

OPINION: TRANSCONTINENTAL FREIGHT NETWORK P.31 | FEATURES: RECORD FLOODING P.34

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Student athletes as cultural ambassadors

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Cover Photo: The men's 100-meter semifinal at the World University Games in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on August 2 (CNSPHOTO)

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EDITOR'S DESK



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E-mail: yushujun@cicgamericas.com
Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)
Chief: Lin Yeqing
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoymx@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

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A Celebration of Youth

The 31st FISU World University Games Summer, or the Summer Universiade, took place in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on July 28-August 8. Student athletes from around the world gathered there to demonstrate the charm of competitive sports while at the same time enjoying a cultural feast. FISU, or the International University Sports Federation, is the global organization providing world-class sports events to student athletes. A total of 6,500 athletes from 113 countries and regions competed in 269 events across 18 sports during this Summer Universiade.

Although the Chengdu Universiade was rescheduled twice from 2021 to 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, China completed all the necessary preparations. The concepts of low carbon and environmental protection ran through the entire setup, while advanced technology was widely used in venue construction, operation and service.

Chengdu was the third city on the Chinese mainland to host the event, following Beijing in 2001 and Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, in 2011. China's active efforts to host important international sports events, including the Universiade, indicate the country's willingness to assume increasing responsibility. Cooperation with the worldwide community to host major sports events speaks

volumes of China's openness.

But the Summer Universiade wasn't just a grand sports event; it was also a salute to young friendship. During the event, Chengdu hosted a range of educational and cultural activities to deepen exchanges between student athletes from China and other parts of the world. In the current context of an international community rife with uncertainty due to armed conflicts, populism and anti-globalization, this celebration of youth instilled a very necessary sense of solidarity.

Sichuan, in southwest China, is home to the giant panda and has been referred to as the "land of abundance" since ancient times. Its capital Chengdu, founded some 4,500 years ago and with an urban history of 2,300 years, is renowned for its unique cultural heritage. It has been recognized as one of the best tourism cities in China by the World Tourism Organization for its exceptional natural scenery, history and culture, pleasant climate and beautiful landscape. It is also a UNESCO City of Gastronomy for its position as the epicenter of Sichuan cuisine.

And it's the city that turned an athletic competition into a vibrant celebration of youth, connecting student athletes through games, cultural activities and shared experiences. **BR**



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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

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TIME FLIES!

Visitors watch an aerobatic display during the Changchun Air Show in Changchun, Jilin Province, on July 27.

As one of the aviation open-day activities hosted by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force, the show, from July 26 to 30, showcased the achievements of the PLA Air Force over the past decades. The aircraft performed a host of challenging, sophisticated maneuvers before the eyes of at least 100,000 spectators.



Super Major

The construction site of the main section of a super major bridge across the Yellow River along the Xiongan-Shangqiu high-speed railway in Taqian County, Henan Province, on July 31. The 552-km-long railway will connect Xiongan in Hebei Province and Shangqiu in Henan, and allow a train to run at 350 km per hour.

Intercity Train

A train coded C2551 slowly pulled out of the Beijing South Railway Station and headed for Tianjin Binhai New Area on the morning of August 1, marking the 15th anniversary of the opening of the Beijing-Tianjin Intercity Railway. As the first high-speed railway (HSR) with a design speed of 350 km per hour in China, the railway has carried 340 million passengers since it first entered operation.

Over the past 15 years, the daily frequency of trains running on the line has increased from 47 pairs to 128 pairs, with the quickest journey taking only about 20 minutes.

The operation of the Beijing-Tianjin Intercity Railway in August 2008 provided strong

support for the hosting of the Olympic Summer Games Beijing 2008 and has accelerated regional integration and development. It has also unveiled a fast-expanding modern HSR network in the world's most populous nation.

By 2022, China had 42,000 km of operational HSR, ranking first in the world. The length of high-speed rail regularly operating at 350 km per hour neared 3,200 km as of June 2022.

National Parks

The population of flagship species in Sanjiangyuan and Wuyishan national parks has recovered as part of the achievements made in China's national park protection, an official said on July 31.

