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THE OLYMPIC COUNTDOWN

The flame is lit, the venues tried and tested



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Cover Photo: An actress lights the torch for the Beijing 2022 Games with the Olympic flame during a ceremony in Athens, Greece, on October 19 (VCG)

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Well Prepared

Before the 100-day countdown, Beijing has completed construction of all facilities and finalized all preparatory work for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. Against the backdrop of the global fight against COVID-19, winter sports participants from all over the world are gearing up to usher in their moment of athletic glory as scheduled.

On October 18, the Olympic flame was lit in front of the Temple of Hera in Olympia, Greece, and embarked on its relay journey to the Beijing 2022 Games.

A number of testing events, too, have been concluded at different venues, demonstrating that the venues fully comply with the standards of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

All athletes can rest assured with regards to pandemic control measures during the Beijing 2022 Games, as their accommodation and competition venues are all subject to strict prevention and regulation procedures. Tickets will be sold exclusively to those spectators residing on the Chinese mainland who meet the relevant requirements for COVID-19 prevention and control, unlike the Tokyo 2020 Games that banned all spectators.

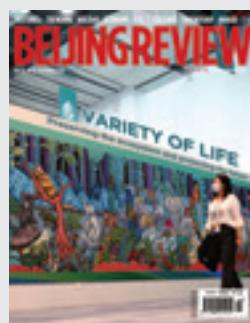
Guided by the principle of delivering an

Olympics with a green, inclusive and open approach, the Beijing 2022 Games are going ahead as scheduled.

Sportspeople from various countries have already expressed their greatest of expectations for the upcoming Games. Participating in a grand event that will unite the world in the peaceful setting of sports competition has become the consensus among all.

However, a handful of Western politicians, some U.S. politicians in particular, always view China's prosperity with a sense of hostility; boycotting the Games in their eyes serves as a bargaining chip to curb China's international influence. The politicizing of athletics runs against the spirit of the Olympic Charter, as well as harms the interests of athletes from all countries as it touches upon the Olympic cause itself. Consequently, the international community—including governments, athletes and the IOC—has spoken out against the boycott.

China, too, strongly opposes turning sports into a political game and firmly upholds the newly added Olympic motto of "Together." The country has complete confidence in its ability to present the world with a safe and splendid event.



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A STRONGER DEFENSE

A medical worker administers a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot to a man at an inoculation site in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, on October 18.

China has begun offering booster vaccines to residents aged 18 and above, who have been fully vaccinated with inactivated vaccines or the one-dose adenovirus vector vaccine for six months.



Innovation Week

A visitor inspects a robot for oral surgery at an exhibition marking the 2021 National Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship Week in Beijing on October 19.

Solar Energy

Solar energy could meet 43.2 percent of China's electricity demand in 2060 at under 2.5 U.S. cents per kilowatt hour, according to a study published on October 19.

Researchers from Harvard University in Massachusetts, Tsinghua University and Renmin University of China in Beijing, and Nankai University in Tianjin developed an integrated model to assess solar photovoltaic potentials and costs from 2020 to 2060 in China with multiple spatiotemporal factors considered.

A spatiotemporal analysis of solar photovoltaic power potential, which can be technically feasible, cost-competitive

and grid-compatible, is crucial for China to forge the energy pathway ahead, read the study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, a U.S.-based peer-reviewed scientific journal.

"The findings highlight a crucial energy transition point, not only for China but for other countries as well, at which combined solar power and storage systems become a cheaper alternative to coal-fired electricity and a more grid-compatible option," said Michael B. McElroy, a Harvard professor of environmental sciences and co-corresponding author of the study.

"Today, subsidy-free solar power has become cheaper

than coal power in most parts of China, and this cost-competitive advantage will soon expand to the whole country due to technology advances and cost declines," said Lu Xi, associate professor at Tsinghua University and also a co-corresponding author.

Regulating Parenting

Chinese lawmakers are mulling over a draft law banning parents from placing an excessive academic burden on their children.

The draft law on family education promotion was submitted on October 19 to the ongoing session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee for its third reading.

The draft stipulates that parents or other guardians of minors should appropriately organize children's time for study, rest, recreation and physical exercise.

Parents should also play their part in protecting their children from the perils of Internet addiction, the draft added.

