

OPINION: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR P.29 | FEATURES: XIAMEN'S YOUNG PROWESS P.38

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## GO FOR GROWTH

Economy dominates annual political sessions



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Cover Photo: The First Session of the 14th National People's Congress opens in Beijing on March 5 (XINHUA)

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## Setting the Bar

Around 5 percent—this is the GDP growth target set by the government work report delivered at the opening meeting of the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress on March 5. The report also proposed targets of creating 12 million new urban jobs, maintaining the surveyed urban unemployment rate at around 5.5 percent and keeping the growth of the consumer price index at around 3 percent.

The projected target, higher than last year's GDP growth of 3 percent, is roughly on par with the country's average growth rate over the past five years, which stood at 5.2 percent. To complete the goals put forward in the Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, a major policy document explaining China's strategic intentions and guiding plus regulating market entities, China must maintain a reasonable growth rate and prevent risks at the same time.

The annual GDP growth target should be set in line with the specific situation each year and focus on achieving sustainable, healthy economic

development with improved quality and efficiency. The 5-percent target for 2023 is consistent with China's growth potential and means to ensure a stable economic performance and help create adequate employment opportunities. It is neither too fast nor too slow.

Since China adjusted its COVID-19 response policies in December last year, the Chinese economy has been ridding itself of the pandemic impact. Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that in January, the purchasing managers' index for the manufacturing sector bounced back to 50.1, above the 50-point mark, which represents expansion. Building on this positive momentum, China is set to meet its annual target.

The international community is also confident about China's growth. In its latest World Economic Outlook report, published on January 31, the International Monetary Fund raised its forecast for the country's economic growth in 2023 to 5.2 percent, 0.8 percentage points higher than its forecast in October last year. This projection is higher than that of most other major economies, a sign China will continue to serve as a powerhouse in the global economy. **BR**



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## POWERED UP

A view of the photovoltaic power station in Dalad Banner, Erdos, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China, on March 3.

Located in the eastern part of the Kubuqi Desert, the seventh largest desert in China, the power base has been constructed with an installed capacity of 1 million kilowatts, generating about 2 billion kWh of electricity per year.

The base has realized the utilization of clean energy while making sustainable use of the desert environment.



## A Highflyer

Staff members check a themed plane in the lead-up to the Third China International Consumer Products Expo at Meilan International Airport in Haikou, Hainan Province, on March 7. The expo will take place in Haikou from April 11-15. The major event provides a platform for the display and trading of consumer goods from China and abroad.

## Travel Time

Immigration authorities across China had handled 39.722 million exits and entries since January 8 as of March 7, up 112.4 percent year on year, the National Immigration Administration (NIA) said on March 8.

China started managing COVID-19 as a Class B infectious disease on January 8.

NIA statistics showed that over 1.01 million exit and entry trips were recorded on February 25, the first single-day figure exceeding 1 million since 2020.

The number of inbound and outbound trips made by various means of transportation totaled 2.487 million in the same period, a year-on-year increase of 59.3

percent, the NIA said.

Immigration authorities across China issued over 3.36 million passports; over 12.67 million certificates for travel between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan; and 122,000 visas, stay permits and residence permits for foreign nationals; up 1,220.9 percent, 837.7 percent and 33.1 percent, respectively, compared with the figures before China adjusted its COVID-19 management.

## Power Grid Project

Construction of a high-cost 750-kilovolt ultra-high voltage power transmission and electrical substation project in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in

northwest China got underway on March 7, the regional power supplier has announced.

The project has a total investment of 4.62 billion yuan (\$662.97 million), the largest single investment in any power grid project in the region.

It will be built in Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, and enter operation in 2025, according to the state-owned electric utility corporation State Grid's Xinjiang branch.

The project is expected to promote the interconnection of power grids in Xinjiang and its neighboring province Qinghai, supply power to a railroad connecting the two provincial-level regions and boost energy storage.

## Senior Campus

China's senior citizens will have the opportunity to continue their education at a national-level university from the 2023 spring semester onward.

