

OPINION: HAS CHINA'S ECONOMY PEAKED? P.21 | FEATURES: WONDERS OF THE SILK ROAD P.28

# BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.66 NO.39 SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

北方周末 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM

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across the distance



RMB6.00  
USD1.70  
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GBP1.20  
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CHF2.60  
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914239



邮发代号2-922·国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2

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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,  
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**Tel:** 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

*Beijing Review* (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published 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

## Dialogue for Mutual Development

Several international exchange events between China and Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries took place in September. They were launched to promote dialogue between civilizations—an overarching term that encompasses material, cultural and intellectual development in a society.

During a forum in Buenos Aires, Argentina, a media and think tank league was launched, with founding members coming from China, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Peru. The China-Brazil Forum for Exchange and Mutual Learning was held in São Paulo, Brazil, unveiling a report on mutual understanding between Gen Z in both countries.

China and LAC countries have a long history of engagement, from Fu Yunlong, a Chinese envoy who visited LAC countries including Peru and Brazil in the late 19th century to Flora Botton Beja, a Mexican professor and Sinologist who has recently won the prestigious inaugural Orchid Award for her contributions to cultural exchange between China and Mexico.

By the end of 2022, 46 Confucius Institutes had been established in LAC countries. Confucius Institutes, named after ancient Chinese philosopher and educator Confucius (551-479 B.C.), are nonprofit public institutions that

help people overseas better understand China by teaching Chinese language and culture at host universities around the world.

Culture, of course, is only part of the story. In the past decade, China has been the LAC region's second largest trading partner. In 2022, their total trade volume reached a new record, exceeding \$450 billion for the second consecutive year. This year marks the 10th anniversary of China's proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to promote connectivity along and beyond ancient Silk Road routes. Twenty-two of the 28 LAC countries that have diplomatic relations with China have signed agreements on Belt and Road cooperation.

In keeping with the principles of peace, cooperation, inclusiveness, and mutual benefit, China-LAC ties have made strides across the board. Now is the best time ever for them to conduct inter-civilizational dialogue. They can exchange ideas on a wide range of issues such as traditional culture, modern civilization, hi-tech and ecological progress, and domestic and global governance. Mutual understanding will go a long way toward ensuring successes in the increasingly diverse partnerships between China and LAC countries. **BR**



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JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90  
TÜRKIYE.....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）

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印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2023年 第39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



# HOW THE UNKNOWN BECOMES KNOWN

The Wide Field Survey Telescope (WFST) Mozi in Lenghu Town, Qinghai Province in northwest China.

The telescope, capable of surveying the entire sky of the Northern Hemisphere, became operational on September 17 in Qinghai Province in northwest China. With a diameter of 2.5 meters, it is now the largest time-domain survey facility in the Northern Hemisphere.

It is named after the ancient Chinese philosopher Mozi, who is believed to be the first person in history to conduct optical experiments.



## A Floating Forte

The Xinghuo water-surface photovoltaic power station of Daqing Oilfield under PetroChina in Daqing, Heilongjiang Province in northeast China on September 19. The power station has an installed capacity of 18.73 megawatts, and its average annual electricity generation is equivalent to that produced by burning 8,400 tons of standard coal, which in turn reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 22,000 tons.

## Rare Diseases

Chinese health authorities have recently compiled the country's second catalog of rare diseases, the National Health Commission announced on September 20.

It contains 86 rare diseases of 17 medical specialties, including hematology, dermatology and pediatrics. With its release, China's catalogs of rare diseases now record 207 diseases.

The catalog provides a legal basis for improving rare disease management, enhancing treatment and safeguarding rare disease patients' rights to health, Zhang Shuyang, President of Peking Union Medical College Hospital, said.

It will guide future work

such as building rare disease treatment capability, boosting the accessibility of medicine and developing a system for protecting patient rights, Zhang added.

The country released its first such catalog in May 2018.

## Skills Competition

China's second Vocational Skills Competition closed on September 19 in Tianjin Municipality in north China, with 393 contestants winning the gold, silver and bronze medals.

The top 10 popular unique skills were also revealed at the closing ceremony. They were selected from 372 projects covering manufacturing, digital technology, art and creativity,

food production, and other categories.

This year's four-day event focused on improving skilled workers' training, use, evaluation and incentive mechanisms.

As the biggest and most high-profile comprehensive national vocational skills competition, the competition has attracted 4,045 contestants and 3,270 judges partaking in 109 competitive events, significantly more than the first competition.

## Robotic Surgery

The International Robotic Surgery Training Center, jointly established by Chinese and U.S. institutions, was inaugurated in Guangzhou, capital of

Guangdong Province in south China, on September 19.

The center was jointly established by the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and the University of California, Berkeley. It will provide training on robotic surgeries to trainees from China, the United States and other Asia-Pacific countries.

The center, covering an area of 1,200 square meters in the Nansha Division of the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University, is equipped with two sets of the state-of-the-art fourth-generation da Vinci Xi surgical robotic system, other devices needed in surgeries, as well as demonstration and broadcasting systems.

The First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University started using da Vinci robotic surgical systems in 2015 and has completed 4,457 robotic surgeries since then.

According to the hospital, compared with traditional endoscopy, robotic surgical systems have unique advantages, including three-dimensional and high-definition vision for operators, as well as dexterous robotic arms. Moreover, the use of robotic surgery systems enables operators to perform surgeries while seated, making them less prone to fatigue.

## Tiangong Class

China livestreamed the fourth lecture from its *Tiangong* space station at on September 21.

