

OPINION: 50 YEARS OF CHINA-BRAZIL TIES P.20 | FEATURES: TEAM CHINA'S ATHLETIC PROWESS P.28

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.67 NO.34 AUGUST 22, 2024

WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



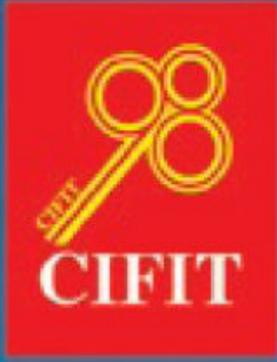
POWERING THE FUTURE

Green and clean energy takes center stage

RMB9.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140
9 771000 914246 34>

邮发代号2-922 · 国内统一连续号: CN11-1576/G2



The 24th China International Fair for Investment & Trade

September 8-11, 2024
Xiamen, China

Tel: +86-592-2859824 / Fax: +86-592-2859827 / E-mail: cifit@chinafair.org.cn

Further expanding bilateral investment
Jointly facilitating global development

CIFIT – A Bilateral Investment Promotion Platform, an Authoritative Information
Release Platform and an Investment Trend Discussion Platform.

Join us in 24th CIFIT!



www.chinafair.org.cn



CIFIT Website



Online CIFIT



CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 Sustainability Surge

THIS WEEK

COVER STORY

12 Fossil to Future Fuels

A step-by-step green revolution

16 Shifting Gears

EVs surpass 50 percent of domestic car sales

OPINION

20 Five Decades of Consistency

China and Brazil celebrate unwavering bilateral journey

22 Cold Cloud Over Paris Olympics

Doping accusations politicize athletic event

24 Sowing Seeds of Unity

A call for exchange and mutual learning among civilizations

25 Building a Practical Patent Powerhouse

Encouraging commercialization and application

26 What China's Medal Tally Tells Us

Revealing an interesting growth pattern

FEATURES

28 Glory and Joy

Team China's triumphs in Paris

32 For a Healthier Future

Medical cooperation across the Pacific

34 Bigger Blooms Bring Rural Booms

Improved varieties and new technologies increase lotus production in Jiangxi

36 Beat the Heat

Rest stations allow outdoor workers to "hit pause"

38 Beyond the Finish Line

New frontiers for retired athletes

40 Bidding Farewell

Shining new light on China's funeral industry

42 Success and Successor

Box office hit places parenting in the spotlight

CULTURE

46 A Day of Sports, Culture and Community

Beijing festival gets pulses racing

FORUM

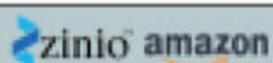
48 Why Are Young Urbanites Gravitating To Farm Work?

Cover Photo: A solar farm in Jiuquan City, Gansu Province, on July 4 (XINHUA)

©2024 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.



www.bjreview.com



Follow us on



YouTube

BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader



北京周报

BEIJINGREVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

President: Li Yafang
Associate Editor in Chief: Liu Yunyun
Vice Presidents: He Peng, Gao Dingbo
Content Supervisor: Yu Shujun

Executive Editor: Yan Wei
Production Director: Yao Bin
Editors: Wang Hairong, Zhang Shasha, Lu Yan
Researcher: Lan Xinzhen
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
Photographer: Wei Yao
Art: Li Shigong
Design Director: Wang Yajuan
Chief Designer: Cui Xiaodong

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.cibt.com.cn

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

General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:

Peace Book Co. Ltd.

17/FI, 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

Sustainability Surge

Travelers visiting Zhangjiakou City, located some 200 km northwest of Beijing, are in for a pleasant surprise.

Beyond the stunning mountain resorts that offer an escape from the hustle, bustle and heat of the capital, they will encounter a manmade spectacle: gigantic wind turbines dotting the skyline. These towering structures, as tall as 20-story buildings, perched on hilltops, will leave many visitors marveling at the ingenuity it took to construct them.

The northern part of Hebei Province, where Zhangjiakou is located, is one of nine clean energy bases that China is developing. These bases, ranging from the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in the southwest to the northeast, are rich in wind, solar and hydraulic resources. Their development has powered not only local progress but also the nation's green transition.

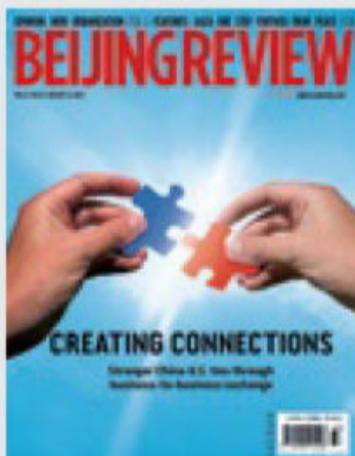
Last year, China's renewable energy capacity surpassed that of thermal power for the first time, accounting for more than half of the country's total installed power generation capacity, according to official data. Thermal power, generated through coal burning, is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions. In the first half of 2024, China's newly installed renewable energy power generation capacity reached 134 million kilowatts, representing 88 percent

of total additions in the country. Renewable energy sources, mainly water, wind and solar power, generated 1.56 trillion kilowatt hours of electricity, or 35.1 percent of the total power generated.

In 2020, China announced its goals of peaking its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060. The rise in renewable energy capacity is a testament to the country's progress in advancing these goals. Moreover, China has become a global leader in environmentally friendly industries such as electric vehicles, solar panels and lithium-ion batteries.

Nevertheless, renewable energy can prove less stable than coal-fired power. And despite its growing capacity, renewable energy's share in total power consumption remains lower than that of coal.

One solution is energy storage. An energy storage system charges when wind or solar power generates a surplus of electricity or when electricity demand is low. The system discharges its stored energy when necessary, ensuring a consistent supply from these intermittent sources. China is encouraging innovation in this field, with dozens of pilot projects underway. About 30 percent of these projects use lithium-ion batteries, a dominant technology in energy storage. **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.....RMB9.00 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(北京日报社)

地址: 北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编: 100037

编委会: 李雅芳 贺鹏 刘云云 高丁博 于淑均 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2024年 第34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 北京市期刊登记证第733号

国内零售价: 人民币9.00元



MONKEYING AROUND!

A golden monkey at the Shennongjia National Park in Hubei Province on August 15.

Shennongjia Forestry District has reported its golden monkey population is growing thanks to efforts in habitat protection. According to the district administration, the area is now home to 1,618 golden monkeys, an endangered species under state protection, 147 more than the previous survey recorded five years ago.



XINHUA

Threads of Tradition

Locals present Tibetan costumes during a fashion show at the opening ceremony of the nomadic cultural tourism season in Sertar County, Sichuan Province, on August 10.

Cruising to New Heights

On August 10, Shanghai launched its inaugural International Cruise Festival, aiming to capitalize on the growing popularity of cruise travel.

The festival, which runs until August 31, will feature product launches and promotional activities centered on the cruise economy.

Liu Ping, Deputy Secretary-General of the Shanghai Municipal Government, highlighted the importance of the cruise industry in expanding domestic demand, unlocking consumption potential, and promoting high-level openness at the festival's opening ceremony.

"The city will continue to offer new consumption experiences and services within the cruise industry to meet customer demand," Liu stated.

The festival is part of Shanghai's

efforts to strengthen its position as an international consumption hub and attract more global cruise companies to establish their headquarters in the city.

Legal Protection

China's Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP), the country's top procuratorate, said in a statement on August 12 it had stepped up efforts to strengthen legal protections for the country's growing numbers of food delivery workers and other workers providing on-demand services via online platforms such as ride-hailing apps.

Since February, Chinese procuratorial agencies have handled over 120 public interest litigation cases involving legal protections for these workers, many of whom are gig workers who face disadvantages in the job market, and for other vulnerable groups such as rural

migrant workers and workers with disabilities, according to the statement.

The SPP has directly handled a rights and interest protection case for food delivery workers, and it has urged Internet enterprises to optimize their delivery and reward-punishment algorithms, which can overwhelm workers by assigning them excessive numbers of orders within limited timeframes, the statement said.

It noted that since February, Chinese procuratorates have also handled more than 230 public interest litigation cases involving the special rights and interests of female workers, including birth allowance and the right to refuse to work in hazardous environments during menstruation, pregnancy or nursing periods.

Procuratorial agencies have prosecuted individuals suspected

of withholding wage payments in more than 420 cases over the past six months, and their efforts have contributed to arrears payments totaling more than 54 million yuan (\$7.6 million), according to the statement.

Aquatic Resource Protection

The aquatic biological resources in China's Yangtze River Basin have registered improved recovery momentum in recent years, according to a communique released on August 12.

Jointly issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs along with three related departments, the communique said that protection measures, especially the fishing ban, have achieved solid progress.

In 2021, a 10-year fishing ban was implemented in key areas of the Yangtze River to help replenish aquatic populations.

As a result, aquatic resources have continued to recover, with improvements in biodiversity and stable habitat conditions for aquatic species, the communique read.

However, the variety of aquatic wildlife species under state key protection remains relatively low, it continued, adding that the protection of endangered species remains a challenging task.

The ministry has pledged to improve law enforcement related to the fishing ban, protect endangered species, restore key habitats, and prevent and control invasive exotic species.

Carbon-Sink Capacity

The annual carbon-sink capacity of China's forests and grasslands has exceeded 1.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalents, ranking first in the world, an official

said on August 14.

A carbon sink is anything that absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases. Forests and grasslands are typically carbon sinks.

China in 2020 set the ambitious goals of peaking its carbon emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060, taking a prominent role in the global fight against climate change.

China's unavoidable carbon emissions are projected to reach approximately 2.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalents in 2060, and forests and grasslands will be able to absorb over half of them, in turn contributing to carbon neutrality, said Guo Qingjun, an official with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

To increase carbon-sink capacity, China will expand the area of forests and grasslands, as well as step up efforts to protect these resources, Guo said at a press conference on ecological conservation and restoration a day ahead of National Ecology Day.

Last year, China's top legislature designated August 15 as the country's National Ecology Day to raise public awareness and encourage actions to protect the ecological environment.

Music Festival

The 27th Beijing Music Festival, scheduled to take place from October 5 to 13, will present 10 concerts featuring artists from countries including China, the United States, Germany, Austria, France and Italy.

The opening concert will be performed by the China National Symphony Orchestra under the baton of internationally acclaimed composer Tan Dun, according to a press briefing of the festival.

Audiences will be treated to flash mob performances along Beijing's Central Axis, a 700-year-old line of historical and cultural landmarks which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in late July.

The music festival will also provide audiences with the chance to interact with musicians through activities such as open rehearsals, face-to-face sessions with masters and master classes, the organizers said.

Folk Art Season

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China will host its first folk-art season starting from August 20, the organizers said on August 9. The season's offline events will continue until 2025.

The event will be jointly hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the region's government



Nighttime Wellness

A medical worker performs cupping therapy on a man at a nighttime traditional Chinese medicine clinic in Changning City, Hunan Province, on August 13. The local health bureau launched this night clinic, offering free traditional Chinese therapies such as acupuncture, moxibustion and massage to residents. The clinic ran until August 18.

and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, said Zhang Jinning, a senior official from the ministry, at a press conference in Beijing.

The folk-art season will become a biennial art event in Xinjiang. It aims to enrich local cultural life and boost tourism, Zhang said.

Local artists and folk-art troupes will present their best productions and leading folk-art troupes from other parts of

the country will also be invited to take part. The performances will be given in the regional capital of Urumqi and several other cities in the region, Zhang continued.

There will be supporting activities such as exhibitions of intangible cultural heritage and related creative products, tourism promotion and food fairs, he added.

The event will also include online art events, such as online shows and exhibitions.



Global Grapes

People visit the exhibition area of Italy at the Helan Mountain's East Foothill International Wine Fair in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on August 10.

THIS WEEK ECONOMY

Express Delivery

The courier sector reached the 100-billion-parcel milestone this year much earlier than in 2023, showcasing the booming consumer market and sustained economic vitality.

According to the State Post Bureau (SPB), the milestone was achieved on August 13, 71 days ahead of last year. This equates to an average of 71.43 parcels per person in China, or approximately 5,144 parcels delivered every second.

The express delivery sector has become a key indicator of the country's economic health. Amid a steady economic recovery, the industry has set new records across three main metrics: The highest single-day delivery volume exceeded 580 million parcels; the average monthly volume surpassed 13 billion parcels; and the sector's monthly revenue topped 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion).

Looking ahead, the SPB plans to enhance logistics hubs in urban clusters, improve rural

logistics systems, expand international delivery services and integrate the delivery chain with advanced manufacturing.

AI Services

More than 190 generative artificial intelligence (AI) service models have been registered with the regulator in China and are now available for public use, said Zhuang Rongwen, chief of the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), the main body overseeing the country's Internet and digital landscape, on August 12.

The number of registered users for these models has exceeded 600 million, Zhuang stated in an interview with Xinhua News Agency, highlighting the favorable and orderly development of related technologies and applications.

He pledged that the government will actively promote industrial development, advance technological progress and enhance security controls in this field while prioritizing the coordination of high-quality development and high-level security.

In July 2023, China issued the world's first set of provisional management rules for generative AI services.

A resolution adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee in July, which lays out tasks for the further comprehensive deepening of China's reform, also noted the need to improve mechanisms for the development and management of generative AI.

Rail Freight Volume

The China-Europe Railway Express operated 11,403 trains transporting nearly 1.23 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of goods in the first seven months of this year, up 12 percent and 11 percent year on year, respectively, data from China State Railway Group Co. Ltd., the country's national passenger and freight railroad corporation, showed.

TEU is a standard measurement to describe the capacity of container ships and terminals in the shipping and logistics industry.

In July, 1,776 trains were oper-

ated, transporting 185,000 TEUs of goods, marking the third consecutive month with more than 1,700 trains in operation, according to the group.

The company reported that since the beginning of this year, it has consistently enhanced the quality and efficiency of China-Europe Railway Express services to ensure the stability and smooth functioning of the international supply and industrial chains.

Specific measures included strengthening the construction of transportation channels, enhancing transshipment capabilities at border ports and promoting a rapid customs clearance model.

These efforts have provided new momentum for supporting the development of China's foreign trade and high-standard opening up, the railway operator added.

Aviation Recovery

China is expected to see a record-high number of air passenger trips in 2024, according to Song Zhiyong, head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

NUMBERS

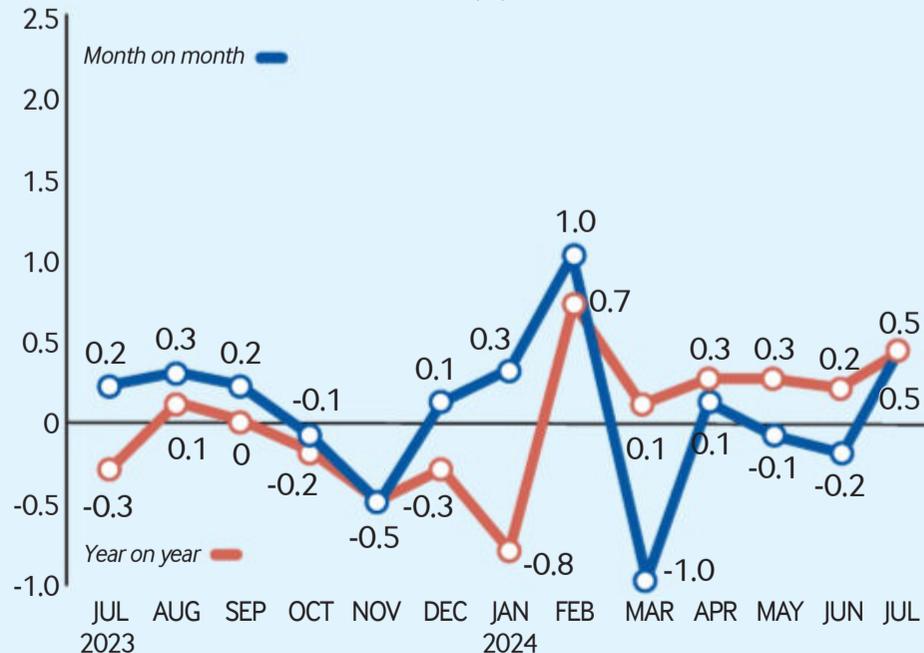
China's Producer Price Index Growth

(%)



Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth

(%)



Speaking at the three-day Asia Pacific Summit for Aviation Safety 2024 (AP-SAS 2024) that opened in Beijing on August 13, Song said the number of air passenger trips may reach 700 million this year.