The establishment of the Seniors University of China (SUC) for the elderly is a concrete measure to address population aging in China and an important milestone in the reform and development of education for the elderly, Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng said at the inauguration ceremony on March 3.

The university provides students with courses on skills training, cultural heritage, social services, scientific research and international exchanges, and offers seniors nationwide both online and offline courses.

The SUC has fostered a national public service platform for elderly education, featuring 407,000 courses totaling 3.973 million minutes, offering high-quality resources to educational institutions for seniors across the country.

According to the university, people aged 50 and above can register online to enjoy free online courses. They can access the teaching platform via the website [lndx.edu.cn](http://lndx.edu.cn), a related app as well as its Weixin mini program, a sub-application within the ecosystem of China's ubiquitous super app.

As stated above, the university also provides offline courses. At one of its campuses in Beijing's Haidian District, enrollment is underway for this year's spring semester, with 44 courses offered by six colleges. Registration started on March 3 and courses will start on March 20.

According to a document released by the State Council in August last year, the country aims to establish at least one

university for senior citizens in every county-level region by 2025.

## New Air Route

China's Suparna Airlines has launched a new cargo air service linking the city of Nantong in Jiangsu Province with Leipzig in Germany.

On March 2, a Boeing 747 freighter of Suparna Airlines landed at Nantong Xingdong International Airport, marking the completion of the first round-trip between Nantong and Leipzig.

It is Nantong's first regular intercontinental all-cargo air route, with one or two weekly flights.

The freighter carried 115 tons of commodities worth over 30 million yuan (\$4.3 million) during the first round-trip.

In recent years, Nantong has opened eight international all-cargo air routes reaching 10 destinations, including Hanoi, Incheon, Tokyo, Osaka and Singapore.

## Social Order

China effectively curbed serious violent crimes and crimes related to guns, explosives and drugs over the past five years, a work report of the Supreme People's Procuratorate said.

No fewer than 814,000

people were prosecuted over such crimes during the period, a drop of 31.7 percent from the previous five years, the report, submitted for deliberation on March 7 to the national legislative session, said.

In particular, the number of prosecutions over homicide, arson, illegal use of explosives, kidnap, robbery and theft in 2022 fell to the lowest level in nearly two decades, the report said, adding the declines point to a continuous improvement in the country's social order.

This has brought the people a strong sense of security, the top procuratorate said.

## Hugo Awards Nominations

Nominations are open for the 2023 Chengdu World Science Fiction Convention (WorldCon) Hugo Awards, the organizing committee of the convention said on March 1.

The Hugo Award is an annual literary award for the best science fiction or fantasy works and achievements of the previous year, extended at the WorldCon and chosen by its members. The Hugo is widely considered the leading award in science fiction.

The nominations cover 19 categories, including 17 Hugo



## All Hail the Queen

A spinning top competition in celebration of International Women's Day (on March 8) is in full swing in Renliang Village of Dahua Yao Autonomous County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on March 5.

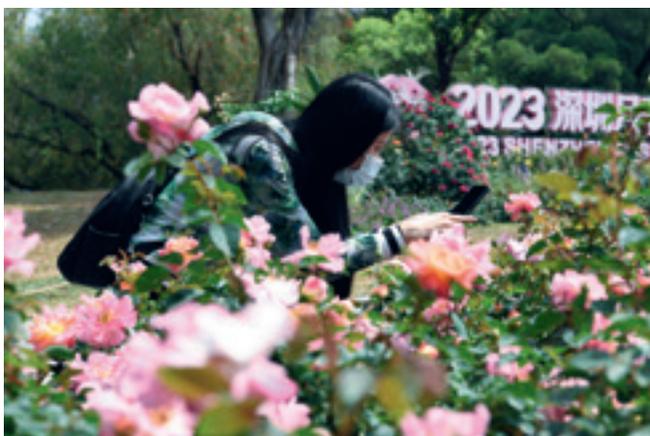
award categories such as Best Novel, Best Novella, Best Novelette and Best Short Story, and two other award categories—Lodestar Award for Best Young Adult Book and Astounding Award for Best New Writer, according to the selection committee.

