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Robust policy support to propel growth

Nation on track for steady rebound in second half of year, say economists

By OUYANG SHIJIA and ZHOU LANXU

China's economy is on track for a steady rebound in the remainder of the year and its annual growth target of around 5 percent is achievable, backed by a solid first-half performance and robust policy support from the country's economic decision-makers, said economists and global executives.

Looking ahead, economists said policymakers will likely strengthen countercyclical adjustments with a stronger mix of fiscal and monetary measures to shore up domestic demand and cushion the impact from a more complicated external environment. Measures in the pipeline may include expanding fiscal spending to spur consumption, further reductions in the reserve requirement ratio and interest rate cuts, as well as targeted support for exporters and workers hit by external shocks, they

Their remarks came after a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, which was presided over by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, shed light on the economic priorities for the second half.

The key meeting, held in late July, called for solid efforts in economic work in the second half of the year, with a focus on stabilizing employment, businesses, markets and expectations, and effectively promoting the positive interplay between domestic and international economic flows.

Macro policies should be continuously strengthened and intensified in a timely manner, the meeting said, stressing the implementation and refinement of a more proactive fiscal policy and a moderately loose monetary policy.

"China's economic activity has remained stable with limited volatility, so the main policy focus should be on implementing existing fiscal, monetary and financial

measures," said Luo Zhiheng, chief

economist at Yuekai Securities. "The strength and timing of additional support will depend on new developments in the second half of

China's second-quarter GDP grew 5.2 percent year-on-year despite headwinds from US tariff hikes, marking the third consecutive quarter of growth above 5 percent, official data showed.

Luo said the recent high-profile meeting's policy signals, such as "stepping up policy efforts when appropriate" and "enhancing flexibility and foresight", mean that while the current fiscal and monetary policies should continue to stabilize market expectations, policymakers will also make flexible adjustments based on evolving conditions, such as rolling out new incremental measures strengthening countercyclical adjustments.

"A wide range of policy tools remains available for deployment," he added. "It is advisable for the government to adjust fiscal budgets with forceful spending, provide timely relief for hard-hit sectors such as foreign trade, offer subsidies for people in difficulty, and expand the scope of trade-in deals to cover services consump-

Prior to the Political Bureau meeting, the CPC Central Committee held a symposium in July with non-CPC personages to solicit opinions and suggestions on the current economic situation and the economic work for the second half.

While presiding over the symposium, Xi noted that the country's economy still faces many risks and challenges. He underscored the need to properly understand the situation, enhance the awareness of potential dangers, think about the worst-case scenario, and make good use of development opportunities, potential and advantages to consolidate and expand the positive momentum of economic recovery and improvement.

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Repairs after rains



Workers remove flood-damaged tracks on Sunday along the Beijing-Chengde railway section in Liudaohe township, Xinglong, Hebei province. Following days of heavy rainfall in Hebei, power and transportation infrastructure in affected areas is gradually being restored, while local authorities are also bracing for further downpours amid renewed weather alerts. WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY See story, page 3

Interest in vocational programs surges

By ZOU SHUO

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Vocational undergraduate programs, which combine advanced technical skills with bachelor's degrees, are experiencing a significant surge in admission scores as high achievers in the national colentrance examination, or gaokao, are increasingly leaning toward professional education instead of pursuing purely academic courses.

He Xianyi, from Zhuji Middle School in Zhejiang province, scored 604 points out of a total of 750 in this year's gaokao, which qualified her for many reputable universities. However, she chose to apply for the directed training program for noncommissioned officers at Wuchang Polytechnic College in Wuhan, Hubei province.

While her unconventional decision sparked heated online discussions, with many perceiving a bachelor's degree as superior to a vocational qualification, He begged to differ.

"Scores are just numbers," she told local newspaper Hubei Daily. "I feel there's no inherent superiority or inferiority between undergraduate and vocational college programs. What suits you best and benefits your future development is what matters most."

She emphasized that studying at a prestigious university solely for its reputation, especially if it meant pursuing an undesirable major, was less appealing to her than choosing a path aligned with her passion and

Inspired by her uncle, a 12-year military veteran, He has wanted to join the military since high school. Tve heard voices of doubt before, but I don't pay much attention to them," she added.

If data recorded by Shenzhen Polytechnic University in Guangdong province is anything to go by, shift has extended beyond individual cases to become a phenomenon.

After the institution upgraded to a vocational university from vocational college in 2023, its top physics stream admission score reached 595, which is competitive with major traditional universities. This year, the physics admission score surged to 617, surpassing that of many prominent institutions.

