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Vehicles wait to be shipped overseas at a loading dock in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Tuesday. In the first half of 2023, China's foreign trade reached 20.1 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion), up 2.1 percent year-on-year, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Foreign trade resilience seen

Officials, analysts say more policy support needed to cope with challenges

By **ZHONG NAN** and **OUYANG SHLJIA**

China's foreign trade is expected to withstand the challenges posed by a complex global environment and demonstrate hard-won resilience to bolster the country's economic growth in the second half of this year, government officials and analysts said on Thursday.

They also urged more policy support to cope with weakening external demand and potential risks, as global economic recovery remains sluggish, major developed economies are adopting contractionary policies, and various factors increase market instability and uncertainty.

In the first half of 2023, China's foreign trade reached 20.1 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion), up 2.1 percent year-on-year, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

In dollar terms, total foreign trade came in at \$2.92 trillion during the period, down 4.7 percent year-on-year.

While concerns have been raised about the growth rate of China's foreign trade, Lyu Daliang, director-general of the administration's statistics and analysis department, said the government remains confi-

dent in the overall stability of the sector. This confidence is supported by positive indicators such as second-quarter readings, as well as growth observed on a quarter-on-quarter or month-on-month basis in the data for May and June.

Lyu said the cumulative effect of China's unwavering commitment to openness and its proactive efforts to advance international economic and trade cooperation is now becoming evident, driving both the economic growth and the stability of foreign trade in terms of scale and structure. "This is the first time in history that China's foreign trade value has exceeded 20 trillion yuan during a half-year period," he said, stressing that China is capable of consolidating its market share and maintaining its position as the world's largest goods trading nation in 2023.

Guan Tao, global chief economist at BOC International, predicted that China's around 5 percent GDP growth target for the whole year can be accomplished through the implementation of effective fiscal policies and the ongoing optimization of Chinese exporters' industrial structure and products portfolio.

"The stability of the foreign trade sector plays a crucial role in driving China's annual economic growth," said Wu Haiping, director-general

of the GACs' department of general operation.

Looking ahead to the second half of the year, the cumulative year-on-year growth rate of export value in the third quarter is likely to remain at a lower level, while a modest upward trend is expected in the fourth quarter, said Zheng Houcheng, chief macro economist at Yingda Securities Co Ltd.

According to Guan, from BOC International, China will benefit from several advantageous conditions in the medium to long term. The country's rapid industrialization and urbanization, coupled with significant growth in its human capital market, contribute to its immense potential.

As China embarks on an era of innovation-led growth, the acceleration of technological progress becomes increasingly vital in sustaining a prolonged period of robust economic expansion, Guan said. These factors underscore the significant potential that lies ahead for China.

For instance, driven by three major tech-intensive green products — solar batteries, lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicles — China's exports of electro-mechanical products increased 6.3 percent on a yearly basis to 6.66 trillion yuan in the first half, accounting for 58.2 percent of its total exports, Customs data showed.

As China's yuan-denominated for-

ign trade declined by 6 percent year-on-year to 3.89 trillion yuan in June and its yuan-denominated exports dropped by 8.3 percent year-on-year, Zhou Maohua, an analyst at China Everbright Bank, said the government should use more flexible adjustments and support measures to alleviate difficulties and promote the steady and healthy growth of foreign trade as the next step.

Li Dawei, a researcher at the Academy of Macroeconomic Research in Beijing, said that further enhancement of foreign trade growth relies on bolstering the core competitiveness of export products and better meeting the demands of overseas customers. Li also said China needs to accelerate the transformation and upgrading of industries by promoting green, digital and intelligent initiatives.

Wang Yongxiang, vice-president of Zoomlion Heavy Industry Science and Technology Co, a Changsha, Hunan province-based engineering equipment manufacturer, said his company will adopt a "go green" approach to further reduce carbon emissions and save on the cost of diesel fuel. Many domestic manufacturers have accelerated the pace of developing electric-powered construction machinery to secure an increased share in overseas markets, Wang added.

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Beijing eyes stability of region in Jakarta talks

By **ZHANG YUNBI** zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Securing stability in the East Asia region and ruling out disturbance from some countries outside the region were high on the agenda of a slew of bilateral and multilateral meetings attended by senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi on Thursday.

Wang, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, is in Jakarta, Indonesia, to attend the annual ASEAN-Plus Foreign Ministers' Meetings — a series of meetings involving the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus countries including China, the United States, Japan and Russia.

On the sidelines, Wang also held bilateral talks with senior diplomats from countries including the US and Russia on Thursday.

Wang's talk with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was their second meeting within a month. The two also met on June 19 during Blinken's visit to China.

Wang stressed the importance of taking tangible steps to put China-US ties back on track. He said the US needs to translate into reality the series of commitments made by President Joe Biden, work toward the same goal with China, advance consultation on the guiding principles for their ties, and

expand communication channels on foreign affairs and security.