Nominations for the awards will remain open until 4:59 p.m. on May 1. The shortlist for the awards is expected to be

announced in late May.

The convention, organized by the World Science Fiction Society, has taken place annually since 1939 (except during World War II from 1942 to 1945).

Chengdu has made great efforts in recent years to develop its sci-fi culture industry and establish itself as China's science fiction town. It was selected to host the 2023 WorldCon in December 2021.



## A Pretty Picture

A visitor snaps some floral shots at a flower expo inside a park in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, on March 8.

# THIS WEEK ECONOMY

## Forex Reserves

China's foreign exchange (forex) reserves came in at more than \$3.13 trillion at the end of February, according to the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

The U.S. dollar index increased and the prices of global financial assets generally fell that month, affected by global macroeconomic data and monetary policy expectations of major economies. China's forex reserves fell due to the combined effects of currency translation and asset price changes, according to the administration.

Forex reserves are expected to remain generally stable thanks to China's efforts to promote steady economic recovery and high-quality development, as well as the great potential and impetus for the development of the Chinese economy, it added.

## Trade in Goods

China's exports of goods rose 0.9 percent year on year during the

first two months of the year to 3.5 trillion yuan (\$502.6 billion), hitting a new high, official data showed on March 7.

The country's foreign trade of goods edged down 0.8 percent year on year to 6.18 trillion yuan (\$887.4 billion) in the same period, according to the General Administration of Customs of China. Imports of goods stood at 2.68 trillion yuan (\$384.8 billion) in the period, down 2.9 percent year on year.

Trade surplus hit 810.32 billion yuan (\$116.4 billion) in the period, jumping 16.2 percent year on year, the data showed.

In the first two months, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) remained China's largest trading partner. Bilateral trade rose 9.6 percent year on year to 951.93 billion yuan (\$136.7 billion), accounting for 15.4 percent of the country's total.

Imports and exports with countries along the Belt and Road routes climbed 10.1 percent

year on year to 2.12 trillion yuan (\$304.4 billion), driving the overall foreign trade growth up by 3.1 percentage points in the first two months.

The country's trade with other members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership rose 3.1 percent during the same period.

In the first two months, imports and exports of private enterprises went up 5.3 percent year on year to 3.16 trillion yuan (\$453.8 billion), accounting for 51.2 percent of the country's total.

Imports and exports of central and western regions surged 12.1 percent year on year in the first two months, accounting for 19.2 percent of the overall trade volume, the data also showed.

## Road Logistics

The road logistics price index went up in February amid a sound recovery of the transportation sector, industry data showed.

The index came in at 103.4 that month, up 5.2 percent year on year, according to a survey jointly conducted by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing and Guangdong Lin'an Logistics Group.

It attributed the price growth to the stronger vitality of market entities and better market supply and demand as the country's economic operation continuously improved.

The survey was also upbeat about the future performance of the sector, emphasizing the further expansion of domestic demand amid China's strong economic rebound.

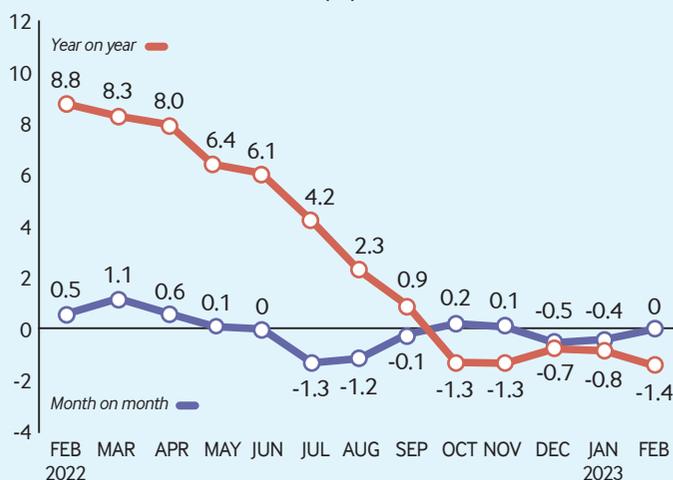
## National Standards

China had established more than 42,000 national standards as of late 2022, data from the State Administration for Market Regulation showed.

