

OPINION: BLINKEN'S BEIJING VISIT P.26 | FEATURES: VILLAGE SPORTS LEAGUES P.38

# BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.66 NO.26 JUNE 29, 2023

北方周末 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



**Building better lives together**

ISSN 1000-9140



邮发代号2-922 · 国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2

# Follow **CICG Americas**

And get in on the conversation



BeijingReview



BeijingReview



@BeijingReview



China Hoy



China Hoje



# CONTENTS

## EDITOR'S DESK

**02 Equity, Justice and Inclusiveness**

## THIS WEEK

### COVER STORY

**12 All Rights Matter**

Each country must set its own priorities

**16 Development Requires Diversity**

The center of all governance: people

**18 Human Rights and Whole-Process People's Democracy**  
American professor on China's actions and achievements

**20 A Common Approach To Security**  
Examining the Global Security Initiative

**22 Placing Rights Above Might**  
Human rights are not a tool for geopolitical gain

## OPINION

**26 A Bit of 'Progress' but More 'Wait and See'**  
Blinken's visit to Beijing

**28 Time to Get on the Ball**  
How to become a major player in the global sports arena

**29 Thriving on Peace**  
Contrasting approaches to major statehood

## FEATURES

**32 Pushing for Common Development**  
Chinese premier visits Germany and France

**34 Sprint to the Start Line**  
Hangzhou gears up to host the 19th Asian Games

**36 Countryside Calling Cards**  
Villages are upping the business stakes

**38 Think Global, Play Local**  
The expanding influence of village sports leagues

**40 The Capturer of Loveliness**  
Artist finds life's cute moments

**42 All Dolled Up**  
A traditional Beijing craft comes back to life

## CULTURE

**46 RV Boom**  
Expo promotes a new style of travel

## EXPAT'S EYE

**48 Huayi Homecoming**  
Cultural connection and an enhanced sense of self

Cover Design: Wang Yajuan

©2023 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.



[www.bjreview.com](http://www.bjreview.com)



amazon

Follow us on



YouTube

BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader



Please recycle



# EDITOR'S DESK



**BEIJINGREVIEW**

A News Weekly Magazine  
Published Since 1958

**President:** Li Yafang  
**Editor in Chief:** Li Jianguo  
**Associate Editor in Chief:** Liu Yanyun  
**Associate President:** Gao Dingbo

**Executive Editor:** Yan Wei  
**Production Director:** Yao Bin  
**Editor:** Wang Hairong  
**Researcher:** Lan Xinzhen  
**Editorial Consultants:** Elsbeth van Paridon, G.P. Wilson  
**Reporters:** Ji Jing, Kang Caiqi, Li Qing, Li Wenhao, Li Xiaoyang, Liang Xiao, Lu Yan, Ma Miaomiao, Pan Xiaoqiao, Peng Jiawei, Tang Yuanhai, Tao Xing, Tao Zhihui, Wang Jun, Wang Ruohan, Yuan Yuan, Zhang Shasha  
**Visual Director:** Pamela Tobey  
**Photographer:** Wei Yao  
**Art:** Li Shigong  
**Design Director:** Wang Yajuan  
**Chief Designer:** Cui Xiaodong  
**Designer and proofreader:** Zhao Boyu

**Editorial Administrator:** Zeng Wenhui  
**Planning Director:** Xu Bei  
**Deputy Planning Director:** Li Nan  
**World News Director:** Ding Ying  
**World News Deputy Director:** Li Fangfang  
**Director of Digital Media:** Yu Shujun  
**Director of Strategic Research:** Zhan Jifang  
**Deputy Director of Strategic Research:** Lu Ling

**Administration:** Zhang Yajie  
**International Cooperation:** Sun Xuan  
**Legal Counsel:** Yue Cheng

## North America Bureau (New York City)

**Chief:** Yu Shujun  
**Executive Assistant:** Zhao Wei  
**Tel/Fax:** 1-201-792-0334  
**E-mail:** yushujun@cicgamericas.com  
**Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)**  
**Chief:** Lin Yeqing  
**Tel:** 52-55-55127271  
**Fax:** 52-55-55332027  
**E-mail:** chinahoyun@gmail.com  
**Peru Office (Lima)**  
**Chief:** Meng Kexin  
**Tel:** 0051-959212702  
**E-mail:** revistachinaperu@gmail.com