Wang also stated China's solemn position on the Taiwan question and asked the US to stop suppressing China in the areas of economy, trade and technology.

The two sides also discussed conducting consultations on Asia-Pacific and maritime affairs, believed that their meeting was candid, pragmatic and constructive, and agreed to continue to communicate.

Wu Shicun, chairman of the Huayang Research Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance and founding president of the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, highlighted the urgency for Beijing and Washington to eliminate mistrust through talks.

"At present, taking effective measures to keep China-US ties relatively stable and prevent potential conflicts or crises from escalating is not only in line with the interests of both nations, but also serves the common expectation of the entire international community," he said.

In a meeting between Wang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, both sides voiced further support for ASEAN's central role in the region's cooperation architecture.

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CUSTOMERS BUY INTO HIGH-TECH CONSUMPTION

Industrial internet is helping manufacturers, retailers provide tailor-made products

By **FAN FEIFEI** fanfeifei@chinadaily.com.cn



Zhang Jing, 33, a middle school teacher from Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province, recently sent a customized air conditioner as a birthday gift to her calligraphy-loving father as a scorching heat wave hit many parts of North China.

With just a few taps on her mobile phone, she chose the functions, appearance and design her father likes.

Zhang said that once she placed the order with home appliance manufacturer Haier Group, the company began making the air conditioner, which also had her father's favorite phrase "Tian dao chou qin", or "God rewards the diligent", embossed on it.

"My father liked this birthday gift so much that he invited his friends

over for a look. The price of this personalized air conditioner was about 150 yuan (\$21) higher than a regular one with similar functions," she said.

Zhang is among the growing group of Chinese consumers who are driving surging demand for customized commodities and who want to have a bigger say in the design, features and functions of products.

Demand for these new products is being met by cutting-edge digital technologies that are reshaping the operations and strategies of Chinese manufacturers and online retailers.

See **Consumers**, page 2

Vision China studies influence of ancient culture on modern world

By **FANG AIQING, WANG RU, WANG KAIHAO** and **WU YONG** in Chaoyang, Liaoning

The place that witnessed the dawn of Chinese civilization more than 5,000 years ago, on Thursday hosted experts who gathered to explore the values the modern world could learn from the distant past.

The Vision China event, jointly organized by the National Cultural Heritage Administration, China Daily and the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Liaoning Provincial Committee, was held on Thursday in Chaoyang, Liaoning province.

Themed "Tracing the origins of Chinese civilization and passing it on to future generations", the event invited Chinese and foreign experts engaged in archaeological and historical research, civilization studies and cultural heritage protection to share their insights on Hongshan



(From left) Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Guo Dashun, An Laishun, Mehri Madarshahi, Jia Xiaobing, Alan Macfarlane, Zhang Jianwei and Stephanie Stone were among the speakers at the Vision China event on Thursday in Chaoyang, Liaoning province.

Culture, the development of world civilization, and cultural inheritance and innovation.

At a symposium on cultural inheritance and development on June 2, President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, summarized five prominent features regarding Chinese civilization — consistency, originality, uniformity, inclusiveness, and peacefulness.

In his keynote speech at the event, Li Qun, director of the

National Cultural Heritage Administration, called for in-depth study and implementation of Xi's guidance on cultural heritage work.

"We will deepen our research in key programs, including projects engaged in tracing the origins of Chinese civilization, systematically reveal the discoveries of ancient Chinese society and its historical

development patterns," Li said.

Hongshan Culture was a key Neolithic culture renowned for its exquisite jade. It covered parts of today's Inner Mongolia autonomous region, as well as Liaoning and Hebei provinces.

In the early 1980s, a team of archaeologists discovered the Niuheliang site dating back 5,000 to 5,500 years in Chaoyang, marking a milestone in the study of Hongshan Culture.

Liu Huiyan, head of the publicity department of the Liaoning Provin-

cial CPC Committee, said the great discovery of Niuheliang not only expanded the scope of archaeological study of ancient Chinese history from the Yellow River Basin to the western region of the Liaohe River Basin, but also extended the recorded history of Chinese civilization by 1,000 years, providing real archaeological evidence about the more than 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization.

Qu Yingpu, publisher and editor-in-chief of China Daily, highlighted the important historical references

provided by Hongshan Culture for modern development, and vowed to expand communication platforms, create high-quality and multimedia products featuring Chinese culture, and promote exchanges and mutual learning among world civilizations.

"We visited the Niuheliang site and were strongly moved by the long-standing and profound Chinese culture," he said. "This experience has deepened our understanding of President Xi's important speech and further enhanced our sense of responsibility and mission to tell the story of Chinese civilization to the world and promote communication between China and the world."

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