By the end of last year, more than 78,000 industry standards, more than 62,000 local standards, and over 2.6 million

# NUMBERS

China's Producer Price Index Growth (%)



China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth (%)



enterprise standards had been put on record in the country, the data showed.

China will align domestic standards for major consumer goods with international ones, develop quality classification standards for household appliances, furniture and clothing, and promote the formulation of standards in the fields of cosmetics and sports equipment, according to the administration.

More efforts will go into the formulation of food quality standards for healthcare products and enhance their coordination with national food safety standards, it added.

## Green Hotels

According to a report released by the China Hospitality Association, the country currently features over 1,500 green hotels.

Green hotels refer to accommodation that adheres to green management, advocates green consumption, protects the ecol-

ogy and rationally uses natural resources.

China's accommodation and food and beverage industries made progress in addressing food and beverage waste and promoting green consumption in 2022 despite the impact of COVID-19, the report said.

Compared to traditional hotels, last year, green hotels saved an average 15 percent of electricity and 10 percent of water, and their revenues increased by 12.08 percent, the report showed.

## China-Europe Freight Trains

Erenhot Port in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China has logged over 500 China-Europe freight trains so far this year, local railway authorities said on March 6.

Since the beginning of the year, in the face of continuously increasing transportation demand and strong growth in imports and exports, the Erenhot

Port has opened a "green channel" for the operation of China-Europe freight trains, resulting in a 20-percent increase in the capacity of container transportation for the service, Qin Zhicang from the China Railway Hohhot Bureau Group Co. Ltd. said.

The Erenhot Port is the largest land port between China and Mongolia, through which 64 China-Europe freight train routes link China with more than 60 regions of over 10 countries, including Germany, Poland and Mongolia.

## 5G Base Stations

China will have built over 2.9 million 5G base stations by the end of 2023, Minister of Industry and Information Technology Jin Zhuanglong said on March 5.

The country plans to add around 600,000 such stations this year and expand the coverage of 5G services in rural areas and industrial parks, Jin told journalists on the sidelines of the Two Sessions, the annual

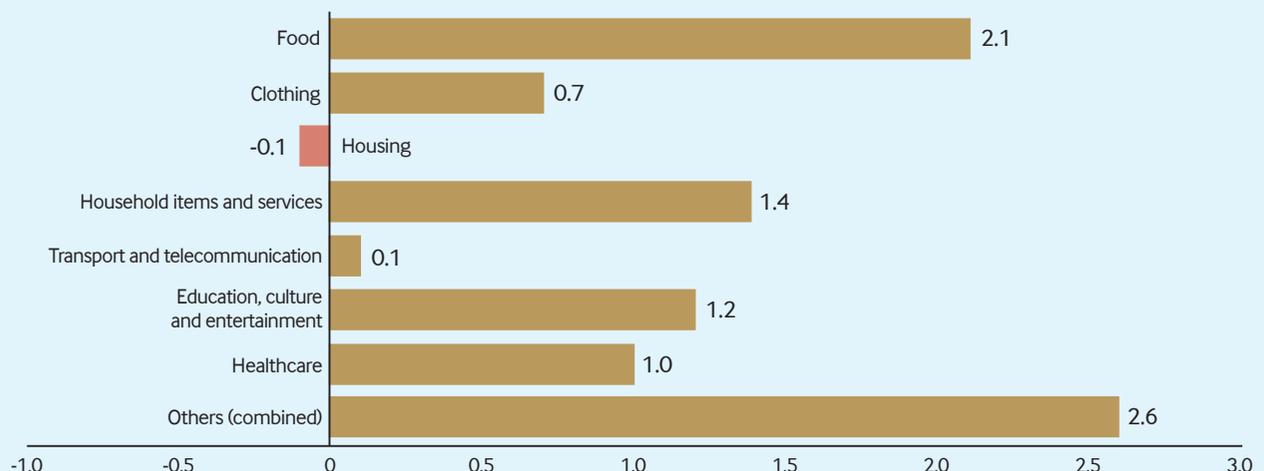
meetings of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference that ran from March 4 to 13 this year.

