

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.66 NO.52 DECEMBER 28, 2023

北方周報 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



THE BIGGER PICTURE

A year of reconnection and recovery



RMB6.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914239

邮发代号2-922·国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2

Follow **CICG Americas**

And get in on the conversation



BeijingReview



BeijingReview



@BeijingReview



China Hoy



China Hoje



CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 **The Year 2023 in Review**

THIS WEEK

COVER STORY

12 **Top 10 Nation News Stories**

16 **Top 10 World News Stories**

20 **Top 10 Business News Stories**

OPINION

26 **Still an Anchor**

China continues to drive global growth

28 Trade and Trends

China-LAC relations embark on a new chapter

30 Reigning in AI

Protecting human rights in the digital era

32 Nipping Economic Risks In the Bud

Stable growth requires proactive problem solving

33 Kindergartens Face Changes and Challenges

Regional responses to shifting demographics

34 NEV Market Calls for Technological Boost

The long road to replacing traditional vehicles

FEATURES

36 The Trials of Translation

National translation exam helps nurture more cross-cultural communication personnel

38 The Power of a Top Influencer

Star employees bring rewards and unique challenges to company management

40 For Art's Sake

Entry requirements change for arts students

42 Dopamine to Dongbei Dahua

Multihued flamboyant fashion takes over social media in 2023

44 A Brazilian Bird's-Eye View

Bringing depth and nuance to China coverage

CULTURE

46 Miracles of Nature

Nation's wildlife on show in Beijing

EXPAT'S EYE

48 A Witness of China

Science is supporting a thriving business environment

Cover Design: Cui Xiaodong

©2023 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.



www.bjreview.com



amazon

Follow us on



YouTube

BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader



北京周报

BEIJING REVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

President: Li Yafang
Editor in Chief: Li Jianguo
Associate Editor in Chief: Liu Yunyun
Associate President: Gao Dingbo

Executive Editor: Yan Wei
Production Director: Yao Bin
Editors: Wang Hairong, Zhang Shasha, Lu Yan
Researcher: Lan Xinzheng
Editorial Consultants: Elsbeth van Paridon, G.P. Wilson
Reporters: Ji Jing, Kang Caiqi, Li Qing, Li Wenhan, Li Xiaoyang, Liang Xiao, Ma Miaomiao, Pan Xiaoqiao, Peng Jiawei, Tao Xing, Tao Zihui, Wang Jun, Wang Ruohan, Yuan Yuan, Zhang Yage
Visual Director: Pamela Tobey
Photographer: Wei Yao
Art: Li Shigong
Design Director: Wang Yajuan
Chief Designer: Cui Xiaodong
Designer and proofreader: Zhao Boyu

Editorial Administrator: Zeng Wenhui
Planning Director: Xu Bei
Deputy Planning Director: Li Nan
World News Director: Ding Ying
World News Deputy Director: Li Fangfang
Director of Digital Media: Yu Shujun
Director of Strategic Research: Zan Jifang
Deputy Director of Strategic Research: Lu Ling

Administration: Zhang Yajie
International Cooperation: Sun Xuan
Legal Counsel: Yue Cheng

North America Bureau (New York City)

Chief: Yu Shujun
Executive Assistant: Zhao Wei
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: yushujun@cicgamericas.com

Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)

Chief: Miao Ye
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoymx@gmail.com

Peru Office (Lima)

Chief: Meng Kexin
Tel: 0051-959212702
E-mail: revistachinaperu@gmail.com

General Editorial Office

Tel: 86-10-68996252
Fax: 86-10-68326628

Editorial Desk

Tel: 86-10-68996250

Partnerships

Tel: 86-10-68995807
E-mail: yecong@cicgamericas.com

Distribution

Tel: 86-10-68310644
E-mail: circulation@cicgamericas.com

Published every Thursday by
CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,
Beijing 100037, China

Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading
Corporation (Guoji Shudian), P. O. BOX 399,
Beijing 100044, China

Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)
Fax: 86-10-68412166

E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn

Website: <http://www.cibtc.com>

General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:

Peace Book Co. Ltd.
17/F, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK
Tel: 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly
in the United States for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books,
360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080
News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,
Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,
South San Francisco, CA 94080

The Year 2023 in Review

It's time again at the year end for *Beijing Review* to review our top 10 news stories from the outgoing year.