During the first half of the year, total transport turnover, passenger trips, and cargo and mail transport volume of China's civil aviation sector rose 11.9 percent, 9 percent and 18.7 percent, respectively, from the same period in 2019, Song noted.

In terms of scale, the country's civil aviation transportation has ranked second in the world for 19 consecutive years and its contribution to global aviation growth has exceeded 20 percent, according to Song.

At present, China boasts 4,335 transport aircraft and 262 airports, with a total transport capacity of 1.6 billion passengers, Song said.

He added that the annual flight time of unmanned aerial vehicles has reached tens of millions of hours, and the number of newly registered drones is growing at a rate of 100,000 per month.

Launched in 2023, the AP-SAS provides a platform for aviation

leaders and professionals to connect and share experiences and expertise on aviation safety matters.

Non-Performing Loans

The non-performing loan ratio of China's commercial banks came in at 1.56 percent at the end of June, down from the 1.59 percent recorded in late March, official data showed.

The balance of non-performing loans stood at 3.3 trillion yuan (\$461.3 billion) at the end of June, 27.2 billion yuan (\$3.8 billion) less than in late March, according to the National Financial Regulatory Administration.

The balance of performing loans at commercial banks amounted to 210.8 trillion yuan (\$29.5 trillion) by the end of the second quarter, confirming that these financial institutions had maintained generally stable credit asset quality, it said.

The balance of loan loss provisions increased by 104 billion yuan (\$14.5 billion) in the second quarter to hit 7 trillion yuan (\$978.5 billion)

by the end of June, demonstrating the risk resilience of commercial banks.

A loan loss provision is an expense set aside as an allowance for uncollected loans and loan payments. This provision is used to cover several factors associated with potential loan losses, including non-performing loans, customer defaults, and renegotiated terms of loans that incur lower than previously estimated payments.

Current Account Surplus

China's current account surplus amounted to \$94.1 billion in the first half of the year, official data showed.

The current account surplus to GDP ratio stood at 1.1 percent from January to June, remaining within a reasonable range, according to Wang Chunying, deputy head of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

Of the total, the surplus under trade in goods amounted to \$288.4 billion during the period, the second highest level of all time, Wang said.

Wang attributed the growth in goods trade to the country's steady economic performance, the development of new quality productive forces, and the recovery of external demand.

China's new quality productive forces represent a strategic shift toward a more innovative, technology-driven and sustainable economic model aimed at achieving higher productivity, competitiveness and long-term growth.

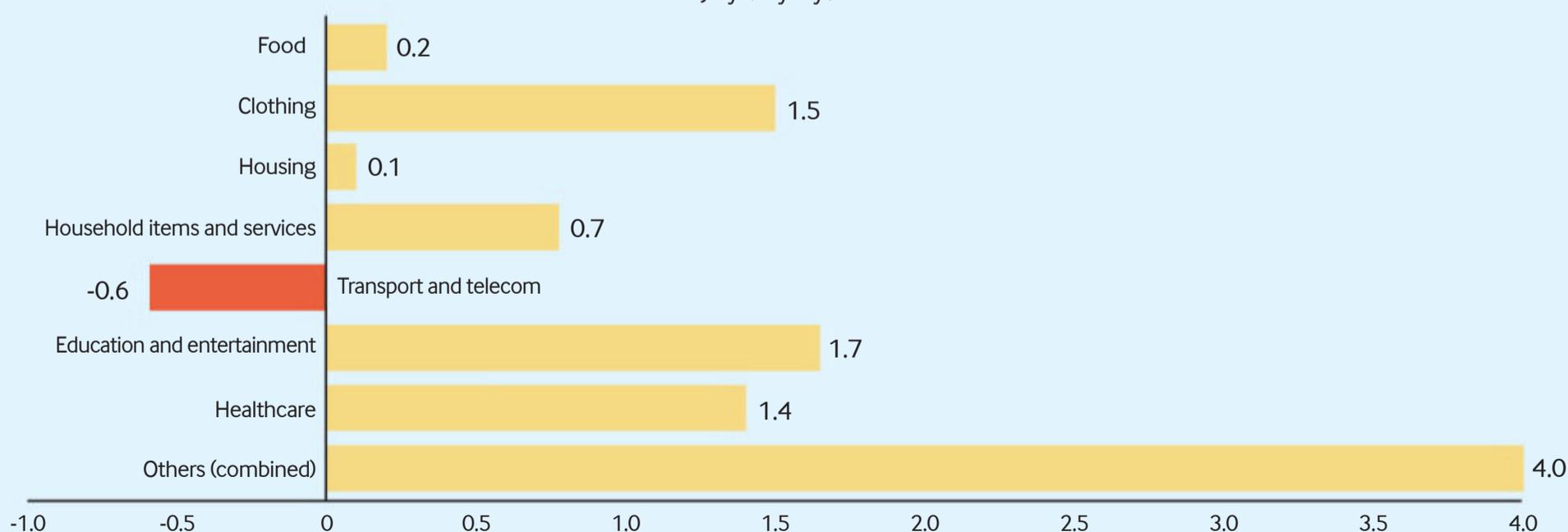
In terms of trade in services, the country saw a deficit of \$122.9 billion during the period. Particularly, the tourism sector's deficit rose by 37 percent year on year to \$103.2 billion.

The sector's incomes and expenditures increased by 43 percent and 37 percent, respectively, driven by a surge in both inbound and outbound travel, according to Wang.

Despite the complex and volatile external environment, Wang said as China continues to advance high-quality development, deepen reforms on all fronts and sustain a steady economic recovery, it will maintain an equilibrium in its balance of payments.

CPI Growth by Type

July (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK WORLD



CANADA

A cosplayer poses for photos during the annual Anime Revolution convention at the Vancouver Convention Center, British Columbia, on August 10



JAPAN

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida attends a press conference in Tokyo on August 14. Kishida announced he would not run in the election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party next month



RWANDA

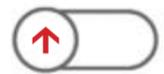
President Paul Kagame delivers a speech during the inauguration ceremony for his fourth term in Kigali on August 11





THE PHILIPPINES

People participate in a demonstration demanding justice for Philippine victims of sexual slavery at the hands of Japanese troops during World War II (1939-45), in Manila, on August 14



GREECE

A firefighter tries to extinguish a wildfire in Attica on August 12



UGANDA

Rescue workers conduct a search and rescue operation at the site of a landslide at the Kiteezi landfill in Kampala on August 11. As of August 15, the death toll of the garbage dump landslide had climbed to 26, with 39 people still missing



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ FORMER GERM-WARFARE UNIT MEMBER EXPOSES WAR CRIMES

Hideo Shimizu, 94, a former member of Unit 731, the notorious Japanese germ-warfare detachment during World War II (1939-45), returned to China in mid-August to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the invading Japanese forces and offer repentance and apologies to the victims.

His itinerary included a poignant visit to the former headquarters of Unit 731 in the north-eastern Chinese city of Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, where he grappled with the stark and haunting evidence of the unit's inhumane deeds.

Shimizu was among the last group of Unit 731 Youth Corps members sent by Japan to Harbin, where he spent more than four months. He witnessed the war crimes committed by the unit, including the cultivation of pathogens, human dissections and human experiments. He fled China with the retreating Japanese forces in August 1945.



Fighting Formaldehyde Fraudsters

Gmw.cn
August 12

In recent years, concerns have been rising about the use of formaldehyde, a colorless chemical widely used in construction and often found in high concentrations in new homes. Breathing in high levels of the substance has been linked to irritations, respiratory distress and, in severe cases, cancer.

In the past few years, a host of agencies that provide indoor formaldehyde testing services and at-home air quality test

kits have sprouted online. However, recent scandals have exposed the dark underbelly of this nascent sector: Some of these agencies have been altering test results to make the numbers look worse, aiming to compel customers to purchase formaldehyde removal products.

These frauds have been chipping away at the very foundation upon which this fledgling sector is built—customer trust. Therefore, continuous regulatory efforts are needed on the parts of both the government and e-commerce platforms to safeguard public health against toxic formaldehyde scams.



The Silent Campus

Lifeweek
August 5

Teachers in universities across China have noticed a curious trend over the past few years: Their students are becoming increasingly shy of socializing. Students are often reluctant to interact with their teachers and fellow classmates. Interest in romantic relationships has also declined, with more and more young people seeing

“All sectors of society must create spaces where you can take charge and make a difference for peaceful societies and robust democracies.”

Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary General, in a video message delivered to the 2024 World Youth Development Forum that opened in Beijing on August 12, calling for greater support for youth development

“While combating desertification, the local government also increases the income of the community members by employing them in these projects. This is win-win, reflecting China’s determination to continually improve the lives of its people.”

Cary Dzodin, Chairman of HCD Earthcare Culture Association, a nonprofit in Austria, during a trip to north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, to learn about renewable energy development and desertification control, from August 11 to 13

the wisdom of being single over the stress of relationships.

Many experts have identified intense academic stress as the main culprit. The pressure to maintain high grade point averages has led to ultra-fierce competition. High levels of stress can not only take a heavy toll on students' mental wellbeing, but also damage their interpersonal relationships. As a result, many college students opt to enter into "power-saving mode," in which seemingly useless social interactions and emotional engagement are cut off to save energy for schoolwork.

Chinese Gen Zs, many of whom are a single child, have grown up in a more affluent period than previous generations, oftentimes with the doting love and attention of their parents, grandparents and larger extended families. Having had less independence during their childhood and teenage years, this generation is overall slower at adapting to their new college environment.

Overall, under the combined influence of academic stress and overprotective parents, college students often feel isolated and lonely. Born and raised in an age dominated by social media, an increasing number of them have turned to the Internet as a comfort space where they can build social ties. However, this behavior is more of a coping mechanism than a fully voluntary choice.

Fandom Frenzy

Southern Daily

August 9

The recently concluded Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games have brought the world's attention to China's thriving sports scene, as a slew of Chinese athletes showcased not only their athletic prowess but also impressive sportsmanship. However, these highlights have been undermined by the invasion of *fanquan*, a type of fandom that originated from the idol-worshipping culture that has taken over the country's entertainment industry.

During the Games, some athletes

were chased down by stalker fans, while others were booed by fans of their opponents. Controversies surrounding *fanquan* reached a peak on August 3 when table tennis player Chen Meng defeated her teammate Sun Yingsha to win gold in women's singles. Chen was subjected to relentless criticism from fervent fans of the latter.

While healthy fan activities can help athletes stay focused and thrive, toxic fandom can greatly interrupt normal sports events and even destroy an athlete's career. Therefore, it is crucial to always offer support and loyalty within the bounds of common sense.

↓ ENTREPRENEUR RECEIVES GOVERNMENT SPECIAL ALLOWANCE

Dong Mingzhu, Chairwoman and President of home appliance giant Gree Electric Appliances, received a government special allowance issued in the name of the State Council, China's highest state administrative organ, on August 14.

Once a monthly stipend but now given as a one-off prize, the allowances are awarded every two years in recognition of professional achievements in fields such as science, education and economic and social development.

Dong joined Gree in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, in 1990 as an air conditioner salesperson. With outstanding sales ability, she became the head of sales in 1994. She continued to climb the corporate ladder, beginning as the chair of its board of directors in 2012.

Dong, an online influencer in her own right, is known for the priority she gives to innovation. The company has more than 90,000 employees, including 15,000 research and development personnel, according to its official website.



“China's relations with the world have changed dramatically. The world needs to understand China better, and China also needs to introduce itself to the world better.”

Chen Shijie, Chinese Consul General in Auckland, New Zealand, at a book exhibition where over 2,000 books from China were on display in Waipa District on the country's North Island on August 10

“Now, China is clearly the leader in solar, electric vehicle and battery technology. Do expect a surge in exports of those things or foreign direct investment... because the world is supposed to be solving the climate sustainability problem.”

Michael Spence, Nobel Laureate in Economics, in an interview with the *South China Morning Post* published on August 12



XINHUA

COVER STORY

FOSSIL TO FUTURE FUELS

China's renewable energy industry sees robust growth By Tao Xing



An offshore wind farm in Dalian, Liaoning Province in northeast China, on September 13, 2023

Similar to traditional coal plants, the concentrated sunlight heats water to generate electricity. Unlike other solar power plants, this design can produce power even at night.

The towers store molten salt, which acts as a thermal battery, retaining extra heat collected during the day and releasing it at night to keep the generators running continuously.

According to the company, the innovative design isn't limited to the two towers, and has the potential to incorporate multiple towers for even greater efficiency gains.

The project, which exemplifies China's commitment to green energy efforts, is expected to become operational by the end of this year. It is part of a larger clean energy complex that includes solar, thermal and wind power plants, collectively generating over 1.8 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity each year and saving 1.53 million tons of carbon emissions.

This year, China's new energy industry has frequently captured global attention, especially as some Western countries, like the United States, have raised concerns about "overcapacity" in China's new energy sector, using it as a pretext to impose additional trade and economic restrictions on China.

Despite the external discordant voices, China remains steadfast in its pursuit of green development. The country's new energy industry is making sizeable contributions not only to domestic growth but also to global efforts in combating climate change and achieving a green transition.

As a major country in energy consumption and related technology exports, China and its photovoltaic (PV) industry are poised to become leading forces in energy transition, Liu Hanyuan, Vice Chairman of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, told *Beijing Review* in an interview. Liu is also chairman of the Board of Directors of Tongwei Group, ►►

China Three Gorges Corp., a state-owned power company particularly known for its role in the development and operation of large-scale hydropower projects, is pioneering an impressive project—the world's first dual-tower solar thermal plant in

Guazhou County, northwest China's Gansu Province.

The two towers each stand 200 meters tall, with nearly 30,000 ground-mounted mirrors. These mirrors form two large, overlapping circles that concentrate sunlight onto each tower. In the morning, the mirrors focus sunlight on the eastern tower, then automatically adjust to target the western tower in the afternoon. The mirrors, made from special materials, achieve a reflection efficiency of 94 percent.



Staff members check devices at the Xinghuo Water Surface Photovoltaic Demonstration Project of Daqing Oilfield in Daqing, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, on August 8

a private technology-based company specializing in agriculture and new energy.

