

OPINION: DOCUMENTING A CHANGING CHINA P.20 | FEATURES: BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION P.36

# BEIJING REVIEW

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## FULL STEAM AHEAD

New maritime revolution  
gains momentum



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# CONTENTS

## EDITOR'S DESK

**02 Sailing Into New Waters**

## THIS WEEK

### COVER STORY

**12 Riding the Waves**  
All hands on deck for a stronger marine shipping industry

**16 All Aboard**  
Technology prowess on display

## OPINION

**20 A Fantastic Formula**  
Organization and state capacity

**22 Toward the Post-Pandemic World**  
Time to recognize the Chinese approach

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### **24 Facts Tell a Different Story**

Why the world should support China

### **26 Grasping a Window In Time**

Middle East situation at a crossroads

### **28 The Digital Yuan on the Daily Commute**

The future of money

### **30 Cash Injection Boosts the Real Economy**

Central bank cuts the reserve requirement ratio

### **32 The True Spirit of Olympism**

Politics won't overshadow sport

### **33 New Models, Higher Levels**

Trade booms in spite of COVID-19

## FEATURES

### **36 Saving a Species**

Conservation efforts are paying off

### **38 Auld Lange Syne**

Expats and the CPC

### **40 Time Is Money**

The joys of the discount section

### **42 Poetry and Profits**

Property developers capitalize on cultural tourism

## CULTURE

### **44 Past and Present**

Hiding in plain sight

### **46 Drive Like a Girl**

New documentary explores life in China

## FORUM

### **48 How to Operate the Primary School's Summer Camp?**



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## Sailing Into New Waters

July 11 marks the 17th Maritime Day of China. On this very day some 600 years ago, Zheng He, a great navigator from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), kicked off his first voyage into the vast open waters. In total, Zheng undertook seven expeditions on behalf of the Chinese emperor sailing across the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and along the east coast of Africa, leaving behind a wide range of cultural, religious and economic heritage.

China has been a maritime power, active and strong in oceanic freight shipping and shipbuilding. At a time of globalization, 95 percent of China's foreign trade in goods is transported by sea, while its shipping fleets keep growing. By the end of 2020, China's shipping transport capacity had hit 310 million tons of deadweight, ranking second in the world. That same year, China's imports and exports by sea amounted to 3.46 billion tons, accounting for 30 percent of global seaborne trade, with huge amounts of COVID-19-related materials shipped to countries around the world.

China has also proposed to foster a new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay

and domestic and international circulations reinforcing one another. Ocean transportation plays a big role in connecting domestic and international markets.

Moreover, China boasts one of the largest port scales in the world, with eight of its seaports ranking among the world's top 10 in terms of cargo throughput and seven listed among the global top 10 in terms of container throughput. All these elements combined suffice to prove China's relevance in international shipping, as well as the significance of Maritime Day for China's shipping industry.

This year's China Maritime Forum, which took place in Kunming, Yunnan Province, offered a platform for communication and cooperation among those who are engaged in ocean shipping from home and abroad.

Currently, international shipping faces a variety of challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and ocean pollution. To overcome these diverse difficulties and forge a better future for this business, it requires joint efforts from the international community in the spirit of win-win cooperation, open-mindedness, inclusiveness and entrepreneurship. **BR**



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# LNG PROJECT UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Workers at the construction site of the Xintian liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Caofeidian District of Tangshan, Hebei Province, on July 10. The second phase of the project started recently. It is expected to be completed and put into trial operation in October 2024.



## Green City

A photo of a park in Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province, taken by a drone on July 12. Since 2015, the city has created a variety of parks, providing ample green leisure space for its residents.

## Xinjiang White Paper

The State Council Information Office issued a white paper on the progress in protecting the rights of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on July 14.

The white paper, titled *Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang*, said the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government have upheld a people-centered approach to human rights protection and Xinjiang has made steady progress in this regard over the past 70-plus years.

“China has given priority to securing and improving people’s wellbeing, advanced various undertakings in Xinjiang, and shared the fruits of reform and

development with people of all ethnic groups, so as to guarantee their equal rights to participation and development,” the document said.

