



## China vows to address exorbitant 'bride prices'

China unveiled the No.1 central document for 2023, vowing to address problems of exorbitant "bride prices" and extravagant wedding ceremonies in rural areas **4**

## We are in a dangerous game: German MP

As practically voiceless stooges to the US, EU countries were not in a position to find a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict **7**

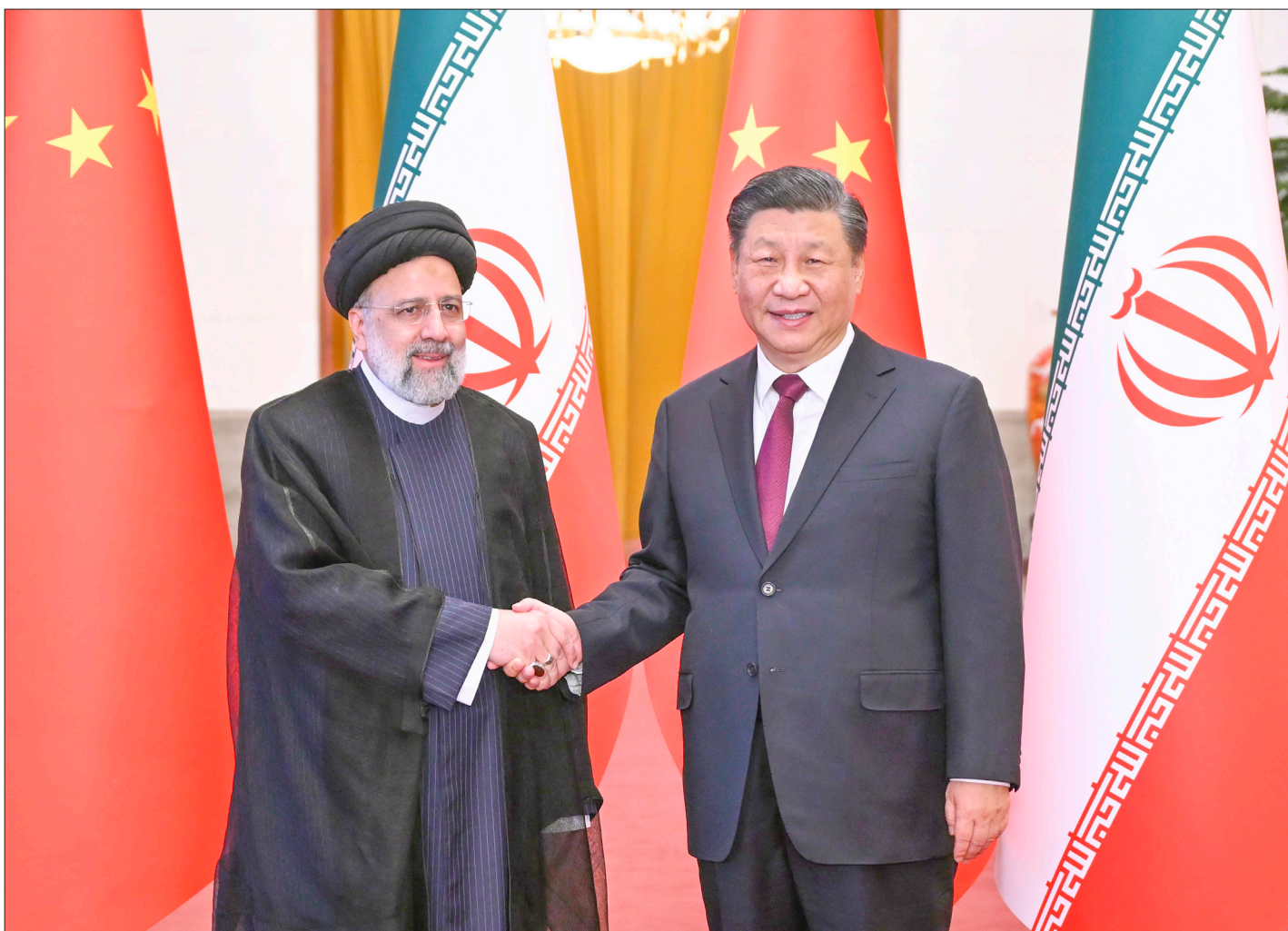
## Valentine's Day spending picks up, mirrors economic vitality

The Valentine's Day in China this year witnessed a surge in spending on flowers and catering, evidence that consumption and business activities are recovering faster than expected from the pandemic **11**

www.globaltimes.cn

VOLUME 14 • NO. 3967 • WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2023

PRICE 2 YUAN



Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomes visiting Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on February 14, 2023. During the visit of Iranian president, the two sides will issue a joint statement. Photo: Xinhua

## Ohio chemical leak 'ignored' by US govt, media; concerns grow

By GT staff reporters

The aftermath of an Ohio train derailment accident, which released toxic chemicals into the environment, has been haunting residents in the affected area for more than a week, but the accident had barely caught attention of American mainstream media outlets until very recently. Chinese experts warned that the chemical leak accident, "underestimated by the US," poses a serious safety hazard to Americans living in the affected area, with lingering effects of at least 20 years. They also believe US authorities' "controlled burn" of the toxic gas could release more lethal substance into the environment, which they said fully exposed US government's irresponsible attitude toward people's health.

