

OPINION: SKEWED DEMOCRACY P.26 | FEATURES: NEW GRAIN SECURITY BLUEPRINT P.30

BEIJING REVIEW

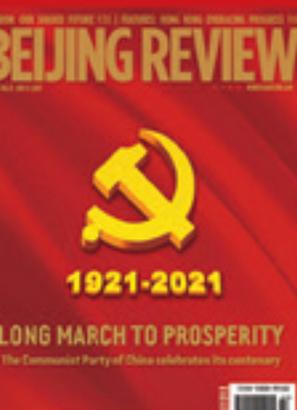
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THE 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Knowing the past, understanding the present



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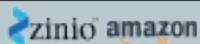
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Onward and Upward

As we bid adieu to 2021 and usher in 2022, our team would like to extend a message of thanks to all *Beijing Review* readers for your continued support. In keeping with the longstanding tradition of compiling a year-end overview, *Beijing Review* in this issue brings you 2021's most memorable events.

2021 was a significant one for China as the Communist Party of China (CPC) celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding. The Party conducted the ceremony on July 1, and the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee was held in November. The latter reviewed the Party's century-long struggle and called on its overall membership to play a leading role in the pursuit of a better life for the Chinese people.

2021 marked a great year for humanity, as exploration of outer space achieved new progress: China's Mars rover *Tianwen-1* landed on the red planet, so did the American Mars rover *Perseverance*. The United Arab Emirates' *Hope* spacecraft entered the Martian orbit. China's lunar probe *Chang'e-4* continues to reveal what lies on the far side of the moon, and the nation's taikonauts have already been living and working in the country's own

Tiangong space station, with more modules to be joined together to form the finished orbital outpost, expected to be completed in roughly one year.

2021 also proved extraordinary when the fight against COVID-19 remained a worldwide focus. Humans were forced to tackle one virus variant after another, from Alpha to Omicron, all damaging public health and posing threats to economic activities. Against that backdrop, China still achieved steady economic growth, contributing greatly to the stability of global supply chains. It provided nearly 2 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to more than 100 countries around the globe.

Peace, cooperation, development, and mutual assistance will be China's key words throughout this new year. The nation will host the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 and hold the 20th CPC National Congress. Cooperation and support are mandatory for the international fight against COVID-19. The Belt and Road Initiative will benefit more people from participating countries.

Humanity should look toward the 12 months ahead and think about how we will position ourselves in the world. It's never too late to change. It's never too late to heal. **BR**



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SNOW ART

Workers put the finishing touches on the main snow sculpture featuring mascots of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 at the 34th Harbin Sun Island International Snow Sculpture Art Exposition in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, on December 28, 2021. After one month of construction, the expo kicked off on December 24, at Sun Island Park in Harbin. In addition to admiring the towering snow figures, visitors can also partake in various ice and snow sports, such as sledding and ice skating. The expo, which runs until the end of February, is one of the most important segments of the city's annual festival.



A Great Catch

Newly caught fish lie on ice covering Chagan Lake in Songyuan City, Jilin Province, on December 26, 2021. For centuries, the fishermen and women living by the lake have continued the tradition of ice fishing—by drilling holes through thick ice and placing gill nets underneath.

Annual Session Schedule

The 13th National People's Congress (NPC) will kick off its fifth annual session in Beijing on March 5, according to a decision of the NPC Standing Committee on December 24, 2021.

The suggested agenda of the annual session includes reviewing the government work report, and examining the report on the implementation of the plan on national economic and social development for 2021, as well as the draft plan on national economic and social development for 2022.

The session is expected to examine the report on the implementation of the central and local budgets for 2021, and the draft central and local budgets for 2022.

According to the decision, lawmakers are expected to deliberate a draft amendment to the Organic Law of the Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments, a draft decision of the Fifth Session of the 13th NPC on the number of deputies to the 14th NPC and their election, plus two draft methods for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the Macao SAR to elect their deputies to the 14th NPC.

