

## Powering a change

Company in Brazil helps aborigines make the transition to modern era

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## Rise seen in poaching of spotted seals

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## Withdrawal begins

UN says Yemen's Houthi rebels are pulling back from three ports  
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# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019

## Guizhou's poverty fight includes better schools, meals for kids

By CAI HONG, LI HANYI and DONG XIANWU in Guizhou province

### 1.32 million people

Have been relocated from impoverished mountainous places to settlements in urban areas in Guizhou since 2016

Policymakers in Southwest China's Guizhou province are trying to improve education programs to empower children with knowledge and skills to combat poverty.

The province is determined that no child should be allowed to drop out of school due to his or her family's financial difficulties.

Local educators believe that particular attention should be paid to helping poverty-stricken students increase confidence in their capability to lift their families out of poverty and view improved schooling as the way to accomplish this.

The province has given 1.69 million registered poor students stipends worth a total of 5.3 billion yuan (\$777 million) since 2015, according to Guizhou's Education Department.

While working out its strategy to impart knowledge to rural children, Guizhou has also taken into consideration that many kids come to school hungry.

According to Bao Benqi of the provincial Education Department, the Guizhou government has set the goal that "each of the primary and secondary schools in the rural areas should have a canteen so that lunch can be served to every student".

The meal is believed to help students improve their performance at school. Many students in the poverty-stricken areas had been coming to class with an empty stomach, since they did not have food at home.

"More than 3.8 million primary and secondary school students and 860,000 preschool kids are

covered in the nutrition project every year," Bao said.

The nutrition project connects residents of the province's low-income villages to canteens in rural nurseries as well as primary and secondary schools.

These canteens purchase farm produce from the poverty-stricken farmers, Bao added.

Guizhou has been making painstaking efforts to improve education for children in rural and mountainous regions because the government believes schooling is the best way to empower the youngsters, who are seen as the hope of their families for getting out of poverty.

The mountainous province is one of the poorest regions in China. In 2018, it still had more than 1.55 million people living below the poverty line of disposable annual income of 8,495 yuan.

One of Guizhou's approaches to lifting impoverished people out of a bare-bones existence is to build settlements in urban areas for the relocation of those who live in mountainous areas considered uninhabitable.

The province has relocated 1.32 million people since 2016, and those living in poverty who remain — 560,000 people — will be moved to new homes this year, according to Sun Zhigang, secretary of the Guizhou Provincial

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Students participate in a physical education class in Huichuan Primary School in the city of Zunyi, Guizhou province, on April 17.  
LI HANYI / CHINA DAILY

## Bringing history back to life



Performers play the roles of Chinese and Irish workers on Friday during a historical reenactment on the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad at Golden Spike National Historical Park in Promontory, Utah, in the United States. TERRY SYLVESTER / REUTERS

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## China's call for balance in trade deal 'rational'

Analysts say cooperation is crucial for Sino-US consultations

By JING SHUYU in Beijing and ZHAO HUANXIN in Washington

China's insisting on protecting its core interests during trade consultations with the United States is a rational choice in accordance with international practice, experts said.

Vice-Premier Liu He said in Washington on Friday that what China wants is a fair and dignified trade agreement. And while key disparities remain, a deal must address the country's core concerns, such as lifting all additional tariffs, establishing realistic procurement expectations and ensuring that the text in any deal is "balanced", he said.

Dong Yan, director of the international trade office at the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said China's opposition to the new US tariffs and its quest for a "balanced trade pact" have a rational basis.

What China has been insisting upon is "the rational choices any country has when facing unreasonable requests in trade rules", Dong said at a seminar on Sunday in Beijing, citing similar cases in history.

The tug-of-war between China and the US over certain trade prac-

tices has rattled global markets for months. Negotiators held an 11th round of talks in Washington on Thursday and Friday.

Before heading back to Beijing, Liu said that overall, the two sides are meeting each other halfway in the draft text, but there needs to be discussion on some key issues.

"We believe that these things are major issues of principle. So every country has important principles, and we absolutely cannot make concessions on such issues," the vice-premier said. However, Liu added that he hoped both sides would exhibit flexibility in the talks.