## General Editorial Office

**Tel:** 86-10-68996252  
**Fax:** 86-10-68326628

## Editorial Desk

**Tel:** 86-10-68996250

## Partnerships

**Tel:** 86-10-68995807  
**E-mail:** yecong@cicgamericas.com

## Distribution

**Tel:** 86-10-68310644  
**E-mail:** circulation@cicgamericas.com

Published every Thursday by  
CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,  
Beijing 100037, China

**Overseas Distributor:** China International Book Trading  
Corporation (Guoji Shudian), P. O. BOX 399,  
Beijing 100044, China

**Tel:** 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)  
**Fax:** 86-10-68412166

**E-mail:** fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn

**Website:** <http://www.cibtc.com>

**General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:**  
Peace Book Co. Ltd.

17/FI, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK  
**Tel:** 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

*Beijing Review* (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is distributed weekly  
in the United States for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books,  
360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080  
News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,  
Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080

## Equity, Justice and Inclusiveness

Thirty years ago, delegates at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, overcame differences and adopted the landmark Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. While affirming the equality of all human rights, the document reiterates the right to development is an inalienable right and stronger international cooperation is a must.

The Forum on Global Human Rights Governance was held in Beijing on June 14-15 with the theme Equality, Cooperation and Development: the 30th Anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and Global Human Rights Governance. In a congratulatory letter to the forum, President Xi Jinping said China is ready to work with the rest of the world to act on the principles enshrined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, push for greater equity, justice, reason and inclusiveness in global human rights governance, promote the development of a community with a shared future for humanity and jointly build a better world.

Currently global human rights governance is facing severe challenges. A few countries use human rights as an excuse to interfere in the domestic affairs of oth-

ers, going so far as to weaponize them to curb other nations' development. China regards the rights to subsistence and development as the primary and basic human rights, and believes that living a life of contentment is the ultimate human right. It is also committed to advancing human rights in an all-round way, from economic, social, cultural and environmental rights to civil and political rights.

As the largest developing country in the world, China has been a supporter and promoter of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It advocates safeguarding human rights through security, promoting them through development and advancing them through cooperation.

China has taken an active part in global human rights governance as it works together with a wide variety of parties. Notably, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Civilizations Initiative, proposed by China with the core message that countries are interdependent, humanity has a shared future, and the international community must unite for collaboration, all have major implications for the protection and advancement of human rights. **BR**



## WRITE TO US

Send an e-mail: [editorsoffice@cicgamericas.com](mailto:editorsoffice@cicgamericas.com)

Please provide your name and address  
along with your submissions.  
Submissions may be edited.

CHINA.....RMB6.00 U.S.A.....USD1.70  
AUSTRALIA.....AUD3.00 UK.....GBP1.20  
CANADA.....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND.....CHF2.60  
JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90  
TURKEY.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位: 中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位: 中国外文局美洲传播中心(北京周报社)

地址: 北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编: 100037

编委会: 李雅芳 李建国 贺鹏 刘云云 高丁博 曾文卉

主任: 李雅芳

总编室电话: (010) 68996252 发行部电话: (010) 68310644

印刷: 北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2023年 第26期 ISSN 1000-9140

国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号: 2-922

广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证733号

国内零售价: 人民币6.00元





## ***SEPETIBA TO SAMBA!***

The China-assembled *SEPETIBA*, one of the world's largest FPSO (floating, production, storage and offloading) vessels, docks at a berth in Tianjin Municipality on June 12. The vessel was shipped to Brazil on June 16.

According to its general contractor, Tianjin BOMESC Offshore Engineering Co. Ltd., the vessel will be used for oil and gas extraction and external transportation at the Mero Oil Field in the Santos Basin located in the south Atlantic Ocean, some 300 km southeast of Santos, Brazil.



## Roaring Rowing Race

Rowers participate in a dragon boat race in Kunshan, Jiangsu Province in east China, on June 18 ahead of China's traditional Dragon Boat Festival, which fell on June 22 this year.

## New Medical Journal

*Pediatric Discovery*, an English-language pediatric academic journal, was launched in Chongqing Municipality in southwest China, on June 1.

Published by China's national clinical research center for child health and development, the peer-reviewed journal has an online open-access format. It offers a platform for researchers and professionals to exchange observations, studies and findings.

Chen Yaolong, co-editor in chief of the journal and executive director of the Institute of Health Data Science at Lanzhou University in northwest China's Gansu Province, said *Pediatric Discovery* will be an international pediatric journal that focuses on the health of children in China.

