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# CHINA DAILY

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Officials attend on Thursday in Dandong, Liaoning province, the opening ceremony of a new bridge on the Yalu River linking China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. PAN YULONG / XINHUA

## Li calls for closer China-DPRK ties at bridge opening

By **ZHAO JIA** in Beijing
and **WU YONG** in Shenyang

An image captured by a drone on Thursday shows the double-pylon cable-stayed Yalu River bridge, which features a 28.5-meter-wide deck designed for two-way traffic. PAN YULONG / XINHUA

The new Yalu River bridge linking China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will become a new landmark symbolizing the traditional friendship between the two nations, Premier Li Qiang said on Thursday, expressing the hope that Beijing and Pyongyang will seize the opportunity presented by the project to continue enhancing connectivity and exploring potential for cooperation in border areas.

He made the remarks in a video address delivered to a joint inauguration ceremony held for the bridge, which connects Dandong in Northeast China's Liaoning province with Sinuiju in the DPRK's North Pyongan Province.

Pak Thae-song, premier of the DPRK Cabinet, also delivered a video address to the event.

Li described the bridge as a major cross-border infrastructure project advanced with the joint care and support of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and Kim Jong-un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea.

China and the DPRK are friendly socialist neighbors linked by mountains and rivers, Li said, adding that under the strategic guidance of the top leaders of the two parties and countries, bilateral relations are entering a new stage and opening a new chapter.

During his state visit to the DPRK in June, Xi said that no matter how the international situation evolves, the firm stance of China's Party and government on highly valuing the China-DPRK traditional friendship will not change; the firm support for Kim in leading the DPRK's socialist cause will not change; and the firm commitment to safeguarding the common interests of the two countries and preserving a favorable strategic environment will not change.

Li said that China stands ready to work with the DPRK to implement the important consensus reached by the two top leaders, strengthen strategic communication, consolidate political mutual trust, expand practical cooperation and enhance coordination in multilateral affairs. These efforts will further deepen bilateral relations and bring greater benefits to both peoples, he added.

According to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the total value of bilateral trade in 2025 reached $2.735 billion, with $2.295 billion in Chinese exports to the DPRK and $440 million in imports.

The opening of the new bridge follows the resumption of other cross-border transportation services earlier this year.

On March 12, international passenger trains linking Beijing and Dandong with Pyongyang resumed, with daily services launched between Dandong and Pyongyang. Air China restored passenger flights between Beijing and Pyongyang later that month.

Dandong boasts China's largest border trade port with the DPRK. The new four-lane, cable-stayed road bridge starts in the Dandong New Area, about 12 kilometers downstream from the Yalu River Broken Bridge and the China-DPRK Friendship Bridge.

Construction work for the new bridge, both funded and built by China, began in December 2010 and was completed in October 2014.

Although the China-DPRK Friendship Bridge caters to both rail and road traffic, it is designed for trucks weighing no more than 20 metric tons and allows only one-way road traffic at any given point of time. The newly opened bridge is designed to carry more load and allows two-way traffic.

Lyu Chao, director of Liaoning University's Institute of American and East Asian Studies, said the new transportation link will help ease bottlenecks in bilateral trade and lay the groundwork for deeper economic cooperation.

Growing freight demand has put increasing pressure on the China-DPRK Friendship Bridge, Lyu said, adding that the new bridge's direct link with Northeast China's expressway network will allow trucks to bypass downtown Dandong, improving transportation efficiency, lowering logistics costs and easing urban traffic congestion.

Kim Ye-rim, a DPRK student who joined Chinese language studies at Liaodong University in spring this year, said the new bridge is a vital link in the traditional friendship between the two countries and a symbol of their economic cooperation and prosperity.

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## Do differences cause conflict? Confucius disagrees

WORLD WATCH
By Igor Radev

Many have argued that in the contest among civilizational narratives unfolding in the first quarter of the 21st century, Samuel Huntington's thesis of the "clash of civilizations" proved "fitter" than Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" claim.

The cutting edge of Huntington's argument lay in the assertion that following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the conflicts of the future would be generated, for the most part, not by ideological, economic, or geopolitical contradictions of interest, but by civilizational differences. The very fact that Huntington used the word "civilization" in the plural is significant. It challenges the Western tendency to treat "civilization" as singular and synonymous with the West.

Huntington's idea can be traced to the Calvinist influence in the American project, dating back to the Puritan 17th century, which promulgated the thesis of "election based upon double predestination". Its modern secular iteration is the myth of "American exceptionalism".