Washington's latest levies targeting Chinese imports came into force on Friday.

Wei Jianguo, vice-president of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said, "Twists and turns in trade consultations are not uncommon and should not be exaggerated."

Wei said the negotiations haven't broken down, since the two sides, according to the vice-premier, had agreed to continue their talks in Beijing. Despite the current headwinds, cooperation is the best



Vice-Premier Liu He

choice for the two countries, said Wei, a former vice-minister of commerce.

The analysts' comments came as US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer announced on Friday evening that he was preparing to impose additional tariffs on an additional \$300 billion worth of Chinese imports.

Following the latest US tariff move, the Ministry of Commerce vowed to take necessary countermeasures.

Gao Lingyun, a research fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, suggested that China work out comprehensive countermeasures that can respond to the US precisely and efficiently.

Vice-Premier Liu said that despite the pressure, he was optimistic about China's economy in the longer term, adding that it had entered an up cycle after bottoming out somewhat in 2018.

Ren Xiaojin and Liu Zhihua in Beijing contributed to this story.

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WORLD WATCH  
By Chen Weihua

## US studies say BRI not a debt trap

Two studies released in the past weeks should put to rest the blind accusation that China's infrastructure financing under the Belt and Road Initiative has sucked developing nations into a debt trap.

Without providing any evidence, senior US officials, such as Vice-President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton, made such allegations last year.

Deborah Brautigam, a leading authority on China-Africa relations at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, dismissed such accusations in an opinion piece in The New York Times on April 26.

In the column, which ran under the headline "Is China the World's Loan Shark?", Brautigam said studies "found scant evidence of a pattern indicating that Chinese banks ... are deliberately over-lending or funding loss-making projects to secure strategic advantages for China."

The Hambantota Port project in Sri Lanka is often cited by critics, but "that's a special case, and it is widely misunderstood," she wrote.

Brautigam's opinion piece was based on studies conducted by her China-Africa Research Initiative at the SAIS, which included information on more than 1,000 Chinese loans in Africa between 2000 and 2017, totaling more than \$143 billion, as well as a study by Boston University's Global Development Policy Center, which has identified and tracked more than \$140 billion in Chinese loans to Latin America and the Caribbean since 2005.

See *Studies*, page 3

## As Jakarta sinks, Indonesia revives plans to relocate capital

By KARL WILSON in Sydney  
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Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, has another problem in addition to its traffic and pollution: The city of 10 million is sinking.

Some researchers are predicting large swaths of the city could be entirely submerged by 2050, and they said north Jakarta had already sunk 2.5 meters in 10 years, the BBC reported last month.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has revived plans to relocate the capital. At a recent Cabinet meeting, Widodo asked his ministers to come up with suggestions, the Jakarta Globe reported on April 29.

The president said there were three choices, according to the Globe reported: Leave the capital

where it is in Jakarta; move it to an area within a 50- to 70-kilometer radius of the city; or move the capital off the island of Java altogether.

Building a new capital could take between five and 10 years and cost as much as \$33 billion, The Jakarta Post quoted National Development Planning Minister Bambang Brodjonegoro as saying.

The idea of relocating is not new, according to Gervasius Samosir, a Jakarta-based consultant with global group YCP Solidiance. "Presidents from Sukarno onward have mentioned the need to relocate the capital," he told China Daily.

But on all occasions, the idea did not get beyond the discussion stage.

Now, President Widodo has revived the decades-old plan and favors Palangkaraya, a city of about

260,000 people that is relatively free from natural disasters and located near the center of the archipelago.

Planning Minister Bambang told a news briefing after the Cabinet meeting on April 29 that the new capital would likely be in the "geographic center of Indonesia".

Other criteria will include land availability, water supply, proximity to the coast and foreign territory, and existing infrastructure.

"We have to find a location that is really minimal in terms of disaster risks. And because Indonesia is a maritime nation, the new capital city should be located near the coast, but not necessarily by the sea," he said.

"We want to have a new city which besides reflecting Indone-

sia's identity is a modern, international-class city, or a smart, green and beautiful city," the minister said.