It noted that the Chinese Government makes full use of its institutional strengths, pools the efforts of all sectors of society, and promotes the rapid development of all undertakings in Xinjiang.

While hailing the progress in human rights protection in Xinjiang, the white paper also condemned a number of foreign media outlets and politicians for spreading misrepresentations about Xinjiang.

## Preventing Myopia

The prevalence of myopia or nearsightedness among Chinese

preschoolers and young students was 52.7 percent in 2020, a health official said at a press conference on July 13.

It is a rise of 2.5 percentage points from 2019 but still 0.9 percentage point lower than 2018, Zenawdu Hasayn, an official with the disease control department of the National Health Commission, said, quoting a recent national survey.

The rise in myopia rates may be attributed to reduced outdoor activities due to the COVID-19 epidemic last year, the official said.

China conducted a nationwide survey from September to December 2020, covering more than 2.47 million students from 8,604 schools countrywide.

Myopia rates in primary school increased from 12.9

percent in the first grade to 59.6 percent in the sixth grade, said Zenawdu Hasayn. “On average, the myopia rate increased by 9.3 percentage points for each higher grade.”

Thus, Zenawdu Hasayn called for strengthened efforts to prevent myopia among students in kindergartens and primary schools.

The official also told the public to remain alert for high myopia levels, noting that 17.6 percent of high school students had high myopia.

However, progression into high myopia has slowed down. The prevalence of high myopia among junior middle school students and high school students logged a decrease of 0.5 percentage point in 2020 from that in 2018, concluded Zenawdu Hasayn.

## Panda Protection

China’s protection of giant pandas will not be weakened despite the fact that the species is no longer listed as “endangered,” an official said on July 10.

Giant pandas are still first-class key protected wild animals in China, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA).

The national treasure has become a trending topic in China after an official of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said at a press conference recently that it has been downgraded from “endangered” to “vulnerable,” as the population of giant pandas living in the wild has reached 1,800.

The downgrade is a testimony to the achievements of our giant panda protection efforts and shows the recognition of the international community for China’s efforts in this area, the NFGA said.

Over the years, China has taken a raft of measures to strengthen the protection of wild animals, especially that of the giant panda. So far, the country has established 67 nature reserves for giant pandas, effectively protecting 53.8 percent of giant panda habitats and 66.8 percent of the species' population.

The administration said that continued efforts will be made to strengthen the protection of giant pandas in accordance with domestic and international requirements.

## Household Registration

A total of 6,045 people are expected to be granted Beijing's *hukou*, or permanent residential status, this year.

The quota is basically the same as that of last year. In 2020, the municipal bureau of human resources and social security announced a group of 6,000 beneficiaries who gathered the most points among 122,852 applicants for a Beijing *hukou*.

Beijing's residential status, much coveted by many non-natives, is a crucial document entitling the holder to numerous social benefits, including in the fields of education and medical care.

Beijing adopted the point-based household registration reform in 2018, which is a positive trial as it opens doors to non-natives working in the city.

## Lunar Samples

On July 12, about 17 grams of lunar samples brought back by the *Chang'e-5* probe were delivered to 13 institutions, which had applied for research programs to the Lunar Exploration and Space Program Center of the China National Space Administration.

Liu Jizhong, Director of the center, said that this is the first batch of lunar samples delivered to research institutions. More samples will be released and delivered in the future as planned.

Liu said China is willing to promote international cooperation and invite foreign scientists for joint research on lunar samples.

The *Chang'e-5* probe was launched on November 24, 2020. The return capsule carried back to Earth about 1,731 grams of moon samples.

## New Reactor

China started construction of the world's first commercial small modular reactor (SMR) project on land in the country's



## Industrial Museum

A visitor visits the Chongqing Industrial Museum in Chongqing on July 13. The landmark was crafted from the ruins of a defunct steelwork site in homage to the city's industrial heritage. Since its opening in September 2019, the site has attracted over 300,000 visitors.

southern-most island province of Hainan on July 13.

The project is based at the Changjiang nuclear power plant and uses Linglong One (ACPI00) technology. It was developed by the China National Nuclear Corp.

The multi-purpose, small modular pressurized water reactor is an impressive achievement in independent innovation after

Hualong One, a domestically designed third-generation nuclear reactor.