A growing sector

As of late June, the installed capacity of renewable energy in China had reached 1.653 billion kilowatts (kw), a 25-percent year-on-year increase, accounting for 53.8 percent of the country's total installed capacity, according to a press conference hosted by the National Energy Administration (NEA) on July 31. Among the total, the installed capacity of hydropower, wind power, solar power and biomass power was 427 million kw, 467 million kw, 714 million kw and 45.3 million kw, respectively.

According to the conference, the combined installed capacity of wind and solar power, which totaled 1.18 billion kw, surpassed that of coal power, which stood at 1.17 billion kw. "The generation of renewable energy has steadily reached new milestones," Pan Huimin, an official with the NEA, told the conference.

According to a July 29 report in newspaper *Economic Daily*, China has abundant wind and solar energy resources, and is committed to a strong

green and low-carbon development strategy. Through long-term research and persistent efforts, several new energy technologies and equipment manufacturing levels have achieved a globally leading position.

The country has established the world's largest clean power supply system and its new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries, and PV products have gained strong competitive advantages in the international market. New energy vehicles refer to vehicles completely or mainly driven by new energy sources, including battery electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid vehicles and fuel cell vehicles. All in all, the development of new energy has already established a solid foundation.

Addressing energy supply shortage is another factor driving China's development of its new energy industry.

Currently, China's dependence on imported oil and natural gas stands at approximately 70 percent and over 40 percent, respectively. As a major oil and gas importer, China is vulnerable to price fluctuations in the global market.

Over the 20 years starting in the early 1970s, the world experienced three consecutive oil crises, each of which led to a spike in oil prices. In response to these threats to energy security, developed countries were the first to adopt new energy sources that are more abundant and stable.

China is abundant in renewable energy sources and proper development of those sources can reduce impact to the environment and also resolve the country's energy supply shortage, Sun Chuanwang, a professor of energy economics at Xiamen University, wrote in an article on financial news portal Yicai.com.

Economic booster

Over 1,000 years ago, silk, porcelain and tea introduced China to the Western world. Today, China's new energy products are causing global astonishment. The country has established the most competitive new energy industrial chain in the world. The production capacity and export scale of China's "new three products" in energy—electric vehicles (EVs), PV products and lithium-ion batteries—continue to grow.

Yiwu in east China's Zhejiang Province is known as the world's largest hub for small commodities and a global benchmark for small commodity trade. While the bustling trade in traditional small goods, such as buttons, toys and apparel continues, there is a palpable shift toward a new frontier—the new energy sector.

In March 2023, Yiwu International Trade City, the primary wholesale market complex in Yiwu, launched the country's first specialized market dedicated to showcasing and trading new energy products.

Overseas buyers can find nearly every type of new energy product, from solar lamps costing a few dozen yuan (a few U.S. dollars) to EVs worth hundreds of thousands of yuan (tens of thousands of U.S. dollars). A stroll through the market offers a glimpse into the global popularity and dynamic market for these new products.

According to local statistics, the output of Yiwu's PV industry reached 87.23 billion yuan (\$12.13 billion) as of 2022, accounting for over 30 percent of the total output of the PV industry in the province. It's projected that by the end of 2025, the total output of Yiwu's PV industry will reach 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion), with five leading enterprises each exceeding 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) in output value and several others surpassing 1 billion yuan (\$140 million) each.

According to the *Economic Daily* report, China's new energy industry is continuously reducing costs and improving efficiency through technology upgrades. In 2023, the price of PV modules in the country dropped to less than 1,000 yuan (\$140) per kw, a 90-percent reduction compared to 2010.

Today, the levelized cost of electricity from wind and solar power is more competitive than that from coal-fired power. The cost of lithium-ion batteries has also decreased by 90 percent, accelerating the adoption of EVs.

Technological innovations and competition have enabled Chinese new energy companies to steadily surpass their international counterparts.

Data from the NEA show that in the first half of this year, national energy investments continued to grow rapidly. Investments in key energy projects across the country exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan (\$167 billion), a year-on-year increase of 17.7 percent.

"Major energy projects are vital for consolidating and strengthening the foundation of the economy," Sun told the *People's Daily* website in an August 6 report. He noted that

accelerating the completion and production of these projects not only helps stabilize investment and growth in key areas, but also stimulates the development of upstream and downstream industries in the energy sector, supporting job creation and income growth, and injecting strong momentum into overall economic development.

Green commitments

On July 31, China introduced a new set of guidelines to ramp up the country's green transition in all areas of economic and social development.

The guidelines outline key objectives, including achieving remarkable results in green transition by 2030 and establishing a green, low-carbon and circular economic system by 2035. By this time, the goal of a Beautiful China will also be largely realized.

The National Development and Reform Commission underscored that these guidelines come at a time when China has already made historical achievements in green and low-carbon development since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012. For instance, in 2023, the nation's energy consumption and carbon emission intensity per unit of GDP dropped by more than 26 percent and 35 percent, respectively, compared to 2012.

The guidelines also emphasize the importance of promoting green consumption by encouraging people to adopt green and healthy lifestyles. They propose measures to expand the scope and scale of government procurement of green products, support trade-in programs to boost consumer spending on green products, and develop marketing

campaigns for new energy vehicles and green home appliances, especially in rural regions.

In 2020, China proposed the national dual carbon goals of peaking carbon emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060.

"The goals receive widespread praise from the European Union and countries around the world. And developing renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, has become a key strategy for China to fulfill this international commitment, to demonstrate the international responsibility of achieving energy conservation, emission reduction, and green sustainable development," Liu told *Beijing Review*. "There is confidence China will reach its dual carbon goals as scheduled," he added.

Renewable energy technologies, like solar and wind power, are the key to reducing emissions in the electricity sector, which is currently the single largest source of carbon emissions. In the pathway to net zero, almost 90 percent of global electricity generation in 2050 will come from renewable sources, with solar PV and wind power together accounting for nearly 70 percent of that total, according to a 2021 report by the International Energy Agency.

Different countries should set aside protective measures and genuinely come together to address the environmental and climate challenges that humanity faces. The world must team up to accelerate the development of the renewable energy industry and expedite the global energy transition, Liu added. **BR**



An aerial view of the world's first dual-tower solar thermal plant in Guazhou County, northwest China's Gansu Province, in July

SHIFTING GEARS

China's auto market hits a new milestone with electric vehicles outselling traditional cars By Zhang Shasha

During the recently concluded Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games, a NIO electric vehicle (EV) parked in front of the Louvre became an unexpected sensation among netizens and locals alike. The Chinese character on the distinctive green license plate suggested that the fully electric car had journeyed all the way from Nanjing, the capital of east China's Jiangsu Province, capturing the imagination of many who were intrigued by its long voyage.

The car's owner, Zhou Jun, had indeed embarked on an ambitious journey that had begun in Nanjing. Over the course of 30 days, Zhou drove 14,000 km across 10 countries, ultimately arriving in Paris two days before the Olympics kicked off. His journey culminated in attending the eagerly anticipated matches of the Chinese women's volleyball team and the Chinese table tennis team.

Zhou's adventure did not stop in Paris. He planned to continue

his journey, driving to Sweden to participate in a cross-country race and then heading to Iceland for a mountaineering expedition.

The long drive demonstrates to consumers, who once worried about traveling across provinces in EVs, that they can now undertake international and even intercontinental journeys. Stories like Zhou's highlight the evolving landscape of the automotive industry.

On August 8, the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA) released its monthly data, showing that in July, the national retail sales of passenger cars reached 1.72 million units. Of these, conventional fuel vehicles accounted for 840,000 units, a 26-percent decrease year on year, while new energy vehicles sold 878,000 units, representing a 36.9-percent increase and a market penetration rate of 51.1 percent. For the first time, the monthly retail sales of new energy passenger cars in China surpassed those of traditional fuel vehicles, marking a historic moment for the Chinese

automotive industry.

In China, EVs are officially called new energy vehicles, which designate automobiles that are fully or predominantly powered by electric energy, including plug-in EVs, battery EVs, plug-in hybrid EVs and fuel cell EVs.

"With the penetration rate surpassing 50 percent for the first time, it's clear that new energy vehicles are gaining increasing recognition from consumers," Cui Shudong, Secretary General of the CPCA, told China Central Television, adding that the cost-effectiveness of these vehicles has reached a level that appeals to mainstream consumers. It is inevitable that new energy vehicles will become the mainstream choice for consumers in the future, he said.

Increasing popularity

From 2005 to 2015, it took China 10 years for the penetration rate of EVs to surpass just 1 percent. Between 2016 and 2019, although the penetration rate increased to 5 percent, fuel-powered vehicles still dominated the market. The year 2020 marked a turning point when China set a goal for EVs to reach a penetration rate of over 50 percent by 2035. Following this, the penetration rate of EVs in China saw explosive growth, surpassing 14 percent in 2021, 27 percent in 2022, and 33 percent in 2023.

In July 2023, the cumulative production of EVs in China reached 20 million units. It took 15 years to produce the first 10 million vehicles, but the second 10 million were produced in just 17 months. In the first half of 2024, China saw its 30 millionth EV roll off the production line.

Behind these figures lies the combined influence of many factors, including market dynamics, technological advancements and a supportive environment.

"The increasing strength of China's manufacturing sector has empowered the industry with significant advantages across the supply chain. These include the robust capabilities in equipment manufacturing and the production of key components like batteries, motors and chips, where China holds a substantial competitive edge," Zhang Xiaorong, Director of the Beijing-based Deep Technology Research Institute, told *Beijing Review*.



Electric vehicles (EVs) are loaded for export at Fuzhou Port in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, on March 12

“As technology advances and costs decrease, the performance and range of EVs have greatly improved, making them more appealing to consumers,” Zhang Xinyuan, head of research at Co-Found, a Beijing-based think tank, told *Beijing Review*. “Additionally, smart features and connectivity in EVs offer greater convenience and enhanced user experience, which are key factors in attracting consumers.”

While many traditional fuel-powered vehicles still rely on mechanical instruments and conventional systems, sometimes even requiring optional upgrades for features like adaptive cruise control, domestic EV makers have advanced rapidly. Features that were once only seen in fuel-powered cars priced over 500,000 yuan (\$70,000), such as air suspension, are now available in EVs priced at around 200,000 yuan (\$28,000).

In addition, EVs offer better driving economy compared to traditional fuel-powered cars. For a gasoline car, assuming a fuel consumption rate of 7 liters per 100 km and using 92 octane gasoline priced at 8.5 yuan (\$1.2) per liter, the fuel cost for commuting 20,000 km a year is approximately 11,900 yuan (\$1,662).

In contrast, EVs typically consume between 11 to 14 kilowatt hours (kwh) per 100 km. If only use the higher estimate of 14 kwh and consider that public charging stations charge around 1.5 yuan (\$0.21) per kwh, the annual electricity cost for commuting 20,000 km would be about 4,200 yuan (\$588). Using a home charging pole would further reduce this cost by two thirds compared to public charging stations.

Incentives such as launching a nationwide campaign to bolster the EV uptake in China’s rural areas and EV tax reduction and exemption policy are also key factors influencing consumers’ decisions to choose EVs.

From the consumer perspective, purchasing a fuel-powered car priced at around 180,000 yuan (\$25,200) incurs a purchase tax of over 16,000 yuan (\$2,240), bringing the total cost to approximately 200,000 yuan (\$28,000). In contrast, the same 180,000-yuan EV is exempt from this tax, resulting in nearly a 10-percent saving on the purchase price.

As car ownership continues to rise in first- and second-tier cities in China, urban traffic pressure is increasing, leading to stricter regulations on the issuance of fuel vehicle license plates by traffic management authorities. Many large and medium-sized cities have established traffic restriction



A technician guides a driver in using a super-fast charging pole at an EV charging station in Beijing on August 11

policies, stipulating vehicles cannot be driven on the road on certain days of the week. EVs are generally exempt from these restrictions, offering greater convenience for daily use.

According to the National Energy Administration, as of late June, the total number of charging stations in China reached 10.24 million, an increase of 54 percent year on year, meeting the charging needs of 24 million EVs.

Growing global acceptance

Currently, Chinese EVs are performing well not only in the domestic market but are also rapidly gaining popularity overseas.

For example, in the Thai market, Chinese-branded EVs hold an impressive 80-percent market share. Chinese car companies’ “going abroad” strategy is gradually shifting from simple product exports to a full industry chain approach. This includes the export of

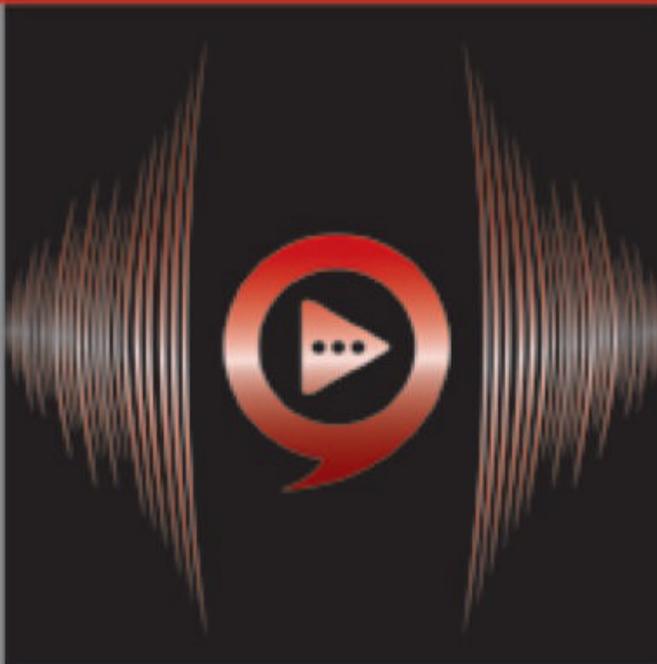
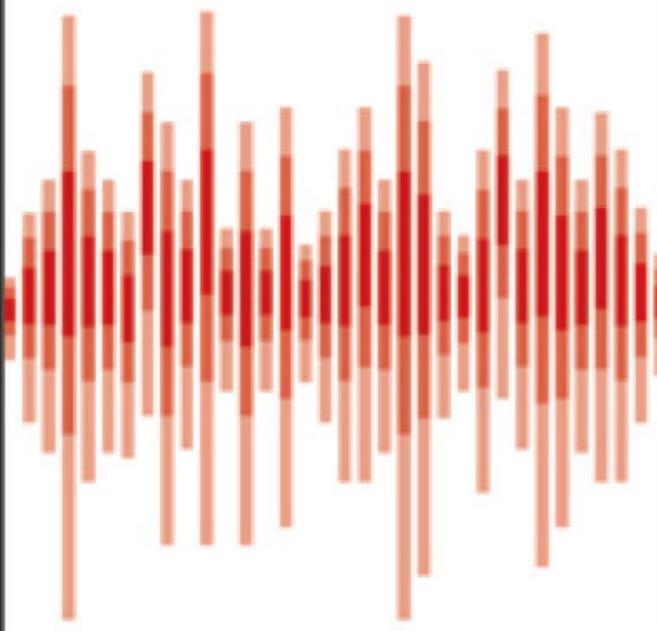
complete vehicles, technology and brand assets, as well as establishing manufacturing plants overseas.

“As global attention to environmental and energy issues continues to rise, it creates a broad market space for the export of EVs. The Chinese EV industry already possesses technological and production advantages, providing strong support for exports. In the future, as EV technology continues to advance and international markets expand, the prospects for Chinese EVs abroad will become even more promising,” Zhang Xinyuan said.