Yayat Supriyatna, an urban planner at Trisakti University in Jakarta, told China Daily that Widodo is serious about moving the capital — "by announcing it in front of high-ranking state, executive, legislative and judicial leaders during a joint sitting at the presidential palace on May 6".

He said there were a number of factors favoring a new capital, with Borneo being an ideal location. "It is strategically located in the middle of Indonesia, and a great deal of the land is already owned by the government or state-owned companies. This would reduce investment costs for infrastructure and

relocation."

"It is also free from potential earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, floods, erosion and forest fires. It has abundant water resources and is free of air pollution."

Heri Andreas, a lecturer on the Institute of Technology Bandung's earth science and technology faculty, said Jakarta "has a long history of flooding, as it sits on a flood plain where 13 rivers cross the city". Due to land subsidence and rising sea level, the city is now suffering from coastal flooding and tidal inundation, he added.

Andreas said the advantage of choosing Palangkaraya as the new capital would be that it is "not a large city now, but it does have infrastructure, and from all accounts it is in good shape".

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ASIA NEWS NETWORK

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Vol.1 - No.90

Newsstand prices:  
US \$1, Canada C\$1  
UK £1, EU €1  
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling

7174000985001

Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 thb; Philippines 120 php;  
Myanmar 2000 kyat; Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham;  
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# TOP NEWS

## US railroad's China connection

Workers' contribution remembered at the Golden Spike's 150th anniversary celebrations in Utah

By LINDA DENG  
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The Golden Spike's 150th anniversary celebration held at the Promontory Summit, Utah, on Friday, was a historic event for the United States. It was also an occasion to recall efforts of thousands of Chinese workers who were part of the project.

The Golden Spike is the ceremonial gold final spike driven by Leland Stanford, then governor of California, to join the rails of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.

Between 1863 and 1869, more than 12,000 Chinese workers helped build the 912-mile transcontinental railroad that connects the eastern US rail network with the Pacific coast.

Even as they endured harsh working and living conditions, they blasted and chiseled 15 tunnels through the hard granite of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Hundreds of them died.

For 72-year-old Siu Wong, a retired doctor from New Mexico, US, and a descendant of a Chinese railroad worker, the grand ceremony in Utah on Friday meant a lot.

Wong's grandfather was working on the railroad in California. She was among the 400 descendants who took part in the celebration.

"Ninety percent of Central Pacific Railroad workers were Chinese, but Chinese are not included in the photos in the US history books. I have noticed that there is more recognition and acknowledgement of the Chinese contribution," said Wong.

The White House issued a presidential message on Friday on the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad, mentioning the contributions of especially 12,000 or more Chinese laborers.

"I have the unique and moving opportunity to fully acknowledge and recognize the contributions and sacrifices of these laborers during the construction of transcontinental railroad," US Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, whose parents are of Chinese descent, said at the ceremony.

The event drew an estimated 20,000 people to the historic ground in Utah, where two railroads joined their rails to form the transcontinental railroad.

For the first time, Chinese and other immigrants were incorporated in the momentous reenactment.



National Park Service volunteers and others (top) re-enact Andrew J. Russell's 1869 "Champagne Toast" photo (above) taken when the Central Pacific Railroad from the west joined the Union Pacific Railroad from the east, on the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad at Golden Spike National Historical Park in Promontory, Utah, on Friday. REUTERS

Chinese, along with Irish and other immigrant groups, were depicted in a musical performance titled *As One*, inspired by the Golden Spike era.

Connie Young Yu, whose grandfather was a foreman in the Central Pacific Railroad Company — the company that built the railroad eastwards from Sacramento, California, to complete the western part of the first transcontinental railroad in the US — was invited to take the stage at the beginning of the ceremony.

Chinese Ambassador to the US, Cui Tiangkai, in a video message, described the railroad as an "example of how the Chinese and

American people can come together to get things done, and make the impossible possible?"

Chinese railroad workers were among the first Chinese immigrants to the US. The event gave a chance to patriotic Chinese Americans from all parts of the country to be honored and feel more connected to the contribution made by their ancestors.