The fact that such a catastrophe occurred for more than a week without being extensively reported also reflects toxic trend in US political and media circle, who are too obsessed with creating imaginary enemies, and hyping outside "threats", such as the Chinese balloon, that they pay little attention to their own people's calls, said the experts.

On February 3, a train carrying toxic chemicals derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. About 50 of the train's 150 cars ran off the tracks. Vinyl chloride was slowly released into the air from five of those cars before crews ignited it to get rid of the highly flammable, toxic chemicals in a controlled environment, creating a dark plume of smoke, US media reported.

The next day after the derailment, an official alert warned that local

**2**  
Aftermath  
See also  
Page 5, 6

► Bilateral relations have withstood tests of various international vicissitudes: Xi

# China, Iran cement ties amid complex changes in the world

By Chen Qingqing, Xu Yelu and Wan Hengyi

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Tuesday in Beijing where the two leaders agreed on deepening China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership. The two sides

are expected to increase coordination under multilateral platforms such as the UN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and inject positive energy to regional and global peace.

China has always viewed and developed its relations with Iran from a strategic perspec-

tive, Xi said to Raisi, noting that no matter how the international and regional situation changes, China will unswervingly develop friendly cooperation with Iran, push for new development of the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership, and play a positive role in world peace and hu-

man progress. China supports Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity and supports its fight against unilateralism, hegemony and external forces that interfere in Iran's domestic affairs and sabotage its

**2**  
Meeting  
See also  
Page 6



Address: The Global Times English Edition, 2 Jintai Xilu, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100026 • The Global Times is published six times a week from Monday to Saturday.

News Dept: (8610) 65367574 editor@globaltimes.com.cn • Ads Dept: (8610) 65369595 advertising@globaltimes.com.cn • Subscription Dept: (8610) 65369602 subscription@globaltimes.com.cn • Marketing Dept: (8610) 65367665 marketing@globaltimes.com.cn

违法和不良信息举报电话: 010-65363263 • 举报邮箱: jubao@people.cn • 地址: 北京市朝阳区金台西路2号环球时报社英文版 • 邮政编码: 100026 • 国内统一刊号: CN11-0272 • 国际标准刊号: ISSN 2095-2678 • 邮发代号: 1-181



# Meeting injects positivity to regional peace, devt: expert

►China, from Page 1

stability, Xi said. The Chinese side is also willing to deepen the comprehensive cooperation plan by deepening cooperation in trade, agriculture, industry and infrastructure as well as expand cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

For his part, Raisi said the time-tested friendship between Iran and China has become even firmer as time goes by. As two independent major countries, the Iran-China relations are based on the spirit of mutual respect, and they are sincere strategic partners worthy of mutual trust. Iran's commitment to deepening and upgrading the Iran-China comprehensive strategic partnership is unswerving and will not be affected by any changes in the international and regional situation, Raisi stressed.

After the meeting, the two leaders jointly witnessed the signing of a number of bilateral cooperation documents in the fields of agriculture, trade, tourism, environmental protection, health, disaster relief, culture and sports, according to Xinhua. During the visit of Iranian president, the two sides will issue a joint statement, Xinhua reported.

The Iranian president is accompanied by a wide-ranging team including the new central bank governor, and six members of Raisi's cabinet such as the ministers of economy, petroleum, foreign affairs and trade, according to media reports.

Raisi's three-day visit to China – the first since he took office in August 2021 – will accelerate the implementation of the 25-year agreement between the two countries, Chinese experts said. This meeting between the two leaders will also guide bilateral cooperation to a higher level, underscoring the deepened mutual trust between the two countries despite geopolitical uncertainties, they said.

## Cooperation at full speed

China and Iran established a comprehensive strategic partnership during Xi's visit to Iran in 2016, since when the two sides have moved forward to promote the development of this partnership, including cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"The purpose of Raisi's visit to China this time is to further promote Iran-China relations and the implementation of the comprehensive strategic partnership," said Wu Sike, former

Chinese special envoy on the Middle East.

In 2021, China and Iran signed a 25-year agreement to enhance comprehensive cooperation in a range of fields. Under the deal, the two sides would tap the potential of economic and cultural cooperation and make plans for long-term cooperation. "The 25-year cooperation program, including energy, trade and infrastructure, has faced obstacles, especially when the US escalated sanctions on both Iran and China. The two sides will likely focus on how to advance practical cooperation between Iran and China amid the growing external uncertainties," said Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University.

