

CHINA

China slams US' tariff hike justification

Experts say fentanyl issue groundless as efforts have been made to tackle it

By WANG QINGYUN
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China has made relentless efforts and gained significant achievements in its fight against fentanyl and other illicit drugs, and it's groundless for the United States to use the fentanyl issue to justify tariff hikes, officials and experts said.

China has some of the strictest and most thoroughly implemented drug control policies in the world, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Security said, adding that China, also a state party to three United Nations drug control conventions, has cooperated actively with the US and other countries to tackle illicit drugs.

The spokesperson made the remarks after the US announced its decision to levy a 10 percent additional tariff on imports from China, citing the fentanyl issue as a reason.

Voicing strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the reasoning, the spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday that China has conducted extensive and pragmatic drug-control cooperation with the US in recent years.

Both sides have seen progress in substance scheduling, intelligence exchange, the cracking of specific cases and other fields, the spokesperson said, taking note of China's scheduling the entire class of fentanyl-related substances in 2019.

As requested by the US, the scheduling was a goodwill gesture that was made even though there was no large-scale abuse of fentanyl-related substances in China, the spokesperson said.

The move made China the first country in the world to schedule the entire class of the substances.

Li Wenjun, a professor of the People's Public Security University of China, said by scheduling the entire class, China has placed under strict control the production, sales and use of fentanyl-related substances.

The scheduling has effectively targeted a variety of "designer drugs", synthetic drugs with slightly modified chemical structures that are invented to escape regulation, Li said.

Since the scheduling, China has not received reports from the US about seizures of fentanyl-related substances originating from China, the spokesperson of the Minis-

try of Public Security said. The US, in contrast, hasn't created a permanent schedule of the entire class of the substances, the spokesperson said.

China and the US stepped up their collaboration to combat illicit drugs last year, leading to a series of meetings between both sides.

In November last year, delegations from the two countries attended the 10th China-US Bilateral Drug Intelligence Working Group Meeting in Shanghai.

During the meeting, they had in-depth exchanges and agreed to strengthen dialogue and communication on the basis of mutual respect, management of differences and mutually beneficial cooperation, according to the Office of China National Narcotics Control Commission.

In January 2024, the two countries launched the China-US Counternarcotics Working Group, which had its first senior officials' meeting six months later in Washington.

China has also strengthened its regulation of illicit drugs over the past year. It added as many as 46 substances into its controlled drug list in July, and regulated seven chemicals in September.

China ranks among the best countries in the world in its response to drug-related crimes, but the issue of fentanyl abuse in the US cannot be resolved by only relying on China to improve its own drug regulation policies, said Li.

Wang Ruiyuan, an associate professor of the Criminal Investigation Police University of China, said the root of the US' fentanyl crisis lies in its long-term drug abuse issue.

Wang, a researcher in anti-drug studies, said China, which has not seen large-scale abuse of fentanyl, has shown great sincerity in its cooperation with the US to address the fentanyl crisis.

The US, on the other hand, is politicizing the drug issue and using it as a "playing card" to serve its tariff policies, Wang said, adding that the move will hurt the foundation of its counternarcotics cooperation with China.

The issue of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, is a challenge for all humanity that requires collaboration among different countries, Wang said, adding that one will only hamper such collaboration by blaming others for its own problems.

Paying tribute



Children honor renowned Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Du Fu during a ceremony at the Du Fu Thatched Cottage Museum in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Tuesday. It has become a custom for locals to visit the museum and commemorate the poet during Chinese New Year.

HUA XIAOFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hikers climbing Taishan find ideal companion in robot weighing 1.8kg

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
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For 23-year-old Zhao Xiangcai, a college student from Tai'an, Shandong province, climbing Taishan Mountain — a popular scenic spot in Shandong known for its steep terrain that features over 7,000 steps — had always been a daunting challenge. But this Spring Festival, his experience was transformed by an innovative exoskeleton robot.

"It felt like the robot was doing most of the work for me, and climbing was so much easier," Zhao said.

"I simply pressed a few buttons under the guidance of the staff, and it automatically adjusted to my walking pace. This was so easy and cool," he added.

Weighing just 1.8 kilograms, the device was developed through a collaboration between Taishan Cultural Tourism Group and Kenqing Technology, a company based in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. It is designed to assist users in climbing steep terrain with ease. Fitting snugly around the user's legs, the exoskeleton integrates advanced ergonomics, power electronics and AI algorithms to perceive movement, and provide instant assistance based on individual strides and terrain conditions.