The Linglong One reactor is designed for electricity generation, urban heating, urban cooling, industrial steam production, and seawater desalination.

It was the world's first SMR approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2016.



## Braving the Storm

A delivery man rides his scooter through Beijing's downpour, en route to his next destination on July 12.

# THIS WEEK **ECONOMY**

## GDP Expansion

The Chinese economy expanded 12.7 percent year on year in the first half of 2021 as recovery continued, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on July 15.

In the second quarter, the GDP grew 7.9 percent year on year, the data showed. On a quarterly basis, it increased 1.3 percent.

Other major economic indicators showed continued improvements across the board, with industrial output rising 15.9 percent and retail sales up 23 percent in the first half.

The surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at 5 percent in June, 0.7 percentage point lower than the same period last year.

In the six-month period, the per-capita disposable income increased 12.6 percent year on year in nominal terms to 17,642 yuan (\$2,731), basically keeping pace with the GDP increase.

In the first quarter, the GDP grew 18.3 percent year on year as

strong domestic and foreign demands powered recovery from a low base in early 2020 when COVID-19 stalled the world's second largest economy.

"Generally, the national economy has sustained a steady recovery in the first half," the NBS said in a statement, but it cautioned over uncertainties stemming from the global spread of the pandemic and the unbalanced recovery domestically.

China aims for an economic expansion of over 6 percent in 2021. It also plans to create more than 11 million new urban jobs and expand domestic demand and effective investment, which are expected to put the economy firmly back to pre-pandemic vibrancy.

The World Bank forecast in June that China's economic growth would reach 8.5 percent in 2021.

## FDI Up

Paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the Chinese mainland

surged 28.7 percent year on year to 607.84 billion yuan, or \$90.96 billion, in the first half of this year, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said on July 14.

The value increased 27.1 percent from the same period of 2019.

Foreign investment in the service industry came in at 482.77 billion yuan (\$74.58 billion), up 33.4 percent, with that in the hi-tech service sector rising 42.7 percent.

Capital inflow from the countries along the Belt and Road routes, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the EU expanded 49.6 percent, 50.7 percent and 10.3 percent, respectively.

## E-Commerce Pilots

MOFCOM pledged to actively expand the integrated pilot zones for cross-border e-commerce to cultivate new competitive edges in foreign trade on July 12.

Some cities had submitted

applications to the State Council for the establishment of such zones and MOFCOM will join relevant departments in carrying out related work, Ren Hongbin, Assistant Minister of Commerce, told a press conference.

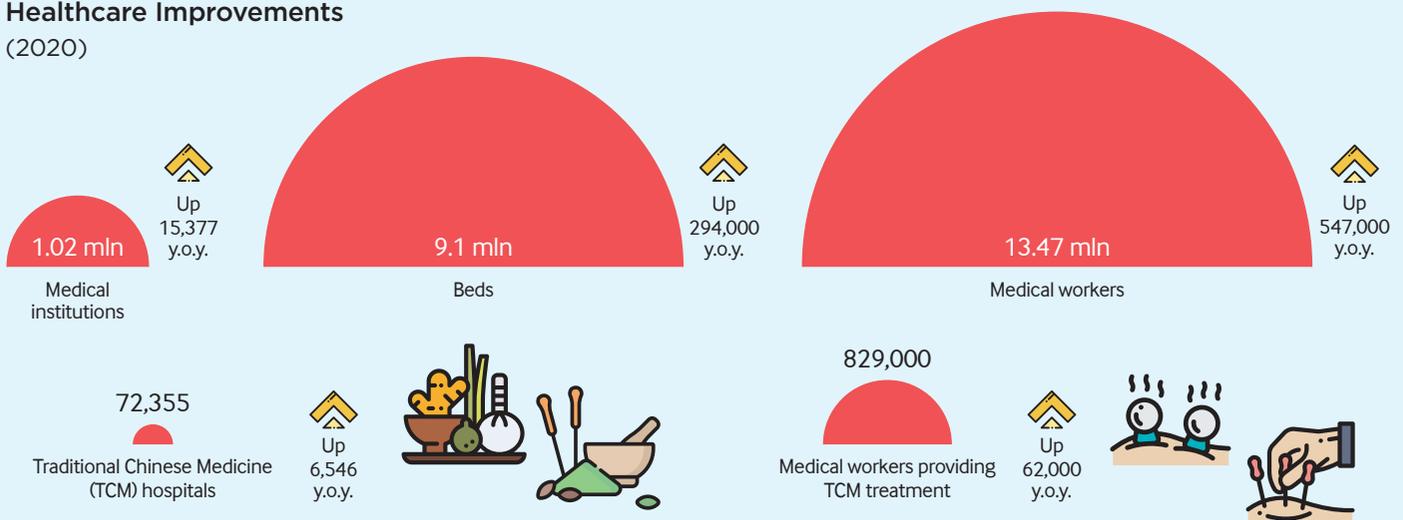
The ministry also promised to formulate guidelines for the protection of cross-border e-commerce intellectual property rights, optimize the list of cross-border e-commerce retail imports, and facilitate the return and exchange management of cross-border e-commerce imports and exports.

