



F1 Chinese Grand Prix draws record crowds

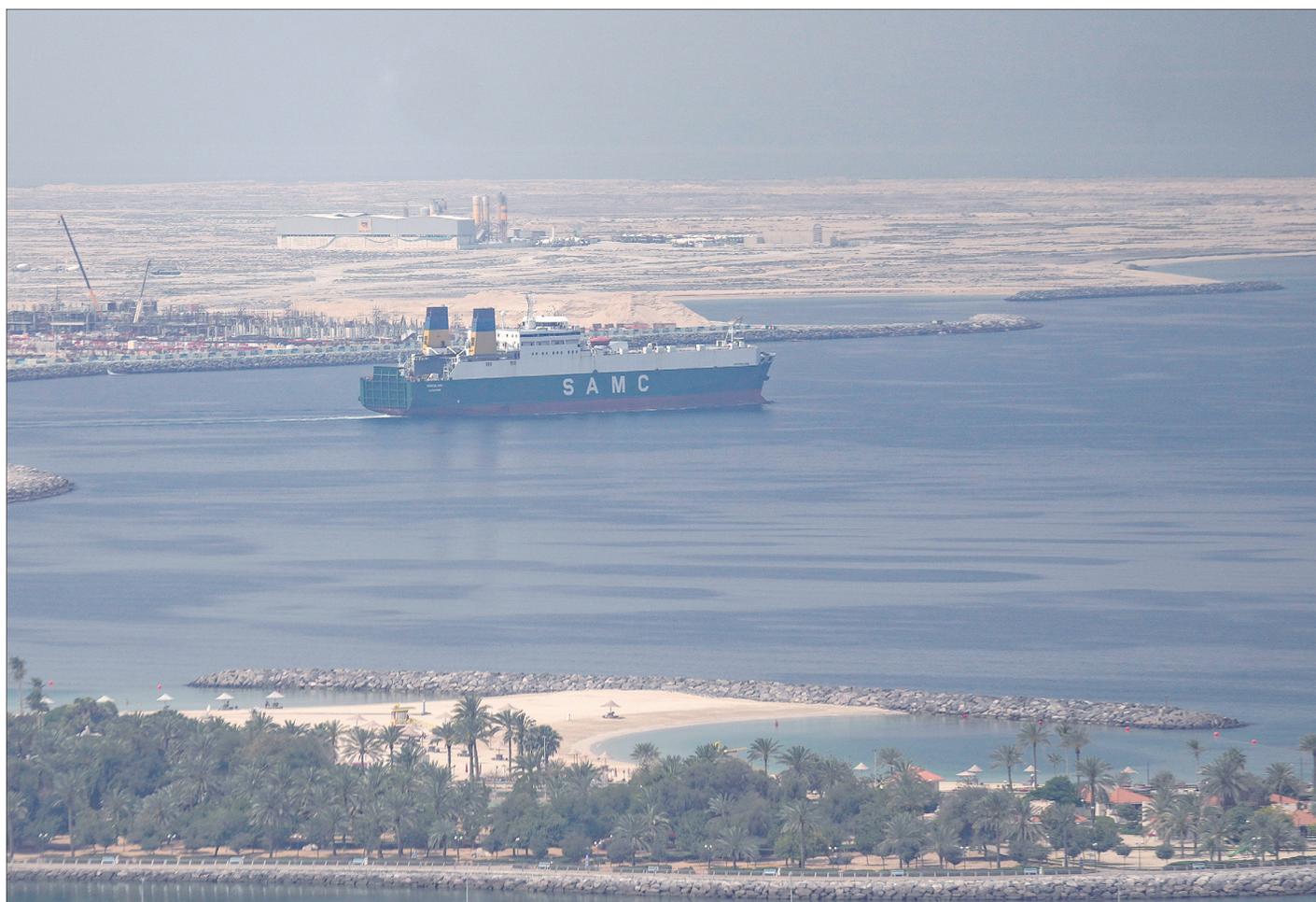
The 2026 F1 Chinese Grand Prix saw a historic winner and record crowds on Sunday, turning the weekend into a wider cultural and tourism event in Shanghai **4**

OpenClaw's security risk in online finance warned

China's National Internet Finance Association has issued a formal risk warning over the use of the OpenClaw application in internet finance **11**

