

OPINION: MATE 60 PRO—MADE IN CHINA P.24 | FEATURES: GOING BY THE MBTI MANUAL P.40

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DEVELOPING OR DEVELOPED?

Beyond first-tier China

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Cover Photo: Wang Qingxian, a master of the Miao ethnic batik art in Huayuan County, Hunan Province (ELSBETH VAN PARIDON)

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EDITOR'S DESK

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More Than Meets the Eye

China, a developed or still developing country? That is the question.

Some claim that China, the world's second largest economy and a global leader in hi-tech development, should be considered a developed country; others argue that China cannot be considered a developed country because its per-capita economic indicators rank low globally.

Neither international law nor international organizations offer official definitions of developed or developing countries. But, in practice, one of the most common metrics used to determine if an economy is developed or developing is per-capita GDP. In 2022, China's per-capita GDP stood at \$12,741, one fifth the average for developed economies and one sixth that of the United States.

Another commonly used metric is the UN's human development index, which goes beyond the economic realm to look at indicators such as literacy and access to healthcare. China ranked 79th in 2021, far behind the 30-plus countries that are deemed developed.

Despite the remarkable achievements China has made in recent decades, it still faces developmental imbalances and shortcomings and

has yet to develop a strong capacity to innovate in science and technology. China has booming cities, like the megalopolises of Beijing and Shanghai. But it is also a country with many places, especially in the rural areas, where infrastructure is in dire need of improvement and where many people struggle to secure a well-off life.

China has eradicated absolute poverty, achieving the poverty reduction goal of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule. Based on this, the country now focuses on pursuing its rural revitalization strategy—one closely intertwined with absolute poverty elimination and a core component of the Central Government's goals to promote more balanced economic and social development.

As it develops itself, China is playing an increasingly important role on the international stage. For instance, it has become the second largest contributor to both the UN's regular budget and the international body's peace-keeping operations spending. But the responsibilities China is expected to shoulder must be in line with its own development level. **BR**



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RISING FROM THE SEA

The CERES-1 commercial launch vehicle carrying four satellites blasts off from the waters off Haiyang, a coastal city in Shandong Province, east China, on September 5.

The Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center conducted the offshore mission. Rocket manufacturer Galactic Energy said it was the CERES-1 series' ninth flight and the first sea-based mission. The takeoff also makes it the first private Chinese company to complete a sea launch.



Growing Like Weeds

Tourists watch a float parade in downtown Arxan, Hinggan League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China, on September 1. Located at the southwestern foot of the Greater Hinggan Mountains and the intersection of four major grasslands, Arxan is an increasingly popular tourist destination.

Preventing Myopia

Chinese primary and secondary schools have been asked to ensure that students have at least two hours of physical activity daily, with one hour during and another outside school hours, as per a circular issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) announcing the launch of a month-long nationwide campaign for myopia prevention and control in September, Xinhua News Agency reported on September 1.

The circular also emphasized the need for schools to allocate teaching time involving electronic devices in a scientific and reasonable manner, implement a daily cap on the overall written homework load for students, and ensure that students have

adequate sleep time.

Acknowledging the crucial role of kindergartens in the prevention of myopia, the ministry emphasized the need to manage the prevalence of myopia among preschool and primary school children.

The circular also highlighted the importance of parents taking an active role in myopia prevention and control. Parents are urged to lead by example, limiting screen time, increasing outdoor activities and creating a family environment that promotes eye health.

Entry-Exit Trips

China logged more than 82.41 million entry-exit trips between July 1 and August 29, the National

Immigration Administration said on August 31.

Among them, 41.19 million trips were made by mainland residents, 32.47 million were made by residents in Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions plus Taiwan Province, and 5.06 million by foreign ID holders.

China has seen a rising demand for exit and entry certificates over the past months, as it was the first summer break after the country downgraded its management of COVID-19 early this year.

During the period from July 1 to August 29, exit-entry control departments issued 3.42 million ordinary passports and 18.59 million exit-entry permits and endorsements for traveling to

and from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

In response to the summer travel peak, exit-entry control departments across the country opened up more counters to process document applications, extended their service hours, and provided express or grouped services when necessary, the administration said.

