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DIPLOMACY

Visit to set course for ties, says Xi

China and UK poised to sign agreements worth billions of pounds

By WU JIAO and CHEN MENGWEI

President Xi Jinping says his state visit to the United Kingdom this week will chart the course for future bilateral ties.

The Chinese leader has also praised Britain's "visionary and strategic choice" to become China's best friend in the West.

Xi, who made the remarks in a written interview with Reuters on the eve of his departure for the UK on Monday, will lead a 150-member business delegation, with billions of pounds of investment planned.

The visit, the first to the UK by a Chinese head of state in a decade and Xi's first to the country in more than 20 years, has been hailed by British and Chinese officials as the start of "a golden era" of relations.

London has been preparing for the visit since last year, and the UK took a lead in joining the Beijing-initiated Asian Infrastructure Development Bank last winter.

The UK has also said that it will be the Western country that is most open to China.

"This is a visionary and strategic choice that fully meets Britain's own long-term interest," Xi said.

During the four-day trip, which begins officially on Tuesday, Xi and first lady Peng Liyuan are scheduled to take part in more than 30 events with members of the British royal family and high-ranking government officials.

Besides addressing Parliament, Xi, who is a soccer fan, will also visit Manchester City, the English Premier League leader.

Deals worth billions of pounds are expected to be signed during the visit in areas including finance, nuclear energy and education.

The most anticipated one is China's participation in Britain's nuclear plants, which, if realized, will be a milestone in Chinese nuclear expansion into developed countries.

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London spares no effort to welcome its Chinese guest

By ZHANG CHUNYAN in London zhangchunyan@chinadaily.com.cn



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been hung along colorfully decorated streets.

On the main street, a long banner featuring the national flags of the two countries has been hung from an archway with the message, "A warm welcome to President Xi Jinping to the UK."

As President Xi Jinping starts his trip officially on Tuesday, Chinese national flags are flying in The Mall near Buckingham Palace and also on Horse Guards Parade.

In central London's Chinatown, hundreds of traditional Chinese red lanterns have

Chu Ting Tang, chairman of the London Chinatown Chinese Association, said the local Chinese community is very proud of China's development, hopes Sino-UK relations, and hopes Xi's visit to the UK will be a great success.

Zhang Xiaofei, a 23-year-old Chinese student, told China Daily: "I'm really excited that President Xi is visiting the UK. It is the first Chinese state visit to the UK for 10 years. I would love to welcome the president and his wife along with many Chinese students."

From Sunday, 50 London taxis displaying pictures of China for a month, took to the roads of the British capital.

The photos were selected from the Amazing China: 2015 Mobile Phone Photo Contest, which encouraged tourists worldwide to discover the beauty of China by sending in photos for prizes.

The contest, launched on Aug 10 by China Daily and the Chinese embassy in the UK, ended on Oct 7 after attracting more than 8,000 entries from around the world.

One hundred of the best photos are being displayed on London's cabs, which are owned by China's Geely company.

In a tweet on Friday, Queen Elizabeth II referred to the bond between the British royal

family and China. She also shared some photos of historic moments, including her first visit to China in 1986, her meeting with Chinese leaders a decade ago, and Prince William's trip to China earlier this year.

On Friday, an honor guard left Buckingham Palace after taking part in a full rehearsal for the state visit.

The governments of both countries will sign a number of agreements aimed at furthering Sino-UK economic, trade, cultural and people-to-people cooperation during the visit.

The businesses community also has plans for major cooperation initiatives.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF PRESIDENT XI JINPING DURING HIS STATE VISIT TO THE UK

October 19

Leaves Beijing for London.

October 20

Attends an exhibition in the Picture Gallery at Buckingham Palace, showcasing items from the Royal Collection relating to China.

Visits the Palace of Westminster and addresses Parliament.



Receives official ceremonial welcome from Queen Elizabeth II.

Meets with Prince William at Buckingham Palace



Meets with Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall at Clarence House.



Attends state banquet at Buckingham Palace.

October 21

Attends creative industry event at Lancaster House.

Attends the China-UK Business Summit at Mansion House.

Visits Huawei Technologies.



