

► First intelligent deep-sea seamounts to be released UNOC3 opens in Nice, China highlights marine wisdom

By Liu Caiyu

Having kicked off on Monday in Nice, France, the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) is focusing on three core objectives: conserving marine biodiversity, eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies, and advancing the global "30x30" target, which is a bold goal by the UN to protect 30 percent of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

Chinese Vice President Han Zheng will attend the conference and plans to visit Spain from June 7 to 13, China's Foreign Ministry had previously announced.

During the conference, 10 plenary sessions, 10 special forums on marine actions and a series of side events will also be held in Nice.

China has made significant contributions to global marine environmental protection and sustainable economic development. This conference provides China an opportunity

to share the nation's wisdom in maritime development and governance with other countries. China has proposed the vision of a maritime community with a shared future, and at the same time, it highlights the diversity of ocean utilization, Chen Xiangmiao, a research fellow with the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, told the Global Times.

Chen said that, on a regional level, China has actively promoted bilateral and multilateral maritime strategy issues.

A top priority at the conference will be to secure the 60 ratifications needed to bring into force the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. Adopted in 2023, the accord aims to safeguard marine ecosystems in international waters. So far, only 32 countries have ratified it. The deadline for reaching

the 60-country threshold is September 20, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

China signed this legal document on the first day that the agreement was opened for signatures in 2023.

Meanwhile, the Xinhua report said China's breakthroughs in deep-sea technology continue to emerge. It revealed that during the UNOC3, China will officially release the world's first digital intelligent system for deep-sea seamounts. Jointly developed by the China Oceanic Affairs Administration and institutions including the Zhejiang Lab, this system marks China's first publicly available digital scientific and technological product in the deep-sea field.

An official from the administration said this system will fill the gap in the application of artificial intelligence technology in deep-sea exploration and is expected to accelerate the transition of deep-sea development into the digital and intelligent era.

With expansion of 4 Gulf countries, nation implements visa-free policy for 47 partners

By Zhang Wanshi

China began to implement a trial visa-free policy on Monday for ordinary passport holders from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain, expanding the nation's unilateral visa-free "circle of friends" to 47 countries.

From June 9, 2025, to June 8, 2026, passport holders from these countries and whose transit does not exceed 30 days may enter China for business, tourism, visiting relatives and friends, exchanges or transit without a visa.

With the United Arab Emirates and Qatar having implemented reciprocal visa-free policies with China since 2018, China now grants visa-free treatment to all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Speaking at a press conference on May 28, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "We welcome more friends from GCC countries to visit China anytime."

Hebah Abbas, chief engineer and technical adviser of the Ministry of Education in Kuwait who is also the chairwoman of the Sustainability Committee at the Kuwait Water Association and a member of AmCham Kuwait, said this policy greatly facilitates her visits to China to explore renewable energy projects, attend environmental conferences and engage in technical exchanges with Chinese companies, adding that the access lays a foundation for mutually beneficial partnerships, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

China's visa-free treatment for all GCC countries marks a significant step in deepening people-to-people exchanges between China and the region, Liu Zhongmin, a professor from the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times.

"China and Gulf countries have maintained strong relations," Liu noted, adding that as political mutual trust and friendly ties continue to strengthen, facilitating people-to-people exchanges through visa-free arrangements and providing greater convenience is also important.

As an important measure of China's new round of opening-up, the visa-free policy will elevate the level and quality of exchanges, facilitate greater movement of people and stimulate trade, investment and goods circulation, said Zhu Yongbiao, the executive director of the Research Center for the Belt and Road at Lanzhou University.

On June 1, China's unilateral visa-free program was for the first time extended to Latin American and Caribbean countries. With the expansion of the four Gulf countries this time, China has now expanded its unilateral visa-free policy to a total of 47 countries, Xinhua reported.

► Fun with shadows



Primary school students learn to perform the shadow play *Nezha Conquers the Dragon King* under the guidance of volunteers from Jiangsu University in Zhenjiang, East China's Jiangsu Province on June 9, 2025. The volunteers helped the students to explore traditional shadow puppetry techniques, make shadow play figures and learn more about the intangible cultural heritage. Photo: VCG

Chinese trendy toy Labubu witnesses surge in popularity and panic buying

By Zhao Yusha and Shen Sheng

As the craze for the trendy Chinese toy Labubu intensifies, prices for the mischievous-looking vinyl figure have soared to around 34,000 yuan (\$4,730) on some e-commerce platforms, three times the original price, the Global Times has learned.

The price of the MEGA LABUBU TEC, a 79.3-centimeter-tall version with freck-

les, has skyrocketed to 34,929 yuan on a Chinese e-commerce platform. Its original price was around 9,900 yuan.

A total of 165 of the Labubu toys have been sold since they were launched in October 2022, a customer service employee from a shop on the e-commerce platform told the Global Times. In addition, the employee stated that many high-priced Labubu products have seen a notable uptick in recent purchases.

Standing at 101 centimeters tall, "Labubu The Monsters," a collaboration with Vans, was priced at 38,074 yuan per unit on JD.com, one of China's largest retailers, according to its online description.

Labubu, the elf-like doll created by Chinese toy maker Pop Mart, has gained global attention, while sightings of Western celebrities with the toy have fueled consumer demand.

The trend is visible both online and offline across major

international markets. Chinese trendy toy stores have secured prime locations in cities like Paris and London, where overseas fans line up for hours to buy the most coveted items, according to media reports.

Staff at Pop Mart shops in Zhengzhou, Henan Province stated that when the Labubu Generation 3 blind boxes [a type of packaging that keeps its contents a mystery until it is opened] were released in April this year, they were still avail-

able in physical stores, a new media account affiliated with the Henan Daily reported.

"Since last year, it has been extremely popular in Southeast Asia. Now, nine out of 10 people entering the store ask about Labubu," said a staff from a Zhengzhou Pop Mart shop, adding that restocking is irregular with no fixed schedule.