To illustrate the Western inability to come to terms with the civilizational "other", I recall an old Zoroastrian creation story from the *Bundahišn*. This ancient Iranian religion is dualistic, since, unlike many other religious traditions, it postulates two uncreated metaphysical principles: the Good One — Ahura Mazda — or God, and the Evil One — Angra Mainyu or the Devil. There is an intriguing asymmetry between these two powers. Ahura Mazda is eternally aware of the existence of Angra Mainyu. However, Angra Mainyu only becomes aware of anything beyond himself upon the creation of the world.

When Ahura Mazda creates the world, Angra Mainyu encounters something other than himself for the first time. His response is destruction: he seeks to eliminate this "other" and the world it represents.

This story has a profound ethical lesson: Evil is characterized by an inability to accept the existence of anything different from itself, thus equating the very fact of difference with inevitable conflict.

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# Scholars look to future of archaeology

Shanxi academic forum reflects on origins and long trajectory of Chinese civilization

By **WANG RU** and **ZHU XINGXIN**
in Yuncheng, Shanxi

Drawing on a century of archaeological experience in China, lessons learned from past excavations should illuminate the future, guiding the discipline forward with renewed purpose, scholars said at the 5th Congress of Chinese Archaeology, which opened on Thursday in Yuncheng, Shanxi province.

The theme for this year's three-day event, one of the highest-level academic forums for archaeological studies in China, is "The history and future of archaeology".

Chen Xingcan, chairman of the Society for Chinese Archaeology, said the theme of this year's congress calls for looking back on history, paying tribute to elder generations of archaeologists, consolidating the disciplinary foundation rooted in present-day practice, and charting a new chapter for archaeology going forward.

The choice of Yuncheng as the venue for this grand event is itself a tribute to the starting point of a century of Chinese archaeology. Exactly 100 years ago, in October 1926, archaeologist Li Ji (1896-1979), who is regarded as the father of Chinese archaeology, broke ground with his spade at the Xiyin site in Xiaxian county, Yuncheng. The Neolithic site dates from 5,200 to 6,000 years ago.

That single spadeful of earth opened a new chapter in history — the first modern scientific archaeological excavation independently led by a Chinese scholar. Together with several other sites where archaeological efforts began in the 1920s, the Xiyin site has been recognized as part of the beginning of modern Chinese archaeology.

In May 2023, President Xi Jinping visited the Yuncheng Museum and called for further efforts to advance the national research project on tracing the origins of Chinese civilization and the historical research on this civilization, and to improve the capabilities of protecting and utilizing cultural relics and passing on Chinese cultural heritage.

Chen, the archaeology society chairman, said, "Today, we converge in Yuncheng to hold the congress, as a concrete endeavor of turning the spirit of President Xi's important instructions into academic practice."

Zheng Yuan, deputy director of the Shanxi Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, said in her keynote speech that from 1926 to 2026, the century-long research journey of the Xiyin site has been just like a mirror, clearly reflecting the development of China's archaeology.

"The year 1926 marked the starting point of self-directed research by Chinese scholars, which focused on collecting artifacts and understanding the stratigraphic layers (the soil, sediment and rock that have built up over time at an archaeological site) and dating of the site," Zheng said.

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A visitor takes a photo of a 500-year-old cypress tree at Ditan Park in Beijing on Oct 4. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

## *ANCIENT TREES OFFER LESSONS FROM THE PAST*

Lush trails show new way to explore Beijing, action plan aims to strengthen conservation effort

By **CHEN NAN**
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When Zhang Qingzi brought her 9-year-old daughter to Beijing's Beihai Park during the National Day holiday, she was merely looking to spend a day together outdoors. However, they found themselves standing beneath an ancient pine tree and talking about an emperor who lived more than two centuries ago.

Nearly 11 meters tall, the tree spreads its branches across 11 meters, while its trunk measures 1.1 meters in diameter at breast height. Legend has it that Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) rested in its shade during one summer visit and gave the pine the honorary title "Zheyin Hou", meaning shade-giving marquis.

For Zhang and her daughter, history suddenly seemed less distant. "Trees in textbooks can feel abstract. Seeing an ancient tree in person makes learning fun," she said.

Their visit was part of a new way of exploring the Chinese capital — one that puts some of Beijing's "oldest residents" at the center of the journey. On Sept 23, the city launched a program called "I See Ancient Trees in Beijing", featuring 10 routes through parks, historic sites and neighborhoods with food, shopping and cultural experiences.

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Executing the green vision
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