TWO SESSIONS

'Porcelain capital' of the nation bridges the world

By **ZHAO RUINAN**
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Jingdezhen porcelain has long been an important cultural symbol through which the world has come to know China and through which China reaches out to the world. Today, the city is using small "China" to tell the story of big "China", presenting Chinese cultural confidence with greater openness and confidence, said Hu Xuemei, Party secretary of Jingdezhen and a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress.

During a visit to Jingdezhen in 2023, President Xi Jinping stressed that ceramics were a treasure of Chinese culture and an important hallmark of Chinese civilization, and urged the city to make the "thousand-year-old porcelain capital" an even brighter calling card.

Since then, Jingdezhen has taken the construction of the national experimental zone for ceramic culture inheritance and innovation as its overarching framework, working to build a new platform for international cultural exchange, Hu said.

"We have always kept in mind the important instruction to build Jingdezhen into a new platform for international cultural exchange. Using porcelain as a bridge, we are telling the story of China through ceramic culture with greater confidence and openness," she added.

That effort is increasingly visible in the city's engagement with the outside world. Jingdezhen now maintains friendly ties with more than 180 cities in over 70 countries. In 2025, it carried out 16 international cultural exchange events in countries including Turkiye and Italy, covering culture, tourism, trade, sister-city cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

The city has also built stronger platforms at home. Since 2004, the China Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo has grown into one of its flagship events. During last year's event, Jingdezhen launched the 1819 Ceramic Carnival, combining exhibitions with float parades, markets and performances that took ceramic culture into the streets and the city's daily life.

The carnival attracted 480,000 visits, generated 570 million yuan ($82 million) in on-site transactions, and drove 2.73 billion yuan in related consumption.

"Ceramics are a world language and a messenger of culture," Hu said. "They play a unique role in promoting mutual understanding and mutual learning among civilizations."

The results have also extended beyond exhibitions. The city's official ceramic flagship stores, after expanding from Dubai to Istanbul, have grown to more than 55 online and offline outlets both at home and abroad, with annual sales revenue reaching 228 million yuan, up 60.56 percent year-on-year.

Hu Xuemei

The openness has also made Jingdezhen a magnet for artists from around the world. French ceramic artist Manon Valle returned to the city for the third time during the 2025 ceramic expo, joining its artist-in-residence community.

She said Jingdezhen offers a rare place where artists from different cultures can meet, work and grow together.

"It's really important to meet people who are not from your own culture. It allows us to grow," Valle said.

Hu stressed that Jingdezhen's growing international appeal is rooted in something deeper: cultural heritage protection.

As one of the world's rare living ceramic heritage complexes, Jingdezhen preserves a complete traditional porcelain-making system linking raw materials, workshops, kiln sites and urban neighborhoods. In recent years, the city has brought 247 protected cultural relic units and heritage zones covering 75 square kilometers under systematic conservation.

More than 420 newly identified immovable cultural relics have been discovered, and the Jingdezhen kiln site complex from the Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties was selected as one of China's major archaeological discoveries in 2024.

"We must protect ceramic culture through inheritance and carry it forward through innovation," Hu said. In Jingdezhen, protection and opening-up are not contradictory, she added. "They reinforce each other. Rooted in a thousand-year ceramic tradition, the city is continuing to connect with the world while keeping its cultural roots alive."

A logistics worker packs a large ceramic water vat with a wooden frame at a logistics center at Jingdezhen's Taobocheng, Jiangxi province, on Nov 7. LIU ZHANKUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Capturing the session

Mediapersons in action during the second plenary meeting of the fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

China a key 'stabilizer' for global economy

Country can sustain supply chain, rein in inflationary pressures, expert says

By **ZHOU LANXU**
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China, with its stable supply capacity and rising manufacturing productivity, can be a "stabilizer" for the global economy as geopolitical conflicts send oil prices zooming and raise inflation fears, a senior Chinese economist said.

On the demand front, China has made significant progress in boosting consumption and investment, while further efforts are needed to lower financing costs and strengthen livelihood support for migrant workers and young graduates, said Zhang Bin, deputy director at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics.