Since 2015, the State Council has established 105 cross-border e-commerce pilot zones in five batches. The new business model has become a vibrant force driving China's foreign trade growth. Its cross-border e-commerce imports and exports reached 1.69 trillion yuan (\$260.9 billion) in 2020, up 31.1 percent year on year.

Over the past five years, China's cross-border e-commerce trade value has grown

## NUMBERS

### Healthcare Improvements (2020)



nearly 10 times, according to Ren.

## Bank Profits

Chinese commercial banks are likely to see their profits grow by around 3 percent in both the second and third quarters of 2021, the Bank of China Research Institute said in a recent report.

In the first half of the year, the profitability of the banking sector showed important signs of improvement, while asset quality remained stable, the report said.

Net profits of commercial banks in the first quarter rose 2.4 percent year on year to 614.3 billion yuan (\$95.07 billion), earlier data from the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission showed.

The institute also predicted that the sector will present a better growth trend in profits and strong risk offset ability in the third quarter.

The business scale of the banks will maintain a relatively

high growth rate in the third quarter, with credit resources of the banks further tilted toward areas such as sci-tech innovation and rural vitalization, according to the report.

## Air-Passenger Volume

The civil aviation industry gradually recovered from the impact of COVID-19 in the first half of the year, data from the aviation regulator showed on July 9.

The industry reported 245 million passenger trips in the period, up 66.4 percent year on year, equivalent to 76.2 percent of the volume during the same period of 2019, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

In the second quarter, passenger trips on domestic flights returned to the pre-pandemic level.

Air cargo volume rose 24.6 percent year on year to 3.743 million tons during the period, up 6.4 percent compared with

the same period of 2019.

The aviation sector's investment in fixed assets reached 43.5 billion yuan (\$6.7 billion) in the six months, up 8.5 percent year on year, the administration said.

## Training Platform

An online platform focusing on training people engaged in new professions has attracted more than 8 million users, according to data released by Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group.

The platform, jointly launched by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and Alibaba's communication app DingTalk, aims to provide further training to professionals.

In July 2020, China gave official recognition to nine new professions, mostly in the public health sector and emerging industries. They included block chain technicians, online marketers, information-security testers, online-learning consultants and community health assistants,

among others, according to a statement jointly issued by the ministry and other departments.

With new industries creating many new jobs, the country released the first batch of 13 new professions in April 2019 and the second group in March 2020.

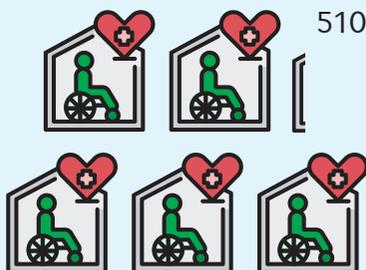
## Bond Holdings

Overseas investors increased their holdings of Chinese bonds in June, marking a rise in purchases for 31 consecutive months, official data showed.

As of the end of June, the total amount of yuan-denominated bonds owned by overseas institutions reached approximately 3.3 trillion yuan (\$510.7 billion), up 36.57 billion yuan (\$5.6 billion) from a month earlier, according to China Central Depository and Clearing Co. Ltd.