The authenticity and integrity of the ecosystem in these national parks were "under effective protection," Tian Yongchen, Director of the National Park Center of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said at a regular press conference.

In 2021, China established the first batch of national parks, with a protected land area of 230,000 square km.

These parks, namely the Sanjiangyuan National Park, the Giant Panda National Park, the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, the Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park and the Wuyishan National Park, are home to nearly 30 percent of key terrestrial wildlife species found in the country.

Citing a previous plan on the spatial layout of national parks, Tian said there were 49 candidate national park areas, covering 1.1 million square km, accounting for 10.3 percent of China's land area.

The official said the master plan will be steadily advanced and more than 400 counties in 28 provincial-level regions are expected to benefit from it.

Striving to build the world's largest national park system, China will host the second National Park Forum on August 19 in Xining, capital of Qinghai Province.

Charging Piles

Nearly 90 percent of China's expressway service areas had installed charging piles as of late June, data from the Ministry of Transport showed on July 31.

At present, 18,590 charging piles have been built in 5,931 expressway service areas across the country, covering 29,000 parking spaces for passenger cars, Guo Sheng, an official with the ministry, told a press conference.

Because of the increased charging facilities in service areas, people have spent less time waiting in line for charging while on holiday this year.

Guo said China will continue to improve its charging infrastructure network along expressways to better meet public demand.

Community Renovation

China started the renovation of 42,600 old urban residential communities across the country in the first half of the year (H1), according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

China plans to start the renovation of 53,000 old urban residential communities this year in an effort to make cities more livable, the ministry said.

The renovation projects in the first six months covered 80.4 percent of the old urban residential communities planned to be renovated in China in 2023, benefiting 7.42 million households, according to the ministry.

More than 95 percent of such communities in Guizhou, Hebei, Hubei, Jiangsu, Jiangxi and six other provincial-level regions began renovation work in H1.

Online Gamers

The number of online gamers in China has reached a record high of 668 million, according to a report released on July 28.

The report was issued by the China Audio-video and Digital Publishing Association (CADPA) at ChinaJoy, Asia's biggest annual online gaming event in Shanghai, which opened that same day.

The report showed that the revenue of China's online gaming market in H1 reached 144.26 billion yuan (\$20.1 billion), an increase of 22.2 percent from the second half of 2022.

Another report released

concurrently showed that the number of e-sports players in China hit 487 million, while the revenue of China's e-sports industry reached 75.99 billion yuan (\$10.6 billion) in H1, up 11.74 percent from the second half of 2022.

Zhang Yijun, an official with the CADPA, noted that China's online gaming industry is recovering and showing steady growth momentum.

In September this year, e-sports will become one of the events of the Asian Games in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, which is expected to boost the e-sports industry in China.

Mpox Prevention

Chinese health authorities have recently issued a plan for the prevention and control of mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, a rare disease caused by a zoonotic virus.

The document aims to ensure timely and effective responses to the spread of mpox cases in China.

The plan laid out rules for mpox prevention and control, concerning disease diagnosis, epidemic monitoring and reporting, and case management.

It also called for sound cooperation and information



Celebrity Bear

A sun bear enjoys a slice of watermelon at the Hangzhou Zoo in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, on August 2. A video of the 4-year-old sun bear standing with ramrod posture on its hind legs recently went viral on Chinese social media, attracting an increased number of tourists eager to see the animal with their own eyes.

sharing between health authorities nationwide and other related departments.

There is no approved treatment for mpox, so care generally involves symptom management.

In September 2022, China

reported its first imported mpox infection. Since June, multiple cases have been reported in several provinces in the country, posing a high risk of new local outbreaks and hidden transmission.



A Splash of Water

Tourists cool off in the waves at a beachside summer resort in Qinhuangdao, a popular seaside destination in Hebei Province, on August 2.

Private Economy

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China's top economic planner, on August 1 unveiled detailed measures to boost the country's private economy following the release of a general guideline for the sector in July.

