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Singer-songwriter marks decade of success with new album LIFE, PAGE 7

Kung Fu Yoga

Veteran action star Jackie Chan embarks on an Indian adventure LIFE, PAGE 6

China looks to stimulate weak exports

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Beijing and Hanoi hail stronger ties

Vietnam vows to 'expand maritime cooperation' as party leader visits

By LIXIAOKUN and WANG QINGYUN

Beijing and Hanoi vowed to expand maritime and security cooperation on Thursday, further calming the waters of the South China Sea, where tensions have subsided since a transfer of power in the Philippines last year.

The agreements were among more than a dozen sealed by President Xi Jinping and Vietnam's ruling party chief Nguyen Phu Trong in Beijing.

The meeting of the leaders and its timing was significant.

Trong's four-day visit, ending Sunday, is happening near the visit of US Secretary of State John Kerry to Vietnam, starting Jan 20, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's arrival in the Southeast Asian nation on Jan 16. Observers said the visits reflect the complexity of relations among the four nations.

"We should strengthen strategic cooperation and keep boosting mutual trust, so as to lay a more solid political foundation for the settlement of maritime issues," Xi said at the meeting. "At the same time, we should push forward joint exploration and cooperation in the sea."

Xi, general secretary of the

“We should push forward joint exploration and cooperation in the sea.”

President Xi Jinping

Communist Party of China Central Committee, suggested expansion of military exchanges and deepening of security cooperation. Trong said Hanoi will "expand maritime cooperation" with Beijing and seek results in security, trade and youth communication. He affirmed that Hanoi takes relations with Beijing as "the top priority of long-term foreign policy."

This is the first visit to China for Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, since his re-election in January 2016. Xi and Trong last exchanged visits in 2015.

The two leaders witnessed the signing of 15 cooperation documents on Thursday, covering



President Xi Jinping welcomes Vietnam's ruling party chief Nguyen Phu Trong at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday. WU ZHUYI / CHINA DAILY

ing areas including national defense, financing, railways and Party cadre training.

"The trip right before the visits of US and Japanese leaders also reflects the importance Hanoi attaches to Beijing," said Pan Jin'e, an expert on Vietnamese studies with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Pan said Vietnam favors conflict control and is carefully watching progress on a code of conduct for the South China Sea. China said on Wednesday it will finish a framework with Southeast Asian nations by the middle of the year on the code.

Tensions in the South China Sea have abated since Philip-

pine President Rodrigo Duterte has taken steps to mend relations with China.

"The visit comes at a good time for both sides to have a pragmatic discussion on the South China Sea," Pan said.

Contact the writers at lixiaokun@chinadaily.com.cn

Alibaba training young recruits for global leadership

By HE WEI in Shanghai hewei@chinadaily.com.cn

Training a class of 32 young foreign employees in leadership is another sign of Alibaba Group's ambitious strategy for overseas expansion.

The students, from 14 nations, are set to spend a year at the Alibaba Global Leadership Academy at company headquarters in Hangzhou. There, they will engage in hands-on leadership training, cultural immersion and industry tours, and serve rotational assignments in different business units. The first class began in October.

When the training is completed, they will be sent to company offices in the United States, United Kingdom, continental Europe, India and Southeast Asia, where Alibaba has a growing presence.

The academy aims to train participants with both a global vision and a deeper understanding of China, according to Brian Wong, the Alibaba vice-president who oversees the program.

The training "will help the company build a strong foundation for our future international footprint. It also shows what Chinese companies are doing to engage with the rest of the world," said Wong.

It is a gateway to "building trust and mutual understanding for a meaningful global impact," according to company Chairman Jack Ma. Alibaba has set an ambitious goal of serving 2 billion customers globally and having 40 percent of its sales from overseas in the coming decade.

The recruits graduated

from leading universities including Harvard, Yale, Oxford and Cambridge, and were selected based on stringent criteria such as learning ability, strategic and innovative thinking, and cultural fit for the company.

Gary Topp, a 31-year old MBA graduate from the University of Chicago, said the combination of the education and the chance to work in one of China's most exciting companies makes for an attractive experience.

2 billion

The number of customers Alibaba hopes to serve worldwide within a decade

"I just came back from a company tour to the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. It's amazing to see how advanced e-commerce and internet finance are in the development of China's rural areas," said Topp, who previously worked for rating agency Moody's in London and New York before joining in Alibaba.