Regarding the international situation, China and Iran have common or similar positions. The two countries oppose hegemony and unilateralism and emphasize the respect for the rights and interests of all countries, Raisi wrote in an article published on People's Daily on Monday.

During the meeting with Xi on Tuesday, Raisi said Iran welcomes more Chinese companies to invest in the country

and more Chinese tourists to travel there. Iran also firmly supports the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative.

Iran's national development plan and its Look to the East strategy are highly compatible with the BRI, and deepened cooperation provides a guarantee for high quality development that will accelerate Iran's economic growth and help consolidate its status in transport and energy, said Zhu Yongbiao, executive director of the Research Center for the Belt and Road at Lanzhou University. "Such deepened cooperation is significant for China, including ensuring energy security and boosting high quality BRI projects," Zhu said.

During the meeting between Xi and Raisi, the two sides also agreed to increase coordination on regional and global issues and maintain active coordination under the auspices of multilateral organizations such as the UN and the SCO.

With official approval from Tehran, Iran is one step closer to joining the SCO. As an important power in the region, Iran's admission into the SCO will help expand its influence.

The meeting emphasized a rejection of unilateralism, hegemony and foreign interference in the domestic affairs of Iran, the experts said

## Active role

Chinese experts believe that in contrast to the US' declining influence in the Middle East, China-proposed development and security initiatives will play a more active role in promoting peace and stability and resolving conflicts.

Some foreign media outlet have been sowing discord between China and Iran, claiming that the visit came after Xi's meeting with the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries last December, with the joint statement triggering dissatisfaction from Iran, or claiming that cooperation between the two sides will weaken US efforts to isolate Iran, further affecting US-China relations.

"The development of friendly cooperative relations between China and Iran is conducive to the well-being of the two peoples and stability in the Middle East, and does not target any third party," Wang Wenbin, spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, said on Tuesday.

## Aftermath could linger over 20 yrs; disregarding catastrophe reflects 'toxic political trend' in US

►Ohio, from Page 1

residents needed to move even further away from disaster zone. The controlled burn reportedly worked and the evacuation order for East Palestine residents was officially lifted on February 8 after authorities claimed real-time air and water monitoring did not find any contaminant levels above screening limits.

Four Chinese students in Pittsburg, which is about one hour away from East Palestine, Ohio, said that the local government has tried to whisk away danger of spillover of the incident, yet the public is suspicious.

Peng Yingdeng, an expert from China's central government supervision center for environmental protection and emergency management, said that the chemical leak constitutes a serious safety accident, and may impose "long-term" health threat to populations nearby.

Vinyl chloride is highly inflammable, said Peng, noting that if the vinyl chloride is not burnt completely, it will release more toxic dioxins and phosgene. Dioxins is very difficult to degrade naturally, and once it permeates into soil, may remain there for decades, Peng said. He noted that the grains produced from this soil will cause cancer and mutation inside human bodies.

Ding Xuejia, a professor from Beijing University of Chemical Technology, said that controlled burn is a wrong way to deal with vinyl chloride, noting that af-



This photo taken on February 9, 2023 with a drone shows the site of a Norfolk Southern freight train carrying toxic chemicals that derailed on February 3, 2023 in East Palestine, Ohio. Photo: VCG

ter being burnt, the vinyl chloride will release substances that are many times more toxic as the gas itself. Those toxic substances can enter human bodies, go into water body and air, and cause serious damage to people and the environment, said Ding. He predicted without further interference, the aftermath of the incident will linger for at least 20 years or even longer, and probably will lead to surge of number of cancer patients. He urged local residents to take

timely health check just in case.

## Toxic politics

Apart from fear, some Americans also expressed outrage as they believe the government is hiding information from the public, and that the mainstream media barely reported the accident until most recently.

Wang Wenbin, spokesperson of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said at a Tuesday briefing that why some self-

labeled free and unbiased media have deliberately ignored the incident such as the Ohio train derailment, which is detrimental to American people's health?

The incident, however, has picked up steam on Chinese social media in recent days. As of time of press, three or the 50 most searched topics on China's Sina Weibo were related to the Ohio incident. Hashtag "release of vinyl chloride in Ohio has caused evacuation of residents" has been read on Weibo more than 59 million times as of press time.

Li Haidong, a professor at the Institute of International Relations at the China Foreign Affairs University, believes that the US media's early ignorance of Ohio chemical leak incident is aimed at deliberately diverting public's attention, and reflected a toxic trend in the US media and political circle.

"US media are very biased and selective of news topics. Compared with such a terrible incident that concerns lives of hundreds of thousands, they believe a balloon story is more eyeball-grabbing," said Li, explaining that media's ignorance of the incident is a result of a domestic political atmosphere that has been poisoned for years with the so-called China threat, and the US has long hyped outside "threat" to divert public dissatisfaction on US domestic affairs.