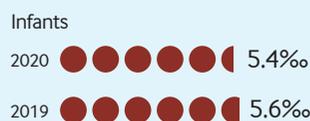
In the first half of the year, overseas investors' holdings of these bonds increased by over 450 billion yuan (\$69.6 billion), up 40.67 percent year on year.

Hospitals with hospice care services



= 100

Mortality rate



Pregnant and lying-in women (per 100,000)





## FRANCE

President Emmanuel Macron attends the annual Bastille Day celebrations with a traditional military parade down the famous avenue of the Champs Elysees in Paris on July 14



## EUROPEAN UNION

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (center) and Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans (first left) attend a press conference unveiling a comprehensive roadmap for realizing the EU's ambitious target of reducing its net greenhouse gas emissions, in Brussels on July 14



## GROUP OF 20

Participants attend a meeting of the Group of 20 finance ministers and central bank governors in Venice, Italy, on July 9. They reaffirmed the common will to reform the international business tax system





## IRAQ

People search for remains of victims at a quarantine center in al-Hussein Hospital in the southern province of Dhi Qar on July 13. At least 92 people were killed and dozens wounded in a huge fire that engulfed the facility



YINXIANG



YINXIANG



## PAKISTAN

People transfer an injured person to a hospital following a bus accident in Gilgit, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, on July 14. A bus plunged into a ravine, leaving nine Chinese nationals and three Pakistanis aboard dead



## NEW ZEALAND

A spectator watches a water screen display about the Matariki, a special occasion in the New Zealand calendar marking the start of the Maori New Year, in Wellington on July 8



YINXIANG

## SHOOTING WORLD CHAMPION ON FOURTH OLYMPIC TRIP

**Pang Wei**, nailing the gold medal of the men's 10-meter air pistol at the Olympic Summer Games Beijing 2008, has become one of the most experienced athletes in the Chinese delegation to the upcoming Olympic Summer Games Tokyo 2021.

The 34-year-old started his shooting career in 2000 and debuted at the Olympic arena after eight years. Pang, suffering lumbar and cervical pain from time to time, is eager to bag medals from his fourth Olympics.



"My goal is certainly a good result, and hopefully we will hear the Chinese national anthem at the award ceremony," he told Xinhua News Agency in April.

Unveiled on July 14 in Beijing, the Chinese delegation, the country's largest representation in an overseas Olympic Games, has a total of 777 members.

## Biodiversity Efforts

[Guancha.gmw.cn](http://Guancha.gmw.cn)

July 9

The status of the wild giant panda in China has been downgraded from "endangered" to "vulnerable" amid the country's active efforts in biodiversity protection and ecological restoration, an official of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment announced at a press conference on July 7.

The populations of several rare and endangered species have gradually recovered and the numbers of Siberian tigers, Asian elephants and crested ibises have seen rapid growth.

The improvement in wildlife living

conditions lies in the country's drive to establish a relatively complete system of nature reserves, protecting large areas of natural ecosystems in a systematic and complete manner.

However, the spatial structure of nature reserves needs to be more rationally arranged. Moreover, it is possible to strengthen protection outside the sheltered area and carry out pilot demonstrations to gradually expand the space of nature reserves.

It is expected to see China and other countries pool their wisdom and resources to generate a transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is achieved.



## Rising Global Inflation

[China Newsweek](http://China Newsweek)

July 12

The highly anticipated jump in inflation has arrived in different countries worldwide. While the duration of the rise remains open to debate, key indicators are showing sizable increases in measures of inflation expectations.

"The transformation that China achieved is staggering. It is not a gratuitous miracle, but the result of long-term planning and continuous efforts of the Communist Party of China (CPC)."

**Javier Miranda**, President of Uruguay's Broad Front Party, hailing structural reforms promoted by the CPC that uplifted people's wellbeing in China, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency on July 13

"As China's green transition takes off, its social, industrial and energy structures will all face an in-depth transformation, where financing institutions can help and must take on their responsibilities."

**Xu Shouben**, Vice President of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, at the opening ceremony of Eco Forum Global Guiyang on July 12