"China is the biggest stabilizer for price, as without China, global manufacturer prices will be totally different," Zhang said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

Zhang, who is also a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, made the comments as the global economy is facing increasing turbulence due to conflicts and supply disruptions. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, surged above $110 per barrel on Monday, as supply disruptions in the Middle East rattled energy markets.

Against such uncertainty, China's manufacturing sector is poised to continue providing reasonably priced products for the global supply chain, given the sector's stable productivity growth, thus helping anchor global inflationary pressures, Zhang said.

China's key role in stabilizing the global economy is making renminbi-denominated financial assets more attractive to global investors, he added.

Zhang Bin

Marshall Mills, the International Monetary Fund's senior resident representative in China, said the country contributed about 30 percent to global economic growth last year.

"Strong growth in China will continue this substantial contribution," said Mills, adding that bolder reforms to boost domestic consumption would make growth more resilient.

Zhang said China has made notable progress in expanding domestic demand since late 2024. Stronger stock market performance, a firmer renminbi exchange rate and stabilization in total social financing all indicate improving expectations and confidence for demand expansion.

However, real-economy indicators such as growth in consumption and investment remain sluggish, Zhang added.

"Combining all the information together, I will say the Chinese economy is at the early stage of recovery. We still need to wait for the confidence to be translated into more investment, income growth and consumption."

For consumption in particular, Zhang said his research shows that more than 80 percent of China's household consumption growth can be explained by changes in nominal GDP growth, with income distribution and propensity to consume playing a smaller role.

For investment, he said the challenge is that some private enterprises see relatively low profit margins in making investments, or that the overall return on assets compared to financing costs remains limited.

All these factors point to the need to strengthen counter-cyclical adjustments, including a more proactive fiscal policy and more "brave" monetary easing moves, including interest rate cuts, he said.

Further rate cuts, on the one hand, could improve the profitability of investments and spur more private investments. On the other hand, asset valuations would be further improved, helping households repair their balance sheets and strengthening their spending power, Zhang said.

"To increase household consumption, counter-cyclical adjustments would be the number one, or the most important, policy choice," he said, adding that reforms should also be advanced to improve income distribution.

Zhang suggested local governments take more active measures to retain young graduates and migrant workers and help them settle down with families by improving their access to housing, education, healthcare and elderly care services.

Providing tax incentives or fiscal support for such services could expand the tax base and generate long-term economic returns, said Zhang, who also suggested lowering entry barriers in such sectors to encourage greater participation from private and social capital.

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Green push gathers pace in modern shipping

By **ZHANG XIAOMIN**
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Boasting the world's largest maritime fleet, China should make its sea transport not only stronger but also smarter and greener, according to a national political adviser.

Li Ying, a professor at Dalian Maritime University, emphasized the crucial role of maritime transport in global trade, noting that it accounts for 80 percent of international cargo transportation.

"For a country to grow strong, its transport, especially maritime transport, must first be strengthened," she said on the sidelines of the fourth session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Li conducted extensive research on green shipping along China's coastline in 2025, advising authorities to promote the coordinated development of green shipping and ecological protection.

Her suggestions focus on fostering new quality productive forces in green shipping and enhancing innovation capabilities.

During a recent visit to a port in Zhejiang province, Li was impressed by the efficiency of a 20,000-TEU container ship. "The captain proudly mentioned that one voyage could carry enough goods to supply a city of 5 million people for the special purchases for the Chinese New Year," she said.

According to her, China's shipbuilding industry has achieved significant milestones, including the successful construction of aircraft carriers, large liquefied natural gas carriers, and high-end cruise ships, marking a breakthrough in the high-end shipbuilding sector.

In addition, by installing sensing devices and integrated management systems, ships are now equipped with "eyes and brains", enabling real-time data sharing between ships and shores. "This automation has streamlined navigation, making long-distance voyages more efficient and safer for sailors," she said.

Meanwhile, China is accelerating the development of green ports and eco-friendly vessels. Eight ports, including Tianjin and Qingdao in Shandong province, are piloting near-zero carbon operations.

Ports are transitioning from oil-based to green electricity-powered operations, while new orders for green ships now account for 70 percent of the global market. Methanol-fueled dual-fuel ships are already in service, and projects for ammonia-fueled and fully electric vessels are underway, she added.