He Tongchuan, another co-editor in chief and director of the Molecular Oncology Laboratory

at the University of Chicago, the U.S., said that the journal will explore major scientific issues that may fundamentally affect the health of infants, children and adolescents.

Li Qiu, President of the Children's Hospital Affiliated with Chongqing Medical University, said the journal will guide pediatric researchers to better serve patients and promote pediatric research exchanges at home and abroad.

## Financial Support

Chinese authorities have called for better financial services to bolster rural revitalization and national strength in agriculture, Xinhua News Agency reported on June 16.

Financial institutions should make themselves available to meet grain producers' financing needs to help stabilize and

increase production, according to a guideline jointly released by five government departments, including the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, and the National Financial Regulatory Administration.

More credit and financing facilities should be developed to help cultivate high-standard farmland, build water conservancy infrastructure and advance breakthroughs in the seed industry and key agricultural technologies. The document further called on financial institutions to aid those areas and people lifted out of extreme poverty in recent years.

The guideline said the country will make monetary policy tools more practical in shoring up agriculture and strengthening coordination between fiscal and financial policies.

Official data showed that outstanding agricultural loans

stood at 53.16 trillion yuan (\$7.4 trillion) by late April, up 16.4 percent year on year.

## Youth Congress

The Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) convened its 19th national congress in Beijing on June 19-22.

President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, and some other leaders of the CPC and the state attended the opening to extend their congratulations.

Nearly 1,500 delegates, representing more than 73 million CYLC members, from across the country attended the congress.

On behalf of the 18th Central Committee of the CYLC, A Dong, a member of the standing committee of the presidium of the congress, made a report on the work concerning young people, covering strengthening theoretical and political guidance for the youth, and mobilizing young people to serve as a fresh driving force of Chinese modernization.

## Occupational Diseases

Newly reported cases of occupational diseases have dropped by 58 percent over the past decade in China, National Health Commission (NHC) official Wang Jiandong said at a press conference on June 15.

Newly reported cases of occupational pneumoconiosis, the general term for a class of lung disease where inhalation of dust causes interstitial fibrosis, have declined by 67 percent.

This marks notable progress in China's efforts to curb the spread of occupational diseases, the official said, though the situation remains severe given the country's rapid urbanization and industrialization.



The country's workforce aged 16 to 59 was estimated at 880 million in late 2022, data showed.

China's occupational health surveillance covered more than 95 percent of counties and districts nationwide, Zhang Meibian, an official with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said.

## Tibet Expo

The Fifth China Xizang Tourism and Culture Expo in Lhasa, capital of Tibet Autonomous Region, signed deals with a total value of over 53 billion yuan (\$7.4 billion) on 60 projects on June 17. According to China's phonetic system, Tibet is romanized as Xizang.

Seven strategic framework agreements were also signed at the expo, which opened on June 16.

The expo is one of the most important events on Tibet's cultural calendar. Nearly 1,000 businesses from home and abroad attended the event, bringing with them some 10,000 different products.

The three-day event featured exhibitions, a main forum and tourism marketing and investment promotional activities.

Co-hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the

regional government of Tibet, the expo previously took place in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018.

## Domestic Violence

The Supreme People's Court (SPC), China's top court, disclosed 10 typical judicial cases on June 15 as part of the country's efforts to protect victims of domestic violence.

The cases published by the SPC involved illegal acts, including intentional homicide and intentional injury as well as cases regarding divorce disputes.

In one intentional homicide case, a court judgment noted that individuals convicted of domestic violence crimes should not receive a lighter or mitigated punishment if their limited criminal responsibility is a result of self-inflicted behavior, e.g., alcohol consumption.

In another case in which a domestic violence victim was accused of intentional injury, a court judgment read that acts stopping ongoing violence in the family, as long as they are in line with the Criminal Law, can be justified as self-defense and exempted from criminal charges.

In recent years, Chinese courts have been working to



## Vrooming Along!

People visit the 27th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area International Auto Show at the Shenzhen Convention and Exhibition Center in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, on June 16. The auto show ran from June 16 to 24.

improve the system of laws and regulations relating to domestic violence.

In March 2015, the SPC and other authorities jointly issued China's first comprehensive judicial document on domestic violence, providing guidance for the handling of domestic violence crime cases in accor-

dance with the law.