Border inspectors optimized their services, posted more guiding signs, and added more inspection lanes, among other measures, to ensure a smooth and orderly flow of traffic across the border.

Database Fined

The operators of China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), a leading online academic database, have been penalized for illegal handling of users' personal information, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) announced on September 6.

A fine of 50 million yuan (\$6.8 million) had been imposed on three major operators of CNKI, the CAC said in a statement.

According to the statement, the operators of the 14 CNKI-related apps collected users' personal information without their consent and illegally kept their information after they had already closed their accounts.

The operators were ordered to stop all illegal activities.

The CAC vowed to strengthen law enforcement on cybersecurity, data security and personal information protection to create a healthy and well-regulated environment for business operations and protect citizens' legal rights and interests.

Living Allowance

A policy designed to improve the well-being of rural teachers

in China has benefited around 1.3 million in nearly 73,000 rural schools, the MOE announced on August 31.

In 2023, China is set to recruit 52,300 university graduates to work as teachers in rural compulsory education schools located in central and western regions, in an effort to beef up the rural teaching workforce, Ren Youqun, head of the teacher affairs division of the MOE, said at a press conference.

Additionally, the country plans to dispatch 17,410 teachers to remote areas, areas with large ethnic minority populations, as well as old revolutionary base areas for educational assistance this year, Ren added.

China will expedite the building of dormitories for teachers in remote rural areas. As of late July, more than 5 million units of government-subsidized rental housing had been completed. These units are capable of accommodating over 15 million individuals, including teachers working in the rural areas.

Academician Candidates

China's top academic institutions on August 31 released the list of candidates for selection as

new academicians, the highest academic honorary title in the country's science and technology fields.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) has 583 candidates for the title, while the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE) has 655.

The selection program, which started on May 31, will this year add 79 and no more than 90 new academicians to the registry for the CAS and CAE, respectively.

The honorary title selection process will tilt toward researchers who work in key fields and basic disciplines, as well as emerging disciplines and interdisciplinary fields that are urgently needed by the country.

Scientists who made outstanding contributions to national defense and security, as well as undertook major national research tasks and scientific and technological infrastructure construction projects, will also be preferred.

International Writing Program

The 2023 Shanghai Writing Program, which commenced on September 4, has offered international writers a unique



Set to Jet?

Visitors look at a flying car on display during the Smart China Expo 2023 in Chongqing Municipality in southwest China, on September 4. This year's expo ran from September 4 to 6, focusing on smart, connected new energy vehicles.

opportunity to immerse themselves in the vibrant city of Shanghai for two months.

Writers from seven countries, including Egypt, Germany, Argentina and Cyprus, are participating in this year's program to gather material for their future literary works during this period.

Hosted by the Shanghai Writers' Association, the program

has invited 100 writers from 38 countries to reside in the city and experience Chinese culture and street life since 2008.

The theme for this year is Cities That Appear Distant, and international writers will have the opportunity to visit Fudan University, partake in city walks and visit cultural heritage sites around Shanghai.



Dashing Dishes

Hangzhou Asian Games-themed dishes are on display at a culinary festival in Shouchang Township, Jiande, Zhejiang Province in east China, on September 6. The games are scheduled to take place from September 23 to October 8 in Hangzhou and five co-host cities across Zhejiang.

E-formation

China is expected to see the average value-added growth of its computer, communication and other electronic equipment manufacturing sectors kept at about 5 percent from this year to 2024, according to a work plan jointly issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Ministry of Finance.

The combined operating revenue of major enterprises in the sector should top 24 trillion yuan (\$3.3 trillion) during the period, as per the document.

In expanding effective demand, the plan stressed efforts to bolster traditional electronic consumer goods and cultivate new growth drivers by promoting technology and product innovation.

China will optimize the export structure of electronic devices, lift the proportion of high-value-added products in total exports and encourage

enterprises to participate in international exhibitions to stabilize foreign trade.

China is a major producer of electronic equipment. The country's fixed assets investment in the electronic information manufacturing industry grew 9.4 percent year on year during the first half of the year.

Private Economy

China has set up a bureau specializing in promoting the private economy's development under the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country's top economic planner.

