

CHINA



Monks debate candidates on five classical texts during the Geshe Lharampa examination at Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Sunday. Thirteen monks earned the Geluk school's highest academic degree this year, bringing the total number of recipients to 215. LI LIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

13 Tibetan monks pass debating exam to get degree

By **PALDEN NYIMA** and **DAQIONG** in Lhasa

Thirteen monks have been awarded the Geshe Lharampa, the highest academic degree in the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism, after passing a rigorous sutra debating examination at Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region. Often compared to a doctorate, the degree is earned through decades of systematic study of Buddhist philosophy, logic and scripture. The newly accredited monks come from major monasteries in Shigatse, Lhokha, Chamdo, Nagchu and Lhasa, bringing the total number of Geshe Lharampas in Xizang to 215. The examination, overseen by an

official evaluation committee, began with a grand prayer ceremony. Chanting echoed through the temple courtyard as the scent of Tibetan incense filled the air, setting a solemn tone for the assessment that followed. At the heart of the process is formalized debate — a defining feature of Tibetan Buddhist education that tests not only knowledge, but also reasoning and clarity of thought. Under the committee's supervision, the 13 candidates engaged in intensive exchanges on the classics of Tibetan Buddhist teachings. The examiners, a board of master scholars, stood in the middle of the courtyard ready to challenge the candidates, who sat on raised podiums situated at the center and at the end of the courtyard.

Debate was fierce at times, with monks making pushing and pulling gestures and clapping their hands to emphasize their points, as if in combat. Such debate is a distinctive method of learning, assessment and advancement in Tibetan Buddhist monastic education, combining philosophical inquiry with a highly structured format passed down through centuries. Following strict evaluation, Ngakwang Leshed of Sera Monastery ranked first. He said he felt honored to receive the degree after more than 30 years of preparation. "Right at this moment, I want to first thank my dharma teachers, fellow monks and my family, who have supported and guided me throughout the years," he said.

The event also drew visitors, offering a window into a living intellectual and spiritual tradition. Ana Cristel Romo, a tourist from Mexico, said she was deeply impressed by what she had learned. "It is very impressive how they carry out these practices and how highly they value wisdom. Through this, one can pursue enlightenment and cultivate virtue," she said. Another visitor from France, who encountered the event during her visit to Jokhang Temple, said she felt fortunate to witness it. "I think the very existence of Tibetan culture is a gift to human civilization, and I feel lucky to be here and experience it," she said.

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Outcry over AI images in drama series

Generating replicas without consent is personal infringement, experts say

By **CAO YIN**
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A Chinese short drama series suspected of using artificial intelligence to obtain people's facial data has sparked public outcry in recent days, prompting regulators and legal experts to stress that technological advancement must not infringe on personal rights. In late March, several bloggers — including traditional Chinese attire enthusiasts and models — accused the popular AI-generated series *Peach Blossom Hairpin* of using technology to replicate their facial features, outfits and makeup without consent to create characters that were widely distributed on short-video platforms. By then, the series had already garnered more than 40 million views on Hongguo, a micro-drama platform, and some of the alleged victims said they were preparing to take legal action. On Friday, Hongguo said on its official WeChat account that the series had been removed and that no new content would be uploaded for 15 days because its creator had failed to provide sufficient proof of compliance with regulations governing facial imagery. The platform said adherence to legal and regulatory standards is a non-negotiable baseline, but noted that short dramas, as a new form of creative product, present major challenges for content review, particularly with the rise of AI tools. It pledged to strengthen content review processes, upgrade verification technologies and improve authorization procedures to foster a more regulated environment for content creation and distribution. Although the producer has not confirmed whether bloggers' photos were used as templates for AI generation, legal experts said such actions could still constitute infringement. Zhao Zhanling, a lawyer at Beijing Javy Law Firm, said under the Civil Code and legal practice, if an AI-generated face leads the public to associate it with a specific individual, it may constitute infringement. "Copying a person's image and processing it with AI is a typical example of using information technology to violate someone's portrait rights," Zhao said. As AI technology becomes more prevalent in the film and television industry, similar cases of AI-powered face and voice swapping have become increasingly frequent. Last month, the Beijing Internet Court disclosed a case in which an actress' images were misused by two companies using AI face-swapping technology in a short drama. The court ruled in favor of the actress, ordering the defendants to issue a public apology and compensate her for financial losses. In another case, the court supported a voice-over artist, ruling