“The rapid development of the passenger car industry has facilitated the entry of Internet companies, smart consumer manufacturing enterprises and international EV makers, which has invigorated industry competition and enhanced innovation capabilities,” Zhang Xiaorong said. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to zhangshsh@cicgamerica.com

Governance
Governance
Governance
Governance



Beijing Review's flagship podcast series

The Governance Podcast

An inside take on the politics of the world's second largest economy

The Governance Podcast delves into topics related to President Xi Jinping's leadership and how the government functions in China. In this series, we explore the past, present and future of governance in China as it works toward meeting its development goals and finds its place in the global community.

Start listening on:



Center for the Americas,
China International Communications Group
中国外文局美洲传播中心 (北京日报社)

BRIDGING THE PACIFIC

你好

HELLO

**Pacific
Dialogue**
对话太平洋

Follow us on X @Pacific_Dialog
& on Douyin @对话太平洋

Five Decades of Consistency

By Filipe Porto

This year is the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Brazil and China—a milestone that offers a timely opportunity to reflect on the strategic partnership that has evolved between the two nations.

Since its official establishment in August 1974, this relationship has been characterized by consistency, a quality that has underpinned both the continuity and growth of their bilateral ties.

China's rise as Brazil's largest trading partner has been well-documented, with direct investment today accounting for 30 percent of Brazil's exports and 50 percent of its trade surplus.

But to truly appreciate the depth of this relationship, we must look beyond the numbers and focus on the partnership that has been cultivated over decades.

The Brazil-China relationship is not just a trade partnership, but a strategic partnership built on mutual respect and shared interests.

The history

The seeds of this in-depth partnership were sown during Brazilian President João Figueiredo's visit to China in 1984. Figueiredo, guided by the expertise of Chancellor Ramiro Guerreiro and a team from the Itamaraty (Brazil's indigenous name for the palace where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is located) colloquially known as "the bearded ones"—progressive figures within the Brazilian Government at that time—carefully laid the groundwork for an enduring relationship. This team recognized the importance of engaging with China, setting the stage for future collaboration.

Two key elements underscoring the consistency of Brazil-China relations emerged from Figueiredo's visit: a trade agreement and three accords in the field of science and technology. These agreements were not just symbolic, but they also provided a roadmap,

emphasizing the long-term potential of the partnership.

Fast forward to 1988, when President José Sarney visited China, building on the foundation laid by Figueiredo. By then, trade between the two nations had already surged to \$2 billion annually—a testament to the effectiveness of the earlier agreements. Sarney's delegation, comprising two Boeings carrying around 350 people, focused on further deepening ties, particularly in industrial technology, energy and transportation. It was during this visit that Sarney signed the first major bilateral agreement with China—the CBERS satellite program, which remains active to this day.

Sarney's meeting with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping was particularly telling. Related documentation from the Brazilian Senate reads that when Sarney expressed a desire for a "special relationship" with China, "one that Brazil had not yet experienced with any other country," Deng's response was: "That will come with time."

These remarks encapsulate the essence of their dialogue—a commitment to a long-term, consistent partnership.

The idea of a strategic partnership between Brazil and China, first hinted at during Sarney's time, took formal shape under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in January 1995. However, the bilateral relationship flourished with the arrival of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the Workers' Party in government in the early 2000s.

Lula's 2004 visit to Beijing marked another milestone, with the creation of the China-Brazil High-Level Coordination and Cooperation Committee (COSBAN), established to strengthen and coordinate strategic cooperation across different sectors, including trade, technology and sustainability, and a landmark cooperation agreement between the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and Tsinghua University in Beijing on climate change and sustainability.

The creation of BRICS during Lula's tenure further solidified Brazil-China relations, providing a platform for more intimate and strategic dialogue among the group's leaders. Established in June 2009, BRICS is now a 10-member group of emerging economies originally consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

As China's importance in global manufacturing surged, Brazil adapted its economic strategy, shifting the focus to agriculture—a sector that coincided with China's own economic reform and opening up. Despite these changes, the consistency of the Brazil-China relationship remained intact, adjusting to new realities while maintaining the core principles established decades earlier.

The present

The Brazil-China relationship today is anchored in the strategic partnership forged in the 1990s. China relies heavily on Brazilian exports, including soybeans, iron ore, proteins and cellulose, among other key commodities. This dependency is not merely transactional. It stems from the reality that alternative suppliers, including the United States, often present challenges for China due to geopolitical tensions. In times of global crisis, China has consistently turned to Brazil, increasing its imports to ensure stability in its supply chains.

Beyond trade, the strategic nature of this partnership is further exemplified by China's considerable investment in Brazil's critical

infrastructure. A prime example is the acquisition of CPFL Energia, a Brazilian company that operates in all segments of the country's power sector, by China's largest power grid operator, State Grid Corp., in 2017, making China the owner of the largest energy distribution company in São Paulo, Brazil's economic hub. This intertwining of interests underscores the depth of the strategic ties that bind the two nations, with Brazil serving as a reliable supplier of essential goods and China as a major investor in Brazilian infrastructure.

The bilateral relationship today remains anchored in an institutional framework that has the potential to shape both nations' futures, i.e., the earlier mentioned COSBAN.

COSBAN represents a unique strategic cooperation structure between Brazil and China. Unlike Brazil's relationships with other global partners, this framework is unparalleled, comparable only to Brazil's close ties with members of Mercosur (the Southern Common Market) in South America, which is one of the world's leading economic blocs.

Brazil has engaged in a broad exercise of identifying its specific interests in its relationship with China, a process reflected in numerous bilateral agreements, memorandums and declarations. These documents, while not

a national strategy for China in themselves, provide insights into the commitments Brazil and China have made and the implementation of these commitments.

The revitalization of COSBAN following the 2008 global financial crisis, with five meetings held between 2010 and 2019, and most recently in 2024, despite the volatile political climate in Brazil between 2016 and 2018, highlights the resilience of this partnership.

The strategic plans developed and signed over the last decade all signal Brazil's unwavering commitment to deepening ties with China.

They represent an attempt to address planning and coordination deficiencies, reflecting Brazil's determination to enhance political dialogue and synchronization in international forums with its Asian partner. These plans, while ambitious, have often been ahead of their time, proposing objectives that depend on levels of trust and decisions that are still evolving

within the context of the countries' partnership.

The future

While Brazil-China relations have seen successes, they also present challenges that must be addressed to ensure sustained mutual benefits. Key among these are the need to diversify trade relations, enhance industrial competitiveness and prioritize sustainability.

Currently, Brazil's exports are heavily commodity-focused, which limits the development of more complex production chains. To move forward, the country must focus on exporting higher value-added products and services, expanding trade into diverse sectors—a strategic necessity for the future.

Chinese investments in Brazil, totaling over \$71 billion across multiple sectors in the last 17 years, highlight the growing importance of the partnership. Both nations must treat agricultural trade with strategic importance, focusing on sustainability and long-term food security through mature dialogue and mutual trust.

Brazil needs to establish a strong framework of cooperation and formal trade agreements with China to reduce risks and diversify its economy.

The infrastructure sector also requires enduring vision and effective communication among stakeholders to foster a conducive environment for investment.

As global uncertainties persist, maintaining clear political dialogue with China is vital.

Looking ahead, sustainability will be the central theme of the Brazil-China relationship.

Both countries have the potential to lead in eco-scientific research, technology and biotechnology, setting global standards for sustainable development. The shift toward a low-carbon economy is inevitable and requires a radical transformation of consumer behavior and corporate practices.

China is likely to be a global leader in this area, and Brazil has a big role to play as a partner in this transformative journey. **BR**



Brazilian students sing *Jasmine Flower*, a popular Chinese folk song, during a concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Brazil in Natal, northeast Brazil, on June 3

The author is a Brazilian researcher of international relations and an editorial consultant at *China Hoje* magazine
 Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
 Comments to yanwei@cicgamericas.com

Cold Cloud Over Paris Olympics

By Danny Haiphong

The Olympic Games are a rare occasion where representatives from the world's nations come together to compete in sports. Despite the intense competition, the world's largest sporting event promotes a spirit of peace and camaraderie. Individual athletes and national teams take great pride in displaying their talent, skill and dedication on the world stage.

However, the Olympics can also become a platform for political tensions.

The Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games demonstrated this issue as some Western countries criticized China's swimmers, invoking rhetorics reminiscent of Cold War-era politics.

Certain Western media outlets have leveled doping accusations against Chinese swimmers. This controversy gained attention in April, when U.S. newspaper *The New York Times* reported that 23 top Chinese swimmers tested positive for trimetazidine, a banned substance, in 2021. Despite this, they had been allowed to compete in the delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympic Summer Games that year.

What happened?

According to the report, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) accused the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) of "covering up" for China after it concluded that the positive tests in 2021 were the result of no-fault food contamination.

WADA responded to the allegations by conducting an independent investigation.

The investigator found that no interference from Chinese authorities or favoritism had occurred in WADA's review. However, in May, the U.S. House Committee on China asked the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate the case under a federal law, the Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act, that allows probes into suspected doping charges even if they occurred outside the U.S.

In early July, just three weeks before the opening of the Paris Olympics on July 26, the international swimming federation World Aquatics

told U.S. not-for-profit news agency Associated Press that its executive director Brent Nowicki had been subpoenaed to testify in the U.S. criminal investigation into the Chinese case.

In late July, *The New York Times* then published another report accusing two more Chinese swimmers of doping. The two in 2022 tested positive for metandienone, an anabolic steroid that carries one of the longest bans.

However, the China Anti-Doping Agency (CHINADA) cleared them, concluding that the positive results were due to contaminated food.

Still, the accusations have cast a shadow over WADA's reputation and fueled skepticism in the West about China's athletic achievements. This was especially evident in the reactions to swimmer Pan Zhanle's record-breaking Paris performance in the men's 100-meter freestyle and 4x100-meter medley relay, where he won China the gold medals. British swimmer and triple Olympic gold medalist Adam Peaty afterward commented to the media that "there's no point in winning if you don't win fair," implying that Pan and the Chinese team were cheating. Australian swim coach Brett Hawke also remarked on social media that Pan's achievements were "not humanly possible."

For thee, not for me

These remarks are not about sports or fair competition at all. All of China's swimmers were cleared by both WADA and CHINADA to participate in the Paris Olympics, and it is well-known that Chinese swimmers are among the most

tested athletes in the world.

The politicization of China's accomplishments in Paris is a byproduct of the U.S. Cold War mentality, which seeks to rally the West into a strategic confrontation with China.

The contradictions in this agenda were highlighted rather dramatically by a WADA report, as revealed by international news agency Reuters, indicating that numerous U.S. athletes were allowed to compete for years despite violating doping rules.

In exchange, these athletes acted as informants for USADA, providing information about other doping violators.

This practice was reportedly kept secret from WADA, and the news has led China to call for stronger testing measures for U.S. athletes. Furthermore, U.S. sprinter Erryion Knighton was allowed to compete in Paris 2024 despite testing positive for the banned steroid trenbolone, with USADA attributing the positive test to contaminated meat.

On the surface, U.S. actions demonstrate the classic expression, "rules for thee, but not for me." Beneath the surface, however, hides the U.S. ultimate goal of maintaining its hegemony in all fields by hyping up the "China threat."

While China participated in Paris 2024 as just another national competitor, the U.S. continued to fuel Cold War sentiment by portraying Chinese athletes as "cheaters."

The bigger picture

This U.S. narrative builds upon years of efforts by Western mainstream media and U.S. elites to portray China negatively and drive public opinion about the country to historic lows.

In doing so, the U.S. has manufactured





Chinese swimmers compete in the mixed 4x100-meter medley relay during the Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games on August 3

support for policies that extend far beyond the Olympics. These include the militarization of the South China Sea and the Asia-Pacific region, the imposition of economic and diplomatic sanctions on Chinese individuals and entities, the steady erosion of U.S.-China cultural and educational exchanges and a continuous stream of negative media coverage of China.

This “Cold War 2.0,” led by the U.S., is designed to arrest China’s development and maintain the U.S. status as the world’s largest and most influential economy.

However, this “war” is starting to backfire on those who are most invested in it. Take the Olympics, for example.

Despite persistent efforts by U.S. media to cast suspicion and ire onto China’s performance as the host, the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games were a massive success. And

most recently, China finished second in the medal tally at Paris 2024. China’s rise in sports continues, and no amount of U.S.-led hostility will change that.

Such is true in all fields.

China’s economy will continue to grow and reach new heights, as demonstrated in its world leadership in the field of hi-tech and the steady increase in Chinese living standards.

Despite sanctions, the country’s first-rate infrastructure and massive manufacturing capacity have only grown stronger. And the global majority of nations, particularly in the Global South, will continue to see China not just as a fair and beneficial partner but also as a good

example of what a fellow Global South country can achieve with sovereignty, economic planning and strong leadership working both in the national and global interests.

The ill-treatment of Chinese athletes is thus emblematic of a larger problem in the global politics. It is imperative that peace-loving people reject the policies and mentality of the U.S.-led “Cold War 2.0.” It is also imperative that humanity builds on the momentum of the emerging multipolar world, which is based on the values China publicly advocates: peaceful cooperation, sovereignty and respect for international law. **BR**

The author is an independent journalist, author and geopolitical analyst based in the U.S., and host of the YouTube show under his own name
 Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
 Comments to dingying@cicgamericas.com

Sowing Seeds of Unity

By Zhang Shasha

‘There is a prospect greater than the sea, and that is the sky; there is a prospect greater than the sky, and that is the human soul.’ This quote from French writer Victor Hugo was referenced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in his speech at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on March 27, 2014.

In this speech, Xi presented China’s perspective on the term “civilization” to the world for the first time.

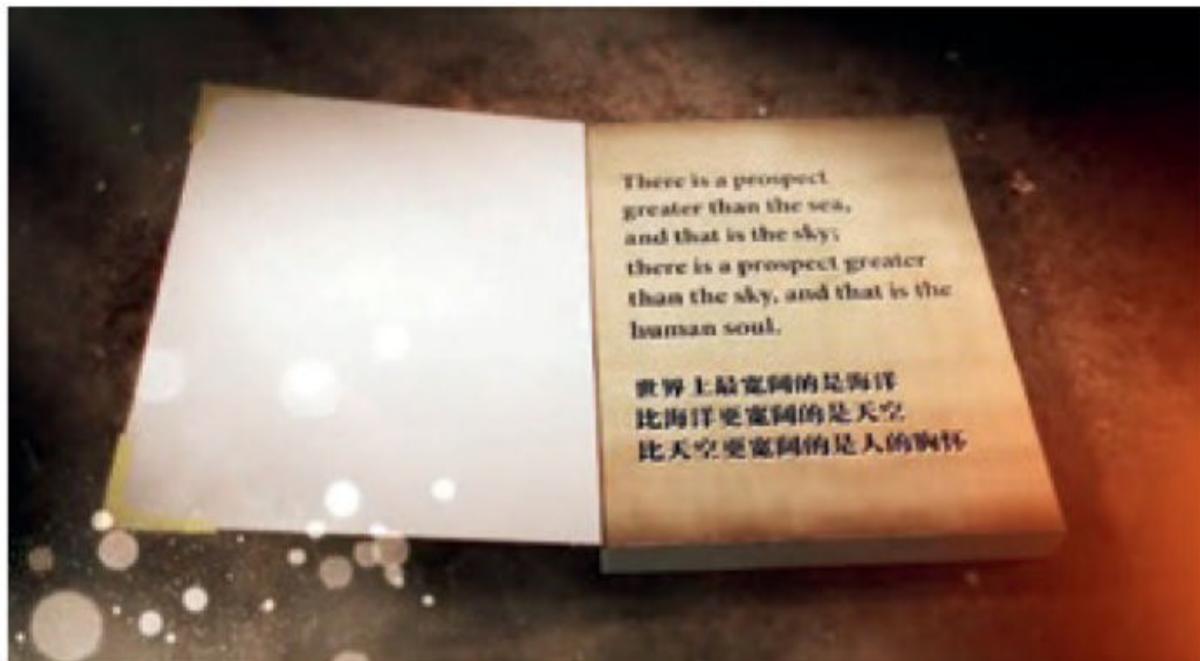
He said, “We need a mind that is broader than the sky as we approach different civilizations... We should encourage different civilizations to respect each other and live in harmony, so as to turn exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations into a bridge promoting friendship between peoples around the world, an engine driving human society, and a bond cementing world peace.”

