

CHINA

Experts defend sea sovereignty

Scholars emphasize need to uphold international order, respect territories

By LI MENGHAN
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Global experts discussed the historical and legal basis for China's recovery of sovereignty over the South China Sea on Saturday, stressing that it is a key part of the postwar order and must be respected and protected.

Wu Jilu, head of China Institute for Marine Affairs of the Ministry of Natural Resources, noted that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, as well as the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Wu said upholding the international order established after World War II is a crucial foundation for lasting peace and stability, with respect for the territorial sovereignty of all nations at its core.

He added that China's recovery of sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha islands formed an important part of the postwar order in the South China Sea and should be firmly safeguarded.

The remarks were made at an international seminar in Beijing attended by more than 40 experts from countries including China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

Zhang Shi'ao, an assistant research fellow at the Collaborative Innovation Center of South China Sea Studies at Nanjing University, echoed Wu's view. He said China's recovery of sovereignty over the South China Sea islands was carried out under international legal instruments such as the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, which required Japan to surrender territory it had seized illegally.

"A significant advancement in civilization after World War II was the recognition that acts of war and the use of force are generally illegal," Zhang said. "Territories, including the South China Sea islands seized by Japan from China through illegal means, cannot confer legitimate titles or rights and should revert to China."

He said China's efforts to reclaim these territories represent "a concrete practice of the postwar international order and rules embodied by the spirit of the UN Charter".

Anna Malindog-Uy, a professor with the Asian Century Philippines Strategic Studies Institute, said the South China Sea is "relatively peaceful, stable and secure, except for the Philippines-China bilateral relations" over the waters.



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Zhang Shi'ao, assistant research fellow at the Collaborative Innovation Center of South China Sea Studies at Nanjing University

"It's not necessarily because Filipinos want to quarrel with China," she said. "It's more about the foreign policy that is very much on the side of the United States. And the United States is pushing and pushing, maximizing this kind of foreign policy that is patterned after the United States' foreign policy."

Malindog-Uy said Washington sees China as its main competitor, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, and seeks to weaken China through potential military conflicts over the South China Sea or Taiwan, similar to how it challenges Russia in Europe through Ukraine. Under President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, she said, the Philippines — heavily reliant on the United States — was positioned as a proxy in conflicts with China.

She said that China's claims to sovereignty over the South China Sea are better supported by historical documents and international law, noting that Chinese vessels were navigating the sea 2,000 years ago during precolonial times.

Other claimant states such as the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei, however, cite the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. That convention, which China also ratified, gives countries exclusive rights to explore and exploit resources within 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from their coastlines. Malindog-Uy noted the convention concerns resource rights, not sovereignty.

"To be frank, the problem in the South China Sea cannot be resolved anytime soon," she said, adding that multilateral efforts are vital for managing disputes and easing tensions.

She emphasized the importance of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in advancing a code of conduct that is recognized and observed by all nations.

Paddle pal



A dog faithfully accompanies its owner, paddleboarder Zhang Cong, throughout the entire race at the 2025 Hubei Paddleboard Open, which is held at the Pengqi Lake in Wuhan, Hubei province on Saturday. ZHU XIYONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Xia Yuhe shines bright



The upgraded version of the "Xia Yuhe" light installation, featuring an AI voice interaction system and emitting the scent of lotus flowers, captivates tourists on the shore of Daming Lake in Jinan, Shandong province, on Saturday evening. Xia Yuhe is a character from the famous TV drama *My Fair Princess* created by Chinese romance novelist and screenwriter Qiong Yao. WANG HANBING / FOR CHINA DAILY

First ultra-zero carbon facility debuts

By HOU LIQIANG
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An innovative structure capable of achieving 100 percent green energy consumption was unveiled on Sunday in Qingdao, Shandong province, making it the world's first ultra-zero carbon building, according to State broadcaster China Central Television.

The building goes beyond traditional green energy solutions by incorporating photovoltaic power generation, an energy storage system that uses retired power batteries and a vehicle-to-building power supply.

