

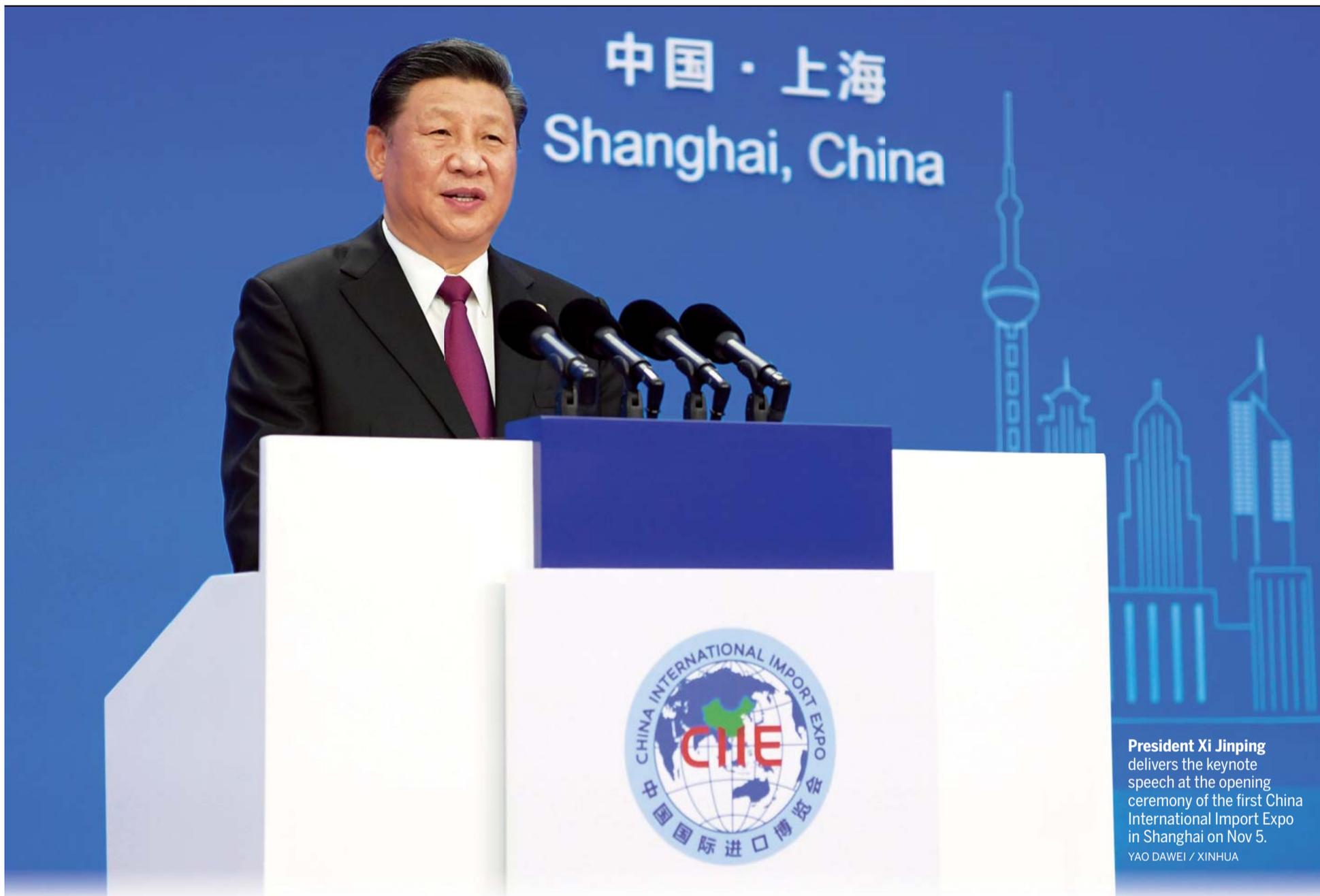
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President Xi Jinping delivers the keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the first China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov 5.
YAO DAWEI / XINHUA

OPEN TO THE WORLD

China launches globe's first national-level import expo in a move to widen market access, underline support for free trade

By AN BAIJIE in Shanghai and KARL WILSON in Sydney

At a time when the world's trading system is under threat, President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's commitment to free trade and globalization in his opening address at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai on Nov 5.

Speaking to representatives from 172 countries, regions and international organizations, Xi said the global economy was going through a "new round of major development, transformation and adjustment".

"The economic and social well-being of

countries in the world is increasingly interconnected," he said. But at the same time, he noted the resurgence of protectionism and unilateralism.

"Economic globalization faces headwinds, and multilateralism and the system of free trade are under threat. Uncertainties and instabilities still abound, and risks and challenges are growing," Xi said.

"Living in such a complex world, we need to see the underlining trend, bolster confidence in our future through opening-up and cooperation and work together to cope with risks and challenges."

Under the theme of New Era, Shared Future, the CIIE — which took place in Shanghai from Nov 5 to 10 — was the

world's first import-themed national-level expo. More than 3,600 companies from around the globe went on display and 400,000 Chinese and foreign buyers, businesspeople and government leaders and officials attended.

Even though the United States did not send any government officials, some 180 American companies were present, including major US brands General Motors, Tesla, Qualcomm, Walmart and FedEx.

Global multinational corporations took advantage of the exhibition space, which covered a total area of 300,000 square meters, to showcase the latest advances in technology, innovation and sustainability.

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