They will also review the work reports of the NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

New Freight Service

A train set off from Hanzhong City in Shaanxi Province on December 26, 2021, for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan,

marking the launch of a new China-Europe freight train service from the city.

The train, by way of the provincial capital of Xi'an, carried 767 tons of merchandise including baby carriages, clothes, stationery, ceramic tea sets and sanitary wares. It is expected to leave China via the land port of Horgos in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

In the future, freight train services via Hanzhong City are expected to be used to facilitate export of more Chinese agricultural products such as tea, rice and oranges, according to a local logistics firm involved in freight train transport.

Higher Education

China will encourage institutions of higher learning in its central and western regions to highlight

disciplines including engineering, agriculture and medicine as part of efforts to improve the quality of higher education in the regions, said Wu Yan, an official with the Ministry of Education at a press conference on December 27, 2021.

Support will go to universities in the regions to establish colleges featuring modern industry, future technology, smart agriculture and public health, among other disciplines, Wu, head of the higher education department under the ministry, added.

Comprehensive platforms for innovation in higher education will be created in China's northwestern, southwestern and central regions, where quality education, research and talent resources will be shared, Wu said.

Anti-Organized Crime Law

Chinese lawmakers voted on December 24, 2021, to adopt an anti-organized crime law in order to strengthen the work of combating and rooting out organized crimes.

The law, to take effect on May 1, was approved at a session of the NPC Standing Committee.

The law includes provisions on the criteria for identifying various types of "soft violence" such as organized disturbances, as well as provisions on the responsibilities of regulators across various industries.

An improved long-term mechanism to prevent and control organized crimes within industries will be established, according to the law, which also calls for strengthened oversight and management of industries and fields where such crimes are likely to occur.

To better prevent organized crimes targeting minors, the law also stipulates schools hold a

responsibility to prevent and report any such crimes, while related departments should step up related publicity and education efforts.

It adds that organized criminal activities targeting minors will face heavier penalties in accordance with the law.

Online Fraud Crackdown

China's cyberspace watchdog has launched a targeted campaign to combat fraudulent online activities and fake social media accounts.

The two-month campaign aims to tackle these interlinked issues, which infringe on the legal rights and interests of netizens, and disrupt the environment for public opinion and market order, according to a video conference of the Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission.

The conference specified efforts to address the manipulation of online traffic to falsify statistics regarding online reviews, sales, followers and rankings in the cultural, entertainment and commercial sectors.

It outlined efforts to tackle anomalous public relations activities, including the dissemination of negative information to blackmail others and make

profits, and the hyping-up and exploitation of trending topics for insidious marketing purposes.

It also urged steps to clamp down on the recruitment and exploitation of fake social media accounts tampering with online data, trending topics or comments; or engaging in libelous campaigns.

Student Health

Chinese students have shown gradual improvements in their physical fitness as efforts have been made to ensure their time for physical activity, according to the Ministry of Education.

According to data released by the ministry at a press conference on December 22, 2021, 33 percent of Chinese primary and middle school students' physical fitness was evaluated as "good," compared with 26.5 percent in 2016.

China has also seen downward trends in the prevalence of obesity and vision impairment among students in recent years, the ministry added.

Earlier this year, the ministry issued a circular calling for proper school schedules that allow students to have two hours of daily physical activity. Meanwhile, it asked schools



New Museum

People visit the Nanjing City Wall Museum in Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province, on December 28, 2021. The museum opened its doors for a test run that day, displaying the wall's historic and cultural values from various angles.

to offer guidance on physical education homework and offer quality exercise resources.