Private firms will be encouraged to participate in major national projects that are profitable and mature, issue Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) products for infrastructure projects, and lead technological programs in key areas, such as industrial software and artificial intelligence, according to a notice from the NDRC and several other government agencies. REIT is a collective investment scheme that aims to deliver a source of recurrent income to investors through focused investment in a portfolio of income-generating properties such as shopping malls, offices and hotels.

According to the notice, companies will enjoy an

easier process of tax reduction in research and development spending, shorter time in export rebates, and stronger inclusive financial support.

China's newly implemented tax refunds, as well as tax and fee cuts and deferrals, for micro and small private firms as well as self-employed households, reached 704.9 billion yuan (\$98.2 billion) in the first half of 2023 (H1), data from the State Taxation Administration showed.

Regulations and official documents violating the principle of equality for enterprises of various types of ownership will be abolished to protect the development of the private economy, according to the notice.

The government will improve its services to help private businesses solve difficulties, cut red tape in administrative approval, clear arrears owed to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and actively engage with entrepreneurs during the policymaking process.

The Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council issued a guideline on boosting the growth of the private economy on July 19, promising to improve the business environment, enhance policy support and strengthen the legal guarantee for its development.

Export Controls

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) has explained the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) export control measures made public by the MOFCOM and three other departments on July 31.

China has always been committed to maintaining global security and regional stability, and has always opposed the use of civilian drones for military purposes, the spokesperson said.

The moderate expansion of the scope of export controls on drone-related equipment is an important measure of the country to display its role as a

responsible country, implement the Global Security Initiative for common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and safeguard world peace, the spokesperson said.

The measures did not target any specific countries or regions, according to the MOFCOM.

The country on July 31 confirmed export controls on drone-related equipment, including some special engines and radio communication devices of UAVs. It also imposed export controls on some consumer-grade UAVs that will be in effect for two years. The measures will become effective on September 1, the spokesperson added.

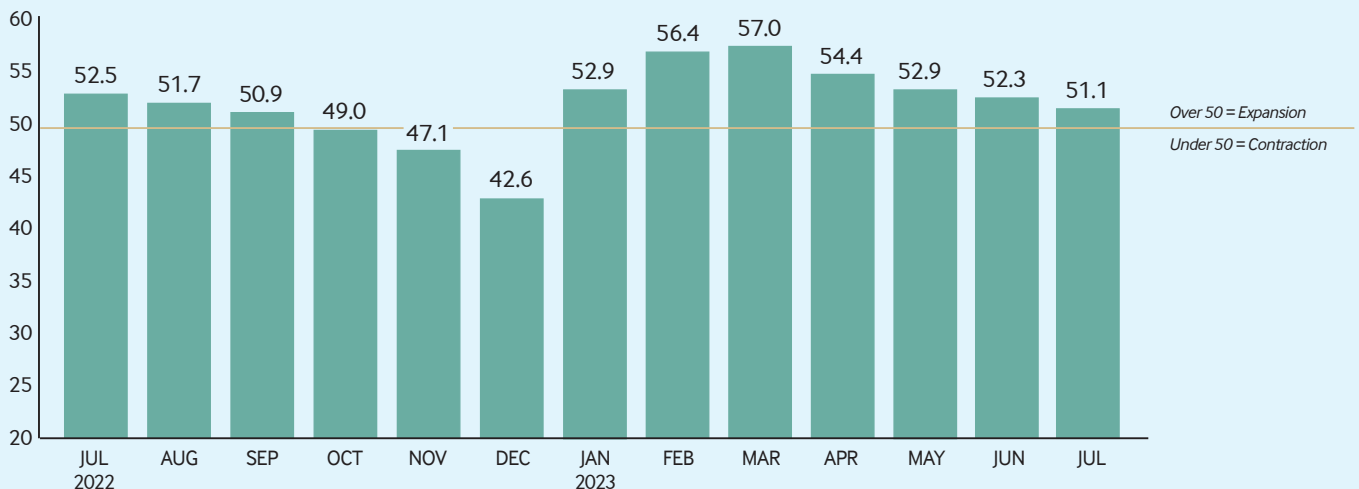
Logistics Recovery

The logistics industry sustained its recovery momentum in H1 as market demand rose modestly, industry data showed.