Standing 117 meters tall with 23 floors of office space, the building serves as the headquarters of Teld New Energy Co — one of China's leading electric vehicle charging operators. The building's east, west and south facades are fitted with integrated photovoltaic glass curtain walls that provide about 25 percent of the building's daily electricity use of roughly 6,000 kilowatt-hours,

cutting carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 500 metric tons annually.

A specially designed power supply system allows the building to use direct current directly, avoiding losses typically caused by converting DC to alternating current.

At its base, the facility houses 14 retired electric vehicle batteries to address the intermittence of solar power. The storage system holds surplus photovoltaic energy as well as unconsumed clean grid energy during off-peak hours at the cost of 0.22 yuan per kWh for use during peak demand or cloudy days. It is equipped with a safety management system that automatically drops risky batteries into a water pool when a fire hazard is detected.

Zhao Yue, a researcher with the China Center for Information Industry Development, said the energy system establishes a new model for zero-carbon buildings by offering a viable way to recycle power batteries.

The broadcaster also reported that nearly 24,000 micro-sensors,

equipped with facial recognition, enhance the building's digital system. The system activates lights and air conditioning when employees arrive and shuts them off when they leave, promoting conservation.

Yu Dexiang, chairman of Teld New Energy Co, said green electricity consumption alone reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 2,500 tons annually, while the digital system further improves energy efficiency and cuts costs by about 30 percent.

The building also features vehicle-to-building power supply technology. Robots automatically align electric vehicles in designated areas for parking and connect them to the power system, allowing them to supply electricity to the building.

Zhao said the smart energy management system can help the grid ease peak consumption and improve reliability.

"It possesses off-grid operational capability, ensuring an uninterrupted power supply for critical loads," he said.

Family's care of Soviet war hero's grave testament to enduring postwar bonds

By TAN YINGZI
and DENG RUI in Chongqing

In a park located in the heart of Wanzhou district in Chongqing, a quiet cemetery stands as a poignant symbol of the enduring bond between China and the former Soviet Union. There lies Grigory Arimovich Kurichenko (1903-1939), a Soviet air force hero whose bravery and sacrifice during World War II left an indelible mark on the Chinese people — especially on a devoted mother and her son who volunteered in succession to serve as the tomb's caretakers for nearly seven decades.

"This is a responsibility, a gesture of gratitude and a testament to the conscience of the Chinese people," said 71-year-old Wei Yingxiang, the second-generation tomb guardian and guide of the Martyr Kurichenko's Cemetery.

Kurichenko, commander of a Soviet Union air squadron, led a daring mission against the invading Japanese forces on Oct 14, 1939. The skies above China were his battlefield, where he fought valiantly, downing six enemy aircraft.

However, his plane became critically unbalanced, and as he flew over Wanzhou, a crash seemed inevitable. Steering away from populated areas, he chose to land on the Yangtze River, saving his comrades but ultimately losing his own life to the river's unforgiving currents. He was 36 years old.

The soldier's heroism and sacrifice deeply moved the local people. A few days later, they recovered his body and held a grand memorial in his honor. Among those present was Tan Zhonghui, a local woman who felt a profound calling upon seeing the hero laid to rest. She vowed to care for his grave.

In 1958, the local government officially recognized Kurichenko's contribution by establishing a dedicated cemetery. Tan became its first official guardian. Her son, Wei Yingxiang, often accompanied his



Wei Yingxiang wipes Grigory Arimovich Kurichenko's bronze statue at the Martyr Kurichenko's Cemetery in Chongqing during last year's Tomb Sweeping Day. RAN MENGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

mother to the cemetery, learned about Kurichenko and grew to understand the deep gratitude his family had for the war hero.

When Tan retired in 1977, Wei took up the mantle. Every morning before heading to work, he tended to the cemetery by cleaning the grounds, maintaining the headstone and planting trees, just as his mother had done before him. When visitors arrive, especially young people, he shares stories of Kurichenko's heroism with them.

Tan's and Wei's dedication did not go unnoticed. Their story was frequently featured in newspapers, on television and online, with people praising both Kurichenko's heroic deeds and the unwavering commitment of the mother and son.

