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COMING OF AGE

Senior citizens take out a new lease on life

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Cover Photo: A painter with her granddaughter in Shanghai in April 2021 (XINHUA)

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Senior Care Strategies

Entering into an aging society, China attaches unprecedented importance to the wellbeing of its senior citizens. A plan for public services during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, recently released by the National Development and Reform Commission together with other 20 agencies, highlights several new approaches.

The blueprint promotes a three-category senior care system, helping providers meet the needs in more targeted manner and giving full rein to the respective roles of government, society and market.

The government will first set out to improve the social safety net for vulnerable seniors, taking on a key role in ensuring facilities and quality are up to par. The plan also encourages nursing homes to offer free or low-price services to senior citizens with low incomes or those with severe disabilities.

Then follows the development of affordable and inclusive services. A community-based nursing service network will allow senior citizens to access nursing services within 15 minutes. Rural areas will see the establishment of elderly care facilities and all new urban communities must be equipped with these facilities at a standard of no less than 0.1 square meter per person.

Private investment is encouraged to enter the nursing service sector, and more training campaigns will follow to improve elderly wellbeing.

The third step will provide more services improving the quality of life for seniors. The plan proposes to integrate the development of senior care services with other industries, including culture, tourism, sports, home services and healthcare, and establish various industrial clusters covering a wide range of areas, bearing significant economic and social benefits.

China has more than 264 million people aged 60 or over, accounting for 18.7 percent of its 1.41 billion residents, according to the seventh national census conducted in 2020.

As can be seen from this new plan, China not only intends to meet senior citizens' material and medical needs, but also wants to help them live a more colorful life.

Organizations and activities, ranging from age-friendly universities and bands to tourist groups and bodybuilding competitions, have become popular forms of recreation in the senior care industry; the recent plan will surely stimulate the emergence of more formulae to better satisfy the elderly demands for a quality life. **BR**



WRITE TO US

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Light the Lantern

A 9-meter-tall light installation featuring tigers, the Chinese zodiac animal for the upcoming lunar year, is illuminated as part of the annual lantern show at Yuyuan Garden, a historical tourist site in Shanghai. The lantern show runs from January 18 to February 28.



A Cute Pair

Children showcase a pair of ceramic mascots for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, in Dehua, a county in Fujian Province, where these ceramic mascots are produced.

Scientific Advances

A list of the top 10 scientific advances in China in 2021 and another similar list for those in the world were unveiled in China. The entries were selected by members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and members of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, Xinhua News Agency reported on January 19.

Among the scientific breakthroughs listed, China's progress in its first Sun-probing mission stands out. Also on the list is the country's successful first Mars exploration mission. Other advances include progress in long-term stays onboard China's space station, research

into synthesizing starch from carbon dioxide, research in lunar samples brought back by the *Chang'e-5* mission, the use of gene technologies in the domestication of wild rice, as well as the prevention and control of the agricultural pest, the tobacco whitefly.

Ranking first on the list of the world's top 10 scientific advances is the development of the first living robots with the ability to reproduce. The millimeter-sized living machines, called Xenobots 3.0, are neither traditional robots nor a species of animal, but living, programmable organisms. Other notable advances include research on the accurate prediction of protein structures,

a genetic engineering technique for treating genetic diseases, using human stem cells to grow sesame-seed-sized heart models, and the recreation of early structures of the human embryo from stem cells.

Cancer Screening

China's National Health Commission issued work plans on January 18 to increase women's access to government-subsidized screening services for cervical and breast cancers.

The scope of such programs will be expanded to include women aged 35 to 64 in both urban and rural areas, and will prioritize those living in rural areas or those from urban families

living on subsistence allowances. The programs used to only cover women in rural areas.

By the end of 2025, the coverage of these cervical cancer screening services for eligible women will surpass 50 percent, while the coverage of breast cancer screening services will increase on an annual basis, according to the plans.

New Carp

Chinese biologists have bred a new variety of crucian carp that does not have intermuscular bones, making the popular freshwater fish easier to eat.

This new variety was bred through gene editing, carried out by a research group from the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences' Heilongjiang River Fisheries Research Institute, *Science and Technology Daily* reported on January 18.

The crucian carp is famous for its tender and flavorful flesh but its intermuscular bones, which are too small to pick from the flesh, easily get caught in the throat and make industrial processing difficult.

The research group pinpointed the key gene that controls the development of intermuscular bones from over 1,600 related candidates, and used gene-editing technology to produce the new variety.