After three years of the COVID-19 pandemic, business and daily life across the world returned to normal in 2023, with people-to-people exchanges resuming, business and trade increasing, the tourism industry recovering and consumption becoming more active.

Over the year, the world continued to experience profound changes unseen in a century. Peace and development remain the call of our day.

The Chinese economy remains the biggest engine of global growth, and the international use of China's currency the renminbi continues growing. In November, Chinese and U.S. presidents had a historic meeting in San Francisco, once again lowering the tension between the two countries and steering the relationship between the world's two largest economies back on course. This contributed to world peace and development and had a positive impact on the entire international community.

Also during this year, BRICS membership expanded, once more enhancing the strength of solidarity and cooperation between developing countries;

ChatGPT and other large language models became a sensation, drawing infinite imagination to the field of artificial intelligence; and the 28th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change concluded with a historic consensus to ratchet up global climate action.

But there are still many situations we never wanted to face. The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine deepens people's desire for peace, and the outbreak of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the death of innocent civilians it caused add more sorrows to this desire. Worse still, the global village, already scarred by wars, was further damaged by Japan's discharge of nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean in July, a pain that will continue into the future.

Our hopes for the dawn of human peace and development continue as we welcome 2024. We hope the coming year will not only bring global economic growth, but also an end to the gloom currently enveloping the human community. The light at the end of the tunnel is in sight and it is also within reach if we advance toward it together. **BR**



WRITE TO US

Send an e-mail: editorsoffice@cicgamericas.com

Please provide your name and address along with your submissions. Submissions may be edited.

CHINA.....RMB6.00 U.S.A.....USD1.70
AUSTRALIA.....AUD3.00 UK.....GBP1.20
CANADA.....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND.....CHF2.60
JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
TÜRKIYE.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30
NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位: 中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位: 中国外文局美洲传播中心(北京周报社)