Xi has also cited people’s different beverage preferences to illustrate the coexistence of civilizations. In April 2014, during a keynote speech at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium, he noted that the Chinese people enjoy tea, while the Belgians love their beer.

For Xi, the moderate tea drinker and the passionate beer lover symbolize two distinct ways of understanding life and the world, both equally valuable. When good friends get together, they may want to drink heartily to celebrate their friendship or quietly have a cup of tea while chatting about life.

In March 2019, Xi received the original French version of *An Introduction to The Analects of Confucius*, published in 1688, as a national gift from his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron. This precious gift is currently housed in China’s National Library.

In May 2024, on the 60th anniversary of China-France diplomatic relations, Xi reciprocally gifted Macron several Chinese



translations of French novels. Imbued with the fragrance of Eastern ink, these literary works symbolically returned to their place of origin.

From six decades of friendship to a two-way journey of intellectual and cultural exchange, China and France have woven a remarkable narrative of civilizational dialogue.

Xi has always been a strong advocate for exchange and mutual learning among different civilizations.

He has proposed the concept of building a community with a shared future for humanity, as well as the Global Civilizations Initiative, contributing Chinese know-how to the advancement of human civilizations.

China upholds the principle of promoting exchange through culture and fostering understanding through exchange. This demonstrates respect and appreciation for other civilizations. Together

with all parties, China seeks to create a tapestry of mutual learning and understanding among diverse civilizations.

The world is undergoing great changes unseen in a century. Addressing common challenges and moving toward a better future together require not only the power of economy and technology, but also the combined strength of all the world’s civilizations.

As the futures of all countries are closely connected, we need a mindset broader than the sky, one that transcends boundaries.

Inclusiveness, coexistence, exchange and mutual learning among different civilizations have an irreplaceable role in advancing humanity’s modernization process and nurturing the colorful garden of world civilizations. **BR**



Scan the QR code to watch the video

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to zhangshsh@cicgamericas.com

Building a Practical Patent Powerhouse

By Lan Xinzhen



China holds the largest number of valid invention patents globally. According to the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), as of June this year, the country had accumulated an inventory of 4.43 million valid domestic invention patents, underscoring the impact of China's focus on science and technology innovation.

Most of these patents are attributed to enterprises, universities and research institutions. However, while enterprises typically drive their patents toward commercial application, universities and research institutions often face challenges in transforming their inventions into marketable products. This discrepancy arises because enterprises are primarily motivated by profit, which naturally aligns with the commercial application of their patents.

In the first half of this year, Chinese universities and research institutions reported 23,000 patent transfer and licensing transactions, marking a 22.2-percent increase year on year, according to CNIPA data. Despite this growth, these transactions represent less than 3 percent of the total valid invention patents held by universities and research institutions. As of late 2023, these institutions had collectively amassed 1.02 million valid invention patents. If invention patents cannot be transferred into commercial products, they will not produce economic or social benefits. In short, these invention patents will be of no economic or social value.

China has been taking more measures to better apply technological advances in real scenarios. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in July outlined the reform of mechanisms for applying scientific and technological advances. The plenum decided to accelerate the planning and construction of technology transfer platforms where invention patent holders can post patent information for investors to convert patents into

products. Scientists and engineers will have a greater say in the distribution of profits from the transfer of their scientific and technological advances. The reform of income distribution for patent transfer in universities and research institutions will be pushed forward. Policies supporting the investment of long-term capital in advanced technology will be refined.

These enhanced policies focus on the transfer of technological advances made by universities and research

Addressing barriers in the application of technological advances from universities and research institutions requires persistent efforts.

These include policy improvements, the development of market mechanisms and reforms in the evaluation system

institutions. They aim to promote the application of such advances with detailed measures. There are several underlying reasons for the low efficiency of technology transfer in Chinese universities and research institutions.

First, the research evaluation system remains incomplete. The application of technological advances is not included in the evaluation standards, so research personnel often ignore the application effects of their research achievements in business activities.

Second, the patent transaction market and pricing mechanism are not sound. The platforms or the intermediary markets for technology transfer are underdeveloped. There is no national technology transfer market, the information networks lag, and technology suppliers and demanders are not properly connected. All these factors have hindered the application of technological advances in the country.

Third, market demand is insufficient. The current economic restructuring and upgrading efforts face challenges, leading to insufficient corporate demand for technology transfer. As a result, scientific and technological achievements are not being fully embraced by the market.

Addressing barriers in the application of technological advances from universities and research institutions requires persistent efforts. These include policy improvements, the development of market mechanisms and reforms in the evaluation system. These steps are essential in promoting the effective transfer and application of technological innovations.

Hopes are high that the measures introduced at the recent third plenary session will make a difference. Prioritizing science and technology as primary drivers of high-quality economic and social development is essential for China's future growth. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to lanxinzhen@cicamericas.com

What China's Medal Tally Tells Us

By Matteo Giovannini

Team China's performance at the Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games was record-breaking. Athletes from the Chinese mainland took home 91 medals, their greatest achievement in an overseas Olympic Games. Global audiences consider this feat a reflection of China's overall progress, showcasing the nation's ability to compete and excel in a highly competitive global arena.

The country is no longer just dominant in a few select traditional disciplines such as diving, table tennis and weightlifting. It is becoming a well-rounded athletic powerhouse, staging successful performances across a wide range of sports.

Aside from the pride and glory of sporting success, this accomplishment may carry profound economic implications that could shape the future of China's economy and its global standing.

The country's success across a broader array of sports is likely to accelerate the growth of its domestic sports industry. This sector, which includes everything from athletic apparel and equipment to infrastructure and related media, is now poised for a significant boost. As more young Chinese are inspired by Olympic heroes, demand for sports-related products will skyrocket, driving the expansion of the domestic manufacturing and retail industries.

Moreover, as the government capitalizes on this momentum, an increase in investment in sports facilities and training centers is to be expected. This not only creates jobs but also stimulates local economies, particularly in less-developed regions where sports development can act as a catalyst for broader economic growth.

China's Olympic success story sends a powerful message to the world: The nation is a force to be reckoned with, not just in traditional sectors like manufacturing and technology, but also in the competitive world of sports.

This fine-tuned perception of the country can, in turn, translate into increased foreign investment. Multinational corporations seeking to tap into the Chinese market may be more inclined to invest in partnerships, sponsorships and joint

ventures, particularly in the booming sports and entertainment sectors.

Plus, the Olympics have always been a platform for showcasing national cultures. As global interest in China's sports medalists grows, so will curiosity about the country's culture, history and tourist destinations, promoting tourism and cultural exchange.

Increased tourism can have a ripple effect across the economy, empowering sectors like hospitality, transportation and retail. Moreover, successful cultural exchange initiatives can lead to stronger bilateral relationships, opening doors for economic collaborations in areas such as education, technology and the arts.

One of the less obvious, but potentially transformative, effects of China's recent Olympic success is its impact on public health and fitness. As more Chinese are inspired to engage in sports and physical activities, the nation could see a significant improvement in public health outcomes. This is important for a country with a swiftly aging population, where healthcare costs are a growing concern.

Healthier citizens mean a more productive workforce, reduced healthcare costs and, ultimately, a more sustainable economy. The government's likely emphasis on sports as a tool for public health can also lead to long-term economic benefits, including increased life expectancy and better quality of life.

But Olympic achievements are not just about physical prowess; they're also a testament to China's advancements in sports science and technology. For instance, cutting-edge technology is increasingly



Children practice rollerblading in front of the National Stadium, also known as the "Bird's Nest," in Beijing on June 25. Nowadays, many people in China regularly engage in fitness activities

driving training regimens, nutrition programs and recovery methods employed by the athletes. These innovations can spill over into other sectors, pushing forward advancements in fields such as wearable technology, biomedical engineering and artificial intelligence.

As China continues to innovate in the athletic area, these technologies can be commercialized and exported, opening up new markets and revenue streams. The country's leadership in sports technology can also attract global talent and investment, further integrating China into the global innovation ecosystem.

In summary, China's record-breaking medal haul at the Paris Olympics is bound to have implications that stretch well beyond the realm of sports.

In the long run, this Olympic triumph could prove to be a turning point, not just for China's sports ambitions, but for its overall economic strategy. The convergence of national pride, economic growth and global influence is a powerful force that will shape China's future in the decades to come. **BR**

The author is a finance professional at the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and a non-resident associate fellow at the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization. Copiedited by Elsbeth van Paridon. Comments to dingying@cicgamericas.com



THROUGH THEIR EYES

People from around
the world take you
on a journey to
rediscover China



Glory and Joy

Athletes and the spirit of sportsmanship shine at the Paris Olympics By Li Wenhan



The closing ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games in Paris, France, on August 11

As China's table tennis star Sun Yingsha, representing Asia, ceremoniously extinguished the Olympic flame alongside athletes from other continents on August 11, the Paris 2024 Olympic Summer Games concluded with the waning summer. What lingers in addition to victories and medals is a mixture of emotions and the enduring spirit of sportsmanship.

“Your performances were amazing. You competed fiercely against each other. Every contest on the edge of perfection. Every performance sparking excitement around the world. You showed us what greatness we humans are capable of,” Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, said during the closing ceremony.

History in the making

Team China concluded its Paris Olympic campaign with 40 gold, 27 silver and 24 bronze medals, its best performance at an Olympics held abroad.

On August 11, the central authorities of China, including the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, sent a congratulatory message to the nation's Olympic delegation. The message praised the athletes for bringing glory to the country and highlighted their promotion of both the Chinese sporting spirit and the Olympic spirit.

In table tennis and diving, sports in which China is traditionally strong, China secured all five and eight gold medals, respectively. Additionally, China achieved historic milestones, including its first-ever gold respectively in the men's 100-meter freestyle swimming, tennis women's single, artistic swimming, women's boxing and rhythmic gymnastics.

On July 28, Chinese swimmer Pan Zhanle set a world record of 46.40 seconds in the men's 100-meter freestyle. “This gold medal is very significant for our country, as it represents a historic breakthrough in a new event

for Chinese swimming. It's a very exciting achievement," Pan said after the race.

Australian swimmer Kyle Chalmers expressed his astonishment during an interview with the YouTube channel SwimSwam on August 12 after competing against Pan in the event.

Chalmers recalled that during the race, he could only see Pan's feet, leading him to think it was the worst race of his career, as he believed he was lagging far behind the others. However, when he discovered that Pan had finished with an extraordinary time of 46.40 seconds, Chalmers felt that his own silver medal finish at 47.20 seconds was a victory.

"I'm so proud of that and to be a part of a race where the world record was absolutely demolished," Chalmers said.

In the men's 4x100-meter medley relay on August 4, backstroker Xu Jiayu, breastroker Qin Haiyang, butterflyer Sun Jiajun and freestyle star Pan ended 40 years of U.S. dominance since the 1984 Olympics with a sensational 3 minutes and 27.46 seconds.

Twenty-one-year-old Zheng Qinwen beat Donna Vekic of Croatia 6-2, 6-3 in the tennis women's singles final at Paris 2024 on August 3, becoming the first Chinese and first Asian player to stand on top of the podium in an Olympic tennis singles event.

From the quarterfinals onward, Zheng Qinwen fought fiercely, often collapsing onto the clay court after each final decisive hit. After a brief moment of repose, where she stretched out fully, she would rise with clenched fists—exhausted yet relieved. The spectators, fully aware of her struggle, responded with a standing ovation, honoring her triumph and the performance presented to them.



Chinese table tennis athlete Sun Yingsha attends the symbolic extinguishing of the Olympic flame during the Paris 2024 closing ceremony on August 11

When asked about the differences between Olympic, Asian Games and Women's Tennis Association matches, Zheng said in a post-match interview she always feels supported when playing for Team China. She defeated World No.1 Iga Swiatek of Poland in the semifinals at Paris 2024. It was her first victory over Swiatek after six straight losses and she called the win her best match.

Fencer Vivian Kong Man-wai, who clawed back from a 7-1 deficit in the women's epee final, won China's Hong Kong its third ever Olympic gold medal on July 27. Kong disappointed the home crowd as she beat France's Auriane Mallo-Breton 13-12 in the final.

In a tearful post-match interview at the Grand Palais in Paris, when asked how she managed to turn the match around, Kong said that she "didn't want to lose so miserably," adding "I didn't want to give up without demonstrating the Hong Kong spirit in my fight."

Beyond gold

Gold medalists stand at the pinnacle of Olympic achievement, but the lasting memories of the Games are often shaped by the courage, effort and sportsmanship of all athletes, regardless of their final standing.

New hurdles star Wu Yanni of Team China finished with a time of 12.98 seconds in the 100-meter hurdles semi-finals, failing to qualify for the final. When asked what score she would give herself for her Olympic debut, she gave a brutally honest self-assessment of "zero."

"I ran really slow while they ran super-fast. Oh my god!" the 27-year-old said in a post-run interview on August 7. However, Wu, untroubled by the failure, said she did not expect too much from Paris and her first Olympics was more an opportunity to learn from other, world-class hurdlers. This has earned Wu, an already very talked-about athlete on Chinese social media, even more admiration, with her interview clip amassing over 27 million views on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok.

Meanwhile, 61-year-old Ni Xialian, representing Luxembourg in table tennis, showed the world that age is no barrier to competing at the highest level. Competing in her sixth Olympic Games, Ni became the oldest competitor in the history of Olympic table tennis.

Despite her eventual loss to the world No.1 Sun Yingsha in the women's single table tennis round of 16 match, Ni's performance was nothing short of inspiring.

She punched her fist when she won a point and shrugged with a smile when she lost one. Her energy and speed may have waned, but her joy never did. As the match ended and the crowd erupted in applause, Ni, smiling as always, blew kisses, waved, and finally let her tears flow.

Newly included sports also brought fresh energy to the Games. Breakdancing—referred to as “breaking” at Paris 2024—made its debut, alongside three other emerging sports: sport climbing, skateboarding and surfing, all of which first appeared at Tokyo 2020 Olympic Summer Games.