During the period, social logistics rose 4.8 percent year on year to 160.6 trillion yuan (\$22.4 trillion) in value, according to

NUMBERS

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



the data released by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing.

Logistics for industrial products went up 3.8 percent year on year in H1, the data showed.

Total revenue of the logistics industry rose 5.3 percent year on year to 6.3 trillion yuan (\$877.7 billion) during the period, according to the data.

Asset-Backed Securities

Ninety-five batches of asset-backed securities (ABS) products worth 86.91 billion yuan (\$12.1 billion) were registered in June, according to the Asset Management Association of China.

ABS are financial securities backed by income-generating assets such as credit card receivables, home equity loans, student loans and car loans.

Specifically, ABS products related to debt financing worth 74.74 billion yuan (\$10.4 billion), real estate investment trusts

worth 10.94 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) and future operating income valuing 1.24 billion yuan (\$172.8 million) were newly registered.

As of late June, there were 2,225 batches of remaining ABS products, valued at 1.96 trillion yuan (\$273.1 billion) in total, the association said.

Business Environment

Vis-à-vis market access, tax payments, dispute settlement and the promotion of market competition in China, foreign firms operating in the country widely applauded its business environment, according to a survey conducted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) during the second quarter of 2023.

Nearly 90 percent of the surveyed companies were satisfied with the aforementioned business environment, Sun Xiao, an official with the CCPIT, told a press conference on July 28.

Foreign companies remained optimistic about their development in China, with over 80 percent of respondents expecting their return on investment to remain flat or increase in 2023, Sun said.

The main factors driving the investment of such firms in China include a vast market size, preferential policies and the integrity of industrial and supply chains, according to the survey.

Forex Market

The Chinese foreign exchange (forex) market recorded transactions worth a total of 21.89 trillion yuan (\$3.05 trillion) in June, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange showed.

In terms of markets, the transaction volume of the retail or client market, where individuals speculate on the exchange rate between different currencies, was 3.35 trillion yuan (\$466.7 billion), while the transaction volume of the wholesale or interbank market, a global network

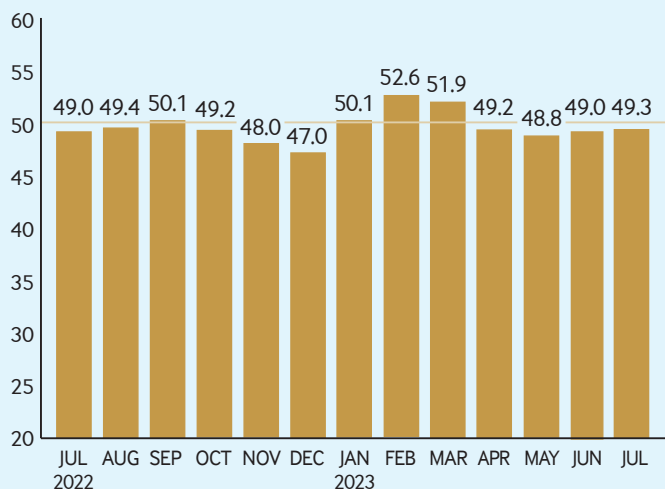
utilized by financial institutions to trade currencies and other currency derivatives directly between themselves, was 18.55 trillion yuan (\$2.6 trillion).

In terms of products, the cumulative transaction volume of the spot market, or the immediate exchange of currencies at the current exchange rate, was 9.15 trillion yuan (\$1.27 trillion), while that of the derivatives market, the financial market for derivatives, financial instruments like futures contracts or options—which are derived from other forms of assets, was 12.74 trillion yuan (\$1.77 trillion).