地址: 北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编: 100037

编委会: 李雅芳 李建国 贺鹏 刘云云 高丁博 曾文卉

主任: 李雅芳

总编室电话: (010) 68996252 发行部电话: (010) 68310644

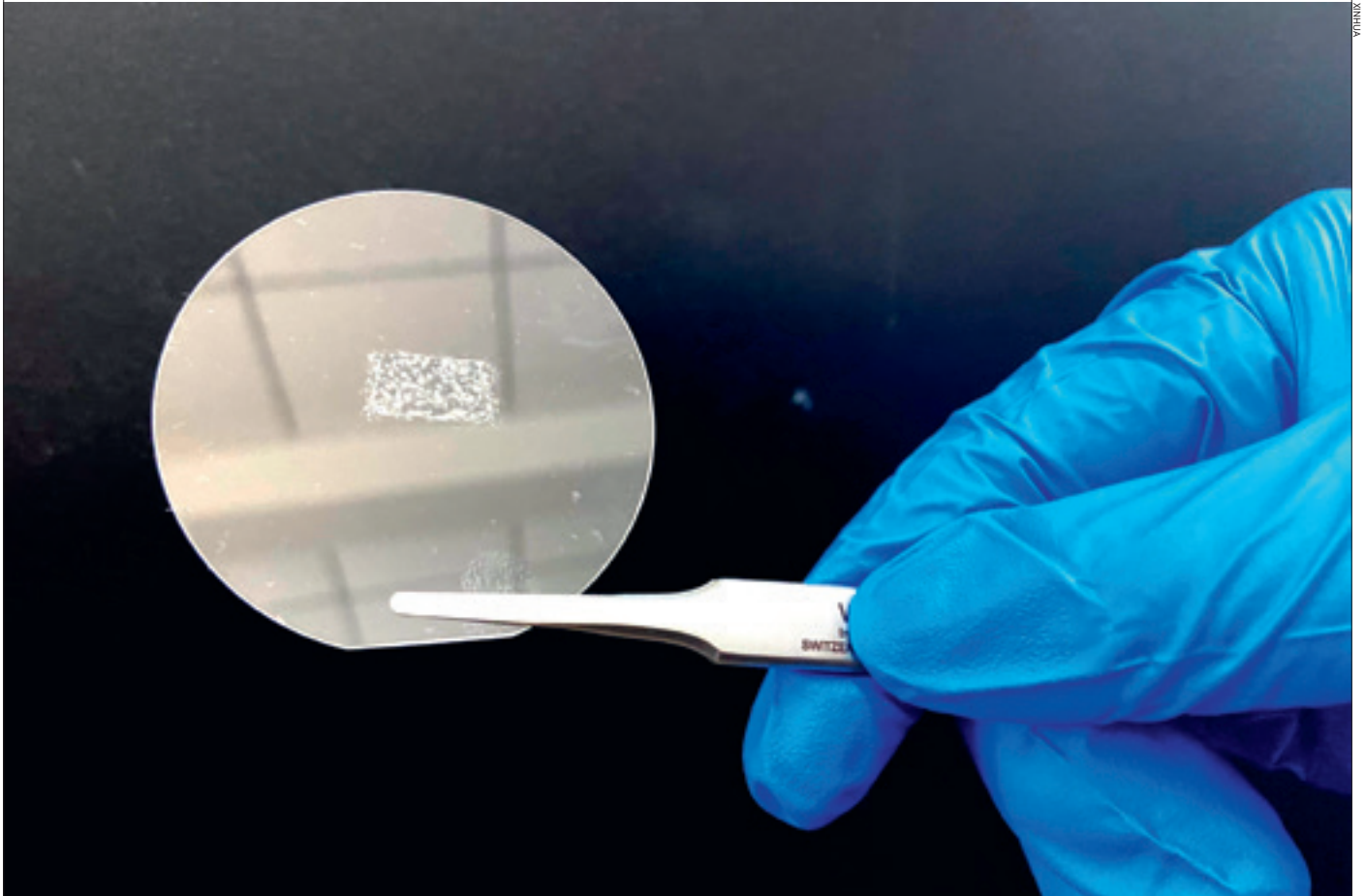
印刷: 北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2023年 第52期 ISSN 1000-9140

国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号: 2-922

广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证733号

国内零售价: 人民币6.00元



A BREAKTHROUGH

A Twisted Boron Nitride (TBN) crystal placed on a piece of fused silica at Peking University (PKU) in Beijing on December 15.

The new type of ultrathin optical crystal, made by a team of PKU researchers, is the thinnest optical crystal currently known in the world, Wang Enge from the university's School of Physics told Xinhua News Agency. Its energy efficiency is 100 to 10,000 times greater than traditional crystals of the same thickness.

The TBN crystal is expected to achieve new application breakthroughs in quantum light sources, photonic chips, artificial intelligence and other fields in the future.



Ensuring Supply

Power supply technicians return after checking the ice condition of a power transmission tower at an observation station on Xihuang Mountain in Huaihua, Hunan Province in central China, on December 19. The technicians have been conducting daily inspections on and maintenance of power transmission facilities to ensure a reliable power supply amid the recent strong cold wave sweeping the province.

Old-Age Insurance

The number of people covered by old-age insurance in China had exceeded 1.05 billion by the end of 2022, an increase of 24.36 million from the previous year, according to a report on the development of elderly care programs in the country, Xinhua News Agency reported on December 14.

The report, jointly released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Office of the China National Committee on Aging, gives a summary of China's elderly population and the development of various programs that ensure their livelihood and access to elderly care and healthcare services.

China had 280.04 million elderly people aged 60 and above by the end of 2022, accounting for 19.8 percent of the total population. The number of those aged 65 and above had reached 209.78 million.

Among them, 41.43 million were covered by an old-age subsidy scheme, the report says.

By the end of last year, the country had 387,000 elderly care institutions and facilities, providing over 8.29 million beds.

A total of 6,986 institutions capable of providing both medical and elderly care services were established across the country, up by 7.6 percent from the previous year, according to the report.