"I feel proud and very happy to be at this once-in-a-lifetime event," said Don Yee, a medical engineer from Hicksville in New York.

Yee drove all the way with his wife, Georgina, and friends to Utah for the ceremony. Yee is a member

of the American Legion Auxiliary unit 291, which works to meet the needs of the country's veterans, military, and their families. His responsibilities include teaching new Chinese immigrants to better adapt to American culture and advocating patriotism and honor.

Olivia Hao, 31, and Ricky Ren, 32, both film makers from Beijing, participated in the celebration. They said they were working on a TV series on the historic event.

"The younger generation doesn't know much about this part of history; we are lucky to have joined the great event," said Olivia.

## Guizhou: Province aims high in poverty fight, helps residents relocate

From page 1

Committee of the Communist Party of China. Sun made the remark in Beijing in March while attending the annual plenary session of the National People's Congress, the country top legislature.

Guizhou has aimed high in its poverty fight in a bid to help reach the nation's goal of lifting all people out of poverty by 2020. This year, a total of 1.1 million residents are expected to escape poverty, Guizhou Governor Shen Yiqin said at the provincial people's congress in January.

Shen said Guizhou will provide 160,000 homes for relocated residents this year, adding that the local government is planning to appropriate 17 billion yuan to fund the process.

Shiqian county in Tongren — to which more than 700 residents moved in 2018 — has built kindergartens and primary schools near residential communities, and more service centers are expected soon.

However, not everyone in the poverty-stricken areas wants to leave their home.

"To encourage them to move, Guizhou authorities have used a better schooling for their children

as bait," said Zhang Qing of Guizhou's provincial Education Department.

"More than 130,000 children will be enrolled in the 1,600 preschool facilities, primary and secondary schools near their urban settlements. Also, 333 nurseries and junior high schools will be built to enroll some 50,000 relocated children," Zhang added.

To promote educational development and cultivate more high-quality teachers in the country's central and western regions, China launched a State-level training program for rural primary and middle school teachers in 2010.

Primary school teachers in Guizhou have joined the training at Beijing Normal University.

In September 2014, President Xi Jinping met with teachers from Guizhou who were receiving training at Beijing Normal University. The group of teachers later wrote a letter to Xi.

In a letter of reply to the Guizhou teachers, Xi asked them to lead

“Giving rural children a good education is an important task in poverty relief, and also a crucial means to stop poverty from being passed on between generations.”

President Xi Jinping, writing to a group of Guizhou province teachers in 2015

education reform in poor areas.

"Reducing poverty must begin with reducing ignorance. Therefore, giving rural children a good education is an important task in poverty relief, and also a crucial means to stop poverty from being passed on between generations," he said.

"The poor regions are the bottleneck in building a moderately prosperous society by 2020," Xi wrote.

While talking with students and teachers at a primary school in Zhongyi, a township in Chongqing's Shizhu Tujia autonomous county, in April, Xi said compulsory education is an important part of poverty eradication.

Children in impoverished mountainous regions must be guaranteed access to education, and they should have a happy childhood, Xi said during his visit to Chongqing. He encouraged teachers to settle down in such regions, dedicate themselves to education in rural areas and contribute to poverty reduction.

The Guizhou government has called in the province's best teachers and school headmasters to help schools in the rural areas, according to Hong Ying of Guizhou's Education Department.

These teachers are required to work out plans on how to help sub-standard schools in rural areas.

Zhang Yan, principal of Huichuan Primary School in the city of Zunyi, is a member of this year's group of selected teachers.

"I've focused my plan on coaching teachers in the poverty-stricken areas rather than giving lectures at rural schools," Zhang said.

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## Studies: Risks of BRI overstated

From page 1

Based on the findings, Brautigam concluded that the risks of the BRI are often overstated and mischaracterized.

A report on a study by New York-based independent research provider Rhodium Group, published on April 29, also dismissed the debt-trap accusation against China.

Based on 40 cases of external debt renegotiation between 2007 and this year in 24 countries, the report said asset seizure was a rare occurrence. More often, China was inclined to renegotiate the debts or write them off, it said.