New Homes

Residents who had relocated to make way for the construction of the Xiongan New Area in Hebei Province are ready to move into their new homes.

The first resident group attended a lucky-draw allocation of the newly built apartments in the Rongdong area on October 19, a 13-square-km area that will likely house 170,000 people.

More than 400 residential buildings are ready for delivery to more than 30,000 people from 54 villages in Rongcheng and Anxin counties, said the administrative committee of the Xiongan New Area.

The area features supermarkets, restaurants, and recreational venues, and schools, hospitals and clinics, as well as social welfare service facilities.

On April 1, 2017, China announced its plans to establish the Xiongan New Area, located about 100 km southwest of Beijing, aiming to turn the 1,770-square-km area into a green city featuring innovation and a national model of high-quality development.

Lunar Sample Study

An analysis of moon rocks brought back to Earth by China's *Chang'e-5* mission suggests the samples are a new type of lunar basalt, different from those collected during the previous *Apollo* and *Luna* missions.

Researchers from the National Astronomical

Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (NAOC) analyzed rock particles 10 to 500 microns (a quarter the thickness of a credit card) in size, and discovered that their characteristics were mainly those of basalt. Yet unlike the magnesium and iron-rich basalt found on Earth, lunar basalt is low in magnesium and high in iron oxide.

The results were published in *Nature* journal on October 19.

China's *Chang'e-5* mission took lunar soil from the mid-latitude region of the moon, a dark and flat region dubbed the Ocean of Storms. Scientists believe it is very likely to have preserved evidence of the earliest lunar volcanic activity.

Nutrition Packages

Tibet Autonomous Region has pushed ahead a program to improve nutrition among infants and children between 6 months and 3 years of age to promote their healthy growth, according to local authorities.

In the first seven months of 2021, the region provided free nutrition packages for more than 89,000 children, said the regional health commission, adding that 74 percent of these made effective use of the packages, which is higher than a year ago.

The packages contain food supplements that include essential minerals, vitamins and protein to strengthen children's immunity, develop intelligence and enhance growth.

The project was first piloted in Tibet in 2013 and covered all county-level areas in 2016. The upper age limit was raised from 2 to 3 back in 2019.

More parents have shown a gradual acceptance of the packages after they proved effective in providing nutrition, according to the commission.

Permafrost Dataset

Chinese researchers have released a high-quality comprehensive dataset of permafrost and related indexes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau for the first time, which can provide basic information for research on land-atmosphere interactions and climate change, and for socio-economic development.

Permafrost is extensively distributed on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, currently covering about 1.06 million square km and accounting for nearly half of the areal extent of the plateau. Permafrost has great influences on the climatic, hydrological, ecological and engineering systems in the region.



Cooking Competition

Chefs display traditional Sichuan dishes during a Sichuan cuisine skills competition in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on October 18. The 2021 World Sichuan Cuisine Conference opened that same day in Chengdu, an event during which chefs demonstrate the trending culinary skills of various Sichuan cuisines.

The joint research team from the Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology and the Chinese Academy of Sciences has been devoted to permafrost study on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau for almost 20 years.

Their data showed that since 2002, ground temperatures of permafrost at depths of 10 to

20 meters on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau increased at rates of 0.02 to 0.78 degree Celsius per decade. Additionally, since 2010, the active layer of the plateau permafrost has thickened by an average of 19 centimeters.

The dataset is now available at the National Tibetan Plateau/Third Pole Environment Data Center.



Self-Driving Test

An autonomous car conducts a trial drive in the Yizhuang economic development area in Beijing on October 19.

THIS WEEK ECONOMY

Joint Plant

China and Indonesia signed a memorandum of understanding in Jakarta on October 18 to conduct a feasibility study of a \$560-million coal-to-methanol plant.

"The cooperation is very important for the industrial sector. The Ministry of Industry really appreciates companies with a vision to initiate coal gasification projects and support this pioneering industrial investment plan," Indonesian Industry Minister Agus Gumiwang Kartasasmita said at the signing ceremony.

Representatives from Indonesia's PT Powerindo Cipta Energy and China National Chemical Engineering Corp. also attended the event.

The plant was expected to be constructed in Meulaboh City situated in Indonesia's western-most province of Aceh, according to a press release from the Indonesian Ministry of Industry.