Food Waste

China has started an inaugural nationwide sample survey on food waste in its continued efforts to fight against the problem.

In a circular jointly published online on December 18 by the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic planner, and the Ministry of Commerce, the two government departments said by analyzing existing problems through the survey, targeted policy measures can be proposed and supervision and management regarding food waste can be strengthened.

According to the circular, the inaugural survey will cover around 30 cities above the

prefecture level in each provincial-level region across the country, with the survey work due to be completed before January 10, 2024. The inaugural survey will mainly cover operators of food and beverage businesses as well as residents.

By 2025, the survey will be further expanded to cover around 100 cities above the prefecture level, while some regions are also encouraged to extend the survey to counties, according to the circular.

Scenic Highway Loop

A scenic highway circling the main island of Hainan Province in south China opened to traffic on December 18, according to a press conference in Haikou, the provincial capital.

The project had a total estimated investment of 16.35 billion yuan (\$2.3 billion), Huang Peng, chief engineer of the provincial transport department, said. The highway is 988 km in length and has 45 viewing platforms, 25 parking areas, 66 roadside parking belts and 14 electric vehicle charging stations, Huang said.

It runs through 12 coastal cities and counties, 64 coastal townships and more than 1,200 villages, Huang added.

The highway loop connects the province's coastal tourist resorts, maritime sports bases, prehistoric cultural sites and historic towns, and is expected to promote the development of local tourism.

Customs Clearance

The highway port of Erenhot, the largest land port on the China-Mongolia border, commenced 24-hour freight customs clearance on a trial basis on December 16.

It is the first Chinese port on the China-Mongolia border that has rolled out round-the-clock service.

"The new service allows customs inspection upon arrival, making the customs clearance process faster and more efficient," Wu Yongsheng, a truck driver, said.

The border inspection station in Erenhot has implemented measures to elevate the level of intelligent customs clearance, ensuring an efficient and smooth clearance process at the port.

As of December 16, the number of inbound and outbound vehicles passing through the Erenhot highway port this year has reached a record high of 161,000, a 60-percent increase compared to the same period in 2019.

Vaccination Guidelines

China has released new vaccination guidelines to enhance standardized immunization management, according to the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration, Xinhua reported on December 15.

The updated guidelines, a revision of the 2016 version,

mandate standardized requirements for vaccination practices, including vaccine-use management, the monitoring and handling of suspected adverse reactions, as well as vaccination-rate surveillance.

According to the guidelines, disease control agencies and vaccination centers should implement a routine vaccine inspection system. This involves monthly checks on factors such as vaccine quantity, source, packaging, storage temperature and expiration date, with records maintained.

In China, vaccines are categorized into immunization plan vaccines, mandated by government regulations, and non-immunization plan vaccines, which residents voluntarily choose.

Wildlife Habitats

China has introduced its inaugural list of key terrestrial wild animal habitats, incorporating areas that are home to over 82 percent of the country's critically protected terrestrial species.

The 789 habitats consist of six categories, including regions where endangered species live and breed, and areas characterized by significant populations



Flying Courier

An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) delivering food lands at Tsinghua Shenzhen International Graduate School in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province in south China, on December 19. Students are now able to order food and drinks from businesses within a radius of 2.6 km from the school and have them delivered by UAVs.

of wild animals, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The administration said the list is expected to gradually expand as more wildlife habitats experience environmental improvements and meet assessment criteria.

Featuring rich biodiversity, China is home to more than 10

percent of the total terrestrial vertebrate species worldwide.

In recent years, the country has established a natural land protection system comprising national parks, nature reserves and natural parks. An increasing number of wildlife habitats are coming under national protection thanks to this national conservation initiative.



Better Connected

Passengers and crew pose for group photos inside a train on the railway connecting Tianjin Municipality in north China with the Beijing Daxing International Airport on December 18. The railway opened that same day, which is the latest move to support the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

Non-Bank Payment Institutions

Premier Li Qiang has signed a decree of the State Council to unveil rules on the supervision and administration of non-bank payment institutions, which will take effect on May 1, 2024.