Foreign consumer brands report earnings growth in China

Multiple multinationals have announced their fourth-quarter 2025 earnings in the Chinese mainland market, with some reporting notable revenue growth **10**



A cargo ship sails in the Arabian Gulf toward the Strait of Hormuz, on March 15, 2026. Photo: VCG

► 'US distorts logic as root cause of blockade lies in US-Israeli attacks'

After self-inflicted chaos, US eyes world to help with Hormuz

By Deng Xiaoci and Zhang Yuying

The Strait of Hormuz, that slender 21-mile choke point where the Persian Gulf meets the open sea, has become the world's most expensive bottleneck as the war triggered by the US-Israeli attack against Iran progressed into the third week. Marking a new development to situation, US President Donald Trump in a social media

post urged countries including China, the UK, France and Japan to deploy war ships to keep the strait "open and safe." This move drew sarcasm from Iran, with Iranian Foreign Minister commenting that "US is now begging others, even China, to help it make Hormuz safe."

Chinese observers noted that both the US and Iran have explicitly mentioned China, which may stem from each side's strategic considerations.

They also believed that Washington is distorting the logic of the issue by dragging more countries into the conflict as the root cause of the Hormuz blockade lies in the US-Israeli military operation against Iran.

Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social on Saturday that "Many Countries, especially those who are affected by Iran's attempted closure of the Hormuz Strait, will be sending War Ships, in conjunction with the

United States of America, to keep the Strait open and safe."

"Hopefully China, France, Japan, South Korea, the UK, and others" will send ships to the area, Trump claimed.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in a social media post, urged neighbors to "expel foreign aggressors" and described Trump's call as "begging," AP reported.

The Washington Post highlighted



First China-Vietnam '3+3' strategic dialogue 'reflects depth, high level of ties'

By Liu Caiyu

The first ministerial-level meeting of the China-Vietnam "3+3" strategic dialogue mechanism on diplomacy, national defense and public security started in Vietnam on Sunday. This marks the inaugural "3+3" mechanism established by two sides on a global scale, fully reflecting the strategic depth and high-level nature of the relations between the two parties and the two countries, Chinese observers said.

According to Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun on March 13, at the invitation of the Vietnamese side, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, Member of the CPC Central Committee Secretariat and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong, and Minister of National Defense Dong Jun will be in Vietnam from March 15 to 17 for the first ministerial meeting of the China-Vietnam "3+3" strategic dialogue.

Noting that the dialogue was established under the personal guidance of the top leaders of the two parties and two countries, Guo said, "Amid transformations and turbulence in the world, closer strategic communication and deeper strategic coordination between China and Vietnam, two major socialist countries, is needed to accelerate the building of the China-Vietnam community with a shared future, advance both countries' modernization drive, and jointly address common challenges."

Zhou Shixin, director of the Center for Southeast Asia



▶ Starting off



Some 15,000 runners participating in the Shanghai Half Marathon depart from the Oriental Pearl Tower as the race starts on March 15, 2026. Photo: VCG

China calls for immediate stop to hostilities, restoration of peace

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Trump's "frustration" evident in his post, as the US media said in an article on Sunday that "Iran's ability to threaten ships in the strait by use of low-cost drones and mines, regardless of how battered its defenses, has proved a frustration for Trump, who conceded in a post Saturday that Iran would retain such capabilities 'no matter how badly defeated they are.'"

The root cause

When requested by the CNN to comment on the latest call from Trump, a spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington said in a statement that China calls for an immediate stop to hostilities, and that "all parties have the responsibility to ensure stable and unimpeded energy supply." The CNN claimed that the spokesperson did not confirm whether China is planning to deploy naval assets to the region.

"As a sincere friend and strategic partner of Middle Eastern countries," the statement concluded, "China will continue to strengthen communication with relevant parties, including parties to the conflict, and play a constructive role for de-escalation and restoration of peace."

Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, said that the US is attempting to complicate the situation. "By its own argument, since the Strait of Hormuz serves the entire world for oil transit, the international community as a whole should bear corresponding responsibilities for its

security. However, the fundamental cause of the current tensions lies in the military strikes launched by the US and Israel against Iran."

Few supportive response

According to BBC, hours after Trump's post, French foreign ministry's official response account on X denied reports that the country was sending its warships to the Strait.

Japan, another close ally of the US, also reportedly claimed that the threshold is "extremely high" for Tokyo to send its warships to help protect the Strait of Hormuz, Al Jazeera reported, citing Takayuki Kobayashi, policy chief of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party as saying.