Looking ahead, Li expressed optimism about the future of China's maritime transport industry. "More technological advancements will be applied to shipping routes and ports. Digital empowerment will enhance the safety and resilience of maritime corridors, while integrated intelligent vessels will make navigation more enjoyable," she said.

Transportation links help Baishan grow

By **LIU MINGTAI** in Changchun and **ZHOU HUIYING**

Baishan city in Northeast China's Jilin province is pursuing a major development leap through transportation breakthroughs, expanding space for external cooperation and advancing high-quality economic and social development.

"Baishan is fully leveraging the synergistic effects of the dual-line connectivity of the Shenyang-Baihe High-speed Railway and the G331 Border Tourism Corridor, accelerating the construction of a modern, integrated and efficient transportation system while expanding new space for external cooperation," said Xiang Hui, Party secretary of Baishan and a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress.

During the Spring Festival holiday, Baishan's tourism market thrived, attracting 1.42 million domestic tourists who spent 1.51 billion yuan ($218 million), marking year-on-year increases of 31.17 percent and 24.16 percent, respectively.

Xiang Hui

During the first National Day holiday after the Shenyang-Baihe High-speed Railway began operating in 2025, major scenic spots in Baishan saw a surge in visitors.

Jilin Lushuihe National Forest Park, renowned for its ancient Korean pine forests and the unique "winter rafting" experience on non-freezing mineral springs surrounded by rime ice, received 15,500 tourists, nearly doubling year-on-year. The hotel occupancy rates of two resorts at Changbai Mountain exceeded 90 percent.

The convenience of high-speed rail has further boosted Baishan's appeal during the 2025-26 snow season, with the Yangtze River Delta becoming a major source of tourists. Visitors from Shanghai, Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces accounted for over 65 percent of arrivals.

Capitalizing on the increased passenger flow brought by high-speed rail, Baishan explored the intangible cultural heritage of Changbai Mountain's ginseng harvesting customs and hosted a series of related events.

"These activities have promoted the deep integration of the ginseng industry with tourism, creating unique offerings such as ginseng culture experiential tours, study tours and wellness tours," Xiang said.

In 2025, the total output value of Baishan's ginseng industry chain reached 26.32 billion yuan, a 29 percent year-on-year increase. The city's standardized ginseng cultivation rate has exceeded 90 percent, with 14 new varieties developed and more than 200 germplasm resources collected.

Baishan has introduced and cultivated 15 well-known ginseng enterprises and other leading companies, developing more than 800 deep-processed products.

With high-speed rail helping expand the ginseng market nationwide, the annual transaction volume at the Changbai Mountain Ginseng Market in Wanliang township, Fusong county, has remained stable at more than 6 billion yuan.

A Fuxing high-speed train runs along the Baishan section of the Shenyang-Baihe High-speed Railway on Jan 13. YANG BAOSEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Baishan has fully implemented the special reform tasks set by the province to promote the high-quality development of the ginseng industry," Xiang said. "The full operation of the high-speed railway has integrated Baishan into the national high-speed rail network, making business exchanges more convenient, product distribution more efficient and resource aggregation smoother."

"A prosperous border leads to a stable frontier, and wealthy border residents ensure a secure border defense. Baishan has always regarded border stability and prosperity as a fundamental political responsibility and goal," he added.

"The full connectivity of the G331 Border Tourism Corridor has integrated resources, stimulated the economy and significantly enhanced Baishan's geographical advantages, opening a new pattern for high-quality development in border areas."

Baishan has also strengthened the digital economy in border areas, establishing six new e-commerce demonstration villages and eight livestreaming bases to help boost local businesses and raise residents' incomes. Meanwhile, with 381 million yuan in integrated funding, the city has implemented 89 key projects to enhance the port economy and expand opening-up.

"Baishan will leverage the combined advantages of the Shenyang-Baihe High-speed Railway and the G331 Border Tourism Corridor," Xiang said. "We will continue to strengthen leading industries, including cultural tourism, pharmaceutical health, green food, clean energy and new materials, while actively developing emerging and future industries."

"By achieving major transportation breakthroughs, Baishan aims to drive new development leaps and secure a strong start to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period," he added.

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