Vocational undergraduate institutions in Zhejiang also saw recordhigh admission scores, with Jinhua University of Vocational Technology seeking a top admission score of 621 - a historic high for similar institutions in the province.

The rise of vocational undergraduate education is reflecting a systemic shift, and China now has 87 vocational undergraduate universities. After the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a guideline in 2019 to initiate pilot programs for vocational education at the undergraduate level, 51 of these institutions -28 public ones and 23 private have successfully enrolled students.

Sun Tongyu, vice-president of Shandong Vocational University of For eign Affairs, noted that since the institution began enrolling students for its vocational undergraduate programs in 2019, it has

cultivated more than 10,000 graduates across three graduating classes, most of whom have secured satisfactory employment.

The university's total annual enrollment for both vocational and bachelor's degree programs has surpassed 10.000 over the past three years, demonstrating the strong appeal of vocational education, he

This robust interest has driven up the university's admission scores for vocational courses, which now exceed the entry score for undergraduate programs by 20 to 40 points, Sun said.
"Most young people and their

parents choose vocational education because it promises stronger employment prospects. We can assure them that all our students are able to secure decent jobs immediately after graduation," he said.

The institution has established over 300 vocational training centers in collaboration with enterprises with many courses centered around hands-on training.

"Students here are very practical." They don't come seeking university prestige; they choose us to learn practical skills and get a job," Sun

Feng Wenjing, who graduated from the Shandong university in June with a major in English, now works at a new-energy company in Beijing.

Compared with traditional uniplace greater emphasis on practical training and knowledge application in real-life working scenarios, she

BEAUTY INDUSTRY LOOKS BEYOND SKIN-DEEP CHANGES

Younger generation turns to 'light medical aesthetics', less invasive treatments

By VII RAN in Shanghai For China Daily

ike a growing number of young Chinese women, 31-year-old Zhu Yanzi has sought subtle and "naturallooking" improvements in her appearance over the years. But in her twenties, her quest got off to a clumsy start.

"I had double-eyelid surgery, hyaluronic acid fillers, even tried thread-lifting to make my face look

indepth

more defined, but all those changes were obvious — a bit too obvious," said Zhu, a product designer in Beijing.

By the time she turned 28, Zhu

began reassessing what she truly wanted. Rather than dramatic alterations, she became drawn to a more subtle, maintenance-based approach - what's now widely known as "light medical aesthetics".

"I actually started getting regular facial spa treatments around the age of 25. But after 28, I gradually replaced those with more effective options — things that really deliver results, like lasers or injectables," said Zhu, whose beauty focus these days is on skin texture, tone and overall vitality.

See Beauty, page 2

Schoolgirl swimmer shines at worlds

By SUN XIAOCHEN sunxiaochen@chinadaily.com.cn

With a string of youngest records under her name and a world championships team medaround her neck, China's schoolgirl swimmer Yu Zidi has probably enjoyed the coolest summer holiday among all her peers.

Although the 12-year-old did not win any individual medal, she capped off her debut at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore as an instant hit with the sport's global community by becoming the youngest ever to qualify for the meet, the youngest to make it to a final, and the youngest to finish on the podium.

The preteen sensation completed her final individual event at the worlds on Sunday with another near-miss from the podium, as she clocked 4 minutes and 33.76 seconds to finish fourth in the women's 400 meters individual medley final.

Summer McIntosh of Canada, reigning Olympic champion and world record-holder, clinched gold with a time of 4:25.78, while Aus tralia's Jenna Forrester and Japan's Mio Narita clocked the exact same time (4:33.26) to share silver.

No bronze medal is awarded to a fourth swimmer when a tied finish happens in a race, according to the rules of the world championships.

Yu had to settle for fourth position in her previous two individual events, finishing 0.06 second shy of the podium in the 200m individual medley on July 28 and 0.31 second behind third in the 200m butterfly on Thursday.

She will leave Singapore with a medal, however, as a member of China's bronze-winning women's 4x200m freestyle relay team.

With the relay bronze won on Thursday, Yu became the youngest medalist in the championships' history, after having become the youngest to qualify for the worlds at the Chinese national trials in May and the youngest to advance to an individual final on July 28.

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Ready for games



Athletes from Singapore pose for a group photo after arriving at Chengdu Tianfu International Airport in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Sunday, as the official arrival and departure services for the 2025 Chengdu World Games kick off. LIU ZHONGJUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

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