Contrary to accusations that China uses its outsized weight to gain advantage over borrowing nations, the study found that China's leverage in negotiations was limited.

The Brookings Institution, a Washington-based nonprofit public policy organization, interviewed a group of its scholars ahead of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing late last month. None of them accused China of debt-trap diplomacy.

Ryan Hass, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former official for China in the Obama administration, said much of the US government's narrative on the BRI has been built around debt-trap diplomacy. He said he is wor-

ried that the US government is making an argument that is more persuasive to itself than to others.

The fact that the BRI has gained more support around the world, as seen in the recent forum in Beijing, is the best answer to those who might have ulterior motives. So far, more than 120 countries have participated in the initiative.

Despite strong US pressure, Italy became the first G7 nation to join the initiative in late March.

European Union officials have started to talk about how to align the EU's Connecting Europe with Asia strategy with China's BRI to achieve synergy.

In Beijing last week, Philip Hammond, Britain's finance minister, described the BRI as having "tremendous potential to spread prosperity and sustainable development, touching as it does potentially 70 percent of the world's population, a project of truly epic ambition".

He offered British expertise on project financing. Indeed, much of China's lending practices in the BRI were learned from Western nations, as well as Japan, which lent to China during the country's reform and opening-up drive in the past four decades.

The BRI may not be perfect yet, but its benign intention of boosting economic growth in developing nations by building infrastructure, something China learned from its own experience, should not be questioned.

Countries should join the BRI to help make it a greater success instead of trying to undermine it.

The author is China Daily EU bureau chief based in Brussels. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## Chinese bikers revving up to ride in style

By ALEXIS HOOI  
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Almost every weekend, Beijing businessman Liang Tao fires up his Italian motorcycle and heads to the hills west of the capital with a group of outdoor bikers.

"Cruising on the open roads on these machines is very liberating after dealing with a week of traffic congestion in the city," said Liang, 35.

He is now considering an upgrade in his hobby — at the Beijing International Motorcycle Exhibition on Saturday, Liang was eyeing a Panigale V4 Speciale model of Italian make Ducati. The sleek, sport-style 1,103 cc engine bike came with a price tag of 415,000 yuan (\$60,800).

Many other deep-pocketed bikers swarmed the exhibition hall filled with the latest models of vehicles from home and abroad, a burgeoning demand that those in the industry said reflected increasingly sophisticated consumer tastes going up globally on the back of rising affluence.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibition, Li Bin, secretary-general of the motorcycle branch of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, said the Chinese motorbike industry has recorded rapid growth in the four decades since reform and opening-up to form much of the global market.

Chinese motorcycle production hit about 15.5 million units last year, with 7.3 million units exported, according to figures from the association.

Imports of large motorcycles



A child poses on a bike at the Beijing International Motorcycle Exhibition on Saturday. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

alone have continued to grow significantly in recent years, with more than 34,100 of the vehicles imported in 2018, a year-on-year increase of over 60 percent.

"The industry is experiencing advances in vehicle safety, technology and design. Motorcycle riding has become a travel, leisure and lifestyle choice, with more than 200 motorcycle clubs just in Beijing," Li said.

Nearly 300 bike models were displayed at the exhibition, including concept, rare and custom-made vehicles from leading European, US,

Japanese and domestic manufacturers, according to event organizers. Special displays were also set up — ranging from a retro "Black Old Crow" moped with a top speed of 45 kilometers per hour, to state-of-the-art police bikes tapping the latest mapping and communications technologies — to help trace the achievements in the industry as part of celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Jason Yan, director of the Joy Motorrad authorized dealership for BMW motorcycles in the Chinese

market, said sales of the major German brand have risen about sixfold in the past four years.

"Motorcycles have moved from a previously basic transportation in rural areas to one signifying affluence, with the demand for large, imported types in line with rapid economic growth and rising internationalization," he said.

"More of those consumers born in the 1980s and 1990s, with their higher incomes and greater global exposure, are going for quality of life and novel types of experiences. Their numbers will only grow."