

INSIGHTS

Lunar Exploration Requires Global Cooperation

Opinion

By TANG Zhexiao

China's Chang'e-6 mission marked a milestone in lunar exploration history by returning with 1,935.5 grams of the first samples from the far side of the moon, which would be an important global asset.

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) said applications would be accepted from domestic research institutions and scientists to study the Chang'e-6 samples in about six months, based on the lunar sample management rules.

China has also published an announcement, welcoming other countries to take part in the study of the lunar samples.

However, NASA said on June 28 that it didn't get "any direct invitation" while China has worked with France, Pakistan and the European Space Agency (ESA).

In response to that, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a regular press conference on July 1, "The U.S. side seems to have forgotten to mention their domestic legislation such as the Wolf Amendment (which prohibits NASA from using government funds for bilateral cooperation with China without authorization from the U.S. Congress or the FBI)."



Researchers put the container holding Chang'e-6 lunar samples into a protective case after a ceremony held in Beijing for opening the returner, on June 26, 2024. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Mao said, "The real question is whether the U.S. scientists and institutions are allowed by their own government to participate in exchanges and cooperation with China."

At a press conference in June, Bian Zhigang, vice administrator of the CNSA, said scientists worldwide were encouraged to jointly carry out scientific research on lunar samples and data. Bian added that the U.S. should remove the obstacles that limit cooperation.

China has always maintained a positive and open attitude to space exchanges and cooperation, the CNSA stressed. While taking a self-reliant path in the lunar exploration program, it supports international cooperation in space exploration.

Based on lunar sample management rules released in August 2023, the samples will be available to scientists from countries such as Australia, Russia, France, the U.S., the UK, and Sweden.

The Chang'e-6 mission carried

four international payloads developed by ESA, France, Italy and Pakistan.

Josef Aschbacher, director general of ESA, expressed his thanks on social media platform X, saying ESA is proud to have a part in the mission.

Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi called the Chang'e-6 mission a model example of international cooperation, which extended meaningful assistance to developing countries.

China is set to further expand its international cooperation for the upcoming lunar exploration. More than 10 countries and international organizations have signed cooperation documents with it.

Scheduled to launch around 2026, the Chang'e-7 mission will carry six international scientific instruments. Chang'e-8 will have 200 kilograms of international payload capacity and has already received over 30 applications, according to the international cooperation department of the CNSA.

Neil Melville-Kenney, ESA technical officer who worked with researchers from China on the Chang'e-6 payload, said he would like to see countries joining hands and working together.

Instead of provoking an arms race, forging international cooperation on the moon and other space explorations is the right path for global sustainable development.

Comment

An Open Mind to Embrace Sci-tech

Edited by Staff Reporters

China has made new breakthroughs in basic frontier research, taken new strides in strategic high-tech fields, and achieved new results in high-quality development driven by innovation. It has opened up new prospects in the reform of the sci-tech system, and made new progress in sci-tech opening-up and cooperation with the rest of the world.

Sci-tech progress is a global issue. Independent innovation in the new era means coordinating resources in an open environment, it is not something that can be done behind closed doors.

In fact, China's sci-tech innovation has never been closed innovation. From the teamwork in the early days to joint research and exchange activities after the reform and opening up in 1978, cooperation has always been a distinctive feature of the country's science and technology development.

In recent years, Beijing has been focusing on strengthening international sci-tech innovation cooperation extensively, is actively engaged in the global innovation network, and is participating in global technology governance, taking the lead in organizing international "big science" plans.

To respond to global challenges and promote development, China has provided its wisdom and strength, demonstrating its leading role in global innovation.

With the world having entered a new period of turbulence and transformation, the more complex the global environment is, the more we must open our minds and door.

To achieve sci-tech self-reliance and strength through openness and co-

operation and further the implementation of international sci-tech cooperation initiatives, all countries should broaden their channels for exchanges and collaborations at both governmental and non-governmental levels. More leveraging platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative are needed to support collaborative research by scientists worldwide.

So far, 146 foreign experts, three international organizations and one foreign organization have won China's International Science and Technology Cooperation Award since 1995. It is a tribute to the foreign scientists and researchers who have devoted themselves to sci-tech exchanges and cooperation with China.

Non-governmental communication and cooperation is an important part of promoting open cooperation in science and technology. Scientists and research institutions from different parts of the world can gather together to discuss frontier technology and share updated research results via international science and technology forums, seminars, and innovation competitions.

The experience accumulated from the sci-tech development in the new era, including sci-tech opening-up and cooperation for the benefit of all, should be put into practice and enriched.

China is ready to promote technology sharing and reduce technical barriers, working together with the others to create an open, fair, just and non-discriminatory science and technology development environment.

China also aims to deepen sci-tech opening-up and cooperation by drawing on global wisdom, and thereby make greater contributions to building a community with a shared future for all.

Worldwide Travelers See the Real China

Voice of the World

By GONG Qian

As global tourists flock to China, a great many of them are posting videos on their firsthand experience of Chinese culture, transportation and technological advancements on video-sharing social media platforms YouTube and TikTok, and the number of these videos is mounting.

The recent surge of tourists is partly due to China's favorable policies and measures, especially the 7/144-hour visa-free transit policy. Launched in 2013, the

policy has been extended to 54 countries, whose citizens can enjoy a six-day trip to select areas of China without having to apply for a visa beforehand.