In 2021, the group was able to cultivate a generation of the variety capable of passing its new genetic trait on to its offspring, while developing normally in all other aspects.

Comprehensive Bonded Zone

The first comprehensive bonded zone on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau began operation on January 16 in Xining, capital of Qinghai Province.

Two container trucks carrying precision equipment imported from Canada entered the Xining Comprehensive Bonded Zone on the morning of January 16 under the supervision of Xining Customs, marking the zone's launch of operations.

Covering 92.4 hectares, the zone is so far home to five companies.

The establishment of the zone, ratified by the State Council in December 2019, is important for promoting the development of an open economy in Qinghai, local authorities said.

The province is located at the crossroads of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Silk Road Economic Belt, and serves as an important reserve of strategic resources and base of specialty agricultural products in China.

New Fleet

The 40th fleet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy set out from a military port in the city of Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, on January 15 to conduct an escort mission in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia.

The fleet is composed of the guided-missile destroyer *Hohhot*, the missile frigate

Yueyang, and the supply ship *Luomahu*, with dozens of special-operation soldiers and two helicopters on board.

In preparation for the mission, the fleet conducted training on the use of weapons, on counter-terrorism and anti-piracy, as well as on replenishment at sea.

The PLA Navy began conducting escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia in December 2008.

Women and Children's Welfare

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has issued two plans to promote the high-quality development of women and children through 180 welfare measures spanning 15 fields, local authorities said on January 14.

The plans aim to promote the coordinated development of women and children from urban and rural regions, and from different areas and groups, and protect the rights and interests of those with special difficulties, said Wang Lixia, deputy director of the regional working committee on children and women.

"These plans integrate the region's goals and objectives for the development of women and children with its overall



New Calves

A wild Asian elephant calf and its parent are seen at the Wild Elephant Valley in the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve in Yunnan Province on January 6. Six new baby Asian elephants have recently been spotted in the park, indicating the endangered animal's population is growing steadily.

economic and social planning," Wang added.

In recent years, the rights of women and children in Xinjiang have been further protected, and their health conditions have continued to improve.

The maternal mortality rate in the region dropped from 39.45 per 100,000 in 2011 to

7.89 per 100,000 in 2020. By 2020, women in the region's urban areas accounted for 45.11 percent of the total newly employed.

Gender discrimination in the workplace has been largely eliminated in the region, with employment channels for women further expanded.



Back on Track

Residents of Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province, line up to buy food on January 17. Life is back on track in some parts of the city as the number of new locally-transmitted COVID-19 cases remained in the single digits for a sixth consecutive day on January 16.

Rate Cut

The People's Bank of China (PBC) on January 17 lowered the interest rate of 700 billion yuan (\$110 billion) worth of one-year medium-term lending facility (MLF) to financial institutions to 2.85 percent, compared with 2.95 percent on the previous operation.

The MLF tool was introduced in 2014 to help commercial and policy banks maintain liquidity by allowing them to borrow from the central bank using securities as collateral.

"The PBC will use multiple monetary policy tools to maintain liquidity at a reasonable and ample level, ensure stable credit growth, and guide financial institutions to increase the credit supply so as to ensure the money supply and social financing expansion will match the nominal economic growth rate," Liu Guoqiang, Deputy Governor of the PBC, said at a press conference on January 18.

Transportation Plan

High-speed railways will stretch to a total length of 50,000 km in 2025, up from 38,000 km in 2020. The figure was revealed in a plan released by the State Council, which outlines major targets for transportation network development during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

The country will have 165,000 km of railway in 2025, up from 146,000 km five years earlier; more than 270 civil airports, up from 241; 10,000 km of subway lines in cities, up from 6,600 km; 190,000 km of expressway, up from 161,000 km; and 18,500 km of high-level inland waterways, up from 16,100 km.

The transportation system will also be greener. Cities will see 72 percent of buses running on new energy, an improvement from 66.2 percent, and carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation sector will decrease by 5 percent.

According to the plan, the main goal is to achieve integrated development in 2025, with tangible breakthroughs in the intelligent and green transformation of the transportation system.

Charitable Trust

The charitable trust industry saw rapid growth in 2021, with its property size growing 32.48 percent from a year earlier, according to an industry report released on January 18.

A total of 227 charitable trusts were established last year, with the value of property covered reaching 571 million yuan (\$90 million), said the report, which was jointly released by the China Charity Alliance and the China Trustee Association.

By the end of last year, the country's 773 registered charitable trusts together managed 3.94 billion yuan (\$620 million).

