



US House elects new speaker amid chaos

After three weeks without a speaker in the House, GOP House Representative Mike Johnson of Louisiana was elected as the new speaker on Wednesday 3

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Six Chinese taikonauts from two Shenzhou spaceflight mission crews pose at the Chinese space station, after three taikonauts aboard Shenzhou-17 spaceship entered the country's space station on October 26, 2023. The red sheets in the background read "Welcome teammates." Photo: CMSA

► Shenzhou-17 embarks on historic journey with youngest crew

Tiangong space station sees reunion of six taikonauts

By Deng Xiaoci

On the momentous occasion of the 20th anniversary of China's first manned spaceflight of the Shenzhou-5, China's space station, also known as Tiangong, which means "heavenly palace," witnessed another historic moment in China's manned space history as six taikonauts from two Shenzhou spaceflight mission crews had their

space reunion on Thursday afternoon, some 6.5 hours after the Shenzhou-17 spacecraft's successful lift-off on Thursday morning at around 11:14 am.

According to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA), the Shenzhou-17 manned spacecraft successfully conducts rendezvous and docking with the Tianhe space station core module at the front port at 5:46 pm Thursday.

The Shenzhou-16 crew opened the door and welcomed the incoming Shenzhou-17 fellow taikonauts by 7:34 pm. The six then took a group picture to mark the historic reunion moment, according to the CMSA.

The two crew groups will carry out in-orbit rotation and work together in the China's space station for around four days, the CMSA said.

Such a great feat of an in-

orbit reunion of six taikonauts continues the new norm for the China's space station with permanent occupation of taikonauts, mission insiders hailed, and they noted that the collaboration between the two crew groups will mark a significant step in China's ongoing space exploration endeavors, reinforcing its capability and commitment to long-

Divide deepens as UNSC fails to pass several resolutions to halt Gaza fight

By Chen Qingqing

A US-backed draft resolution on the Israel-Hamas conflict was vetoed for it did not reflect the world's strongest calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, showing that the deadlock is deepening at the UN Security Council (UNSC) after several relevant drafts on the issue failed to pass in recent weeks. Some observers saw Washington as playing a proxy role for Israel, with an apparent long-term biased view at the UNSC, impeding efforts to tackle the Israel-Palestine issue.

The resolution drafted by the US would have reaffirmed Israel's right to self-defense, urged respect for international laws – especially protection of civilians – and called for "humanitarian pauses" to deliver desperately needed aid to Gaza, the AP reported on Thursday.

In Wednesday's vote in the 15-member council, 10 countries voted in favor, Russia, China and the United Arab Emirates voted against. The resolution was not adopted because permanent council members Russia and China cast vetoes.

The draft is seriously out of balance and confuses right and wrong, was introduced in haste and lacked the consensus it deserved, Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, said in an explanation of the vote.

It does not reflect the world's strongest calls for a ceasefire and an end to the fighting, and it does not help resolve the issue, Zhang said.

The initial US text shocked many diplomats with its bluntness in stating Israel has a right to defend itself and demanding that Iran stop export-

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China's space mission marked by 'independence, safety'

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term space habitation and research, they noted.

With an average age of 39, the crew of taikonauts of the Shenzhou-17 mission is notably young, setting a record for China's manned space history.

Tang Hongbo, 48, will be the first second-generation taikonaut to lead two younger third-generation taikonauts on a Shenzhou mission. Tang will also be the first taikonaut to return to the Tiangong space station with the shortest interval between crewed spaceflight missions to date.

The Shenzhou-17 mission is the first space experience for both Tang Shengjie and Jiang Linxin.

Flawless record

Director of China Manned Space Engineering Office, and the country's first taikonaut Yang Liwei told the media that the third batch of taikonauts are undertaking special trainings for the China's space station application and development phase and they will be honed to become the backbone of the future space endeavors.

This year marks the 20th anniversary

of China's first manned spaceflight mission the Shenzhou-5. In the past 20 years, China has carried out 12 crewed missions including the latest Shenzhou-17 mission, with a perfect success rate.

Also during this period, the mighty Long March-2F rocket and Shenzhou manned spacecraft at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center have successfully launched 20 taikonauts, with 32 trips into space, holding aloft celestial dreams of the Chinese nation with a solid 100 percent success rate, the CMSA said in a statement it provided to the Global Times on Thursday.

Since its inaugural flight in 1999, the Long March 2F rocket, the country's first and only manned carrier rocket, has maintained a flawless record.

Through continuous efforts to address weak links and optimize technical conditions, the reliability assessment of Long March 2F rocket has now increased to 0.9896, with a safety assessment value reaching 0.99996. "This showcases the rigorous enhancements and technical advancements that have been implemented to ensure the rocket's reliability and safety over the years," the rocket developer the state-owned China Academy

of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT) told the Global Times on Thursday.