China's youngest Olympic skateboarder Zheng Haohao, who turned 12 on August 11, concluded the women's bowl preliminary round on August 6 with a score of 63.19, missing out on the finals. Although her attempts to execute more difficult tricks didn't go as planned, her enthusiasm was undimmed.

Rock climber Wu Peng was narrowly defeated by Veddriq Leonardo of Team Indonesia by a margin of 0.02 seconds on August 8. More than his silver medal or outstanding performance, what truly lingered in the audience's memory was his determination, intense focus and the sniper-like gaze he held as he was awaiting the race.

Moment of warmth

The Olympic Games showcase some of the fiercest competition in the world, but Paris reminded us that it's more than just winning. Beyond the score sheets and broken records, there were moments worthy of cheering for humanity itself.

China's weightlifter Shi Zhiyong, a two-time Olympic champion, faced an unexpected defeat in the men's 73kg event at the Paris Olympics on August 8, failing all three attempts in the clean and jerk.

“I was a bit anxious during the first attempt, which led to the failure; the second left me feeling a bit lost,” he said after the race. “By the third attempt, I tried my best to lift it, but my legs were in great pain; I couldn't hold on,” Shi, breaking down in tears, said, adding that his adductor muscle was torn during the competition.

“My third Olympics ended with regret. I feel I've let everyone down, but I haven't let myself



China's He Bingjiao (left) shares the podium with An Se-young of the Republic of Korea (center) and Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia at Paris 2024, on August 5



Gold medalist Li Wenwen (center) of China, silver medalist Park Hyejeong (left) of the Republic of Korea and bronze medalist Emily Campbell of the United Kingdom celebrate on the podium after the weightlifting women's +81kg competition at Paris 2024, on August 11



Shi Zhiyong of China during the weightlifting men's 73kg competition at Paris 2024, on August 8



Liu Qingyi of China competes during the breaking B-girls bronze medal battle at Paris 2024, on August 9

down. I gave it everything I had,” Shi commented on popular Chinese microblogging platform Weibo, one day later, while revealing the details of his six-month battle against injuries—a five-liter bottle packed with acupuncture needles and more than 50 painkiller injections.

“You haven’t let anyone down. It is us that should say thank you,” one post commented. After the Chinese weightlifting team concluded its Paris campaign with five gold medals, all the gold medalists hung their medals around Shi’s neck for a post-competition photo.

Another instance occurred during the badminton women’s singles semi-final between China’s He Bingjiao and Spain’s Carolina Marín. Marín, who appeared to have the upper hand, suffered a right knee injury that forced her to withdraw from the match. She advanced to the gold medal match, where she lost to An Se-young of the Republic of Korea (ROK).

With a silver medal draped around her neck, China’s world No.9 lifted a small Spanish flag badge—a tribute to her injured semi-final opponent as she shared that she was “heartbroken” over Marín’s misfortune. As noted by the *South China Morning Post* newspaper, it was “a silver medal, but a golden gesture.”

U.S. *Time* magazine highlighted a touching moment from the mixed table

tennis doubles award ceremony—players from China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the ROK took a podium selfie. ROK broadcasters repeatedly aired the footage, noting the significance of this rare show of unity.

“This is probably the most meaningful image of this Olympics,” the magazine quoted a Weibo user commenting on the photo.

The Paris Olympics wrapped up with a spectacle: Tom Cruise skydived into the stadium, took the Olympic flag from gymnast Simone Biles, and secured it to the back of a motorcycle before roaring out of the arena. Preparations for the next Olympics are now underway, and the excitement is set to continue. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to liwenhan@cicgamericas.com

For a Healthier Future

The promise of China-U.S. medical cooperation By Zhao Wei

In October 2022, Megan (alias), a 35-year-old South African residing in Beijing, received life-changing news during a routine physical examination. Doctors discovered tumors in both of her ovaries, one of which was larger than an adult's fist.

Confronted with the diagnosis, Megan sought treatment at the Arion Cancer Center (ACC), a private oncology hospital in Beijing. After a three-hour surgery that November, the medical team successfully removed the tumors from both ovaries. To Megan's immense relief, not only were the tumors eradicated, but the surgeons had also managed to preserve her fertility—a concern that had weighed heavily on her mind.

Science for treatment

Central to Megan's successful treatment was ACC's Multidisciplinary Treatment (MDT) approach. Originating in the United States during the 1990s, the MDT concept involves a collaborative working group comprising experts from different departments, including surgery, oncology, radiotherapy, imaging and pathology. These doctors focus on specific diseases and, through regular consultations, develop optimal treatment plans tailored to individual patients. The plans are then implemented by the related disciplines, either individually or in combination.

In essence, MDT can be likened to a vast network with the patient at its center, each doctor representing a node on this web. This structure provides patients with round-the-clock, real-time protection; even the slightest change in condition can be swiftly communicated to any point within the network.

This August, the ACC advanced its approach by establishing an MDT medical center in collaboration with experts overseas, enabling international consultations through remote networks. This new platform allows patients to access international diagnostic services without having to travel abroad.

According to Hu Lan, the center's founder and CEO, up to 830,000 patients from China opt for treatment in the United States every year, with 80 percent suffering from tumor-related diseases. However, the journey to overseas medical treatment is fraught with challenges. Patients face not only high medical costs but also often fail to complete the necessary examinations

and preparations before departure due to information asymmetry, in turn leading to inefficiencies in the medical process.

More critically, many patients seeking second opinions overseas discover that, without the involvement of domestic doctors, many treatment plans are difficult to implement locally, further delaying vital treatment timelines.

"By integrating top-tier expert resources from both China and abroad, we achieve real-time, whole-process joint diagnosis and treatment," Hu said at the MDT medical center's inauguration on August 8.

International medical cooperation, particularly in remote or mobile healthcare, is not a new concept. A decade ago, think tank scholars from China and the U.S. already explored ways to use mobile technology to improve the efficiency of healthcare services, enhance information-sharing capabilities, reduce medical costs and boost treatment outcomes.

In May 2014, the China Academy of Telecommunication Research, subordinate to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C.-based public policy organization, jointly released a research paper titled mHealth [mobile health] in China and the United States. The study examined the developments, challenges and opportunities for mobile healthcare in both countries. Additionally, it proposed a roadmap for developing mHealth programs within each nation. Today, this forward-thinking vision is steadily becoming a reality.

"Together, we will broaden opportunities for Chinese patients to gain access to top physicians and healthcare teams for cancer and other serious illnesses in Beijing and throughout the world, including consultants in the U.S. and Western Europe," Marc Shuman said via video link at the inauguration. Shuman, a professor emeritus of medicine and former chief of the Division of Hematology and Oncology at the University of California, San Francisco, is also one of the ACC's international MDT medical center experts.

Room for the future

Since President Richard Nixon's historic 1972 visit to China, scientific collaboration between China and the U.S. has flourished, particularly in health and medicine. In early 1980, a U.S. delegation visited China, which consisted of representatives from the country's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and directors of the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Health and Human Services. The mission promoted cooperation in public health research and services.

This effort, supported by Chinese government departments and academicians, quickly fostered joint programs in public health research and services. Over the next four decades, the relationship between Chinese and U.S. health research institutions

"By integrating top-tier expert resources from both China and abroad, we achieve real-time, whole-process joint diagnosis and treatment."

—Hu Lan, Founder and CEO of the Arion Cancer Center

COURTESY PHOTO



The inauguration of the international Multidisciplinary Treatment medical center at the Arion Cancer Center in Beijing on August 8

mutually beneficial partnerships between China and the U.S., illustrating how scientific collaboration can thrive even amid broader geopolitical complexities.

strengthened considerably. In the 1990s, joint research on folic acid prevention of neural tube defects provided key data in support of mandatory folic acid fortification policies in the U.S.

Nongovernmental institutions have played an increasingly important role in promoting health exchange and cooperation between China and the U.S. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, for instance, has partnered with a range of sectors in China to address global health challenges. Since 2015, it has worked with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce to support medical and agricultural development in African nations. In 2016, the foundation partnered with Tsinghua University and the Beijing Municipal Government to establish the Global Health Drug Discovery Institute, which promotes health initiatives in developing countries.

Since 2017, the China-U.S. Health Track II Dialogue has emerged as a platform for bilateral health cooperation. Co-hosted by the National School of Development at Peking University and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, this annual event facilitates extensive discussion between health experts from both nations.

The ninth round of this dialogue took place in Tianjin Municipality, north China, on June 16-17. It gathered 21 top experts from China and the U.S., all leaders in health policy research and practice. The participants engaged in in-depth discussions on major healthcare issues and potential solutions, with the goal of enhancing capabilities and fostering cooperation between the two countries in addressing global health challenges.

In the commercial realm of healthcare, China and the U.S. have forged a relationship that is more complementary than competitive. Globalized biotech companies like BeiGene and Boyalife in China, and Amgen and Merck in the U.S., have adopted transnational business models that capitalize on the unique strengths of each nation's bio-pharma ecosystem. American pharmaceutical companies benefit from China's huge patient population for efficient clinical trials, while Chinese-developed cancer drugs offer affordable alternatives to American patients. The frequent cross-licensing of technologies and the diverse composition of executive teams, which often include experts with experience in both countries, further underscore this symbiotic relationship.

This deep integration within the biopharmaceutical sector stresses the potential for

On June 28, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng addressed a breakfast meeting of the Advanced Medical Technology Association, the largest medical technology industry organization in the U.S. Representing 80 percent of U.S. medical device and diagnostic product companies, the association has over 450 members, including many *Fortune* 500 enterprises.

In his speech, Xie emphasized the vast potential for China-U.S. cooperation in the medical and healthcare sectors. He highlighted China's commitment to public health as a cornerstone of its modernization efforts and progress toward building a healthier nation. Citing a report from international consulting firm Roland Berger, Xie noted that China's medical device market is projected to reach \$320 billion by 2030, potentially becoming the largest in the world.

The ambassador also pointed to China's rapidly aging population, expected to exceed 300 million people over the age of 60 by 2035, and its expanding middle-income group, projected to surpass 800 million within the next 15 years. These demographic shifts, he explained, are driving a surge in demand for high-quality pharmaceuticals and healthcare services, creating unprecedented opportunities for related businesses in both countries. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to zhaowei@cicamericas.com

Bigger Blooms Bring Rural Booms

Seeds from space bring prosperity to lotus farmers in east China By Li Qing

Throughout every summer season, the ponds and lakes of Yaoxi Village in Guangchang County, located in east China's Jiangxi Province, transform into vast expanses of lotus flowers, drawing tourists with their enchanting beauty.

Chinese people harbor a deep affection for the lotus flower. Although it emerges from the murky depths of the mud, the lotus flower maintains its pristine cleanliness and transforms into something exquisite. It is therefore a timeless symbol of beauty, purity and spiritual enlightenment.

In Guangchang, people consider the flower to be an integral part of their traditions and daily lives. Blessed with the ideal geography and climate for lotuses, locals began cultivating these plants 1,300 years ago. In 2016, Guinness World Records confirmed that the county had set a remarkable new record as the home of the world's largest lotus field.

Today, the county is renowned as the "hometown of white lotus in China," with the growing area now more than 73 hectares. It yields an annual output of 9,000 tons of dried lotus seeds, which are used in East Asian cuisine, creating an output value of more than 800 million yuan (\$110 million). Also, the county is home to China's largest center for white lotus research, production and distribution.

A space-bred variety

The success of Guangchang's lotus industry can be traced back to 1994, when Liu Guangliang, then head of the county's white lotus research institute, heard about China's experiments taking seeds into space. The higher radiation and unique environment of space increases the rate of mutation in seeds, accelerating production of new varieties from which scientists can select for favorable characteristics.

With the support of the local government, 442



COURTESY PHOTO

A folk music performance during the 2024 Lotus Tourism and Culture Festival in Guangchang County, Jiangxi Province, east China, in July

seeds from over 10 lotus varieties grown in Guangchang were sent into space for 14 days before being returned to the institute.

After five years of cultivation by the institute, a new variety known as No.36 space-bred lotus outperformed traditional varieties. It boasts an extended growth period, abundant flowers and large lotus pods of superior quality.

In that same year of 1999, the county began to trial commercial growing of the No.36 space-bred lotus and 20 bases were established to grow the variety. However, lotus farmers, who were accustomed to traditional varieties, showed little interest in the new one. With encouragement from lotus technicians from the institute, Xie Changjun, a resident of Xialan Village in Guangchang, decided to take the lead by planting 4 *mu* (0.27 hectares) of the space lotus.

He was surprised by the results. "First, the bloom is unique. Flowers of traditional varieties are beneath the leaves while flowers of the new one stretch out above the leaves, creating a sea of blossoms in the distance," Xie told Xinhua News Agency in March.

His success made a stir in the village, and people lined up to purchase his seedlings. Xialan currently has 502 households, with over 240 engaged in lotus farming.

Since then, the No.36 space-bred lotus has been introduced to lotus production areas across China.

In 2019, Guangchang established what it calls a white lotus science and technology research "courtyard" with the aim of upgrading its white lotus industry.

The county has over 20 enterprises dedicated to the development and processing of white lotus products, boasting a range of nearly 150 items. These include dried white lotus seeds, lotus root powder, medicinal products and white lotus seed processing machinery.

Lotus plus

The white lotus seeds from Guangchang are renowned for their exquisite white color, generous size, delightful sweetness, refreshing fragrance, abundant nutrition and a wide range of medicinal benefits.

“Nearly every household in our village is engaged in related businesses,” Feng Guangrong, Secretary of the Yaoxi Village Branch of the Communist Party of China, told *Beijing Review*. He added that their work, which includes lotus picking and seed processing, begins at 5 a.m. and finishes at 8 a.m., then resumes from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

“When I was a student, I used to assist my family in managing these seeds



A resident of Yaoxi Village removes lotus seeds from a pod in Guangchang on July 16



An aerial photo of lotus ponds in Yaoxi Village, Guangchang, on July 16

during the summer and winter vacations. The income from this work helped cover my expenses for the next semester,” Feng said.

Feng said that when the lotus pods develop black spots, it indicates that the seeds are ripe and ready to be harvested. Additionally, medium-ripe lotus seeds, which are less ripe than the normal ones, are also available for picking, as they have recently become favored by consumers due to their fruity flavor.

Yaoxi is one of the main lotus production areas in Guangchang, and has a growing area of about 133 hectares. In 2022, Yaoxi established a factory to produce lotus seed products.

This new facility utilizes machines to peel, shell and dry raw lotus seeds, resulting in a significant increase in productivity. As a result of these improvements, the factory is now able to produce nearly 2,000 kg of lotus seeds daily. According to Feng, the village’s income surged from 168,000 yuan (\$23,537) in 2020 to nearly 560,000 yuan (\$78,456) in 2022.

While machines are now capable of handling some aspects of lotus seed processing, the traditional eight manual steps to process lotus seeds have been preserved as a cultural heritage, Feng explained.

After picking lotus pods, the seeds are removed and their shells opened before being soaked in water. The next step involves splitting the seed and removing the seed plumules (embryos), and rinsing the seeds before drying them, which gives them a nutty aroma. “We value and uphold this tradition as we have a great love for our white lotus and aim to promote our rich lotus culture,” he said.

As the lotus industry has thrived in recent years, Guangchang has been focusing on developing tourism centered on lotus flowers. The county offers a variety of tourist-friendly activities such as flower appreciation, fruit tasting and entertainment. For those seeking an enchanting experience, the annual Lotus Tourism and Culture Festival in July is a must-visit event.