Desert Expressway

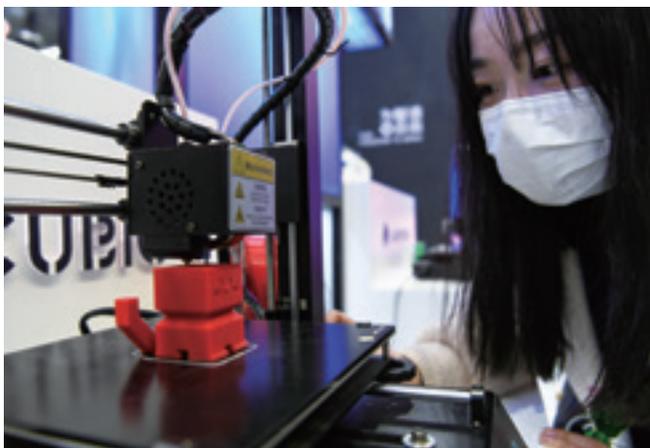
The first cross-desert expressway in Xinjiang officially opened to traffic on December 25, 2021, cutting travel time between cities in north Xinjiang, the regional transport department said.

The expressway, linking Altay Prefecture and the regional capital of Urumqi, stretches some 343 km, with sections totaling

more than 150 km constructed through the Gurbantunggut Desert, the second largest desert in China.

With a designed maximum speed of 120 km per hour, the expressway reduces travel time between Altay and Urumqi by half, to some three and a half hours.

In addition, the expressway is designed to enable drivers and passengers to enjoy diverse scenic views and services along the way, and facilitate economic development in local regions.



Hi-Tech Fair

A visitor views a 3D printer at the 23rd China Hi-Tech Fair (CHTF) in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, on December 27, 2021. The CHTF kicked off that day, both onsite and online, lasting till December 29 and December 31, 2021, respectively.

Investment Opening

Shortened negative lists for foreign investment were unveiled on December 27, 2021, as part of efforts to further open up the Chinese economy and promote high-quality economic development.

It was the fifth consecutive year that China had revised its negative lists for both pilot free trade zones (FTZs) and non-FTZ areas.

The number of items that are off-limits to foreign investors was cut from 30 to 27 in the FTZs and from 33 to 31 in non-FTZ areas, according to a statement jointly released by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Commerce.

The new lists took effect on January 1.

Foreign ownership caps on passenger car manufacturing companies were removed. All

manufacturing sectors are open to foreign investors within the FTZs.

Foreign investor access to the service sector in the FTZs was also expanded. Foreign investment is allowed in the social survey industry, but ownership by foreign investors should be no more than 33 percent and the legal representatives should hold the Chinese nationality.

For industries that are not included in the negative lists, foreign-invested enterprises should be given national treatment, said an official with the NDRC.

Manufacturing Upgrade

China will see 70 percent of its major manufacturing firms basically digitalized and networked by 2025, according to a smart manufacturing development plan.

The document, issued by

the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and other departments on December 28, 2021, also states that all of the country's manufacturing firms above designated size will be digitalized and networked by 2035.

More than 500 industry-leading smart manufacturing demonstration plants will be created by 2025.

Although China's smart manufacturing has progressed from the pilot test phase to application, it still lags behind the standard of high-quality development. The plan proposes a range of special actions, including innovation, application, supply and support, to advance the development of the sector.

Transport Growth

The international transport sector saw marked expansion in the first 11 months of 2021, the Ministry of Transport said.

The number of international cargo flights rose 25.8 percent year on year to 74,000, and the international road freight volume hit 42 million tons, according to the ministry.

The total number of China-Europe freight train trips rose 20.3 percent year on year to reach around 14,000 by the end of last November.

Stock Investors

Nearly 1.34 million new investors opened accounts to trade in stocks on the Shanghai and Shenzhen bourses in November 2021, an increase of 36.38 percent from the previous month, according to the China Securities Depository and Clearing Corp. Ltd. (CSDC).