The number of trustees

also maintained an uptrend, the report said.

Digital Yuan

Digital yuan transactions hit nearly 87.57 billion yuan (\$13.78 billion) at the end of 2021, as China ramped up research and pilot use of the central bank digital currency, also known as digital currency electronic payment or e-CNY.

A total of 261 million personal wallets for the digital yuan had been opened, and the number of pilot scenarios had exceeded 8.08 million, Zou Lan, an official with the PBC, said at a press conference on January 18.

Zou said the central bank would continue promoting research and development of the digital fiat currency, and further increase its pilot use in retail business, government services and other scenarios.

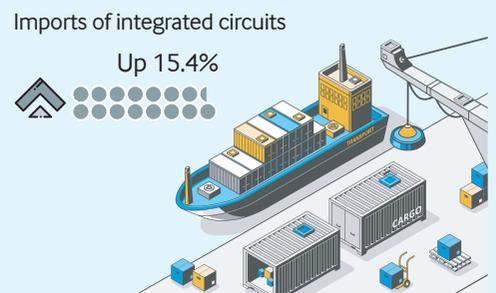
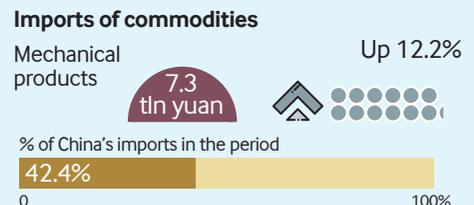
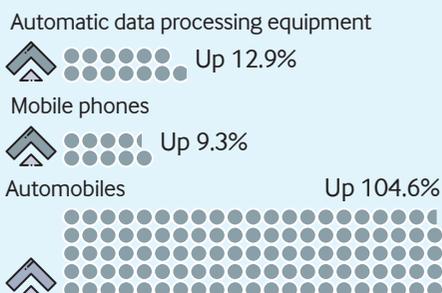
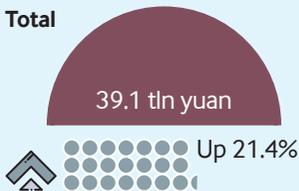
China's studies of the central bank digital currency began in

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.34 yuan)

China's Foreign Trade in 2021

(All changes are y.o.y.)



2014, followed by research and development cooperation with commercial banks and Internet companies in 2017.

Exhibition Industry

The exhibition industry saw rapid expansion in 2021 despite severe challenges posed by COVID-19 to offline events across the world, according to a recent report from the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Incomplete statistics showed 2,949 economic and trade exhibitions took place in China last year, jumping 48.6 percent year on year. They covered a total area of 92.99 million square meters, rising 27.2 percent from the previous year, the report said.

Shanghai Municipality and Guangdong Province remained the top two localities in terms of both number of exhibitions and area covered, with their respective exhibition areas exceeding 15

million square meters.

As the shift from offline to digital modes is accelerating, many Chinese exhibitions combined both online and offline activities to help domestic and overseas companies better expand international trade channels, the report concluded.

Listed Firms

As of the end of November 2021, there were 4,640 companies listed on China's A-share market, up 479 from the beginning of the year, according to a recent industry report from the China Association for Public Companies. The association forecasts that the number will top 5,000 in August this year.

The total value of listed companies also expanded steadily. The number of companies with a value of over 100 billion yuan (\$15.74 billion) stood at 154, reaching a five-year high, the report said.

Ford Project

Ford Motor Co. opened a new design center in Shanghai on January 17, a move considered an important step in the U.S. automaker's plan to increase investment in the Chinese market.

With world-class facilities, including a full-size clay model workshop, it is the only full-function automotive design center in downtown Shanghai.

The company said it will use the latest technology to create future products that cater to the demands of Chinese consumers and at the same time lead global trends.

The opening of this world-class design center is the latest driver behind Ford China's continued brand transformation, according to Anning Chen, Group Vice President of Ford Motor Co. and President and CEO of Ford China.

Last year, Ford sold nearly 625,000 vehicles in China, up

3.7 percent year on year, with its Lincoln brand recording the best annual sales since entering the market.

Investment Record

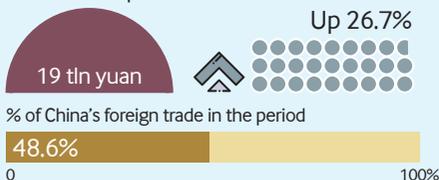
China remains a highly attractive investment destination, with its technology startups drawing a record amount of venture funding last year, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on January 13.