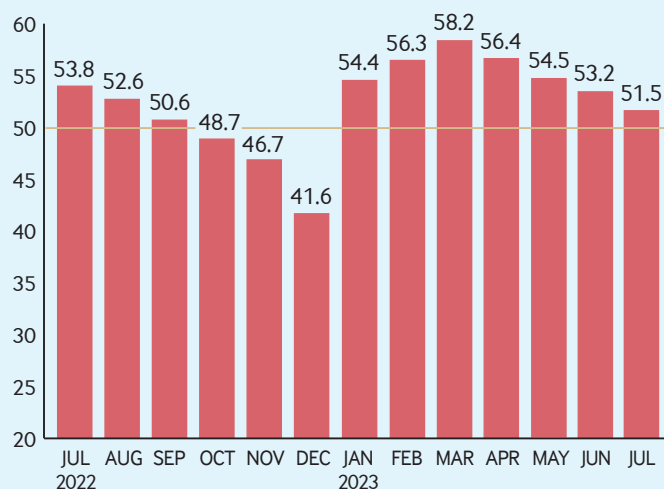
The forex market can be viewed as a two-tier market: One tier is the wholesale or interbank market and the other tier is the retail or client market.

Retail transactions account for only 14 percent of the forex market. The other 86 percent are interbank trades between international banks or non-bank dealers large enough to transact in the interbank market.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



MEXICO

Dancers in costume perform during celebrations for the 698th anniversary of the foundation of Tenochtitlán, an Aztec city that flourished between 1325 and 1521, in Zocalo Square, Mexico City, on July 26



THE PHILIPPINES

People ride their scooters along a waterlogged road in Valenzuela City on July 28. The death toll from heavy rains, floods and landslides in the country, triggered by typhoon *Doksuri*, had climbed to 25 as of July 31, with 20 people still missing at the time of writing



RUSSIA

A building in Moscow is left damaged following a drone attack on July 30. Ukraine had attempted to launch an attack on targets with three drones earlier that day but failed to achieve its goal, the Russian Defense Ministry said



LEBANON

A man inspects the damage to his car at the Ain al-Helweh refugee camp near Sidon City on August 1. Despite a cease-fire reached between rival factions a day earlier, clashes once again erupted in the refugee camp



EGYPT

President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi (right) welcomes Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in New Alamein City on July 31. They met to discuss the recent developments in the Palestinian cause and the efforts to end the intra-Palestinian division



DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Young dancers perform during the military parade in central Pyongyang, on July 27, in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the country's Fatherland Liberation War



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ FIRST NATIONAL DATA ADMINISTRATOR

Liu Liehong, former CEO and Chairperson of state-owned telecom giant China Unicom, was appointed head of the newly unveiled National Data Administration on July 28 amid China's ongoing efforts to improve data management.

Liu, 54, began to head China Unicom in August 2021. Before that, he served as the vice minister of industry and information technology, the country's top industry regulator, following a career in electronics and information technology.

The National Data Administration was created as part of the country's plan to reform state institutions adopted earlier this year. Its responsibilities include planning China's digital economy, as well as the sharing and development of the country's data resources, promoting smart cities and the exchange of information resources across industries.



Chunky Children

People's Daily

July 28

For many young students, the summer break is not a time for play, but rather a period of intense working out at weight loss camps. The extreme popularity of these camps bespeaks an alarming trend in China—childhood obesity. According to a report published by the National Health Commission in 2020, one in five Chinese youth aged 6-17 years is overweight or obese, up from just one in 20 in 1995.

This increase is driven by multiple social factors. For instance, heavy coursework at school and a ready availability of digital devices are fixing the country's younger generations in a more sedentary lifestyle. Also, an age-old belief that more food consumption

equals better growth has led many parents to spoil their children with an unlimited supply of junk food and late night snacks.

Excess weight gained in childhood may likely be carried into adulthood and may increase the risks of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, sleep disorders and cancers. What's more, social stigmas related to obesity can also take a heavy toll on a child's emotional wellbeing and self-esteem.

Therefore, parents should closely monitor their child's weight from an early age so that they can promptly intervene when signs of obesity show. That does not mean parents should rely on intermittent fasting or slimming pills for dramatic transformations. A balanced diet, regular physical activity, limited screen time and adequate sleep are enough to help children maintain a healthy weight.