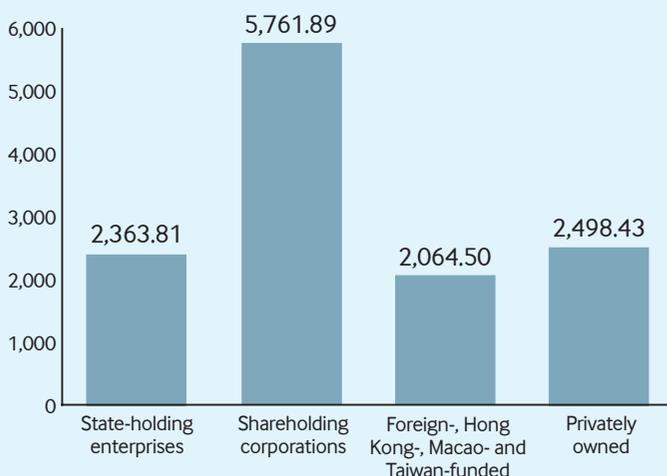
At the end of the month, the number of investors with A-share accounts stood at 196 million, CSDC data showed.

The country saw roughly 18.26 million new investors in

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.37 yuan)

Industrial Enterprise Profit by Business Type
January-November 2021 (bln yuan)



Industrial Enterprise Profit Growth by Business Type
January-November 2021 (% y.o.y.)



its stock market over the first 11 months of 2021, surpassing the total figure of 2020 and hitting a record high since 2017, according to the company.

Unicorn Report

China ranked second globally with a total of 301 unicorn companies, or startups valued at more than \$1 billion, in 2021, according to a report released by the Shanghai-based Hurun Research Institute.

Compared with a year ago, 74 new Chinese unicorn companies were added to the list, the Global Unicorn Index 2021 showed.

Globally, 1,058 unicorn companies were on the list, up 80 percent year on year.

The U.S. topped the list with 487 entrants, while India overtook Britain to grab the third spot with 54 startups.

Chinese tech giant ByteDance, the parent company

of video platform TikTok and its Chinese sister app Douyin, came in as the most valuable unicorn worldwide, with its valuation surging to 2.3 trillion yuan (\$350 billion) last year.

Beijing was home to 91 unicorn companies in 2021, the second highest number of any city globally, while Shanghai ranked fourth with 71. Shenzhen maintained its fifth place with 32 such firms.

Power Project

China's largest offshore wind farm in terms of single-unit capacity was connected to the power grid at full capacity on December 25, 2021.

Electricity generated by 134 wind turbines in sea waters around 35 km from the city of Qidong, Jiangsu Province, was successfully transmitted to the power grid through undersea power cables, the State Grid Jiangsu Electric Power Co. Ltd. said.

The project has a total installed power generation capacity of 802 mW. It is expected to send roughly 2.2 billion kWh of electricity to the power grid annually, an amount equaling the yearly consumption of 900,000 households.

As of December 22, 2021, the total installed capacity of wind farms off the coast of Jiangsu that are connected to the power grid had exceeded 10 GW.

Rare Earth Giant

China Rare Earth Group Co. Ltd., a state-owned enterprise, was inaugurated in Jiangxi Province on December 23, 2021.

The group was jointly founded by three companies—Aluminum Corp. of China, China Minmetals Corp. and Ganzhou Rare Earth Group Co. Ltd., as well as two research firms—China Iron and Steel Research Institute Group and Grinm Group Co. Ltd.

The new company will

operate under the direct supervision of the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council and have diverse equity holders.

The group will focus on research, exploration, smelting and deep processing of rare earth. Its business will also include downstream applications, equipment manufacturing, industrial incubation, technical consulting services and foreign trade.