China now has over 2.34 million 5G base stations and the number of 5G cellphone users has surpassed 575 million, according to Jin, noting that 5G technologies are widely applied in the economy, most prominently in the sectors of mining, power supply and trunk jetliner production.

Jin said efforts will be made to promote the industrial application of 5G, especially in manufacturing, with plans to build more than 10,000 5G-enabled factories during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

Research and development of 6G wireless technologies will also accelerate, drawing on the advantages of China's super-large market and full-fledged industrial system, Jin added.

China's CPI Growth by Type  
February (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



## BANGLADESH

Rescue personnel work at the site of a massive explosion inside a commercial building in Dhaka on March 7. At least 16 people died in the blast, with many more injured



## NEPAL

Revelers smeared with *gula* or colored powder take selfies during the celebration of Holi, a festival that marks the arrival of spring, at Patan Durbar Square in Lalitpur on March 6



## UNITED NATIONS

Secretary General António Guterres addresses the opening of the 67th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women at the UN headquarters in New York on March 6, calling for more action to close gender gaps in science, technology and innovation





## ITALY

A visitor holding a sign reading "But I like it!" sits next to Grouchy Smurf, one of the main characters in *The Smurfs* comic book series, in Bologna on March 7 at the 60th Bologna Children's Book Fair. The event ran from March 6 to 9



## UNITED STATES

Federal Reserve (Fed) Chair Jerome Powell appears before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee in Washington, D.C. on March 7 as part of his semiannual monetary policy testimony before Congress. He said the Fed would have to raise rates to higher levels if the incoming economic data remained strong



## GERMANY

The Mexico booth at the ITB Berlin travel trade show, the largest of its kind in the world, in Berlin on March 7—the show's opening day. The fair concluded on March 9



## ↓ RACE WALKER SETS NEW RECORD

Race walker **He Xianghong**, 24, dominated the men's 35-km race and improved the Asian record by 20 seconds during the opening leg of the Chinese National Race Walk Grand Prix, held in Huangshan, Anhui Province, on March 4.

He maintained a fast and steady pace throughout the race and continued to extend his lead before wrapping up the overwhelming victory in two hours, 22 minutes and 55 seconds. His winning time not only shattered his own national record of 2:24:45, but also beat the Asian record of 2:23:15, set by Japan's Masatora Kawano at the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon, the U.S., and is 19 seconds faster than Italian world champion Massimo Stano's winning time at that event.

He's win was selected by World Athletics, the international governing body for the sport of athletics, as one of the world's best performances of the week from February 27 to March 5.



## Sustainable Growth

**People's Daily**  
March 2

Plastic pollution is a major challenge facing the globe and fast-growing, renewable and biodegradable bamboo is rising as a greener alternative in multiple fields, including packaging, architecture, transportation and chemical engineering.

The extremely versatile material can be used for just about anything. A bamboo straw never gets soggy in liquid as paper straws often do. Advanced bamboo winding technologies are now used to produce highly elastic and durable pipelines. The incredible stability of bamboo

flooring makes it an ideal component of shipping containers.

Home to the world's richest bamboo resources and most developed bamboo industry, China has closely worked with the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization to launch and promote the Bamboo as a Substitute for Plastic Initiative, an action plan that encourages countries to address climate change by replacing plastic with bamboo.

Despite its many wonderful abilities, bamboo is yet to be widely accepted as the best alternative to plastic. The bamboo industry should focus on building up core technologies, which will then help produce a new breed of affordable and high-quality bamboo products.