With an investment of \$560 million, it will process 1.1 million

tons of coal into 600,000 tons of methanol per year.

"This project will engage 600 to 700 workers. Based on the plan, it will enter the construction stage in mid-2022," the minister said.

Top VR Firms

HTC Communication Co. Ltd., Beijing Baidu Netcom Science and Technology Co. Ltd., and electro-acoustic components manufacturer Goertek topped the list of China's top 50 virtual reality (VR) firms for 2021, which was unveiled on October 19.

First released in 2019, the rankings are compiled by the Industry of Virtual Reality Alliance. Renowned companies in the fields of the Internet, artificial intelligence and cloud computing, such as Lenovo, iFLYTEK and iQIYI, also featured on this year's list.

China's VR market saw a year-on-year increase of 46.2 percent in 2020 and is expected to maintain a growth rate of

30-40 percent over the next three years, according to CCID Consulting data.

Policy Review

The World Trade Organization (WTO) embarked on its eighth trade policy review of China on October 20.

The review lasted until October 22 and was attended by Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao and Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen from Beijing via video link, as well as China's Ambassador to the WTO Li Chenggang from Geneva.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of China's accession to the WTO. Over the past 20 years, China has fulfilled its accession commitments, actively participated in the WTO undertakings, and contributed to upholding the multilateral trading system, the Ministry of Commerce said on October 19.

The country's last WTO review was conducted in 2018.

The ministry elaborated

on China's new development philosophy during the eighth review, expounded on the country's new reform and opening-up measures, and responded to concerns raised by other WTO members.

"China welcomes all countries to share development opportunities with it and is willing to work with all parties to jointly safeguard the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core," the ministry said.

Cruise Ship

Work on the structure building of China's first domestically manufactured large cruise ship was completed in Shanghai on October 18, according to the manufacturer.

This marked the 45-percent completion of the ship, which is scheduled to be delivered in 2023, Chen Gang, General Manager of the shipbuilder Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding Co. Ltd, a subsidiary of China State Shipbuilding Corp. Ltd, said.

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.5 yuan)

China's Foreign Trade in January-September

(All changes are y.o.y.)

Total



Imports

2.78 tn yuan

Exports

15.55 tn yuan

Exports of major products

Mechanical products

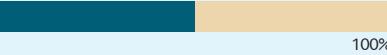
9.15 tn yuan



Up 23%

% of China's exports in the period

58.8%



Labor-intensive products



Up 9.5%

Pharmaceutical products and medicine



Up 108%

Imports of commodities

Iron ore

Down 3%

Crude oil

Down 6.8%

Natural gas

Up 22.2%

Soy beans

Down 0.7%

Copper

Up 37.9%

The work will continue on interior engineering, completing the mechanical and electrical projects, as well as system pre-tuning and testing, he added.

The vista-class cruise ship will be 323.6 meters in length and 37.2 meters in width and will be able to accommodate over 5,000 passengers, according to the blueprint.

New equipment and technologies such as laser cutting and 5G-powered assembly line management have been employed in the shipbuilding process, the company said.

FDI Inflow

Paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the Chinese mainland rose 19.6 percent year on year in the first nine months of the year to more than 859.5 billion yuan, the Ministry of Commerce said on October 20.

In U.S. dollar terms, paid-in FDI totaled \$129.3 billion, up 25.2 percent year on year.

FDI into the service sector

increased 22.5 percent in yuan terms, while hi-tech industries saw FDI inflow jumping 29.1 percent, data from the ministry showed.

Investment from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and countries along the Belt and Road routes increased 31.4 percent and 31.9 percent, respectively.

Robotics Factory

Swiss tech giant ABB will realize its “robots make robots” program in Shanghai, the company announced on October 15.

According to Peter Voser, Chairman of ABB, with a total investment of \$150 million, ABB's new robotics factory in the city will go into operation in the first quarter of 2022.

Covering 67,000 square meters, it will be one of the most advanced, automated and flexible factories in the robotics industry worldwide, utilizing the latest manufacturing processes—a cutting-edge center where robots make robots.

Production in the facility will be based on cells of automation, with robots moving from station to station, enabling greater customization and more flexibility than found in traditional, linear production systems.

The factory will also include a research and development (R&D) center to accelerate the innovation and development of artificial intelligence.