In July 2022, the SPC issued judicial interpretations on personal safety protection orders, which further clarified the different forms of domestic violence and highlighted the timely protection of the rights and interests of domestic violence victims.



## Forest Forays

A band performs aboard a tourist train in Heilongjiang Province, northeast China, on June 18. Carrying about 200 passengers, the train left Harbin for China's "forest capital" of Yichun City in the same province. The train offers passengers a comfortable experience and magnificent views as it traverses a wide span of forests.

## Industrial Output

Value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, went up 3.5 percent year on year in May, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed.

The growth rate was 2.1 percentage points lower than that of April.

The industrial output is used to measure the activity of large enterprises each with an annual main business turnover of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million).

China's industrial production overcame the adverse factors of weak market demand and falling prices, and maintained its recovery momentum in May, NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui told a press conference on May 15.

The manufacturing sector's output increased 4.1 percent year on year during the period, while the production and supply of electricity, heat, gas and water rose 4.8 percent.

State-owned enterprises saw an increase of 4.4 percent in

output, while the private sector's output grew 0.7 percent, according to the NBS.

The production of solar cells and new-energy vehicles surged 53.1 and 43.6 percent year on year, respectively.

The country's industrial output rose 3.6 percent year on year from January to May.

## More Taxpayers

May saw the registration of 1.52 million new market entities handling tax-related business, an increase of 24.9 percent from the same period last year, data from the State Taxation Administration showed.

That month, newly registered companies numbered about 691,000, representing a rise of 27.1 percent year on year, while the number of new individual businesses stood at about 817,000, up 33.7 percent from a year ago.

In the first five months of this year, the number of new taxpaying market entities totaled nearly

6.44 million, up 15.5 percent year on year.

By late May, the number of taxpaying market entities stood at 86.92 million, up 7.5 percent year on year.

## Infrastructure REIT Listings

The Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock exchanges listed China's first group of four infrastructure real-estate investment trust (REIT) expansion projects on June 16. An REIT is a company that owns, operates or finances income-generating real estate.

The listings will help promote the improvement of refinancing in the REIT market, rationally expand effective investment and promote the high-quality development of infrastructure, the exchanges said.

The two stock exchanges said they will continue to promote the high-quality development of the infrastructure REIT market in accordance with the work requirements of the

China Securities Regulatory Commission to further promote the regular issuance of REITs.

In April 2020, China initiated a pilot scheme for infrastructure REITs to deepen supply-side structural reform in the financial sector and enhance the capital market's capabilities in supporting the real economy.