Meets with UK Prime Minister David Cameron at Downing Street.

Attends banquet at the Guildhall in London hosted by the Lord Mayor and City of London Corp.



Visits Imperial College London.



Visits Immarsat, a leading provider of global satellite communication services.

Joins a Confucius Institute conference hosted by the UCL Institute of Education.

Leaves London for Manchester.

October 22



Meets with Cameron at Chequers, the official country residence of British prime ministers.

October 23

Visits the National Graphene Institute at the University of Manchester.

Visits Manchester City Football Club, accompanied by Cameron.

Attends an event at Manchester Airport.

Leaves Manchester for Beijing.



Sources: Buckingham Palace and China Daily

FENG XIUXIA / CHINA DAILY

ECONOMY

Economists favor reducing GDP target to 6.5%

By CHEN JIAO chenjiao@chinadaily.com.cn

49.5 percent

of GDP was provided by the service industry in the first half of this year, up from 48.1 percent last year.

A further cut in GDP growth is being advised by economists for China's 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) to pave the way for more reforms and the switch to a consumption-driven economy.

They propose that the annual GDP growth target should be cut from about 7 percent to 6.5 percent.

Some economists even see short periods of 6 percent growth as tolerable.

The ideas are being floated ahead of a top leaders' meeting later this month.

Economists said there is no need to fear a further slowdown. Even as year-on-year GDP growth falls to 6.5 percent, based on a total of 63.65 trillion yuan (\$10 trillion) last year, this still represents a rise of more than 4 trillion yuan, more or less the total of the nation's economy in 1994, or that of Switzerland, the 20th-largest economy in the world.

In March, the government lowered the national GDP growth target of 7.5 percent last year to "around 7 percent" this year to allow the country to shed unwanted manufacturing capacity and for its transition from an export-led growth model to a consumption-driven one.

The economy grew by 7 percent in the first two quarters of the year, while many analysts are predicting slower, perhaps about 6.8 percent, growth in the third quarter.

Slower GDP growth does not mean a weaker economy, said Yu Bin, an economist with the State Council Development Research Center, a government think tank. It is only natural because the service industry is comprising an increasing share of the economy.

"The service industry generally has a lower demand for capital investment than

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manufacturing industry, and inevitably when translated in terms of GDP growth, you get a smaller figure," Yu said.

According to the government, in the first half of this year, the service industry provided 49.5 percent of China's GDP, up from 48.1 percent last year and 47.6 percent in 2013.

In contrast, manufacturing industry's share was 43.7 percent in the first half, down from 47.1 percent last year and 48 percent in 2013.

The other source contributing to GDP is agriculture. According to an economic outlook from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the five years from 2016 the nation's potential growth rate could range between 6 and 6.5 percent a year.

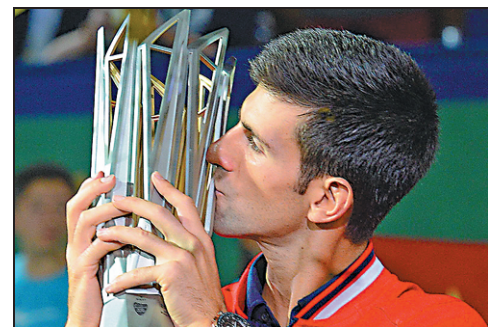
But Li Yang, a leading economist at the academy, said a lower growth target should have a "bottom line" as well, to avoid social turbulence, financial crises, or a major contraction in the jobs market.

Some economists suggest that the "bottom line" should be 6 percent, while others prefer a higher level.

Zhang Xiaoli, vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said China could achieve its long-term promise to double its GDP as long as its average annual GDP growth reaches 6.53% in the next five years.

Zheng Yangpeng contributed to the story.

In the news



Tennis triumph: Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates winning the men's singles final against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France at the Shanghai Masters. See more > p23 CAO ZICHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

CHINA

Rail boost

A project to improve industrial infrastructure in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cluster will be led by building an extended high-speed railway. > p5

SPORTS

Youth games

Nearly 8,000 young athletes will compete at the first National Youth Games being held in East China's Fujian province from Oct 18-27. > p24

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