French associate Isabelle Kam said: "The program, which includes Chinese history, economics and politics, makes me better understand Chinese culture and the market, and I get to feel the social impact of Alibaba." Kam expects to be sent to Paris after finishing the program.

Xu Jian, founder of Decide Consulting, a human resources firm, said the academy shows Chinese firms are becoming a major draw for high-caliber international talent.

Britain gears up for biggest New Year show outside Asia

By WANG MINGJIE in London wangmingjie@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Britain is gearing up for some of the biggest Chinese New Year celebrations outside Asia and tourism chiefs expect they will help attract a record influx of visitors from China.

Chinese New Year falls on Jan 28, marking the start of the Year of the Rooster. Visitors will be able to join celebrations nationwide.

In London, celebrations include a parade on Jan 29 that starts in Chinatown and ends in Trafalgar Square.

Manchester will put on a Dragon Parade, complete with a 50-foot dragon, which will end in Chinatown with traditional Chinese entertainment, more than 6,000 lanterns, street food and a

fireworks grand finale.

This year will also see the top international art exhibition *Lanterns of the Terracotta Warriors* held in Manchester during the celebrations.

Other significant events will take place in Birmingham, Cumbria, Edinburgh, the Isle of Wight, Leeds and Liverpool. James Kennell, principal lecturer in tourism at the University of Greenwich, said the celebrations provide a great opportunity to showcase British Chinese culture and to attract visitors who will experience the UK as a diverse, multicultural country.

He said: "Chinese communities in cities such as Liverpool, London and Manchester have held these events for many years and they have become part of the cultural landscape."

The extent of the New Year celebrations mirrors the num-

ber of Chinese tourists flocking to the country.

The latest flight booking data from ForwardKeys, a travel data analysis company, shows that bookings from China to the UK for January are up by 81 percent compared with the same time last year.

Speaking at a Chinese New Year preview event for the Chinese travel trade and press in London this week, Richard Nicholls of national tourism agency VisitBritain, said this reflected a New Year bulge in Chinese visitor numbers.

Patricia Yates, VisitBritain director, has described China as "a huge tourism opportunity for Britain."

She said: "Chinese New Year is traditionally one of the busiest travel times for Chinese travelers and we want to make sure the UK is at the top of their list."

Fired up by the ice



People ride on a dragon-shaped sled on the frozen Shichahai Lake in Beijing on Thursday. CHEN JUNQING / XINHUA

PROFILE

Woman breaks new ground at vineyard

By SHARMILA DEVI sharmiladevi1@gmail.com

It was fitting that Lina Fan didn't hesitate to order a glass of white wine to accompany our interview, even though it was the middle of the day. After all, she is the boss of a prestigious French wine company and the first Chinese woman to be accepted into the ratified society of Bordeaux winemakers.

She ordered a glass of Italian pinot grigio. After swirling the wine and inhaling deeply, she took a sip.

"Very basic. Very short aroma. This would sell in Italy for between 3 and 5 euros." The hotel was charging £9 (10 euros) a glass.

Fan, 36, is chief executive officer of Vignobles des Quatre Vents, which was bought by Chinese company Liaoning Energy Investment in 2014. It was the first time a Chinese company had bought such a prestigious Medoc appellation — the legally protected geographic name under which wine in France may be sold and marketed.

Fan was in London to pick up an award from the Mulan Foundation Network, a UK-based organization that promotes successful Chinese women. She has lived in France since 2003, having studied wine at university and following that with a master's degree in



Lina Fan

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Outsiders are urged to respect territory

By ZHANG YUNBI in Beijing and CHEN WEIHUA in Washington

With US secretary of state nominee Rex Tillerson threatening to make trouble for China over the South China Sea, observers said Beijing should continue its buildup in the area and tighten relations with countries involved in the area's territorial disputes.

China, which remains firm on its territorial rights, also should approach the incoming administration of US president-elect Donald Trump through all available channels to control differences and manage any potential

crises, they said.

At a confirmation hearing at the US Congress on Wednesday, Tillerson, the former Exxon Mobil chairman and CEO, said China's access to the islands is "not going to be allowed," after he was asked if he supported a more aggressive posture toward China.

In response, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Thursday that the tension in the South China Sea "has cooled down," and China and countries in the area have returned to two-way talks.

It is hoped outsiders to the region will "respect this

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People enjoy a past New Year celebration in London's Chinatown. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

INSIDE

Eyes hold key to identity, personal data security

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