ABB has 27 companies with 15,000 employees in China, with business activities covering R&D, manufacturing, sales and services.

Derivatives Contract

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd. (HKEX) launched its new A-share derivatives contract on October 18.

The new futures contract is based on the MSCI China A50 Connect Index, a sector-balanced index that selects 50 names from the largest stocks listed in Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges available via

Stock Connect programs, and targets at least two stocks from each sector, HKEX said in an online statement.

It provides international investors with a new and effective risk management tool to manage their portfolios of Stock Connect eligible A-shares, reflecting the increasing global reliance on Stock Connect to access the mainland's burgeoning equity markets, it further said.

HKEX Chief Executive Officer Nicolas Aguzin stated, “This new product strengthens Hong Kong's role as the gateway to China for global investors and marks another great step forward in supporting the further internationalization of China's capital markets.”

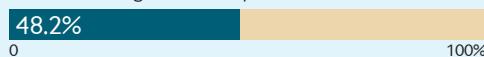
“China connectivity is Hong Kong's unique advantage, setting us apart from other international financial centers around the world. We look forward to continuing to develop Hong Kong's leading position as Asia's derivatives hub,” he added.

Imports and exports

Private enterprises



% of China's foreign trade in the period



State-owned enterprises



Foreign-funded enterprises



China's top five trading partners

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Association of Southeast Asian Nations | 4.08 tln yuan |
| European Union | 3.88 tln yuan |
| United States | 3.52 tln yuan |
| Japan | 1.78 tln yuan |
| Republic of Korea | 1.7 tln yuan |

(Source: General Administration of Customs of China)

THIS WEEK WORLD



UNITED STATES

Onlookers admire planes demonstrating their acrobatic flying skills during the Hammond Northshore Regional Airshow in Louisiana on October 16. The airshow was canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic and took off once again on October 16



ECUADOR

A medical worker administers a dose of COVID-19 vaccine to a student at a school in Quito on October 18, as Ecuador embarked on its vaccination of children aged 6-11



AUSTRIA

Customers shop at the newly opened Huawei flagship store in Vienna on October 20

THIS WEEK



GERMANY

Visitors at the Frankfurt Book Fair on October 19. After last year's digital-only edition due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event once again welcomed visitors on site



RUSSIA

Pedestrians on a street in Moscow, on October 20. Russia will introduce paid non-working days across the country from October 30 to November 7 to contain rising COVID-19 infections and related deaths



ISRAEL

An event commemorating the 26th anniversary of the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin takes place in Tel Aviv on October 18. As he left a peace rally on November 4, 1995, Rabin was fatally shot by a far-right radical opposing the treaty with the Palestinians

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ WATER INDUSTRY SCHOLAR PASSED AWAY

Xu Baojiu, China's renowned water industry scholar, died in Beijing at the age of 103 on October 15.

Xu, a pioneer in water supply and sewerage engineering in China, was the first one to put forward the concept of the water and wastewater industry, contributing to the rise of urban sewage treatment rate from 5 percent to 90 percent between the 1970s and 1990s.

Born in Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province, Xu graduated from the University of Wisconsin System in 1951 and then returned to China. As the first PhD of water and wastewater engineering in China, he went on to teach at the School of Environment, Tsinghua University, for almost five decades.

Based on Xu's concept of water and wastewater industry, the school's curriculum topic of Water Supply and Sewerage Engineering was upgraded to Water Supply and Drainage Science and Engineering in 2012.



Cheers to the Twilight Years

guancha.gmw.cn

October 15

China's Chongyang Festival, celebrated on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, is known as the Senior Citizens' Festival. This year, it took place on October 14.

According to the seventh national census, there are 264 million people aged 60 and above in China, accounting for 18.7 percent of the total populace. This number is expected to exceed 300 million during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, posing a huge challenge to effectively tackling the issues of an aging population.

For that reason, governments at all levels

should attach great importance to related undertakings by renewing policies, rolling out financial support plans and improving associated systems, such as social security, to ensure that the elderly can continue to live their lives with health and dignity.

The aging issue also serves as an opportunity as a so-called silver economy can inject impetus into social development. Yet it is worth noting that the overall market supervision should improve along with the emerging needs of the seniors for healthcare and financial management.

"Today, subsidy-free solar power has become cheaper than coal power in most parts of China. Technological advances will soon lead to cost reductions that will see this competitive advantage expand throughout the country."