Without confirming whether they are sending warships to the strait, CNN reported that a spokesperson for the British Ministry of Defense said that the UK is "currently discussing with our allies and partners a range of options to ensure the security of shipping in the region."

Likewise, a Cheong Wa Dae official reportedly said regarding Trump's request that "we will maintain close communication with the US and prudently review the matter before making a decision," per Korea Times.

Day 16

As the conflict entered its 16th day on Sunday, the struggle between the two sides persists both on the front lines and in the information and narrative domains. The US and Israel carried out attacks on Iran's Isfahan city in the early hours of Sunday, killing at least 15 people, per

Al Jazeera. Sirens blared in central Israel on Sunday as Iran launched multiple barrages of missiles in retaliatory attacks on the country, per the network's update.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards pledged to target Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as Iran's war with the US and Israel continues, the Guardian reported Sunday.

"Iran wants to make a deal, and I don't want to make it because the terms aren't good enough yet," Trump said in a phone interview with NBC News. When asked what terms he sought, he said, "I don't want to say that to you," but agreed they would involve Iran committing to abandoning its nuclear ambitions, per the German DW News.

The president confirmed US forces carried out strikes on Kharg Island, home to an oil terminal that supplies the majority of Iran's oil exports. "We totally demolished Kharg Island, but we may hit it a few more times just for fun," Trump told the US broadcaster.

Araqchi said on Sunday that Tehran is open to dialogue with neighboring countries as part of efforts to bring an end to the conflict with the US and Israel. Araqchi said Iran is in contact with several Gulf capitals and would welcome any initiative to help secure a complete end to the war.

"The constant shifts of US and Iranian stances toward ending the war could indicate that they both are currently facing difficulties in the war situation," said Ding Long, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University.

Mechanism 'a microcosm' of China's approach to neighbors rooted in equality, mutual respect

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Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, who has been closely following how China interacts with neighboring countries, hailed the first ministerial meeting of the 3+3 strategic Dialogue mechanism as being of "milestone significance."

From a broader perspective, the China-Vietnam relationship is a microcosm of China-ASEAN relations, and the establishment of such mechanisms reflects how China manages ties with its neighbors, an approach which is rooted in setting aside "big-power mentality" and strengthening cooperation on an equal footing and mutual respect, Zhou said.

Serving as 'stabilizer' for ties

According to spokesperson Guo, during the meeting of the "3+3" mechanism, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Public Security Minister Wang Xiaohong and Defense Minister Dong Jun will have in-depth exchanges of views with the Vietnamese side on political and security issues, cooperation on fighting crimes, defense cooperation, and the international and regional situation.

Mi Liang, Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, told the Global Times on Sunday that China and Vietnam have much to accomplish together amid the shifting international landscape.

He cited cross-border crimes, smuggling, drug trafficking, human trafficking and telecom fraud as areas requiring joint action. He added that both countries share broad common interests in defense and regional security, concluding that "these areas of cooperation call for a higher-level platform to drive progress forward."

Globally, the "2+2" model, which typically involves diplomacy and defense, is very common. It's a relatively stable bilateral security mechanism used by both large and small nations. In contrast, the "3+3" model, which adds public security to the mix, is rare worldwide, according to Zhou.

Though the public security departments of China and Vietnam primarily serve to safeguard domestic security in their respective countries, police from the two countries have been working effectively together for years particularly in combating cross-border telecom fraud and anti-drug, according to media reports.

Meanwhile, the latest news from the Chinese Ministry of National Defense on Sunday showed that China and Vietnam will hold their 10th border defense friendship exchange in mid-March. The event is set to take place in designated areas and ports in China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Vietnam's Quang Ninh province, as well as waters in the Beibu Gulf.

"Regularly conducting friendly defense exchanges helps to continuously enhance political mutual trust, thereby providing a solid guarantee for the stable and healthy development of bilateral relations," military affairs expert Zhang Junshe told the Global Times on Sunday.

"As our cooperation deepens, the '3+3' platform allows us to put out fires before they catch fire," Zhou said, characterizing the mechanism as a "stabilizer" for the bilateral relationship. "Whether it's the South China Sea, cross-border crime, or any other emergency, this mechanism provides the stability to resolve issues early and strengthen our ties."

