timing Array project, the telescope that confirmed China's pulsar findings. Since the discovery of pulsars in 1967, scientists have found more than 2,700 of them, more than half of which were found by Parkes Observatory, Hobbs said.

"Australia is the world leader in finding pulsars, but China will catch up really fast with FAST's help," he said. "If FAST can find a binary system in which a pulsar is orbiting a black hole, this will be a discovery worthy of a Nobel Prize."

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## 7th plenary session to set agenda

Gathering will be of great importance heading into congress, experts say

By AN BALJIE anbaljie@chinadaily.com.cn

19 THE 19TH CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS Inside

A key meeting to be held by the Communist Party of China in Beijing on Wednesday will lay the foundation for the Party's upcoming 19th National Congress a week later.

The Seventh Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, which is the CPC's most important conference ahead of the 19th National Congress, will highlight the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with General Secretary Xi Jinping as the core and the Party's new thoughts of governance over the past five years, analysts said.

During the session, the members of the 18th CPC Central Committee — mostly senior officials from Party organizations, government agencies, State-owned enterprises and the military — will discuss the report to be delivered by Xi at the 19th National Congress, which starts on Oct 18.

The members also will discuss the amendment to the Party's Constitution and the report to be delivered at congress by the Central Commission for Discipline

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Inspection of the CPC, the country's top anti-graft watchdog.

Li Chengyan, head of Peking University's Center for Anti-Corruption Studies, said that the seventh plenary session is of great importance, as it will make preparations for the Party's 19th National Congress.

"The plenary session will discuss the reports to be delivered at the Party's 19th National Congress," he said. In the past, the CCDI report was submitted directly to the CPC National Congress after the CCDI's plenary meeting approved it.

The commission said the procedural change reflects respect for the

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Rudy Habibe of Puerto Rico takes photographs by the burning Hilton Sonoma Wine Country hotel, where he was a guest, in Santa Rosa, California, on Monday. JEFF CHIU / AP

## Deadly wildfires hit California wine areas

SAN FRANCISCO — An onslaught of wildfires across a wide swath of Northern California broke out almost simultaneously then grew exponentially, swallowing up properties from wineries to trailer parks and tearing through tiny rural towns as well as urban subdivisions.

At least 11 were dead, at least 100 injured and at least 1,500 homes and businesses destroyed, but authorities expected all three figures to grow as more reports come in. Together, the fires are already among the deadliest in California history.

Tens of thousands were forced to flee as areas were reduced to a wasteland of twisted metal and ash while firefighters tried to contain the flames supercharged by wind gusts up to 110 km/h.

Santa Rosa, the county seat and the largest city of Sonoma County, took the

hardest hit, with seven people confirmed killed there.

Sonoma County said it has received over 100 missing-person reports, and it's impossible to tell how many of them are safe because of widespread communications problems.

State fire officials said two people died in a blaze in Napa County and one was killed in Mendocino County.

Hundreds were treated for injuries, including burns and smoke inhalation at hospitals in the major wine country region of San Francisco.

The blazes have burned more than 2,600 hectares of land and blanketed much of the Bay Area in cough-inducing smoke.

Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency for Napa, Sonoma and Yuba counties. The blaze has left parts of the state wine industry potentially crippled.

## Meeting growth target 'no problem'

By XIN ZHIMING in Beijing and ZHAO HUANXIN in Washington

4.83 percent

The unemployment rate in first eight months of 2017 in China's 31 major cities, the lowest since 2012

China not only will easily meet its economic growth target of around 6.5 percent this year, it may even beat it, Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics, said on Tuesday in Beijing.

"China will not have any problem at all meeting its growth target," he said at a news conference while speaking about the country's economic achievements since 2013. "The Chinese economy's stabilizing and improving trend remains unchanged and the whole-year results could be even better (than the target)."

Ning commented ahead of the bureau's release of third-quarter GDP data on Oct 19. Economists widely expect growth to remain stable, though it may soften a little in the third and fourth quarters.

Major international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have shown more confidence in the world's second-largest economy, raising their forecasts of its GDP growth this year.

In Washington on Tuesday, the IMF forecast China's economy would grow by 6.8 percent in 2017 — up by 0.2 percentage point from its April projection.

"The upward revision to the 2017 forecast reflects the stronger-than-expected outturn in the first half of the year, underpinned by previous policy easing and supply-side reform," the report said.

Last week, the World Bank raised its growth forecast for China for this year to 6.7 percent from 6.5 percent in its June projection.

China's economy grew by 6.9 percent in the first half of this year, up from last year's 6.7 percent, which was the lowest rate in 26 years. If the

whole-year growth turns out to be higher than 6.7 percent, it will mark the first acceleration in seven years.

Many indicators have shown that economic fundamentals also are improving, laying a solid foundation for future sustainable growth.

In the first eight months, China created 9.74 million urban jobs, driving the unemployment rate in 31 major cities down to 4.83 percent, the lowest since 2012, Ning said.

China has made much headway in its supply-side structural reform, he added. Economic restructuring has been boosted by the increasing role of sectors like services, online sales, the sharing economy and advanced manufacturing, which are new driving forces for growth, Ning said.

China's contribution to global growth averaged about 30 percent annually from 2013 to 2016, larger than that of the United States, the eurozone and Japan combined, Ning added.

Contact the writers at xinzhiming@chinadaily.com.cn



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