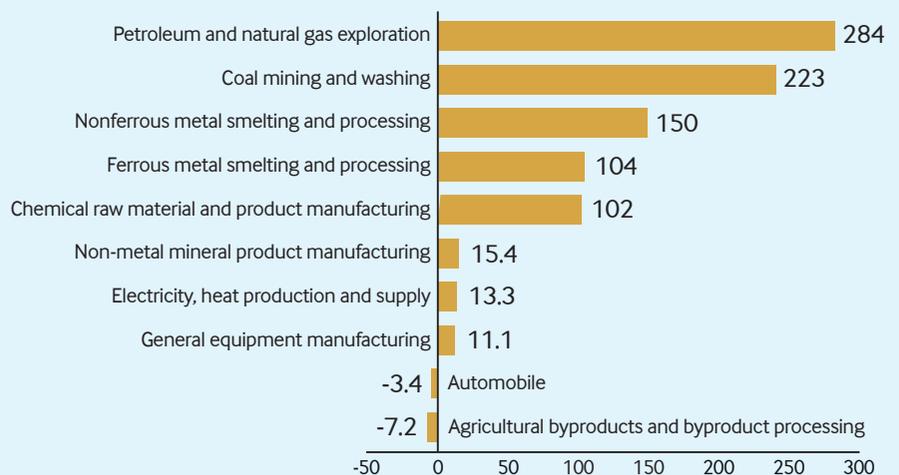
The founding of the company is conducive to increasing investment in scientific research, integrating resources and improving applications of new technologies and materials, the company said.

It is expected to better link the upstream and downstream sectors of the rare earth industrial chain, and help promote the upgrading of traditional industries and the development of strategic emerging industries.

Industrial Enterprise Profit by Sector
January-November 2021 (bln yuan)



Profit Changes for Major Sectors
January-November 2021 (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK WORLD



MALAYSIA

Students paint a tiger-themed Chinese New Year picture in Bentong, Pahang State, on December 26, 2021. The Year of the Tiger, the third sign of the Chinese zodiac, will commence on February 1



BRAZIL

A woman wades through a flooded street in the city of Itapetinga, Bahia State, on December 27, 2021. The death toll from torrential downpours in the area rose to 20 on that day, with 358 people injured



AFGHANISTAN

A man carries supplies donated by China in the capital of Kabul on December 24, 2021. China has provided several emergency assistance consignments to Afghanistan and has further imported its agricultural products





RUSSIA

President Vladimir Putin speaks at his annual press conference in Moscow on December 23, 2021



TURKEY

People pose for photos in front of a light installation to greet the New Year in Istanbul on December 27, 2021



NIGERIA

Expired AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines at a dumpsite in the capital of Abuja on December 22, 2021. Over 1 million doses of these vaccines already had a short shelf life when originally offered, but Nigeria had to accept them due to scarce supply



↓ NEW XINJIANG PARTY CHIEF

Ma Xingrui, former Governor of Guangdong Province, was appointed secretary of the Communist Party of China Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on December 25, 2021.

Born in 1959, Ma earned his PhD in 1988, specializing in flight dynamics at the Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT), and in 1993 became the dean of the institute's Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics, before being named HIT's vice president in 1996.

From 1996 to 2012, he held several senior positions at the China Academy of Space Technology and China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

In 2013, Ma was appointed vice minister of industry and information technology, head of the China National Space Administration and director of the China Atomic Energy Authority before launching his political career in Guangdong.

That same year, he became deputy Party chief of Guangdong and went on to become provincial governor in 2017.



Road to Common Prosperity

People's Daily
December 24, 2021

Road networks across the vast rural areas, much like capillaries, cater to the immediate demands of villagers if they want to venture beyond town borders. The byroads along National Road 214 are all well-made and maintained. In some sections, the creation of tunnels helps reduce travel time from one hour to 10 minutes. Especially when it comes

to crossing the Lancang River, dangerous zip treks have been replaced by solid and sophisticated bridges. Experiencing the upgrade from mud roads to gravel, cement and asphalt roads, locals today find traveling increasingly convenient, in turn ensuring smooth business flows between mountainous areas and the rest of the country.

The establishment of advanced transportation networks, especially of roads leading into the countryside, is a prerequisite for developing the rural economy and for people there to benefit from the country's overall development.



Small Towns, Big Hopes

Lifeweek
December 25, 2021

On China's national economic map, small towns possess traits of both rural and urban areas. Towns thus naturally become the breakthrough areas for the solving of problems concerning farmers, agriculture and the general countryside. The township economy used to contribute one third of the country's economic growth in the 1980s, even well into

“Our partnership with China is one that is mutually beneficial, based on win-win; we are very grateful to the Chinese Government and people for the support that they continue to render not only to our country, but to the rest of Africa.”