In their videos, the overwhelmed visitors speak highly of China's safety, modernity and the beauty of both its urban landscapes and natural scenery.

A South Africa vlogger who uses only her first name Lizzy has been living in China for several years.

The social media influencer says her YouTube account was flooded by videos from first-time visitors to China. The most striking aspect of their videos was how different the reality was from their expectations, Lizzy says.

One of her friends, who had previ-

ously imagined the Chinese living in huts, was amazed by the impressive infrastructure and skyscrapers upon his arrival in China.

There are many stories like this.

The Hutchinsons, who describe themselves as a full-time traveling British family of five, took an "epic" three-month trip to China. Their vlog on YouTube about their trip to Guangzhou in south China's Guangdong province in March describes them wandering the streets of Guangzhou in the early morning and marveling at the peaceful and pristine environment: "It feels really safe."

Chinese culture and high-quality life experiences are the core attractions of the destinations. YouTube vloggers Shae and David documented their first journey in China in June. The Canadian couple entered China courtesy the 144-hour transit visa, heading to Beijing. They were captivated by the historical spots including the Great Wall and Jingshan Park, a royal garden.

Their videos gained popularity online because of authenticity, showing viewers genuine experiences without any flattery or exaggeration. The videos resonated with many Internet users who posted comments like "Chinese are really friendly," "A safe country," and "China's advancement and civilization are impressive."

In August 2023, YouTube vlogger

Joel Friend and his partner Emilia came to China on a transit visa. During their four-day visit to Shanghai, they were stunned by the spectacular light show at the Bund. They described their first day in Shanghai as "such a cool and unique experience" and expressed a strong desire to return.

In June, they returned to explore the country for four weeks. This time, they were overwhelmed by the convenience of WeChat Pay and the innovative traffic light countdown feature on a map app. "Never seen anything like that. It's pretty crazy," they said.

A report released in June by the China Tourism Academy indicates a significant increase in the number of overseas tourists searching for flights and accommodations in China, signaling a growing interest in traveling to the country.

"Demand levels for us right now are more than quadruple what they were last year, which is taking us back to the level where we were in 2019," Peter Crane, global product director at Wendy Wu Tours, told *The Telegraph*.

Vlogger Lizzy says many foreigners have a preconceived bias about China due to a lack of firsthand knowledge. What they know is often based on media reports. She hopes that more people can experience China by themselves. As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing."



Foreign visitors take selfies at the Palace Museum in Beijing in May. (PHOTO: VCG)



Participants visit a greenhouse at the opening ceremony of the China-Romania Joint Laboratory for Cooperation in Agriculture in Bucharest, Romania, on June 25, 2024. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Space Cooperation Consolidates Sino-French Friendship

From page 1

Overall, the cooperation between China and France in space science and technology has yielded significant achievements, enhancing research capabilities and technological breakthroughs, and fostering talent.

Looking to the future, the space technology cooperation between China and European countries such as France will be influenced by technological, geopolitical, and diplomatic factors, but the foundation of mutual benefit and long-

term cooperation will remain vital. China will always be committed to maintaining an open, pragmatic approach, strengthening strategic communication with European partners, and promoting the peaceful and sustainable use of global space technology.

ZHANG Zhihui is with the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS); LIU Yong is with the National Space Science Center, CAS

Robot Guide Dog Becomes Eyes for the Blind

Hi! Tech

By Staff Reporters

A robot guide dog raises its six legs, stamps the ground a few times, and then gently leads the visually impaired person forward via the fixed guide cane. If the person holding the cane wishes to walk faster, the robot will accelerate its pace upon receiving

instructions.

This six-legged robot guide dog was developed by a research team from China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The robot has the function of visual environmental perception and can autonomously navigate to its destination, dynamically avoid obstacles and identify traffic lights.

The robot's primary task is to understand the user's intentions, while always maintaining coordinated actions. The team has integrated multiple interaction

methods into the robot, such as hearing and touch.

It also has the capacity to understand semantic information based on voice recognition models according to the person's voice instructions, and respond quickly and accurately. The current voice recognition accuracy rate is over 90 percent, and the response speed is within one-second.

In addition, the fixed cane can achieve force perception interaction between the person and the robot, guiding

the person to move forward and turn. The cane can also be pushed and pulled to dynamically adjust the robot's walking speed.

The robot's current maximum speed is 3m/s, which can meet the needs of the person, such as walking slowly or quickly, and even running. Moreover, the unique configuration of the six legs ensures that the robot can walk stably with low noise levels. The robot can also help overcome the severe shortage of guide dogs in China.

China's Leap in Bridge Building

From page 1

The Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah Bridge, the second cross-sea bridge in Penang state, Malaysia, is a landmark project for the internationalization of China's bridge construction technology. The 24-km bridge, the longest in Malaysia, has improved traffic between the island of Penang and mainland peninsular Malaysia, and shows the competitiveness of Chinese enterprises in the global engineering market.

However, Chinese bridge technolo-

gy needs increased investment in R&D to maintain competitiveness and innovation ability, according to Xiao Rucheng, chairman of the Bridge and Structural Engineering branch of China Civil Engineering Society.

In the future, with the development of science and technology in China, Chinese bridge technology will aim to make greater breakthroughs in intelligence, green construction and operation, and high efficiency, making greater contributions to global infrastructure construction.