The bureau was established to strengthen policy coordination in relevant areas, and ensure that related measures are implemented as early as possible and achieve tangible results, Cong Liang, deputy head of the NDRC, told a press conference on September 4.

Main responsibilities of the bureau include tracking,

studying and analyzing the development of the private economy, coordinating and organizing the formulation of policies and measures to promote its development, and formulating policies to promote the growth of private investment, according to the commission.

The bureau will also be responsible for establishing a mechanism for regular communication with private enterprises, coordinating efforts to solve major problems concerning the development of the private economy and working toward enhancing its international competitiveness.

Demonstration Bases

The Ministry of Commerce announced on September 2 that 16 more e-commerce parks will be listed as national e-commerce demonstration bases this year.

Speaking at a national e-commerce conference, Assistant

Minister of Commerce Chen Chunjiang said the digital economy has provided strong impetus for Chinese modernization and highlighted the vital role of the e-commerce sector in the economy and the country's development.

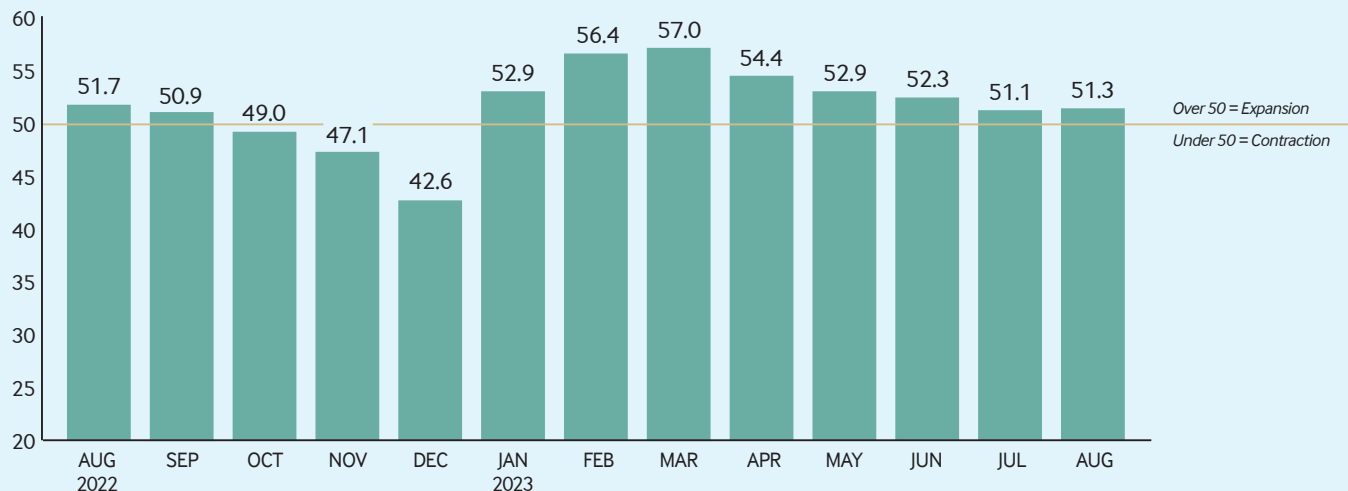
Official data showed that China's digital economy exceeded 50 trillion yuan (\$6.8 trillion) for the first time in 2022, accounting for 41.5 percent of GDP.

E-commerce-related sectors in the country have created approximately 70 million jobs, and nationwide online retail sales have ranked first globally for 10 consecutive years, the data showed.

China will give full play to the guiding role of national e-commerce demonstration bases and cultivate e-commerce industry clusters and leading enterprises with international competitive edges to empower the development of the real economy, Chen said.

NUMBERS

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



Futures Market

The futures market logged brisk trading in terms of both volume and turnover in August, according to the China Futures Association.

Total trading volume stood at around 949 million lots in August, up 47.76 percent year on year, according to data from the association.

The data showed that the market's trading turnover rose 23.49 percent over the previous year to 60.7 trillion yuan (\$8.3 trillion).

In the first eight months, trading volume and turnover grew 30.82 and 4.55 percent over the same period last year, respectively, the association said.

Insurance Solvency

The insurance sector had maintained adequate solvency by the end of Q2, official data showed.