Kenyan President **Uhuru Kenyatta**, during an inspection tour of an expressway in Nairobi which is being constructed by a Chinese company, on December 23, 2021

“Since the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between our countries under the one-China principle, we have received different expressions of appreciation, affection and love for our people.”

Nicaraguan Presidential Advisor **Laureano Ortega Murillo**, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency after Nicaragua received a new batch of COVID-19 vaccines donated by China on December 24, 2021

the 1990s, but it began shrinking continuously since the mid-1990s due to various reasons. Yet as the Chinese economy enters a new era of development, it once again is becoming a prominent feature in the Chinese economic landscape, particularly in the context of the country's dual circulation growth paradigm, in which domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other, with the domestic market as the mainstay.

Today, the Internet brings new hopes to rural areas, with a coverage of 60 percent and 300 million users there. The popularization of all that is digital provides townships with various newfangled options.

E-commerce is proving extremely popular across the vast countryside. As of 2021, China had more than 7,000 Taobao villages, villages that generate 10 million yuan (\$1.6 million) or more in e-commerce sales annually and have 100 or more active online shops on Taobao operated by residents, and their number is growing at an annual rate of 20 percent.

The townships, with their wide-ranging land and labor resources, now bear huge potential for economic take-off in the near future, bringing closer conclusive solutions to the underlying problems at play in agriculture and the countryside by large.

More and Younger Incentives

Guangming Daily
December 27, 2021

Young experts in science and technology tend to be among the most active across all sectors.

Current assessment systems overemphasize the number of theses, and forego adequate measures for innovation, creativity and actual contributions to society. A rational academic assessment system must be able to steer young talents' attention and energy toward key research that might lead to breakthroughs, so that they can make full use of their professional

prime to create and innovate.

Another factor that dampens young scholars' enthusiasm for research is their mismatched welfare and related management. Crucial scientific breakthroughs are based on continuous input, both difficult and exhausting, but those involved, and mostly the junior ones, often miss out on due awards and incentives.

The country now needs a talent management mechanism focusing on individual academic capability, performance and contributions, and select leading young science and technology talents. A stable mechanism to support the growth of young experts is crucial for them to develop quickly into academic backbones and leading figures.

↓ TAIWAN ACTRESS SHOWS MAINLAND ID

On December 24, 2021, Taiwan-born actress and TV host **Fang Fang** posted a short video to show her brand new mainland ID card on Douyin, China's version of TikTok, receiving a warm welcome from mainland netizens on social media.

According to the actress, in late November, she applied for the mainland ID card, which provides convenience for Taiwan compatriots to study, work and live in the mainland.

"I did not expect it to be so easy and the process to be so convenient. You only need to bring your Taiwan Compatriot Permit, residential permit and a certificate of property or rental contract, and have your photo taken. The process takes less than 10 minutes," Fang said in the video.

Fang, whose real name is Zhou Zhengfang, told followers she had been living in the mainland for the past 18 months. She often shares snippets of her daily life with her following, saying she came to the mainland very early and first got invested in Shanghai back in 2003.



"The competition between the U.S. and China is not a 'modern boxing match' and should be a 'racing match,' it should not be perceived or presumed as beating the other to the ground."

Qin Gang, Chinese Ambassador to the U.S., during a recent joint interview with major American media outlets

"The fact is that Xinjiang prohibits any form of ethnic discrimination and forced labor. The people's will is respected and their rights are protected by law."

Xu Guixiang, spokesperson for the government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, at a news conference in Beijing on December 25, 2021

TOP 10 NATION NEWS STORIES OF 2021



Balloons fly up into the sky while people celebrate the Communist Party of China's centenary at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on July 1

CPC Centenary

The year 2021 marked the centennial of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). On July 1, a grand celebration took place in Beijing. President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, announced that China had achieved the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

A landmark resolution on the major achievements and historical experiences of the CPC's 100 years of endeavors was adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee in Beijing, running from November 8 to 11.