that using AI to imitate someone's voice without permission constitutes infringement of voice rights. "The advancement of AI has facilitated creative production but has also been exploited for infringing activities," said Ma Xiangxiang, a lawyer at the Anjie Broad Law Firm. She noted that regulators in China have begun addressing the illegal use of such technology, particularly in AI-driven face swapping in short videos. On Thursday, the performers' committee of the China Federation of Radio and Television Associations issued a statement condemning the unauthorized use of actors' images and voices through AI face swapping, voice cloning and unauthorized editing or remixing. The committee said any content that can be linked to specific actors — whether through AI-generated lookalikes, imitated voices, face-swapped dramas, commercial use, virtual replicas or derivative works — does not avoid liability, regardless of labeling. On Sunday, the studio of Yi Yangqianxi said AI-generated dramas using the actor's likeness without permission had been circulating online. The actor has not appeared in such productions nor authorized any third party to use his image for AI synthesis, the studio said, adding that it had engaged lawyers. Zhao said pursuing legal remedies is important but noted that it is more difficult for ordinary individuals to identify infringement, as AI-generated content often draws on large datasets. "Producers frequently claim that any resemblance is purely coincidental, making it harder to prove recognizability," he said. "Additionally, the costs of legal action — including evidence collection, notarization and litigation — can be prohibitively high." He advised individuals who discover unauthorized AI-generated content using their likeness to immediately record or take a screenshot of the material and preserve evidence, preferably through blockchain methods. He added that filing complaints with hosting platforms is a faster and more affordable way to seek remedies. Ma cited the Civil Code, which requires platforms to take necessary measures — such as removal, blocking or disconnection of links — once notified of infringing content. Upon receiving such notice, platforms must promptly forward it to the alleged infringer and take appropriate action based on preliminary evidence and the nature of the service, she said. She also called for a stronger legal framework to further regulate AI applications, thereby ensuring data security, intensifying personal information and minor protection and serving the healthy development of the digital economy.

Cross-Strait ferry trips surge for Qingming holiday

By **ZHANG YI** in Fuzhou and **SHI XUEFAN** in Wuhan

Ancestral ties drew thousands of Taiwan compatriots across the Strait as maritime passenger routes saw a surge in travel during Qingming Festival, with many returning to the Chinese mainland for tomb-sweeping and family reunions. The four "Mini Three Links" routes — providing direct ferry services between coastal areas of Fujian province and the islands of Jinmen and Matsu — handled 6,655 passenger trips on Saturday, a year-on-year increase of 22.5 percent, according to the Fujian Maritime Safety Administration. The Jinmen-Xiamen route, which takes about 20 minutes, recorded nearly 6,000 cross-Strait travelers on Saturday, with Taiwan residents accounting for more than 70 percent. Total passenger volume on the route over the three-day holiday is expected to reach 20,000, according to border inspection authorities. Li Yung-hung, a Taiwan compatriot who arrived in Xiamen by ferry, said she postponed a scheduled leg surgery to return for the annual holiday. "It is a Chinese tradition to return home for tomb-sweeping, and I want the next generation to know our roots are on the mainland," Li said.



Passengers disembark from a ferry on the Quanzhou-Jinmen "Mini Three Links" route at the Quanzhou-Jinmen passenger terminal in Quanzhou, Fujian province, on Friday. JIANG KEHONG / XINHUA