In 2021, venture capital investors put \$129 billion into more than 5,300 startups in the country, higher than the market's last record of around \$115 billion in 2018, it said, citing data from Preqin, a platform for private equity and hedge fund data.

According to the report, unlike in previous years, when most Chinese tech funding went to startups in e-commerce, the bulk of investment in 2021 went to areas such as semiconductors, biotechnology and information technology.

Imports and exports

Private enterprises



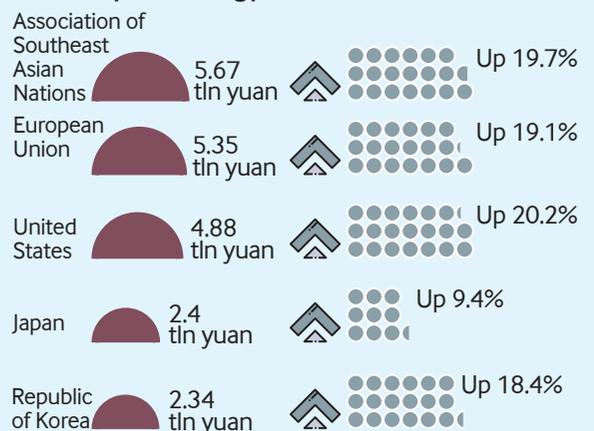
State-owned enterprises



Foreign-funded enterprises



China's top five trading partners



(Source: General Administration of Customs of China)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



TONGA

People clear ash and rubble in the capital city of Nuku'alofa on January 20, after a volcanic eruption and ensuing disasters, including a tsunami, ravaged the remote island nation on January 15



MADAGASCAR

People walk along a flooded street in the capital of Antananarivo on January 19. Ten people died after heavy rainfall hit the city and its neighboring areas



EUROPEAN UNION

Roberta Metsola (center) from Malta attends the European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg, France, on January 18, where she was elected president of the EU lawmaking body



GREECE

A Rafael fighter jet lands at the Tanagra airbase on January 19. Greece received the first six of 24 warplanes it has ordered from French aircraft manufacturer Assault Aviation that day



THE PHILIPPINES

People ride the bus in Quezon City on January 17. The Philippines grapples with a fourth wave of COVID-19 infections as cases surged to record highs over January



AUSTRALIA

A coin and stamps for the Year of the Tiger displayed at a Sydney post office on January 13. As the Chinese New Year approaches, the Australia Post issued a celebratory new set of memorabilia

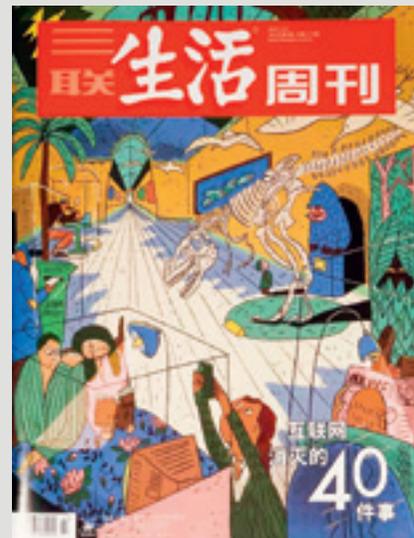
THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

ARTIST LAUDED FOR SPREADING OLYMPIC SPIRIT

The International Olympic Committee awarded the Pierre de Coubertin medal to **Cui Jingzhe** in Beijing on January 18 for the Chinese artist's efforts in spreading the Olympic spirit through art.

Cui, 41, who is also the art director of the *Cheer for the Olympics* series of cultural exhibits, is known for his magnificent paintings of ancient ladies dressed in striking red dresses. During Beijing's bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games 2022, and after it eventually became the host city, he has carried forward the Olympic spirit through his art, deeply integrating traditional Chinese culture and Olympic elements to present the world with China's understanding of the Games and its winter sports culture.

The medal was inaugurated in 1997 and named in honor of Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, to recognize those who promote the Olympic spirit. Cui is the youngest artist to have received the honor.



Genuine Data

Guangming Daily
January 14

Chinese colleges have recently released their reports on employment rates of fresh graduates in 2021. The Central China Normal University (CCNU) report stands out—20 percent failed to secure a job by the time they left school.

CCNU is among the nation's top universities. Yet given employment rates of well below 80 percent, it strikes a stark contrast with the much higher figures of 97 percent, or up, announced by most universities, which are actually painting a rather

distorted picture.