Smart Museums

Oriental Outlook

July 27

With the adoption of virtual reality, augmented reality, and many other advanced technologies, museums are no longer just sedate, old-fashioned art spaces filled with lifeless artifacts, but ultra-modern scenes that transcend the boundaries of time and space.

Now, people can simply log onto the Dunhuang E-Tour, a mini program on the Weixin super app, for a game-like virtual tour through the Mogao Grottoes, a constellation

“It's a very timely and exciting topic because robotaxis will improve road safety, efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint.”

Howard Yu, Director of the Center for Future Readiness of the International Institute for Management Development, commenting on the rollout of driverless taxis in China in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“Whatever you call it—de-risking or incremental steps on the road to decoupling—there is no escaping the deleterious effects on the U.S. economy.”

Stephen Roach, a senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute of Global Affairs, in an opinion piece recently published in *Australian Financial Review*

of 492 ancient Buddhist sanctuaries in Gansu Province in the northwest. A recent exhibition in Shenzhen used naked-eye 3D technology to display a virtual collection of treasures held at the Palace Museum in Beijing. At the Bell and Drum Towers, a pair of ancient structures in Beijing, a light show projected onto the ceiling details the history of the towers and their connection to the capital's Central Axis.

Technology also plays a massive role in the real-time management of museum collections. Modern scientific tools, such as DNA testing and radiocarbon dating, have allowed museum researchers to identify the age and composition of ancient artifacts. Sensors monitor warehouses for temperature, pressure and humidity, thereby enabling museums to optimize the conditions for the storage of collections. What's more, with the ability to automate certain tasks and generate creative solutions, artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize the way museums approach heritage conservation by streamlining the restoration process.

Given the colossal number of ancient artifacts China possesses, the digitalization of domestic museums will need a continuous supply of highly qualified staff. Therefore, more energy should go into the nurturing of young, multidisciplinary professionals.

Women-Only Compartments

Yangcheng Evening News
July 28

Trip.com Group Ltd., a leading travel service provider in China, has recently launched a new feature that offers women-only compartments on sleeper trains for an additional service fee of 10 yuan (\$1.4). This new booking option has triggered heated online debates, with some condemning the feature as an act of sexual segregation and others hailing women-only sleeper cars as a much needed protection mechanism against sexual harassment.

Some people have argued that the interior

of a sleeper train, like that of a subway or a bus, is a public space and therefore does not need special segregated areas. Others, however, agreed that these sleeper cabins, with doors that can be locked from the inside, form small enclosed spaces in which solo female travelers may feel uncomfortable when surrounded by men.

Setting up a women-only compartment is not always an easy task. On top of people's polarized attitudes toward the idea, the constant flux of passengers on a train poses a great challenge for daily management and maintenance. If the establishment of women-only compartments is not currently feasible, railway companies should consider optimizing the ticketing systems to ensure single female travelers don't find themselves alone.

↓ FIREFIGHTER DIES DURING FLOOD RESCUE

Feng Zhen, 31, a firefighter in Beijing, died on July 31 while rescuing a resident trapped by a record rainstorm that hit the capital city.

In the process of helping a person caught in the swift currents of a flash flood, one rescue team member was swept away by a surge in floodwaters. Feng swam after his colleague and pulled him to safety before succumbing to physical exhaustion and being dragged under himself.

Since becoming a firefighter in December 2009, Feng had rescued more than 150 people during over 3,500 missions, according to the National Fire and Rescue Administration.

From late July to early August, the Chinese capital experienced the heaviest rainfall in 140 years, brought by typhoon *Doksuri*.



“Now, more than ever, we need greater and stronger collaboration to address our common issues by leveraging our unique strengths.”

Shi Yigong, President of Westlake University, calling for cooperation and exchange among universities at the World University Presidents' Forum in Beijing in late July

“This study demonstrates the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in improving predictions of significant climate events like El Niño that can have devastating effects around the globe.”

Huang Ping, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, speaking about a recently published study by him and fellow researchers on an AI model to predict the development of central Pacific El Niño events



COVER STORY

'CAUSE WE ARE YOUNG

FISU World University Games—a platform for international youth to compete, shine and communicate By Lu Yan