The solvency ratio is a key metric to measure an insurer's

ability to meet its debt and other obligations.

The average comprehensive solvency ratio of the 186 insurers reviewed at a regulatory meeting stood at 188 percent by the end of Q2, according to the National Administration of Financial Regulation (NAFR).

Their average core solvency ratio hit 122.7 percent, the NAFR added.

Specifically, the average comprehensive solvency ratio of property insurance companies, life insurance companies and reinsurance companies stood at 224.6, 178.7 and 275.2 percent, respectively.

The NAFR said it will strengthen regulation and promote high-quality development of the insurance industry.

Joint Venture

Air China and the British engineering giant Rolls-Royce on August 31 broke ground on their joint venture of an aero-engine maintenance, repair

and overhaul (MRO) facility in Beijing.

The new joint venture, Beijing Aero Engine Services Co. Ltd. (BAESL), will provide MRO services on Rolls-Royce Trent 700, Trent XWB-84 and Trent 1000 aero engines to both Chinese and international airline customers.

Air China and Rolls-Royce each hold 50 percent of the shares in this joint venture, which is located adjacent to Beijing Capital International Airport. It will support both parent companies' sustainability goals by reducing the long-distance transportation of aero engines for MRO services.

BAESL is scheduled to launch operations in 2026. It will be able to serve up to 250 shop visits per year at full capacity, which is expected to reach in the mid-2030s.

Non-Cash Payments

Non-cash payments handled by Chinese banks continued

their sound growth in the second quarter of this year (Q2), data from the People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank, showed.

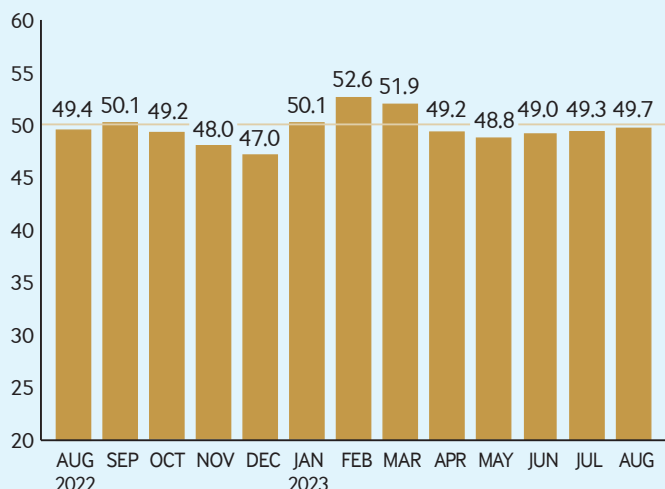
Non-cash payments via bank cards, electronic payment vehicles, commercial papers, credit transfers and other settlements hit 1,308.83 trillion yuan (\$178.8 trillion) during the period, up 12.28 percent year on year, according to a report from the PBC.

Electronic payments took the lion's share of non-cash payments, with a total transaction value of 842.19 trillion yuan (\$115.1 trillion), the report said.

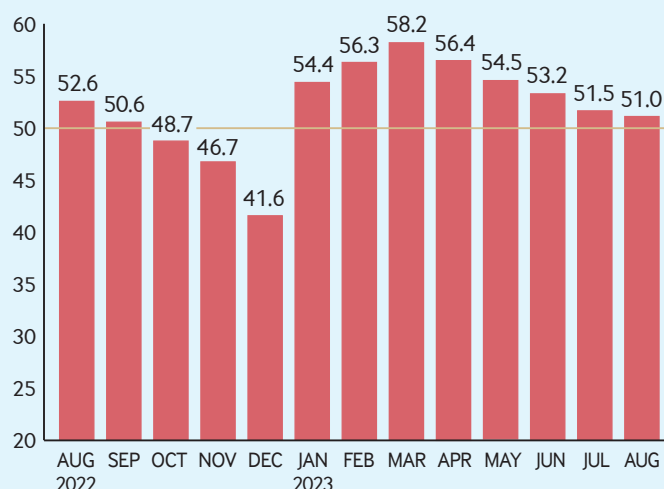
A closer look at data for electronic payment vehicles showed that mobile payments expanded 14.29 percent compared with the same period last year to 138.96 trillion yuan (\$19 trillion).