Schools tend to inflate their employment rates because a good performance record warrants bigger inputs from education authorities, as well as a good reputation. Nevertheless, the inflated rates do not help students. Schools in actual need of supportive policies to ramp up their employment rates will thus lose out on the potential benefits, making it even harder for graduates to secure a job. In this sense, CCNU's truthful practice has set an example for other universities to follow.

Smart Thinking

Lifeweek
January 17

The past two years have seen the rapid progress of remote working. Science and technology again came to the rescue. Despite the various difficulties the COVID-19 pandemic posed to real life, overall, human society and the economy are operating as normal, or even at a higher rate and lower costs.

When smart technology makes instant communication highly convenient,

“There are still 1 billion people in China who have never been on a plane, more than 200 million households that do not have flush toilets, and only 4 percent of Chinese people have a bachelor's degree or above, compared with 25 percent in the U.S. These are the issues that we should attach great importance to and strive to change.

Instead of fixating on whether our GDP can surpass that of the U.S., we care more about whether we could do better in terms of our thoughts and ideas, governance capacity and contributions to the world. What we pursue, is to be more advanced, to be in line with people's expectations, and to follow the tide of the times.”

Vice Foreign Minister **Le Yucheng** in a speech at the opening ceremony of the Macro Situation Annual Forum in Beijing on January 18

it's not necessarily leading daily life in a more comfortable direction. Digital devices make every spot a working spot and every moment a working one.

Social media does help some battle loneliness and others kill time, but the public finds it more difficult to concentrate on one particular thing, often accompanied by varying degrees of anxiety.

If history has taught us one thing, it is that the arrival of a new medium proves to be of game-changing significance. Radio dominated the 1920s, thanks to its power of spreading big news far and wide; in the 1950s, television took up the mantle. Yet their penetration into people's lives was no match for that of social media. In the digital era, media is no longer simply a tool to gather information, but it has become the world we live in. Take China's top multipurpose platform WeChat, for example. Not only can you communicate via the platform, you can also make payments. Meanwhile, people's ideas are more likely to be manipulated by the influx of various voices on social media. Digitalization wields great influence on society by large. For people to figure out how to adapt to this change for the better today proves more important than ever.

Green Express Delivery

People's Daily
January 17

The vast size of express delivery imposes a huge pressure on the environment, as annual packaging waste has now far surpassed 10 million tons. How to turn the packaging green and clean is now a matter of urgency.

The government has already worked out a green revolution blueprint for delivery packaging, with quantitative targets set for the 2022-25 period. Recyclable packaging is a priority for the delivery sector, but in real life, such packaging is

rare. Seldom do shops offer these wrappings and rarely are consumers aware of any recycling bins in their vicinity.

The express delivery sector is exploring standardized green packaging, but the toughest issue is the high cost. If the current packing materials were to be wholly replaced by biodegradable materials, this would entail an additional cost of 18.8 billion yuan (\$2.96 billion) for the entire sector, based on the 2020 delivery scope.

Scientific innovation to cut packaging costs is key to accelerating the green pace; raising consumer awareness toward environmental protection is equally important.

↓ FORMER VICE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY FACES PROSECUTION

Sun Lijun, 53, former Vice Minister of Public Security, is facing prosecution for taking bribes, manipulating the stock market and illegal possession of guns.

Sun used the convenience of his past positions to seek benefits for others and unlawfully accept extremely large amounts of money and properties. He manipulated the securities market and violated gun management regulations by illegal possession of guns, according to the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

He took money in different forms to build up and consolidate his own power and that of his political clique. For example, the amount of money he got from Wang Like, former Vice Governor of Jiangsu Province, is more than 90 million yuan (\$14 million).

Aside from Wang's bribes, Sun also accepted huge amounts of cash, expensive watches, gold and silver jewelry, high-end mobile phones, teas, wines, and other items from others.



“Both the Olympic spirit championed by the Games and the Shanghai Spirit upheld by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization depict the concentric circles of different civilizations and provide a bond of common values for the realization of broad unity among members of the international community which should be inherited and carried forward.”

Zhang Ming, Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, at a China-SCO-Eurasia Youth Leaders Dialogue on January 18

“China's vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity is the blueprint for peaceful, harmonious and prosperous global development.”

Thong Mengdavid, research fellow with the Phnom Penh-based Asian Vision Institute, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency



COVER STORY

IN TWILIGHT, SHINE BRIGHT

Dancing and learning, China's senior citizens enjoy their golden years in youthful ways By Lu Yan