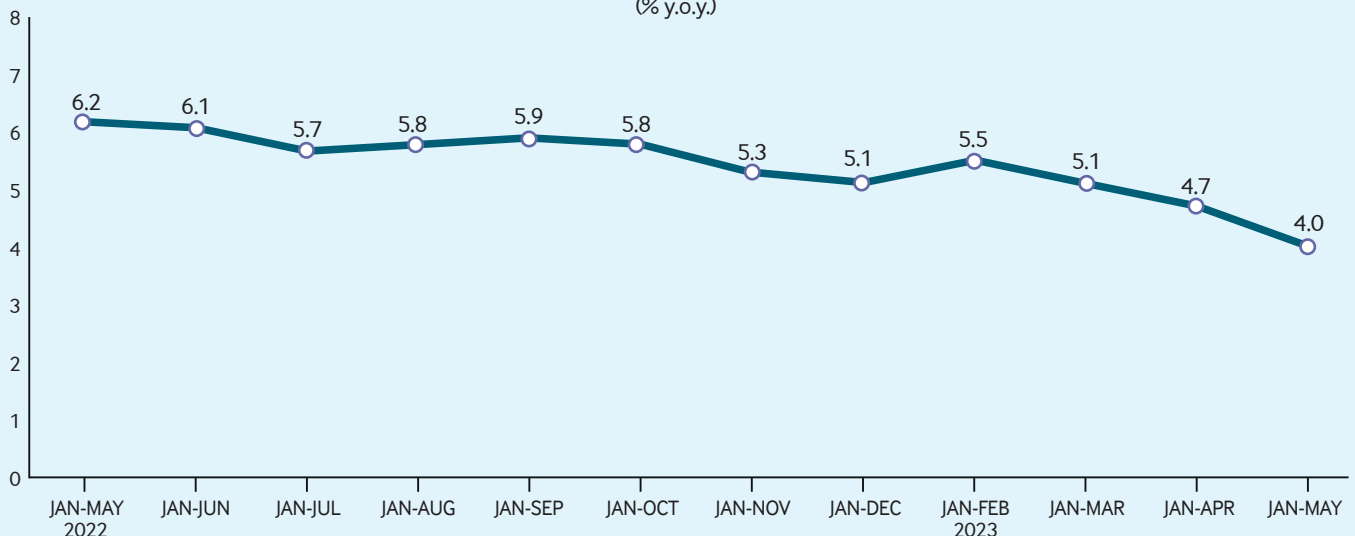
## Civil Aviation Transport

Total transport turnover of the civil aviation sector was 9.71 billion ton-km in May, rising 4.3 percent from April and recovering to 90 percent of the level recorded in the same period of 2019, before the outbreak of COVID-19, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

Nearly 51.7 million air passenger trips were handled in May, 94.8 percent of the level recorded in May 2019. Of the total air passenger trips that month, passenger transport on domestic routes represented

## NUMBERS

Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China  
(% y.o.y.)





an increase of 2.6 percent from May 2019.

In May, the cargo and mail volume of the civil aviation sector totaled 590,000 tons, recovering to 94.7 percent of the figure recorded in the same period of 2019.

## Protected Agriculture

China has rolled out its first plan to develop modern protected agriculture, designating four primary tasks for the industry in the 2023-30 period.

Protected agriculture—the cultivation of high-value vegetables and other horticultural crops in greenhouses—allows farmers to grow cash crops on small plots in marginal, water-deficient areas where traditional cropping is not viable.

The strategy, jointly issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and three other government bodies, indicates that modern protected cropping should be energy-efficient and

suitable for machinery operations, and animal husbandry will be based on efficient and intensive development, the ministry said on June 15.

The plan noted that by 2030, the mechanization rate of protected agriculture and the contribution rate of scientific and technological progress to the industry will likely reach 60 and 70 percent, respectively.

## Foreign Direct Investment

Paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) on the Chinese mainland expanded 0.1 percent year on year to 574.81 billion yuan (\$80.7 billion) in the first five months of this year, the Ministry of Commerce said.

In U.S. dollar terms, the inflow went down 5.6 percent year on year.

In terms of sector-specific figures, FDI in manufacturing rose 5.9 percent year on year.

FDI in hi-tech industries rose 7.5 percent year on year, with

that in hi-tech manufacturing up 30.8 percent and that in the hi-tech service sector up 1.5 percent.

## Lithium Reserves

China recorded a 57-percent year-on-year increase in its lithium reserves in 2022, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Jiangxi Province in east China accounted for the lion's share of the country's total reserves at 40 percent, the data showed.

Among all types of minerals discovered nationwide, nearly 40 percent registered an expansion of reserves last year, the ministry said.

Usually referred to as "white oil," lithium is widely used in sectors such as energy storage, chemical engineering, pharmaceutical, metallurgy and electronics. It is playing a growing role in the domestic economy's green, low-carbon shift and the development of new-energy vehicles.

China boasts diverse types of lithium, with the majority of its

lithium mines located in Jiangxi, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces and Tibet Autonomous Region.

## Cloud Infrastructure Services

China continued to increase spending on cloud infrastructure services in the first quarter (Q1) of this year, according to a report by technology market research firm Canalys.

Such expenditure on the Chinese mainland hit \$7.7 billion in the first three months, up 6 percent from a year ago, Canalys said.

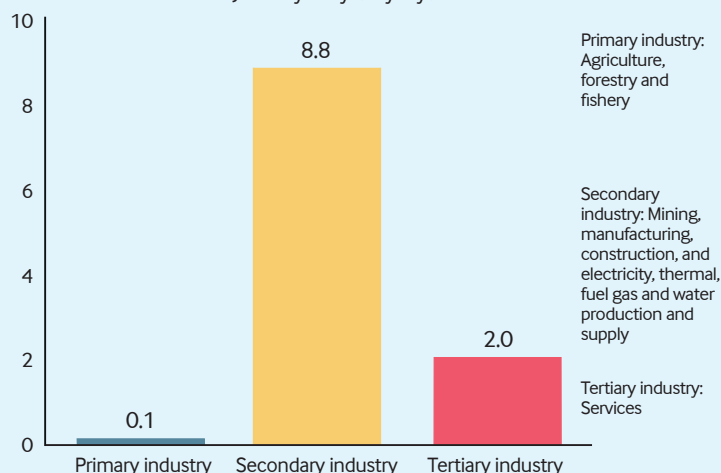
The report said the country's spending accounted for 12 percent of the global total.