From January to May 2024, the county welcomed 3.35 million tourist visits, generating about 2.1 billion yuan (\$289 million) in tourism revenue. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to liqing@cicgamericas.com

Beat the Heat

Outdoor workers find solace in smart rest stations By Zhang Yage

In the scorching summer heat, packs of office workers are seen rushing through the streets of Beijing, even more hastily than usual. It's just too hot to hang around outside.

During the dog days, most people prefer to stay inside the air-conditioned cool of their office. If they wish to order anything, from food and beverages to office supplies or whatever their heart may desire in that moment, a few taps of their mobile phone screen suffice, courtesy of China's thriving delivery business.

However, those delivering the items have to work outdoors, rain or shine, in searing summer heat or bitter winter cold.

Recently, smart rest stations have mushroomed, sheltering outdoor workers, including delivery people, construction workers and street sweepers, from extreme weather and fatigue.

"Our peak time usually occurs between 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. because that is when most people will order lunch or afternoon tea. But it's also the hottest time of day," a delivery worker surnamed Wang told *Beijing Review*. "So cooling off for one hour, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., at a smart rest station has become part of my routine. Without the station, I would have been exhausted this summer."

Wang's favorite rest station is located inside a branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, one of the country's "Big Four" state-owned banks, in Beijing's Xicheng District.

In addition to air-conditioning, the station also provides Wi-Fi, mobile phone chargers, bottled drinks, snacks, towels, general medication, umbrellas and ample space to rest. Most of these products and services are either available free of charge or extremely cheap as long as the user is legally registered as an outdoor worker.

"Some bigger stations even have microwaves, refrigerators, printers and (audio) books," Wang said. Most of his co-workers can now reach a nearby station within a 15-minute electric scooter ride, something Wang believes to be of great

importance in preventing heatstroke, dehydration and overall burn-out.

Sharing is caring

The rest stations were set up by local branches of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), the country's leading body of trade unions.

Last July, the ACFTU launched the "Double 15 Project," proposing to set up 150,000 rest stations nationwide by the end of 2023. The project aimed to create enough stations so that outdoor workers could reach one within a 15-minute walk in major cities and key urban hubs across the country.

Most stations were set up in collaboration with widely distributed public institutions such as banks, post offices, community centers, libraries and Internet service providers. Many suburban areas also chose to construct independent stations.

According to an ACFTU report released in late 2023, China had thus far built 184,200 stations, providing services for 147 million workers and serving a daily average of 3.27 million outdoor workers.

Basic services aside, some stations have now extended their offerings by, for example, teaming up with local communities to organize activities such as providing free meals to outdoor workers, staging cultural performances, and hosting free lectures. Doing so further supports outdoor workers and enriches their cultural lives.

To make life more convenient for outdoor workers working long hours, the provincial-level trade union of Guangdong Province in south China has



A delivery worker listens to an audiobook at an intelligent rest station in Chaoyang District, Beijing, on May 11



Two delivery workers take a break at a smart rest station in Chaoyang District, on May 11

even offered help so that they can apply for public services at the stations.

The workers can deposit their application documents at an electronic cabinet inside the station, and then select the type of service they require. This can range from registering their households or vehicles to updating their social insurance; volunteers then oversee the proceedings. Upon completion, applicants will receive a notification via mobile phone and can then retrieve their documents.

“Most outdoor workers need to work during the office hours of government departments,” an official from the Guangdong union told news portal Worker.cn. “In this way, the outdoor workers don’t need to spend their valuable working hours dealing with lengthy application procedures.”

Hi-tech management

With the rapid spread of permanent rest stations and plans already in place to build more such stations, more and more of the ACFTU’s local branches are now applying cutting-edge technology to reduce the human resources cost of the stations while guaranteeing service quality.

“Beijing alone features more than 1,200 rest stations that provide outdoor workers with 24/7 service,” Zhang Liang, Vice President of the Beijing Federation of Trade Unions, said at a press conference on July 26, adding that artificial intelligence (AI) is widely applied to manage stations and their services.

AI enables the station to run without human staff all day long. The technology is used in many ways, including access control, monitoring and remote sensing. Outdoor workers can enter the station by scanning a QR code via Weixin (a ubiquitous super app in China). The system will then

automatically open the door and turn on the lights, at the same time voicing instructions for any services users require. Facial and voice recognition technologies are used for making payments and unlocking cabinets, and AI-powered devices are used for delivering products and answering workers’ questions.

Plus, AI allows for the remote management of the station by sending updates and alarms in certain situations, as well as sending out signals to clean the station.

In addition to cutting down costs and improving service quality, the application of AI has extended the service time of many rest stations from eight to 10 hours per day to 24/7. Therefore, many provinces are stepping up efforts to make more of these stations “smarter.”

“We sometimes have to work evening or night shifts; knowing there’s a smart station nearby reassures us,” Wang said. “It feels like you have a second, mobile home in this metropolis. Whenever I get to a station in the pitch-black darkness of night, it will light up to welcome me.” **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to zhangyage@cicgamericas.com

Beyond the Finish Line

The transformative journey of retired athletes By Yuan Yuan

The Olympic Games, celebrated for showcasing athletes at their peak, also often serve as a finish line for their career, turning the occasion into bittersweet moments of reflection and change.

Information from the General Administration of Sport of China shows that approximately 3,000 athletes step away from their careers annually. This number sees a spike in China after the Olympic Games and the National Games, with up to 40 percent of competitors hanging up their boots following the Games.

For most, the journey away from sports is filled with uncertainty. The glory and dreams that once accompanied them to the podium now fade, leaving them to ponder their next steps.

A new chapter

Speed skater Yang Yang, holder of 59 world championship titles, reached the conclusion of her illustrious career in 2006.

Upon retiring at the age of 31, she received an e-mail from a friend that read, “Welcome to the real world.” This message was both a beacon of encouragement and a sobering reminder of the uncharted life that lay ahead. Yang chose to venture beyond the familiar territories of the athletic world.

After exploring different avenues, including volunteer work with international organizations and founding an ice skating school, Yang discovered her calling in 2011 when she established the China Champions Foundation (CCF), a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting athletes with their career and life transitions.

She said many athletes worldwide experience uncertainty upon concluding their careers. “The average retirement age for Olympic athletes is 28—a time when most non-athletes are making strides in their careers,” she told *China Newsweek* magazine. “Athletes, having devoted years to rigorous training, often find themselves at a crossroads, lacking a comprehensive understanding of societal dynamics, which makes stepping into a new phase more intimidating than exhilarating.”

Yang also expressed concern over the public’s tendency to focus on star athletes, often overlooking



Yang Yang (front left) meets members of the Kakuma Refugee Camp women’s soccer team in Turkana County, Kenya, on February 21

the majority. She aspired to shift this perspective, advocating for greater societal support and encouragement to help athletes navigate their way into new fields.

As the founder and inaugural instructor of the CCF, Yang, even during her pregnancy, stood in front of her students as a beacon of confidence and courage. She reassured them, “We are not starting from zero. The one to two decades of training have not been in vain. We’ve cultivated many transferable skills and qualities beyond our sports capabilities.”

She believes that the athletes’ abilities to execute action plans and resist pressure are valuable qualities in the workplace.

Yang’s vision for the CCF is to enable more athletes to leverage these attributes in pursuits beyond the realm of sports.

A new arena

With the development of digital technology, short video platforms have emerged as a dynamic stage for retired athletes to display their prowess and share their expertise. Yang has adeptly utilized short video platforms to disseminate knowledge about ice and snow sports. Through her insightful sharing, she inspires a broader audience to embrace and develop a passion for sports.

Guo Yan, a former table tennis champion, has navigated a multifaceted post-retirement career path. She engages in activities ranging from coaching table tennis and providing match commentary to educating the masses about sports on short video platforms.

With nearly 1 million followers on Douyin, TikTok’s Chinese sister app, who are predominantly middle-aged and elderly enthusiasts, Guo interacts with her audience by reviewing their table tennis videos, offering advice and corrections on their techniques. To accommodate her early-bird elderly followers, she schedules her livestreams in the early mornings, making the national sport more



Luo Rui (center) talks with customers at the Silent Restaurant in Yuxi, Yunnan Province, on May 14

accessible to them.

Wu Li, a former synchronized swimmer and now a fitness coach for the national swimming team, shares insights into her work and training routines via short videos. This not only helps professional swimmers in other regions improve their skills, but also bring synchronized swimming, or “artistic swimming,” following the competitive sport’s rebranding in 2017, closer to the general public.

A report from Douyin earlier this year reveals that over the past year, more than 2,500 retired athletes had become active on the platform, registering a 15-percent increase. The majority of these athletes competed in the 1980s, with significant representation from the 1990s and 2000s cohorts as well.

A new journey

After their retirement, some athletes embarked on entirely new ventures. Luo Rui, at 39, has transitioned from celebrated Paralympian to culinary entrepreneur in Yuxi, Yunnan Province in southwest China.

In 2007, Luo made headlines at the National Paralympic Games, securing victories in the T60 category for the 400-meter, 800-meter and 400-meter hurdles, a feat that not only showcased his talent but also earned him the prestigious role of torchbearer for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Summer Games. Over his career, he amassed more than 50 medals, making him a phenomenal athlete.

However, Luo’s life took a dramatic turn after retiring in 2015. The consecutive losses of his elder sister and mother plunged him into deep sorrow. During

this difficult period, he and his sister Luo Juan decided to open a restaurant, which would later be affectionately known as the “Silent Restaurant,” employing staff with hearing impairments.

Gradually, the “Silent Restaurant” has established itself as a beloved local establishment, drawing in customers not only with its delicious offerings but also with the compelling story of perseverance and strength that underpins it.

Recently, Luo and his wife celebrated the birth of their child, an event Luo cherishes as his “new gold medal.” Looking ahead, he dreams of expanding his business, aspiring to create more opportunities for individuals with hearing impairments. “In the future, I dream of opening a bigger restaurant and working alongside more people with hearing impairments,” he told Xinhua News Agency. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to yuan yuan@cicgamericas.com

Bidding Farewell

First undergraduate funeral major brings the profession into the spotlight By Ji Jing

In traditional Chinese culture, death is a taboo topic, which has made the funeral industry a rather mysterious one to most people. However, this industry has recently come under the spotlight with the establishment of the China Civil Affairs University (CCAU) in Beijing, which has introduced China's first undergraduate major in funeral management. The university plans to enroll 120 students in this program starting this fall.

Founded in June, CCAU is China's first university offering undergraduate studies in the civil affairs sector. Initially a vocational school, it features five majors, including marriage services, senior care, social work, rehabilitative and assistive technology—and, obviously, funeral management.

There is ongoing debate about the necessity of elevating funeral technology and management from a junior college major to an undergraduate program. Some argue that a junior college course is sufficient for this subject, while others hold the undergraduate curriculum will be very different from the junior college program.

Why the need?

Xu Yuzhou, a technician responsible for embalming and cosmetically preparing bodies for cremation at Hangzhou Funeral Home in Zhejiang Province, shared with national broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) that he believes it is necessary to establish an undergraduate major in funeral management to meet increasingly diverse customer demand.

In 2002, Xu graduated from Changsha Social Work College with a junior college degree in modern funeral technology and management, becoming one of the first graduates recruited by Hangzhou Funeral Home. Over the years, Xu has honed his skills in the art of embalming and cosmetically preparing bodies, which sometimes involves extensive reconstruction.

Despite earning recognition for his work, Xu still feels inadequate in addressing the growing variety of personalized requests from customers. For example, some clients have requested that a piano or violin be played at the funeral, while others have asked for the ceremony to be conducted in a foreign language. Therefore, Xu believes the industry has to attract more

young professionals.

Since the establishment of the junior college major in funeral management in China in 1995, about 1,200 students have graduated from the program every year. While this has somewhat alleviated the shortage of skilled professionals in the field, it still falls far short of the industry's demand. Data indicate that funeral homes in China face an annual shortfall of 10,000 professionals, a gap that may widen with the country's rapidly aging population.

Xiong Bingqi, Director of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, told CCTV that upgrading the funeral management major to an undergraduate degree is intended to address the growing need for such services in an aging society. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), China recorded 11.1 million deaths in 2023, equating to one death every three seconds. "An aging society requires more and higher-caliber professionals in the funeral industry," he stated.

According to CCAU, the funeral management major includes courses on funeral and internment management, information and intelligent technology related to funeral and internment, management of funeral homes, grief counseling, embalming and cosmetically preparing bodies for cremation, as well as cemetery planning and design.

He Zhenfeng, Dean of the School of Life Culture at CCAU, told CCTV that in addition to mastering the techniques required for conducting funeral services, the undergraduate program also expects students to develop the ability to formulate technical standards and innovate new technologies related to the industry. They are also trained to manage funeral homes effectively.

"Undergraduate education in funeral services not only broadens employment opportunities for professionals in the field, enabling them to take on management roles, but also lays the foundation for offering more personalized services in the future," Sun Shuren, Honorary Dean of the School of Life Culture at CCAU, told CCTV.



A staff member at Babaoshan Funeral Home in Beijing applies makeup to a deceased person on March 30, 2022



A staff member at Babaoshan Funeral Home showcases paper cranes made of water-soluble paper during an open day on March 31, 2022. Paper cranes are symbols of peace; those made of water-soluble paper are more eco-friendly

Tackling bias

The funeral and interment market is expected to have an increasing trend. According to industry information network Chyxx.com, the per-capita cost for funeral and burial services will reach 31,700 yuan (\$4,421), with the overall market size of the industry to hit 317 billion yuan (\$44.2 billion) this year.

Ren Junsheng, an associate professor of modern funeral technology and management at Chongqing City Management College, told China News Service that graduates of funeral and interment majors find it relatively easy to secure employment.

However, despite the industry's increasing demand and the high employment rate for these graduates, discrimination against the funeral profession remains widespread.

Lu Xiaoning, a staff member in her 20s at Hangzhou Funeral Home, told CCTV that no one, except her parents, knows where she works.

Industry insiders have pointed out that this professional bias has caused several negative impacts, such as a lack of professional pride among workers, talent loss, and challenges in driving innovation within the industry.

Sun underlined the importance of promoting death education to the general public as a way to reduce bias against the funeral profession.

According to the honorary dean, several localities have explored death education in recent years, with some funeral homes organizing open days to engage the public.

Another issue hindering graduates from pursuing careers in the funeral industry is the modest income. A survey of over 1,500 practitioners in 150 funeral homes across China revealed that more than 60 percent of workers in the industry earn a monthly income of less than 5,000 yuan (\$697.3), according to the Report on Funeral Development of China (2018-22), published by the Social Sciences Academic Press

in 2022.

China's per-capita disposable income stood at 36,883 yuan (\$5,153) in 2022, according to NBS statistics.

Zhou Wang, a technician at Hangzhou Funeral Home, told Hangzhou-based newspaper *Dushi Kuaibao* that out of the 40 graduates from his junior college class, only five are still working in the funeral industry.

"In addition to the difficulty in finding a spouse due to the stigma attached to the profession, [the low] income is also a big problem. Many of my classmates working in smaller cities are paid less than 4,000 yuan (\$557.9) a month," he said.