Bank card transactions also went up in Q2, up 11.35 percent year on year to 271.76 trillion yuan (\$37.1 trillion), the data revealed.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



BELARUS

People visit a vintage vehicle show in Minsk on September 2. About 200 vintage vehicles were on display there



CANADA

Stuffed animals and pink flags are placed around suspected child or infant graves in Beauval, Saskatchewan on August 31. A First Nation, a term used to describe indigenous peoples in Canada, has found 79 suspected child grave sites and 14 potential infant grave sites at a former residential school in Saskatchewan



THAILAND

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin (center) and his cabinet ministers take an oath before King Maha Vajiralongkorn in Bangkok on September 5



GREECE

Spectators watch a performance of aircraft from the United Arab Emirates during the Athens Flying Week 2023 air show at the Tanagra Air Base some 70 km north of Athens on September 2



EGYPT

A volunteer works at the site of a collapsed building in Cairo on September 6. At least four people were killed and five others wounded when the structure collapsed



ITALY

Director Ang Lee (left) and Actor Tony Leung Chiu-Wai attend an award ceremony during the 80th Venice International Film Festival in Venice on September 2. Tony Leung was presented with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in the field of acting during the event



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ NEW HEAD OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

Veteran police officer **Xu Ganlu** has recently become head of the Police Association of China, a national, nonprofit social organization.

Since joining the Xiamen Municipal Public Security Bureau in Fujian Province in 1980, Xu has worked in the public security sector throughout his career. He became vice governor of Henan Province and director general of the provincial public security department in 2015. Xu has been vice minister of public security and commissioner of the National Immigration Administration since 2018.

Established in 1992, the Police Association of China is an organization representing police officers. It is committed to fostering strong relations between police and public and engages in exchange with counterparts around the world.



Specialty Swap

Workers' Daily
August 29

Chinese millennials have recently picked up a new way to connect with strangers online—specialty swapping. The idea is simple—two random netizens from different provinces link up online to decide on a certain price range and mail each other a selection of specialties from their respective home regions that add up to the designated price.

The rapid rise of e-commerce platforms in recent decades has allowed local produce to transcend geographical barriers and reach a wider market. However,

what sets the new gift swapping trend apart is the sense of suspense, of not knowing what one's swap partner will send, which is very much like the thrills of opening a mystery box.

Souvenir exchange can yield good or bad surprises. While many netizens have posted about their happy unboxing moments, some people have received awful gifts, which include expired or near-expired food, secondhand items and everyday groceries.

As a new sector built entirely on trust, specialty swapping is not easy to regulate. Therefore, participants should always be respectful and put careful thought into the local specialties they send.



Revitalizing Private Businesses

Lifeweek
August 28

On July 19, Chinese authorities published a set of measures aimed at boosting the country's private economy. The guidelines pledge to create a more robust and favorable environment in which the private sector can unleash its potential amid challenges.

The private economy accounts for more than 60 percent of the country's GDP, 70 percent of its innovative capacity, 80 percent of the urban workforce and 90 percent of new jobs. The sector's vital role in the job market is rooted in the fact that a large

"Now, when automobile manufacturers talk about their development strategies for the future, they almost always focus on new energy sectors. If we don't keep up with that pace, we will be left behind."

Wang Hao, President of Tesla China, as Tesla's new version of its China-made Model 3 sedan debuted on September 2, marking the first time the global carmaking giant unveiled a vehicle in China ahead of the United States

"I take pity on the hardworking fisher folks in Fukushima and hope their legal action against the Japanese Government's move will put an end to it."

Harald Brünig, Director of *The Macao Post Daily* newspaper, in an article recently published in *China Daily*, commenting on Japan releasing radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant, wrecked by a tsunami 12 years ago, into the Pacific Ocean

proportion of China's younger generations work in manufacturing, real estate and the Internet industry—fields where private businesses are clustered.

However, the sector has seen an increasingly slow rate of growth since 2016, the year in which China began to rein in excess production capacity. While the reforms have streamlined raw material industries such as coal, iron and steel, and cement, private businesses have been faced with raw material price surges, which mean higher costs and lower net profits. Some private companies have suffered because of their aggressive business strategy, which may backfire when the economic outlook is less certain.