In 2010, through a Chinese TV program, Wei connected with Kurichenko's granddaughter and they talked via a video call during the program, where Wei reaffirmed his commitment to honoring her grandfather's memory. His efforts were also immortalized in the film *A Promise to the Kurichenko's*.

According to Kurichenko's family, he once expressed that he felt the

suffering of the Chinese people as deeply as he felt the suffering of his own countrymen.

In 2009, Kurichenko was posthumously awarded as one of the "100 heroic model figures who made outstanding contributions to the founding of new China" by 11 departments, including the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

Now, as the trees planted by Tan cast their shade over Kurichenko's grave, they stand as living symbols of the legacy she and her son have nurtured.

"He sacrificed his precious life for us. If I had another lifetime, I would continue to stand by him. Even a century would not be too long to be his guardian," Wei said, dedicating himself to guarding the tomb for as long as he lives.

Wei is mentoring a guide to take over his duties in the future, ensuring that the ideals of peace and friendship represented by Kurichenko's sacrifice continue to be carried forward.

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Ticket stubs give boost to economy

NANCHANG — At halftime of a soccer league match in Jiangxi province, spectator Li Zide unexpectedly learned that his ticket could get him half off the usual price of indoor skiing at a nearby scenic spot.

"I'd always thought winter sports were expensive, but this discount was the perfect chance to give it a try," he said. The next day, Li headed straight to the spot to give skiing a go.

The 2025 Jiangxi City Football Super League kicked off in mid-July, attracting fans from across the country.

"Most spectators are young people and families. They are exactly our target customers," said Liu Xin, a staff member at Jiangxi's Wugong Mountain scenic area.

The site has seen a surge in visitors after offering discounts to holders of soccer match tickets.

"Many come directly after matches to enjoy activities such as barbecues, stream trekking, fruit picking and camping. Our revenues have grown noticeably," Liu revealed.

Today, ticket stubs are far more than just simple mementos, instead serving to fuel the rise of the "ticket-stub economy" — a model in which tickets from transportation services, cultural and tourism activities, and sports events are able to be used to enjoy discounts, redeem points or unlock other benefits in the course of subsequent spending.

"The ticket stub economy links separate tourism, transportation and commercial scenarios — turning one purchase into a chain of spending," said Zhou Yongbo, a professor of tourism management at Soochow University.

Concertgoer Xu Lei experienced this phenomenon first-hand in Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi.

"I was surprised to find I could get discounts at more than 60 restaurants with my concert ticket. These bonus surprises made me want to stay longer," he said.

Jiangxi is not alone. In 2024, Shanghai trialled a ticket-stub program during an exhibition at the Shanghai Museum, giving visitors discounts on shopping and dining experiences. Official data showed that the event generated tens of billions of yuan in spending.

In May this year, Shanghai rolled out an action plan to promote the ticket-stub economy, encouraging malls and scenic spots to offer discounts to holders of exhibition or event tickets.

During this year's Beijing International Film Festival, ticket holders enjoyed discounts at 1,100 businesses in over 30 commercial districts, attracting 76.66 million visits and driving 25.17 billion yuan (\$3.51 billion) in spending.

Data from Chinese travel services platform Qunar shows that a single ticket can generate secondary spending worth as much as twice the ticket price, and ticket stubs can help tourists save an average of 15 to 30 percent on related expenses.

As the ticket-stub economy fuels waves of consumption, the industry is also exploring ways to ensure its long-term growth.

According to Zhou Jianjun, a professor at the College of Finance and Statistics at Hunan University, governments can use policy tools such as tax breaks and subsidies to lower the cost of merchant participation, as well as establish cross-industry collaboration platforms to clarify the rules.

Zhou Yongbo also suggested enhancing ticket stub design to make them into collectible souvenirs and adopting anti-counterfeiting technologies such as blockchain to prevent misuse.

"Most importantly, the development of the ticket-stub economy should be rooted in local characteristics, in order to enhance its competitiveness," he added.