The rules are meant to promote the law-based supervision and administration of these institutions and their business operations, facilitate the sound and healthy development of the sector, protect customers' legal rights and interests, and help the institutions better serve the real economy and meet the need of customers for diversified payment methods.

The new rules clarify the definition of non-bank payment institutions and their establishment requirements and improved the legal framework governing payments.

In order to protect the legal rights and interests of payment users, these institutions should

establish effective due diligence systems and enhance risk management, according to the rules. The institutions should also ensure the security of payment accounts and guard against illicit fundraising, telecom fraud, money laundering, gambling and other criminal activities, the rules noted.

The rules define the supervisory and administrative duties and measures of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, as well as outlined its risk management methods, and asked local governments to cooperate with the central bank in managing risks.

Battery Output

Nationwide output of power batteries and storage batteries saw rapid expansion in November, according to data from the China Automotive Battery Innovation Alliance.

The output of the batteries stood at 87.7 gigawatt-hours (GWh) that month, up 40.7

percent year on year. In the first 11 months, the output rose 41.6 percent year on year to 698.7 GWh.

Sales of the batteries came in at 84.2 GWh in November, up 12.3 percent from October, according to the data.

In November, production and sales of new-energy vehicles hit 1.07 million and 1.03 million units, respectively, up 39.2 percent and 30 percent year on year, said the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Bond Allocation

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) said on December 18 that 237.9 billion yuan (\$33.4 billion), the first batch of funds raised by the issuance of an additional 1-trillion-yuan (\$140.3 billion) of government bonds for disaster relief and response, has been transferred to local governments.

The bond issuance was approved by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's

top legislature, in October.

Of the total, 107.5 billion yuan (\$15.1 billion) will be used for disaster relief, reconstruction, and disaster response, 125.4 billion yuan (\$17.6 billion) for improving and restoring 3.6 million hectares of farmland in 1,336 counties nationwide, and 5 billion yuan (\$701.7 million) for the construction of meteorological infrastructure.

The remainder of the funds raised by the bond issuance will be allocated in batches according to project reviews, said Wang Jianfan, an MOF official, who also vowed to make sure the money will be spent effectively.