The market leaders in China remained unchanged in Q1, with the top four cloud service vendors being Alibaba Cloud, Huawei Cloud, Tencent Cloud and Baidu AI Cloud, according to the report.

The four providers accounted for 79 percent of total expenditure in China, Canalys said.

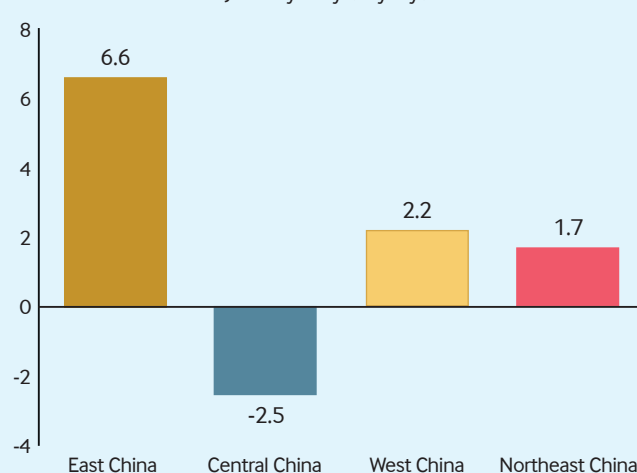
**Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Sector**

January-May (% y.o.y.)



**Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Region**

January-May (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

# THIS WEEK **WORLD**



## THE PHILIPPINES

Members of the Philippine Coast Guard attend the *M/V Esperanza Star*, which caught fire off Bohol Province on June 18. Around 120 passengers and crew were on board the ferry, with all being rescued safely



## JAPAN

An aspiring witch and wizard pose for photos at the theme park Warner Bros. Studio Tour Tokyo—The Making of Harry Potter in Tokyo on June 16, the theme park's opening day



## UNITED KINGDOM

King Charles III rides down the Mall during the Trooping the Colour parade to honor his official birthday in London on June 17





## UNITED STATES

Members of a Civil War reenactment troop parade during Juneteenth celebrations in Washington, D.C., on June 19. The holiday marks the day in 1865 when Union Major General Gordon Granger issued an order in Galveston, Texas, emancipating the remaining enslaved people in the state



## UGANDA

Security officials stand near the Lhubirira Secondary School after a rebel attack, in Mpondwe, Kasese district on June 17. The attack has left more than 40 dead, with the majority being students



## FRANCE

Visitors look at exhibits of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp. at the 54th International Paris Air Show at Le Bourget Airport near Paris on June 19, the opening day. The weeklong event lasted until June 25





## ↓ GATES DONATES TO BEIJING HEALTH INSTITUTE

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will donate \$50 million over the next five years to support the Beijing-based Global Health Drug Discovery Institute (GHDDI) in its efforts to improve health outcomes worldwide through lifesaving therapies for infectious diseases. The announcement was made during a recent trip by **Bill Gates**, cofounder of Microsoft and cochair of the foundation, to China.

The GHDDI is a nonprofit institution established in 2016 as the country's first public-private partnership on innovative research between the Beijing Municipal Government, Tsinghua University and the Gates Foundation.

Chinese President Xi Jinping met Gates on June 16, hailing him and the foundation for their long-term work to promote poverty reduction, health, development and philanthropy around the world.



## Professional Nurses Needed for Aged Care

**Beijing Evening News**  
**June 15**

Privately hired care workers for inpatients are a vital lifeline for many seniors whose children are often too busy to take care of their sick parents. However, as China's population ages, the country not only faces a critical shortage of healthcare support workers, but also sees the overcharging of service fees, a lack of professional standards, and a welter of disputes and micro-aggressions within the private healthcare sector.

Therefore, many people have urged hospitals to set up geriatric wards attended by specialized teams of personnel. These healthcare workers should be professionally trained and managed by hospitals, thus relieving patients of the need to hire care workers themselves.

The gradual replacement of outsourced personal care nurses with strictly trained hospital staff is an inevitable trend. To accelerate this process, hospitals should take the lead by opening up positions for specialized personnel. At the same time, better medical insurance policies and financial support from the government should be in place to ensure a smooth transition.