Therefore, urgent actions are required to bring China's private sector back onto a healthy, upward-going track. Whether the newly issued guidelines can effectively turn the tide and lift private businesses out of their current predicament is yet to be tested. Nevertheless, these measures are a good place to start. Hopefully, the guidelines will usher in a new phase in the country's economic agenda that fosters the sustainable growth of the private sector.

Call to Repatriate Relics

Rednet.cn

September 1

Upon its release on August 30, a three-episode video series called *Escape From the British Museum* went viral on Chinese social media. Directed by two Chinese vloggers, the video series follows an ancient Chinese jade teapot, personified as a young woman dressed in *hanfu*, the traditional dress of the Han Chinese, as she escapes from the British Museum and encounters a journalist who is willing to help her return to China.

The series pays meticulous attention to detail. The female protagonist's emerald-green robe and hair accessories match the color of the teapot, while

the dirt on her face betrays the many hardships she has experienced on her exit from the museum. At one point, the female protagonist is shocked by the spaciousness of her new friend's home, which forms a stark contrast to the tiny compartments in which ancient Chinese artifacts at the British Museum are confined.

The series has stirred a massive online movement that demands the return of looted Chinese artworks from the British Museum and other overseas institutions. The British Museum currently houses some 23,000 Chinese artifacts, many of which were taken from the Old Summer Palace, an imperial garden in Beijing, by British and French troops during the Second Opium War (1856-60).



THE SUMMER'S BIGGEST MOVIE RELEASE

Director **Shen Ao** has seen his movie *No More Bets*, the first Chinese film to expose the inner workings of overseas online fraud, become a major hit. It has been leading in terms of screen share and box office since its premiere on August 8.

By September 5, the movie had grossed more than 3.65 billion yuan (\$498.5 million) at the box office, ranking 11th in Chinese film history. The film is about a Chinese programmer and a model who, enticed by the promise of high-paying jobs, find themselves trapped in a foreign country as prisoners of a ruthless gang, and forced into online gambling fraud.



Shen, 37, said he studied over 10,000 cases and interviewed a variety of people, from victims to police officers, to gain inspiration.

“Unlike their parents, who prioritized utility and functionality in products, Gen Zs are more focused on immersive shopping experiences and consumption scenarios that allow them to showcase their individuality and personality.”

Zhu Yuan, Deputy General Manager of THE BOX Youth Energy Center, as the shopping complex opened in Beijing in early September

“Digital health is the present and future of our health systems.”

Hans Kluge, World Health Organization Regional Director for Europe, alongside the release of a report calling for more investment in digital health technologies and platforms, on September 5



COVER STORY

REALITY CHECK

Scratching the surface: beyond China's first-tier bubbles

By Elsbeth van Paridon

A senior woman, residing in a minuscule Miao ethnic community nestled in the mountains of Huayuan County, Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hunan Province in central China, shucks corn on August 20

Last month, like the great chef, author and travel documentarian Anthony Bourdain, this intrepid author had no reservations about confronting the tear-jerking, throat-tickling, sense-consuming capsaicin clouds produced by the (in)famous local chili peppers hissing in the hot wok before her. In the kitchen, she stood her ground to carefully capture on camera every step of the process,

as well as every detail the local Miao minority chef gave on the recipe as she whipped up a sizzling symphony of vibrant veggies—Hunan style.

Hunan cuisine is the style of Chinese cooking that originates in Hunan Province in central China. It is known for its use of chili peppers and garlic to create full-bodied, fiery flavors.

Although my colleagues and I were not engaging in any live-cooking or live-commerce, we found ourselves wokside in the small kitchen of a hotel catering to the needs of “verified” *wanghong* (online influencers) in Shibadong Village, literally “the Village of 18 Caves,” in Hunan’s Xiangxi Tujia and Miao

Autonomous Prefecture.

The 180-degree lavish panorama of lush green subtropical forest, in combination with the picture-perfect hotel, gives travelers the feeling they’re staying in a premium area. The cabins, resembling shipping containers, are sustainably equipped and dressed to the hilt with tech, each with their own balcony, seemingly hanging off the mountainside at an altitude of 700 meters above sea level. Many other