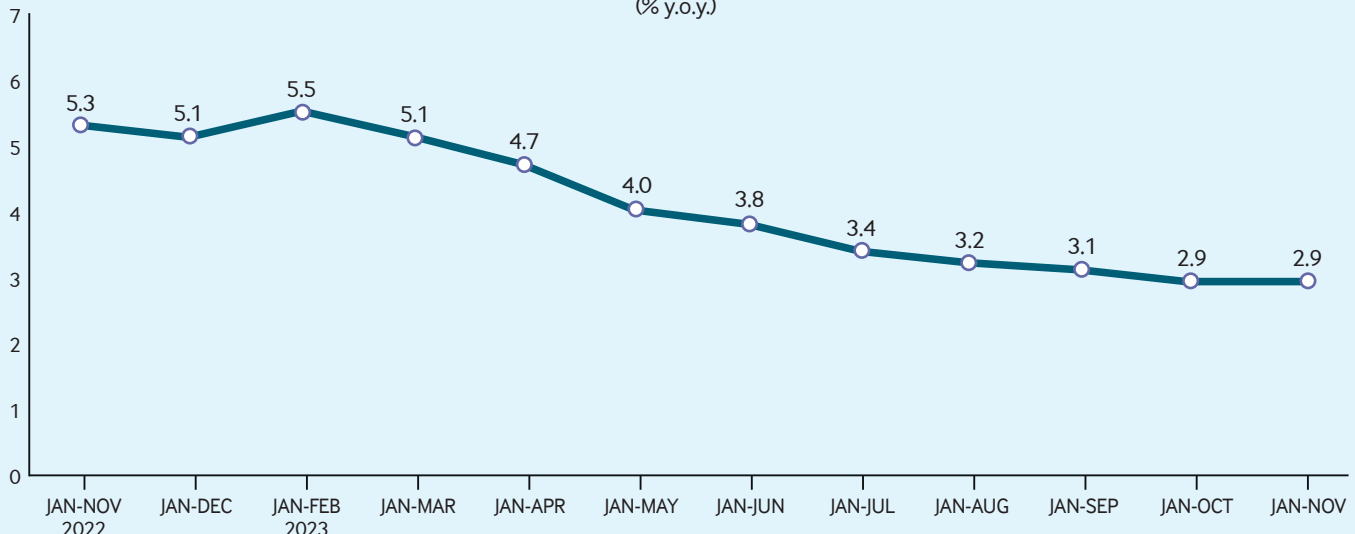
Privately Offered Funds

The value of China's privately offered funds stood at 20.61 trillion yuan (\$2.9 trillion) at the end of November, industrial data showed.

The figure was up from 20.59 trillion yuan (\$2.9 trillion)

NUMBERS

Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China (% y.o.y.)



a month ago, according to the Asset Management Association of China, a self-regulatory organization that represents China's mutual fund industry. Mutual fund is a financial vehicle that pools assets from shareholders to invest in securities like stocks, bonds, and other assets.

A breakdown of the total showed that equity investment funds, with a total size of 11.12 trillion yuan (\$1.6 trillion), were the largest category, followed by stock investment funds and venture investment funds.

The number of registered privately offered funds stood at 153,698 at the end of November, and 21,699 institutions managed these funds.

Civil Aviation

The cargo and mail volume carried by the civil aviation sector totaled 719,000 tons in November, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

The volume was 102.8 percent of the figure recorded in

the same period of 2019, exceeding the pre-pandemic level for a fourth consecutive month, and reaching a record high in scale, the administration said.

In the first 11 months of the year, the civil aviation sector completed a total of 6.61 million tons of freight and mail transport, it added.

Bond Holdings

The net increase in foreign holdings of domestic bonds stood at \$33 billion in November, the second highest in history, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) showed.

Cross-border capital under securities investments have resumed inflows, with increasing willingness of foreign capital to allocate renminbi bonds, Wang Chunying, Deputy Director and spokesperson of the SAFE, said.

China's foreign exchange market expectations and transactions remained generally stable that month, Wang said, adding that companies continued to be

"rational" in forex transactions.

The net cross-border capital inflow under trade in goods essentially remained steady, Wang added.

As favorable conditions outweigh unfavorable factors in China's economic development, the country's forex exchange market has a more solid foundation than before to maintain steady operations, she said.

Industrial Output

China's value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, went up 6.6 percent year on year in November, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed.

The growth accelerated from the 4.6-percent rise registered in October, according to the NBS.

Industrial output is a measure of the activity of enterprises with an annual main business turnover of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million) each.

On a monthly basis, industrial output edged up 0.87

percent in November.

Most sectors logged faster industrial output growth rates in November compared with a month earlier. The output of equipment manufacturing expanded 9.8 percent year on year that month, up 3.6 percentage points from that in October and driving up the overall industrial output by more than 1 percentage point.

Hi-tech manufacturing registered a 6.2-percent increase in industrial output in November, up 4.4 percentage points from October, the data revealed.

Hi-tech products such as solar cells, service robots and integrated circuits continued their stellar performance in November, with their output rising 44.5 percent, 33.3 percent, and 27.9 percent, respectively.

In the first 11 months, China's industrial output grew 4.3 percent from the same period a year earlier, up 0.2 percentage points from the January-October growth, the NBS said.

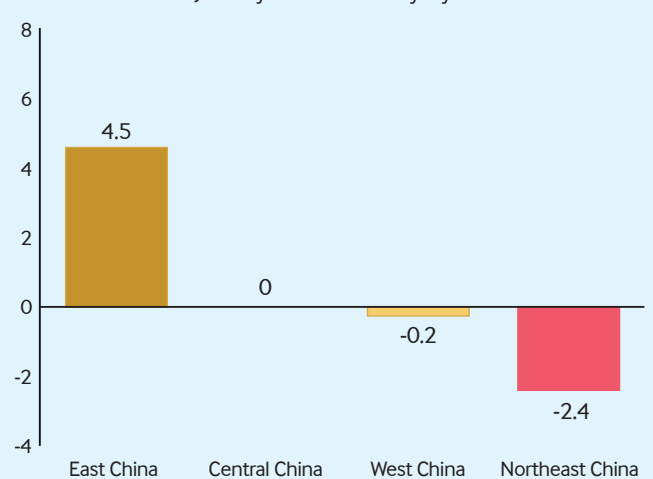
Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Sector