## Along the Yangtze River

**Lifeweek**  
**June 19**

Stretching for some 6,300 km from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the west to the East China Sea in the east, the Yangtze River is the longest river in Asia and the third longest in the world. Running through Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, Chongqing, Shanghai, and many other well-known megacities, the Yangtze River and its tributaries have nurtured the growth of some of the country's most

**“No country can fundamentally develop in isolation... Development needs can only be realized if countries can be better integrated into the global economy, global supply chains and so on.”**

**Keith Bennett**, Vice Chair of Britain's 48 Group Club, a group of British business and political leaders with strong ties to China, in recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

**“It shows the firm determination of China and Egypt in promoting green and low-carbon transformation and tackling climate change.”**

**Liao Liqiang**, Chinese Ambassador to Egypt, as China donated energy-saving public facilities to Egypt on June 18

industrially advanced regions.

Despite its crucial role in shaping the country's modern socioeconomic landscape, the Yangtze River basin was once a wide stretch of wasteland and only started to be inhabited in the eighth century, when the country's population embarked upon a large-scale southward migration from the Yellow River basin in north China.

As more and more people settled in the Yangtze River basin, agriculture began to flourish. With a mild climate and rich soils, the area furnished its new settlers with a quite ideal place for crop cultivation. Carrying a tremendous volume of water, which is 20 times the flow of the Yellow River, the Yangtze has created new farmlands by transporting massive amounts of sediment and depositing them in its lower reaches.

However, the river has also long plagued its surrounding areas with floods and soil erosion, and the unpredictable nature of the river has led many people to turn from agriculture toward trade. As the backbone of China's inland water transport system, the Yangtze has also supported the rise of its riverside trade-intensive cities and towns with a fluid movement of people and goods. The centuries-long concentration of commercial activities in the area has laid the foundation for the country's modern industrialization.

## Digital Celebrities Go Global

**Global Times**  
**June 13**

In China, virtual idols, artificially created popular digital celebrities, are garnering massive fan base among the country's millennials and Gen Zs, who grew up in an increasingly digitized world and have therefore cultivated a natural fondness for virtual content.

According to a report published by iResearch, a Chinese market research and consulting company, in 2022, the market size of the country's virtual idol industry came close to 1.3 billion yuan (\$181 million). However, the industry has not seen any

game-changing technological leaps or surges in user growth since 2020. Virtual idols remain a niche market targeting only a small group of fans, who are mostly students and young professionals and therefore relatively limited in how much they can spend.

To break through the bottleneck and reach a wider audience, the country's virtual idols must extend their influence beyond the domestic fan base. One way to go global is to collaborate with Chinese short video and online game platforms, which are becoming increasingly popular worldwide. As each country has its own unique culture, when tapping into a foreign market, the developers of these digital avatars should pay due respect to local customs and taboos. Kept within certain parameters, and these virtual characters can become a new cultural brand.

### ↓ MESSI CREATES SENSATION IN CHINA

Soccer superstar **Lionel Messi** joined an exclusive live-streaming event on Taobao, a leading online marketplace in China founded by e-commerce giant Alibaba, on June 14. During the 15-minute show, Messi recalled his 2008 trip to Beijing for the Summer Olympics. He also shared tips on how to stay in shape.

Messi's recent trip to China ignited Chinese soccer fans' passion, with large groups of enthusiasts following his activities in person and online.

On June 15, he led Argentina's world championship-winning team in a friendly match against Australia, scoring after just 81 seconds and guiding Argentina to a 2-0 win. More than 50,000 fans packed into the Workers' Stadium in Beijing to watch the match.



**"Reading is essential for culture.  
Reading is essential for  
communication."**

**Niels Peter Thomas**, President of Greater China and Managing Director of Books with international publisher Springer Nature, at the 29th Beijing International Book Fair, which concluded on June 18

**"By reducing reliance on Western  
currencies and embracing our own, we  
can foster greater economic stability,  
encourage cross-border transactions,  
and unlock the full potential of  
intra-Asian trade."**

**Anifah Aman**, former Malaysian Foreign Minister, in his remarks at the Kuala Lumpur Conference, which brought together officials and academics for discussions on Asian cooperation in the face of new geopolitical realities, on June 17



COVER STORY

# ALL RIGHTS MATTER

By Liang Xiao