"When the Jinmen-Xiamen Bridge opens in the future, I want to drive back to my ancestral home." To ensure smooth travel, the Gaoqi border inspection station in Xiamen deployed Hokkien-speaking officers to assist travelers, as 80 percent of Taiwan residents have ancestral roots in Fujian, said Chen Jinlai, deputy chief of the station. "Qingming is the most vivid manifestation that both sides of the Strait are one family. Every visit is a

confirmation of shared roots and a continuation of family memory," Chen said. Supporting such root-tracing journeys, genealogy-matching services were offered on Friday at a port in Nan'an, Quanzhou, by the China Museum for Fujian-Taiwan Kinship. Since 2006, the museum has helped more than 300 Taiwan compatriots trace their ancestral roots. The search for familial links often leads to ancestral landmarks such

as the Jiangxia Ancestral Hall in Xiamen, where people surnamed Huang from both sides of the Strait gathered on March 29 to honor their ancestors. Built in 1910, the hall was once a departure point for the Huangs heading to Taiwan as well as Southeast Asia and remains a key destination for those seeking their origins. The search for roots extends even further. Huang Chao-jung, a young Taiwan compatriot, visited Wuhan's Jiangxia district in Hubei province — considered the earliest historical origin of the Huang surname — last month. "I once heard a saying that all Huangs originate from Jiangxia ... Back in the early days in Taiwan, most of us only knew our ancestral roots were in Fujian," Huang said. "Traveling all the way to Wuhan gives me a special feeling of connection, as if I have gradually traced my roots back. Arriving at the place makes me feel especially moved," she said. Contact the writers at zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

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Clean energy transition speeds up across nation

JINAN — In Tai'an, East China's Shandong province, a massive power facility has risen from a once-abandoned rock salt mine, reshaping the skyline of this once resource-dependent city. "The station is designed to store energy for eight hours and generate electricity for four hours, with an annual output of up to 460 million kilowatt-hours. That is enough to meet the yearly electricity demand of more than 200,000 households," said project manager Liu Shaoyong with the China Energy Engineering Group Co, the facility's operator. As the company's first commercial compressed air energy storage project, the station turns under-

ground salt caverns left by years of mining into "energy reservoirs". During off-peak hours, electricity is used to compress air and store it underground. The compressed air is then released to generate power during peak demand. In recent years, China has made several breakthroughs in renewable energy generation. By 2025, renewable energy installations accounted for more than half of the country's total installed capacity, driven by the use of innovative technologies. This has provided strong momentum for both China and the world in their clean energy transition. In Tai'an, renewable energy technologies are not only accelerating

the development of new power storage models but also improving the grid's ability to absorb renewable power, ensuring a stable and secure energy supply. "We actively track electricity demand and provide technical support for project commissioning and grid connection, streamlining comprehensive grid integration services," said an official with the dispatching center of the State Grid Tai'an power supply company. By 2030, the city's installed capacity of new-type energy storage is expected to approach 5 million kilowatts. With close cooperation between enterprises and power authorities, a growing number of clean energy

projects are being put into operation across China, reshaping the country's energy landscape. In October, the world's largest 26-megawatt offshore wind turbine, independently developed by China's Dongfang Electric Corporation, was successfully connected to the grid in waters off Shandong, setting new global records for both single-unit capacity and rotor diameter. According to the company, under full-load conditions, each rotation of the turbine generates 62 kWh of electricity. At an average wind speed of 10 meters per second, a single unit can produce 100 million kWh annually — enough to power 55,000 households — while saving 30,000 metric tons of

standard coal and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 80,000 tons. Similar clean energy-powered data centers are also being developed in Northwest and Southwest China. China is accelerating the construction of renewable energy infrastructure to support its fast-growing digital economy while effectively reducing carbon emissions. In September, China pledged to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions across its economy by 7 to 10 percent from peak levels by 2035. To achieve this goal, China's installed capacity of renewable energy has already surpassed that of coal-fired power. As China rapidly expands its clean energy infrastructure, it is also sharing the spillover benefits of its technological innovation with the rest of the world. At the Solar and Storage Live Africa 2026 exhibition held in

Johannesburg in March, Chinese companies' photovoltaic equipment and smart energy solutions drew widespread attention. Qhakazile Mathebula, general manager for digital energy at City Power, welcomed the strong presence of Chinese firms and highlighted their contribution to Africa's energy transition. "We welcome the participation of Chinese renewable energy companies, whose investments and technologies are helping accelerate Africa's shift toward cleaner and more sustainable energy," she said. China's ability to deliver cost-effective and scalable solutions is critical as African countries are working to expand energy access and address supply constraints, Mathebula added. XINHUA