January-November (% y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Region

January-November (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



HUNGARY

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (right) shakes hands with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan after they signed an agreement to elevate bilateral ties to “priority strategic” level, in Budapest on December 18



MOROCCO

The Sixth Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum takes place in Marrakech on December 20. Arab countries and Russia agreed to boost cooperation on international issues, including addressing the Gaza crisis



IRAQ

A voter casts his vote in the provincial council elections in Baghdad on December 18. Fifteen of Iraq’s 18 provinces held such elections that day, after a 10-year hiatus due to political differences





FRANCE

A lantern on display at the Dragons and Lanterns Festival at the Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris on December 14. The event is open to the public from December 15, 2023 to February 25, 2024, showcasing the magnificent lanterns and light structures of Shanghai's Yuyuan Garden



AUSTRALIA

The nation's first uterus transplant recipient Kirsty Bryant holds her son Henry at the Royal Hospital for Women in Sydney on December 20



MADAGASCAR

Reelected President Andry Rajoelina attends his inauguration ceremony in Antananarivo on December 16. He pledged to build a stronger and more prosperous nation



SPACE SCIENTIST RECEIVES AWARD

Qi Faren, a preeminent space scientist and former head of the China Academy of Space Technology, received the highest prize of the Ho Leung Ho Lee Foundation Awards for his contribution to aerospace in Beijing on December 19.

Born in Fuxian County, Liaoning Province in 1933, Qi worked on the development of many satellites, including China's first—*Dongfanghong 1*—which was sent into space in April 1970 by the Long March 1, the country's first carrier rocket, which he had helped design.

Qi also led the research and development of the first five Shenzhou spaceships, including the *Shenzhou-5*, which carried out the country's first manned space mission in 2003.

The Ho Leung Ho Lee Foundation was founded in 1994 by Hong Kong financiers Ho Sin Hang, Leung Kau-Kui, Ho Tim and Lee Quo-Wei to honor outstanding Chinese scientists. In addition to Qi, another 55 sci-tech workers were also honored with the accolade this year.



Birthplace of Chinese Science

Lifeweek

December 11

With quilts hanging over the front steps and the aroma of food wafting through the air, No.15 Bingmasi Hutong in Beijing's Xicheng District looks like a regular *hutong* courtyard. In reality, it used to house the National Geological Survey of China (NGSC). As a longstanding witness to the evolution of natural sciences in China, the site is as much a part of the historical identity of China's capital as the imperial palaces and temples.

Introduced into China by Western explorers and missionaries, the term "science" was first translated rather inaccurately into Chinese as *gezhi*, which

Senior 'Snowbirds'

Nanfang Daily

December 14

Over the past few years, more and more Chinese retirees are migrating to the country's southern sunbelt provinces during the winter season.

This new spatial pattern of senior mobility is rooted in the fact that hundreds of millions of people born in the 1960s, an era that saw a huge spike in birth rates, are hitting retirement age and exiting the workforce. This massive, ongoing wave of retirees, along with upgraded infrastructure in the country's

southern provinces, has fueled the rise of the "snowbird" lifestyle.

However, the emerging trend also poses many challenges. The huge influx of seniors has the potential to strain local hospitals. Additionally, these out-of-town seniors may face difficulties applying for reimbursement of medical expenses, as medical insurance policies vary across provinces. Finding themselves in completely strange surroundings, these retirees may also experience a heightened feeling of loneliness.

Therefore, more efforts should be invested in clearing these obstacles and boosting the physical as well as emotional wellbeing of these migratory seniors.

"Journalism must be based on truthful and verified information, and the use of modern technologies and artificial intelligence in the media should not negatively affect their credibility."

Ali Hassan, Chief of Egypt's official Middle East News Agency, after attending the Fifth World Media Summit in China

"Damage to the planet would be tantamount to damage to the longevity of civilization as we know it."