People working in the funeral industry are considered "burdened with misfortune" in traditional Chinese culture. They are usually unwelcome in the homes of neighbors and relatives because of cultural beliefs that they might bring in bad luck.

Zhou said two young college graduates recently joined the funeral home where he works. He hopes that more young people will join the profession and discrimination will decrease. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to jijing@cicgamericas.com

Success and *Successor*

Hit movie explores the complexities of Chinese parenting By Peng Jiawei

A decaying village nestled in the depths of an urban high-rise jungle, a close-knit community of low-income, non-local residents, a bedbound grandma who needs 24/7 care, a father who rides donkey to work, a mother vanishing into the roles of maid and housewife, a jar of coins that the family has been saving up for decades, and a young boy beating a path amid the hardest of circumstances.

From the get-go, the film *Successor* has all the elements of a tear-jerking coming-of-age story that traces a boy's growth as he juggles the gritty reality of poverty and the growing pains of adolescence.

Yet that façade of reality quickly collapses, as the audience discovers the boy's parents, played by the famous comedic duo Shen Teng and Ma Li, are incredibly wealthy and have constructed an elaborate alternate reality to instill in their son the drive and character necessary to one day take over their business empire.

In a manner reminiscent of the god-like series creator in *The Truman Show* (1998), the couple secretly orchestrates every aspect of their son's growth from a hidden underground control room, where an entourage of top educators has been assembled to act as extras and watchdogs in the strange bubble they have created.

However, that bubble is destined to pop, as Jiye, the son, must someday realize the truth of his environment.

The horror in the humor

Amid a lackluster summer movie season, which is still lagging far behind last summer's 20-billion-yuan (\$2.79-billion) box office takings, the film has provided the kick that the industry severely needed.

Since its official release in Chinese theaters on July 16, the film had raked in some 3 billion yuan (\$419 million)—a third of the domestic summer box office total—as of August 12, making it the highest-grossing film of the season and one of China's biggest cinematic hits of the year, Chinese ticketing platform Maoyan reported.

When asked about why the film has stood out

among other blockbuster hopefuls this season, Simon Abrams, a New York-based film critic and regular contributor to *The New York Times*, film review website RogerEbert.com and *Vanity Fair*, brought attention to the movie's comic ingenuity.

"I was really impressed by how, in each scene, there is a new setup and a new premise to deal with, and the ideas just piled up and kept building," he told *Beijing Review*. "The joke writing, the general execution and just the way the narrative keeps spinning out new variations really sustain its comedic effect."

Besides the film's laugh-out-loud sort of humor, industry insiders also attribute its box office triumph to its use of the comedic genre to examine the prickly theme of Chinese parenting, a topic that is often tiptoed around or handled with the utmost gravity in domestic cinema.

"The film has managed to strike a balance between commercial appeal and social relevance," Zeng Yuli, a veteran film critic, wrote in an article published on news portal ThePaper.cn. "It allows the audience to laugh throughout and later be caught up in a sense of dread as they reflect upon the many social issues that are exposed."

This sense of dread that Zeng was referring to has resonated throughout the domestic audience. Across Chinese social media, *Successor* is widely referred to as a

SLINKY TOWN PICTURES



“Chinese thriller” that essentially captures the “horrors” of traditional Chinese parenting. Though lacking a clear definition, traditional Chinese parenting practices have often been described as “controlling,” “overprotective” and “demanding.”

“Oftentimes, comedies are tragedies narrowly averted. But *Successor* has transcended the thin line between comedy and tragedy to venture into the realm of horror,” a top comment on Douban, China’s leading media review website, read.

United by the hashtag, “*Successor* is a horror film,” countless Chinese millennials and Gen Zs have posted about how the movie brings back painful memories of their own teenage years.

Many have noted how, like the couple in the film, their parents have given up their own dreams and lives for their children and made use of the sense of guilt in their children toward their sacrifice as a source of authority.

Others have also connected the father’s obsessive desire for his son to go to Tsinghua University, popularly known as China’s MIT, to a widespread, near-religious addiction to academic achievement as the key to social mobility.

“Watching the film was like reliving my own past,” Yang Lufan, a 29-year-old lawyer, told *Beijing Review*.

Born and raised in Haidian, a district in Beijing where some of China’s most elite high schools and universities are clustered, Yang describes herself as a product of *jiwa* parenting. Stemming from an age-old Chinese superstition that injecting chicken blood can greatly boost a person’s energy, *jiwa* parenting is a trending style in China that is highly invested in ensuring that a child stays above the curve in a highly competitive society.

Just as Jiye was closely monitored by a team of top educators, from a very early age, Yang was enrolled in intensive tutoring classes that commanded all of her free time. Like Jiye, she even moved with her family into a crude aged home close to her school so that she could concentrate on her studies.

“The most troubling part for me, however, was my own reaction to the film,” she said, adding that she could not help but feel extremely disappointed when she learned that Jiye did not finish the *gaokao*, the all-important national college entrance examination that is a make-or-break moment that can completely alter one’s course of life.

“And that was the moment when I realized that I, too, have internalized the mentality that values *gaokao* above all else,” Yang said.



A scene in *Successor* shows Chun Lan (left) and Ma Chenggang, played by Ma Li and Shen Teng, reveal their true identities as they walk out of their fake ramshackle home

Parenting in perspective

In *Successor*, the *gaokao* serves both as an end goal for the parents’ grand *jiwa* project and a point of departure where the son plots an escape. In the last act of the film, Jiye, having discovered the truth, decides to renew his passion for running, with full support of his previously controlling parents. The film closes with a post-credit scene in which the couple jokingly discusses having another child while watching their son compete in a running race on live broadcast.

The ending has been met with extremely diverse reactions from the audience.

Some lament that the satire at the heart of the film has not been fully explored. “It could have been a radical breakaway. Instead, we got an ending that in many ways resemble that of a typical skit in Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) galas on TV, where all tensions and conflicts are resolved through a single final remark, *baojiaozi* (‘Let’s make dumplings’),” Kongshan Daily, a movie blogger, said in a video posted on Bilibili, China’s YouTube equivalent.

Others, however, see the ending as an exploration of how parents and children can possibly reconcile their differences across the generational divide.

“The latter half of the film not only keeps the story in balance, but also conveys the idea that, after setting everything up and creating this entire world for their kid, the parents eventually realize their limitations and inevitably have to let go,” Abrams said.

“That last scene for me is an open ending, one that symbolizes a yet unwritten chapter in the story of Chinese parenting. After a spoiled first-born, a second son almost crushed under tough love, the couple is still in the process of finding that balance between being strict and supportive, directive and kindhearted,” Yang said.

In an interview, Yan Fei and Peng Damo, the directors of the film, said they intentionally structured the narrative in such a way that the audience is more aligned with the father’s perspective in the first half and then slips into the son’s point of view toward the end.

“We hope that the split in perspectives will allow audiences to both empathize with their parents, to understand their parents just a little bit more, and be able to reflect on the many potential hurts that overparenting can inflict upon a child,” Yan said. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to pengjiawei@cicgamericas.com



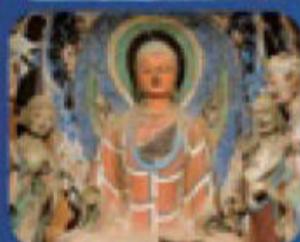
BEIJING REVIEW IS NOW AVAILABLE IN FACTIVA

Beijing Review is now available as a source in Factiva, a leading, global collection of licensed news, Web content, and company data. Factiva has 32,000 sources from nearly every country worldwide, in 28 languages, and is owned by Dow Jones.

CHINA MOSAIC

Weekly video commentary direct from Beijing

中国3分钟



A Day of Sports, Culture and Community

August 8, also known as China's Fitness Day, marked the 16th anniversary of the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Summer Games. In honor of the date, the 15th Beijing Olympic City Sports Culture Festival was held at the Chinese capital's Olympic Park.

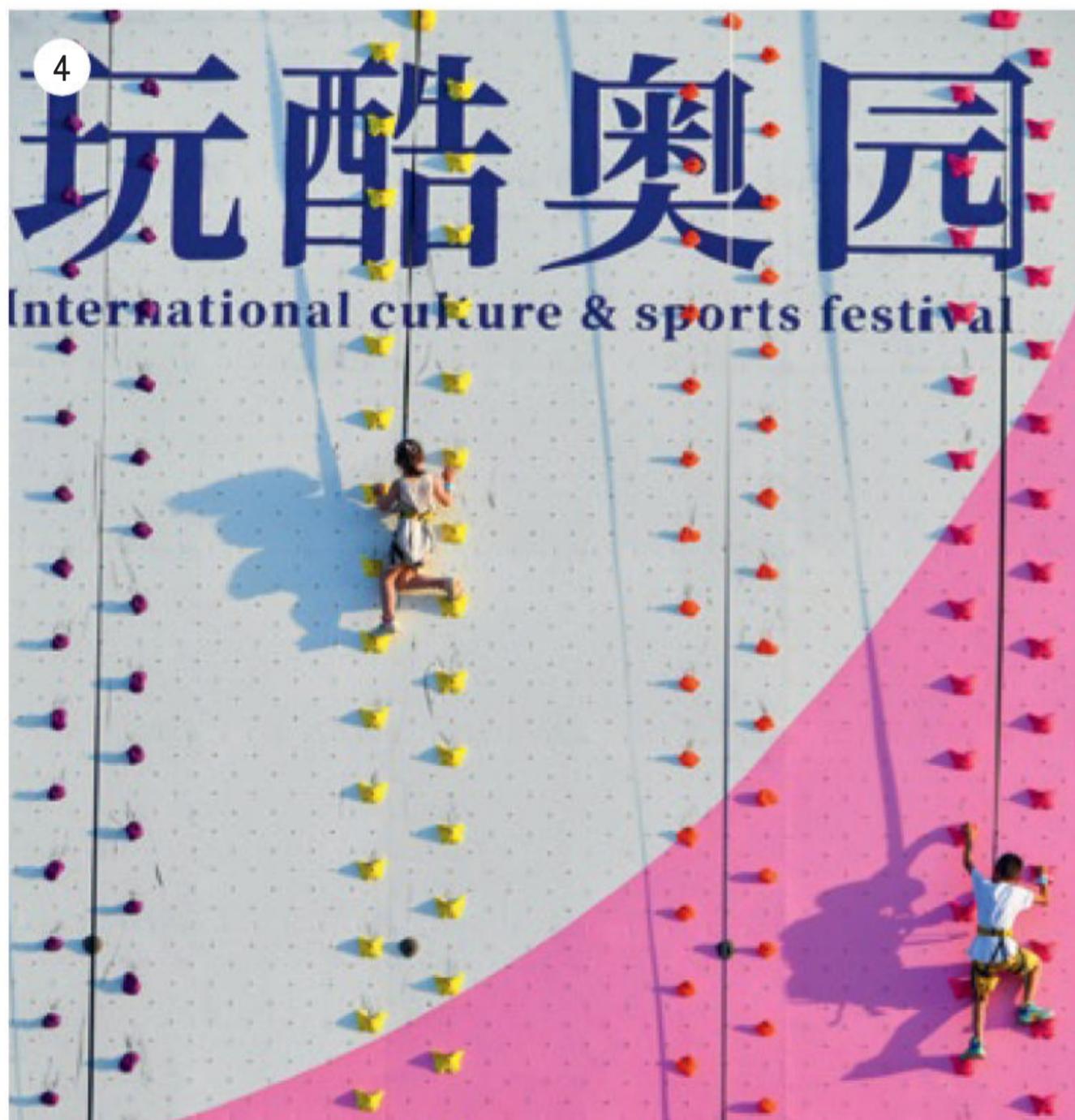
Since the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, the annual event has celebrated Beijing as a "dual Olympic city"—a city that has hosted both Summer and Winter Olympics.

Some 400 cycling enthusiasts participated in a 5-km ride along the northern extension of

Beijing's Central Axis, a straight north-south line considered the backbone of the ancient city, within the Olympic Park area. Their route passed through iconic landmarks such as the National Stadium, known as the Bird's Nest, the National Aquatics Center, known as the Water Cube, and the Olympic Tower. Other events included three-on-three basketball games, a street dance competition and sport climbing.

BR
(Text and photos by Wei Yao)

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to weiyao@qicgamerica.com





1. Cycling competitors pose for photos in front of the iconic Bird's Nest

2. Sprinters run a race outside the Water Cube

3. The opening ceremony for the 15th Beijing Olympic City Sports Culture Festival is in full swing

4. Young visitors try their hand at sport climbing



Why Are Young Urbanites Gravitating to Farm Work?



Recently, a growing number of young people in big cities have become interested in urban farming. Setting aside the pressures of their fast-paced metropolitan lives, they're opting to spend free time cultivating grain, fruit and vegetable crops on rented plots on the outskirts, in small gardens in their homes, on their balconies or even in their offices. Urban farming is also becoming a hot topic on social media, with urban farming variety show *To Farm (Zhongdi*

Ba) going viral among netizens.

While the new trend is generally being applauded by pundits, there are some caveats when it comes to "gardening for the camera."

Tang Wei (*Beijing Youth Daily*): Young urbanites' enthusiasm for farm work is partly driven by curiosity and partly by the discovery of the value of labor through farming. The process of farming allows them to work hard and then harvest the fruits of their labor. Many of them feel that

farming is a form of self-cultivation and a more meaningful leisure activity. As they become stronger physically, young people also begin to enjoy and feel refreshed from farm work.

Busy urban life is somewhat eroding the physical and mental health of the young, making them feel marginalized and excluded. Sedentary office work hurts their health and psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress are already posing a threat to individuals and society on the whole. Only by finding a suitable way to relax and reenergize can one really escape these traps.

Farm work adds color to what can otherwise be a dull urban life for young people. It also allows them to express their individuality and creativity, and helps develop a positive mindset. Everyone, young or old, needs to find ways to cope with the pressures of daily life and thus maintain a psychological balance, whether it's reading, listening to music, traveling, meditation, or gardening.

Ding Pengzhi (www.voc.com.cn): Rather than using it as a method of escapism from the realities of urban life, young people are engaging in urban farming mostly because of their passion for it and because they have the confidence to engage in new pursuits that interest them and enthusiastically embrace life.

This group does deserve plaudits. However, some young people are engaging in urban farming with the sole purpose of attracting social media traffic, and they down tools and abandon their plots and crops as soon as they finish filming.

This new passion for green lifestyles and farming deserves applause, but wasting land and resources to accumulate fans should be neither applauded nor rewarded. We should all hold a basic reverence for the land as it is the source of our food. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to yanwei@qicgamericas.com



Beijing Review Vol.67 No.1 January 4, 2024

by Beijing Review (Author) Format: Kindle Edition

[See all formats and editions](#)

Kindle

\$0.99

Read with Our **Free App**

Beijing Review is China's only national English newsweekly published by China International Communications Group Center for the Americas.

Product details

ASIN : B0BTKKP3G4

Publisher : Beijing Review (January 4, 2024)

Publication date : January 4, 2024

Language : English

File size : 1396 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

X-Ray : Not Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Sticky notes : On Kindle Scribe

Print length : 90 pages

**Now available
on
amazon**

In addition to *Beijing Review*, CICG Americas publishes *China Hoy*, a monthly publication launched in 1960, aiming to bridge the gap between China and the Spanish-speaking world—particularly Latin American countries.

Website: www.chinahoy.com.cn