Lu Xi, associate professor at Tsinghua University, addressing the importance of solar power for the operation of future electric systems in China, in an interview with CGTN, on October 21

"We appreciate not only China's steadfast financial support over the decades, which enables the entire UN system to support peace and development around the world—but [also] its support of the landmark reforms we are undertaking to strengthen the UN development system for the future."

Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General of the UN, addressing a Vision China virtual speech session hosted by *China Daily*, on October 20



City of Biodiversity

Oriental Outlook

October 21

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life on Earth. It is the accumulation of all animals, plants, micro-organisms and the ecological environment in which they live. In recent years, Beijing has made continuous efforts in the field of biodiversity conservation, creating a harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

How many new species were discovered in Beijing in 2020? The answer is 70, among

which 11 fungi and one insect species were firstly discovered in China. Today, the city is home to over 5,000 species and 82 natural and semi-natural ecosystems, including forests, thickets and wetlands. These are the preliminary results of last year's survey on the biodiversity of Beijing released in May, embodying the city's endeavors in biodiversity conservation.

In 2019, the State Council unveiled a guideline to establish the mechanism of protected areas with national parks as a major component, in a bid to push forward sustainable development. The protected areas are divided into three categories—national parks, nature parks and protected areas.

Now, Beijing embraces 79 protected areas, covering over 368,000 hectares. "As a megacity with a permanent population of over 20 million, it is not easy to designate such a large area to the protection of natural ecology," Zhang Qianpeng with the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau said.

Beijing's achievements in ecological construction should also be attributed to two rounds of afforestation projects, which have adjusted the urban landscape, said Yang Hao, an official with the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau. It laid the green foundations for local biodiversity protection.

"Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China over the past seven decades, people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have united and worked together to make the region an epitome of the success of the country's accelerated development."

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, at a special Foreign Ministry event organized to present Tibet Autonomous Region to the world, in Beijing on October 20

Hometown Schooling

Beijing Daily

October 15

At a recent seminar on synthetic practical activities in Beijing, experiences of Beijing Heizhima Hutong Primary School rather impressed attendees. As part of the school's social studies project, students get to learn about the history of local time-honored brands and even act as tourist guides introducing original *hutong* culture, the city's network of traditional alleyways, to visitors.

Responding to requirements from the Ministry of Education, schools have put more effort into organizing events that can help

expand students' comprehensive abilities and individual qualities. For example, the school has taken advantage of its geological features to help students further explore the knowledge of the capital's traditional *hutongs*, the central axis that divides the city into east and west and other aspects. That way, children can gain better understandings of their local features and customs amid the accelerating urbanization that is reshaping the city's landscape.

Similarly, instead of learning knowledge inside the classroom, students should be encouraged to venture outside and visit places where they can witness the development of their hometown. That can help them grow a deeper interest in the module and learn to think independently.

↓ FEMALE TAIKONAUT

Wang Yaping, the Chinese female astronaut onboard *Shenzhou 13*, entered the country's space station core module *Tianhe* on October 16. She is the first female taikonaut to visit China's space station and carry out extravehicular activities.

During this mission, Wang, along with her two male colleagues, will stay in orbit for six months, setting a new record for China's manned space mission duration.

Born in Yantai, a coastal city in Shandong Province, Wang, 41, joined the People's Liberation Army Air Force in 1997. In 2012, she was part of the backup crew for the *Shenzhou 9* mission.

Furthermore, Wang became the second female astronaut to take part in a spaceflight as a crew member of the *Shenzhou 10* mission in June 2013. Liu Yang, who took part in the *Shenzhou 9* mission in June 2012, was the first Chinese woman in space.



"The international community should make joint efforts to promote development and security through win-win cooperation and governance, so as to achieve higher-quality, more efficient, fairer, more sustainable and safer development, and to jointly build a community with a shared future for humanity."

Zhang Qingli, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency, on October 20

相约北京
系列冬季体育赛事
A SERIES OF WINTER SPORTING EVENTS
EXPERIENCE BEIJING

Chinese athletes perform during the 2021 Asian Open Figure Skating Trophy in Beijing on October 15

COVER STORY

BURNING BRIGHT

Beijing Winter Olympics preparations are well underway

By Lu Yan