According to them, in the coming years, the Long March 2F rocket is set to continue its high-frequency launch schedule with two launches per year. It will play a crucial role in the operation of China's space station, demonstrating its pivotal role in supporting the country's ambitious space exploration and operation endeavors.

Steadfast progress

The Shenzhou-17 crewed flight mission, the 30th flight mission since the establishment of China's manned space program in 1992, has some crucial objectives.

The mission's primary goal includes completing the in-orbit crew rotation with the Shenzhou-16 trio, before they carry on to conduct an approximate six-month stay in space until April 2024.

During this period, the crew will engage in on-orbit trials of space science and application payloads, conduct extravehicular activities, commonly known as spacewalks, and perform payload extravehicular operations, which according to the CMSA, will also involve the installation of extravehicular payloads and

maintenance tasks on the space station.

Moreover, the mission will continually evaluate the functional performance of the space station assembly, accumulating precious data and experience regarding space station operations. This initiative aims to assess the coordination and compatibility of the ground support center in managing space station operational tasks, thereby enriching the operational efficiency and troubleshooting capabilities of the space station, the CMSA said.

A significant highlight of the Shenzhou-17 mission is the pioneering experimental extravehicular repair operations to be undertaken on the space station, which will be a historic first.

China's steadfast progress in its manned space program, characterized by a strong emphasis on independence and prioritizing safety, indeed offers insightful lessons for emerging space powers like India, said Song Zhongping, a TV commentator and space affairs watcher.

The meticulously structured steps, coupled with a robust support framework, pave the way for accomplishing complex space objectives, the expert told Global Times on Thursday.

Geopolitical confrontation further impedes UN mechanism, prolongs conflict

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ing arms to militant groups, Reuters said. It did not include a call for humanitarian pauses for aid access, according to the media report.

After the failure of the US resolution, the UNSC voted on a Russian-drafted text that called for a humanitarian ceasefire and withdrawal of Israel's order for civilians in Gaza to relocate south ahead of a ground assault, Al Jazeera reported on Thursday.

This was the second draft resolution led by Russia in two weeks, but was not adopted as it failed to secure the sufficient number of votes in favor.

Earlier last week, a Brazil-led draft resolution calling for humanitarian pauses for full and unhindered aid into Gaza, condemnation of violence against all civilians and rescission of Israel's evacuation order failed to be adopted due to a veto by the US.

There's a long history of divergences at the UN on the Palestine issue. The US has vetoed a number of resolutions in the past concerning Israeli occupation of some Palestinian territory or Israel's massive retaliation that caused humanitarian crisis, Li Weijian, a research fellow with the Institute for Foreign Policy Studies of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, told the Global Times.

"Such divergences delayed the resolution of the Israel-



The UN Security Council votes on a draft resolution on Israel-Palestine conflict at the UN headquarters in New York, on October 25, 2023. China vetoed the draft resolution, pointing out that the draft is seriously out of balance and confuses right and wrong. Photo: Xinhua

Palestine issue, which also impeded the UN from playing its normal role," Li said, noting that the US veto of the Russia-led resolution came out of intensifying geopolitical confrontation.

Escalating crisis

Israeli ground forces operated within the northern Gaza Strip on Thursday, attacking multiple Hamas targets before withdrawing, Reuters reported.

Given the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, European Union leaders will call for the establishment of "humanitarian corridors and pauses" to get urgently-needed aid into Gaza at a summit in Brussels on Thursday, the media report said.

A video showing Wael Al Dahdouh, a journalist from the Al Jazeera, who lost his wife, son, daughter, and grandson in a reported Israeli airstrike on

Wednesday, was circulating on Chinese social media on Thursday, grabbing the public's attention on how severe the humanitarian crisis is now in Gaza.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has gone through two stages, firstly the attack by Hamas on Israelis, and second Israel's bombing of Gaza, but the US-led resolution mainly focused on Israel's "right of self-defense," Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East

Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times.

"It is important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said recently, who also accused Israel of clear violations of humanitarian law in the Gaza Strip.

"The UNSC is now in an awkward position as it's difficult for the five permanent members of the UNSC to achieve an agreement now. The US is playing the role of a proxy for Israel by only repeating its stances," Liu said, noting that this kind of bloc confrontation will dodge some key issues and prolong the conflict.

The top priority on the Palestine-Israel issue is to cease fire, avoid humanitarian disasters, downgrade conflicts, and allow the UN to play its due role, Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East Issue Zhai Jun told a symposium on the Arab-Chinese Relations and Dialogue between Arab and Chinese Civilizations recently.

Experts said there is still a possibility for a ceasefire, especially with the US and Israel facing pressure globally and domestically, which will force Washington to exert some influence on Israel.