Dennis Francis, President of the United Nations General Assembly, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency, highlighting the gravity of the climate situation and the urgent need for a united front in addressing climate change

is the abbreviation of *gewuzhizhi* (“investigation of things to acquire knowledge”), a philosophical concept developed by Zhu Xi, a Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty (960-1279). It was not until the 20th century that China began to develop a modern understanding of Western sciences.

Founded in 1913, the NGSC is widely considered to be the country’s first modern scientific institution. Over the next few decades, the institute not only withstood the vicissitudes of modern Chinese history, but also played a prominent role in the advancement of homegrown geological science. In 1921, scientists from the NGSC discovered the Yangshao Culture, a Neolithic culture that thrived along the middle reaches of the Yellow River from 5000 B.C. to 3000 B.C. In 1930, the institute supervised the construction of the Jiufeng Seismic Station, China’s first independently built seismic station.

The NGSC also gave birth to a host of homegrown research institutions in the field of earth science. In 1951, it was reorganized into the Institute of Geology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Though the NGSC no longer exists, its legacies are spread across a wide range of disciplines including paleontology, petrology and geography.

Cafés Gone Wild

Rednet.cn

December 18

TAIJUAN, a coffee shop in Shanghai, has recently become a local hit after launching a new type of beverage called the green pepper latte. Served inside hollowed-out green peppers, the drink blends the bitterness of roasted coffee beans with a slight crisp spiciness.

This is just one example of how the café scene in China is evolving. The country’s coffee market has become so competitive that many coffee shop owners have resorted to bold, and oftentimes weird, concoctions

to woo coffee drinkers. Bizarre coffee drinks have been created with octopus, oyster, stinky tofu, roast goose, vinegar, fermented vegetables and even century eggs (eggs pickled in ash, brine and slaked lime).

While these avant-garde creations have opened up a whole new world of taste possibilities, food safety concerns have risen in regard of the use of unconventional ingredients, some of which can lead to food poisoning if not properly handled.

Industry insiders also worry that this overflow of boldness may upstage true creativity and divert homegrown cafés away from fine-tuning their selection of beans and their brewing techniques—things that define quality in coffee.

↓ AI PIONEER DIES AT 55

Tang Xiaouu, a professor of information engineering at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and cofounder of Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) pioneer SenseTime, died of an undisclosed illness on December 15 at the age of 55.

Born in 1968 in Anshan, Liaoning, Tang joined the Department of Information Engineering at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1998, where he established the Multimedia Laboratory, an institute for research into deep learning, in 2001.

Established by Tang in 2014, the SenseTime team developed a facial recognition system with a world-record accuracy of 99.15 percent. The company has since become one of China’s biggest AI firms as public and private demand for its facial recognition technology has increased.



Tang has conducted groundbreaking research and innovation in computer vision and deep learning, and also promoted the responsible and ethical use of AI in various sectors, including healthcare, education and public safety.

“Low production costs, high labor efficiency, and very efficient infrastructure are the main strengths for the Chinese economy to attract more foreign investments.”

Selcuk Colakoglu, Director of the Ankara-based Turkish Center for Asia-Pacific Studies, in a recent interview with Xinhua

“Let’s not underestimate the significant role a smile, a handshake, a friendly gesture can make in enhancing the growth of some big relationship.”

Zhang Jianmin, Chinese Consul General in San Francisco, during an event to celebrate the 52nd anniversary of Ping-Pong Diplomacy on December 15

TOP 10 NATION NEWS STORIES OF 2023



President Xi Jinping meets local residents during an inspection tour to Panlong Community in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on December 14

1 Xi Jinping Reelected President of China

On March 10, Xi Jinping was reelected president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission at the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), the country's top legislature.

Since his reelection, Xi has made inspection tours to several

regions across the country to advance Chinese modernization through high-quality development. He has also been promoting world peace and bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

On March 15, Xi proposed the Global Civilizations Initiative, advocating respect for the diversity of world civilizations and the common values of humanity and strengthening international cultural exchange and cooperation.