With a single charge, it can operate for more than five hours and cover approximately 14 kilometers, making it an ideal companion for those who want to enjoy the mountain's scenic beauty without excessive physical strain.

The high-tech device debuted during the Spring Festival and quickly became popular among tourists of



A worker tests an exoskeleton robot while climbing Taishan Mountain in Shandong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

all ages, including elderly visitors, young adventurers and those with lower physical endurance.

More than 400,000 tourists visited the mountain during the holiday, and the exoskeleton received an enthusiastic response, said Wang Houzhe, deputy Party secretary of Taishan Cultural Tourism Group.

"The feedback has exceeded our expectations. Visitors are curious and excited about the technology. Many have even called to inquire about purchasing the robots for elderly family members or individuals with mobility impairments," he said.

Encouraged by the trial's success, Wang said the company plans to roll out 200 units by March and scale up to 3,000 by June. Until then, visitors can rent the robots for 60 yuan (\$8.27) to 80 yuan per session. Service points along the climbing route will provide battery replacements, maintenance and consultation. The robots, equipped

with GPS, are monitored closely by a management team.

Beyond mountain climbing, Wang said the exoskeletons have broader applications, including fitness, running, daily walking and navigating stairs at home or work. The robots are expected to be sold for less than 10,000 yuan each.

"I'd like to buy one for my grandparents, if the price is reasonable," Zhao said.

Taishan Mountain's tourism sector has been integrating advanced AI technology beyond the exoskeletons and previously introduced four-legged robotic dogs. The scenic area is developing smart audio guides equipped with GPS and AI technology to provide personalized explanations of landmarks.

According to a report by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, humanoid robots are poised to become the next major technology platform after personal computers, smartphones and new energy vehicles, potentially forming a trillion-yuan-level market.

The report said humanoid robots will help address labor shortages and challenges posed by aging populations, particularly in manufacturing and agriculture. They are also expected to reshape social services by taking on tasks traditionally performed by humans, including public services, household chores, logistics and security patrols.

Guo Yanqi contributed to this story.



Online
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Actress' death casts spotlight on flu risk

By WANG XIAOYU
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The sudden death of a renowned Taiwan actress has once again sounded the alarm on the life-threatening risks of influenza for vulnerable groups and people with preexisting illnesses, medical experts said.

Barbie Hsu — also known as "Big S" — who was famous for her leading role in the 2001 television drama *Meteor Garden*, died of flu-induced pneumonia during a recent family holiday in Japan, her younger sister Dee Hsu said in a statement released through her agent on Monday.

"She may have underestimated the severity of the flu," said Li Tongzeng, chief physician at the infectious disease department of Beijing YouAn Hospital, in a social media post on Monday evening. "People with underlying health conditions should receive antiviral treatment promptly after contracting the virus, get adequate rest, closely monitor their condition and seek hospitalization at the first signs of severe symptoms."

Barbie Hsu, 48, was believed to have had a history of heart disease, asthma and epilepsy. At the time of her visit, Japan was experiencing a surge in flu cases, local media reported.

"Implementing these preventive measures can be more challenging while traveling abroad," Li said. "Therefore, it is crucial to remind people with chronic illnesses that even at a young age, they are at risk of severe complications."

According to the latest influenza diagnosis and treatment guidelines released by China's top health authority, high-risk groups include children under age 5, adults 65 and older, cancer patients, people with obesity, pregnant or postpartum women, and individuals with chronic respiratory, cardiovascular, kidney or liver diseases.

"Close attention should be paid to these individuals," the guidelines said. "They should undergo nucleic acid tests and other necessary examinations, and receive antiviral treatment as soon as possible."

Ma Yanliang, chief physician at the respiratory and critical care department of Peking University People's Hospital, said in a social media post on Tuesday that influenza is significantly more dangerous than the common cold and causes 200,000 to 500,000 deaths globally each year.

"Flu infections can rapidly worsen chronic diseases, trigger inflammation and immune responses and even lead to heart failure, acute asthma attacks, diabetic ketoacidosis and other severe complications," she said.

Ma advised high-risk individuals to adopt strict personal protective measures and seek professional medical treatment without delay.

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Between heaven and earth,
together with other sentient beings, I live.

—Zhuangzi, philosopher, late fourth century BC

天地与我并生，而万物与我为一

—《庄子·齐物论》



华北豹
North China leopard