## A Big Ship for a Big Market

**China Newsweek**  
December 20

China is counting down to the debut of its first large, domestically made cruise ship, the H1508, a 135,500-ton vessel that will undock in May and embark on its first trial voyage in July. Extremely complex in their construction, large cruise ships are known as one of the three "pearls in the crown" of the shipbuilding industry, alongside aircraft carriers and liquefied natural gas carriers. The completion of the H1508 will be a critical moment in China's endeavor to establish an independent shipbuilding industry.

Large cruise ships are a sector long

"We're witnessing ongoing progress in the number of women in politics this year, which is encouraging. However, we still have a long way to go to reach gender equality when we see the current rates of growth."

**Martin Chungong**, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as the IPU and the UN Women jointly released a report on women in politics on March 7

"Let's unite a divided world with a COP of solidarity, a COP of action and a COP for all."

**Sultan Al Jaber**, President-Designate of the UN's COP28 climate conference to take place in the United Arab Emirates in November, in a keynote address at the CERWeek on March 6

ruled by European shipyards and only entered China in 2006, the year in which the *Costa Allegra*, a cruise liner owned by the Italy-based giant, Costa Cruises, first arrived in Shanghai. The following decade saw astounding growth in the country's cruise market, as a bevy of international cruise lines, some even custom-designed for Chinese customers, targeted the country's coastal cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin, and Xiamen, which have all constructed their own home ports.

As of now, China has become the second largest market for cruise tourism, next only to the United States. The surge in domestic consumer demand has pushed the country to build its own large cruise ship, a project that officially began in 2013. To bring this gigantic vessel to life, engineers from China State Shipbuilding Corporation, a conglomerate of Chinese shipbuilders, have accomplished a major technological overhaul of the entire production process, from initial design to manufacturing and finally to cruise line management and operations.

Hopes are high that the ship's debut will help drive the country's maritime economy by bringing positive changes to not only ship and home port construction, but also sectors such as retail, hotels and entertainment.

## On Track

### *Economic Daily* March 5

After three long years of absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marathon events have finally returned to China, with many cities recently announcing their race schedules.

The marathon is no longer just a sports event, but a market that integrates sectors including food and beverages, accommodation and sportswear. New sportswear brands fueled by cutting-edge technologies and sophisticated designs are constantly reshaping the apparel industry and breaking the boundaries between function and fashion. The increasing popularity

of marathon events has also spurred the rapid growth of the souvenir industry, as collecting souvenir medals and trophies has become a fashionable hobby among professional and amateur runners alike.

Winding through many of the world's famous sights and wonders, marathon races are one of the best advertisements for their host cities. Many Chinese cities seeking to bring tourists back have created culturally distinct routes that take participants through some of their most spectacular sceneries. Some cities have further pushed the envelope by organizing creative running events such as the breakfast run, a warm-up run prior to the big race that always concludes with hearty breakfasts featuring local delicacies.

## ↓ PIONEER RESEARCHER IN RADAR DIES AT 84

**Wang Xiaomo**, one of China's most renowned radar researchers and known as the father of China's early warning aircraft, passed away on March 6.

Born in Shanghai in 1938, Wang graduated from the Radio Engineering Department of the Beijing Institute of Technology in 1961, before beginning his career as a radar designer.

From the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, Wang focused on the research and development of the country's first domestic early warning aircraft system. He was the chief designer of the ZDK03, the first Chinese early warning aircraft specifically developed for export.

In 2013, Wang, also a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, received the State Scientific and Technological Award, the highest honor for Chinese science and technology workers. He was also a deputy to the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, from 2003 to 2013.



“Many of these countries are very dependent on exports to China. That is why the Chinese economy's performance is strategic.”

**Eduardo Regalado**, a researcher with the International Policy Research Center of Cuba, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“The rise of China into a global economic powerhouse came to offset a long held notion that Western modernization was the epitome of global pursuits.”

**David Monyae**, Director of the Center for Africa-China Studies at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, in a recent interview with Xinhua



COVER STORY

# A BALANCED AGENDA

The Chinese path to modernization requires  
high-quality development By Ji Jing