The lecture was given by the *Shenzhou-16* astronauts Jing Haipeng, Zhu Yangzhu and Gui Haichao. The lecture was also held as a space-Earth interaction between the crew in space and youth on Earth, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

The astronauts showed and



introduced their working and living scenes in the Mengtian lab module at the *Tiangong* space station.

They also demonstrated various experiments, such as spherical flame and “table tennis” experiments, and those showing the law of momentum conservation.

The astronauts invited their audience to simultaneously carry out experiments to explore the mysteries of the universe and identify differences between experiments on Earth and in space.

As China’s national space laboratory, the *Tiangong* space station plays a pivotal role in science popularization and education. The *Shenzhou-13* and *Shenzhou-14* astronauts crews had given three “*Tiangong* Class” lectures, which received warm responses.

## Geothermal Standard

China released the world’s first geothermal industry standard at the 2023 World Geothermal Congress, which concluded on September 17 in Beijing.

The standard recommends medium-to-low-temperature hydrothermal geothermal heating practices, based on China’s own heating practices.

Previous tests carried out in

Hebei Province in north China have demonstrated that the standard can ensure the sustainable development and usage of geothermal heating projects.

Contributors to the standard include Sinopec Group, the China National Petroleum Corp., Tsinghua University, the China University of Petroleum and the China University of Geosciences.

This is the first year that China has hosted the World Geothermal Congress. The event ran from September 15 to 17 and was themed Clean Geothermal, Green Earth. Over 1,400 guests from 54 countries attended the congress, which was hosted by the National Geothermal Energy Center and organized by Sinopec Group.

## Train-Ticket Sales

China State Railway Group Co. Ltd. (China Railway) said on September 16 it had sold 22.88 million train tickets on September 15, setting a new record for single-day ticket sales.

Of the total, 20.95 million train tickets were sold on China’s official railway ticket-booking website, 12306.cn, and its official app, according to China Railway.

September 15 saw the start of the presale of train tickets



## Of All Stripes

A young girl reaches out to a taxidermy zebra at the Shanghai Natural History Museum in Shanghai, on September 20. Seventy tourist attractions in Shanghai as well as a raft of museums and parks offered a 50-percent discount on admission tickets from September 16 to 22 to boost cultural and tourism consumption.

for the first day of the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holidays, which extend from September 29 to October 6 this year.

Ticket sales volumes reflect both people’s travel demands as well as trends in economic and social development, a China Railway official said, adding that the record-breaking ticket sales on September 15 are indicative of the strong demand for

travel during the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day “golden week” holiday.

China is expected to see 190 million railway trips during the upcoming 12-day travel rush, which lasts from September 27 to October 8. The Mid-Autumn Festival, falling on September 29 this year, is a traditional Chinese Festival usually marked by family reunions, watching the full moon and eating mooncakes.



## All About Avos

Farmers sort avocados at an avocado growing base in Nanya Village of Nayun Town, Menglian County, Yunnan Province in southwest China, on September 20. The county is now the largest avocado growing base in China, with a cumulative growing area exceeding 6,907 hectares.

## Renewable Energy

By the end of August, the installed capacity of solar power in China expanded 44.4 percent year on year to 510 million kilowatt (kW), while that of wind power stood at about 400 million kW, representing a yearly increase of 14.8 percent, data from the National Energy Administration (NEA) shows.

The country's installed power generation capacity totaled about 2.76 billion kW by the end of August, rising 11.9 percent year on year, the NEA said.

China has enhanced its investment in renewable energy over the years as part of its pursuit of green development.

In the first eight months, China's major power companies invested 187.3 billion yuan (\$25.7 billion) in solar power projects, soaring 82.7 percent year on year. Their investment in nuclear and wind power projects reached 52.2 billion yuan (\$7.2 billion) and 114.9 billion yuan (\$15.8

billion), surging by 56.9 percent and 38.7 percent from a year ago, respectively, according to the NEA.

## Postal Industry

From January to August, the revenue of the postal industry expanded 10.4 percent year on year to 970.85 billion yuan (\$133.1 billion), data from the State Post Bureau shows.

In August alone, the revenue went up 10 percent year on year to 122.62 billion yuan (\$16.8 billion), the bureau said.

The postal industry handled 100.96 billion parcels in the first eight months, up 13.1 percent year on year. Among those parcels, 81.46 billion were handled by courier service companies, an increase of 15.9 percent from a year earlier, according to the bureau.

## Forex Settlement Deficit

China's commercial banks saw a net foreign exchange (forex)

settlement deficit of 74.1 billion yuan (\$10.2 billion) in August, narrowing by 30 percent from the month before, official data shows.

In yuan terms, forex purchases by banks stood at 1.39 trillion yuan (\$190.6 billion), while sales reached about 1.46 trillion yuan (\$200.2 billion), according to data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

During the first eight months, forex purchases by banks came in at 10.44 trillion yuan (\$1.4 trillion), and sales totaled 10.6 trillion yuan (\$1.5 trillion).

## Tax Cut

Chinese authorities on September 18 announced a tax cut on the R&D expenses of eligible integrated circuit and machine tool firms between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2027, to spur enterprise-led innovation.

The announcement was jointly made by the Ministry

of Finance, the State Taxation Administration, the National Reform and Development Commission, and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

During the period, these costs, if not covered in the income statement as intangible assets, will be deducted before tax based on 120 percent of the actual amount incurred, in addition to the existing rule that such costs will be deducted before tax, according to the announcement.

If the costs have been taken as intangible assets, they will be amortized at 220 percent as intangible asset costs before tax.

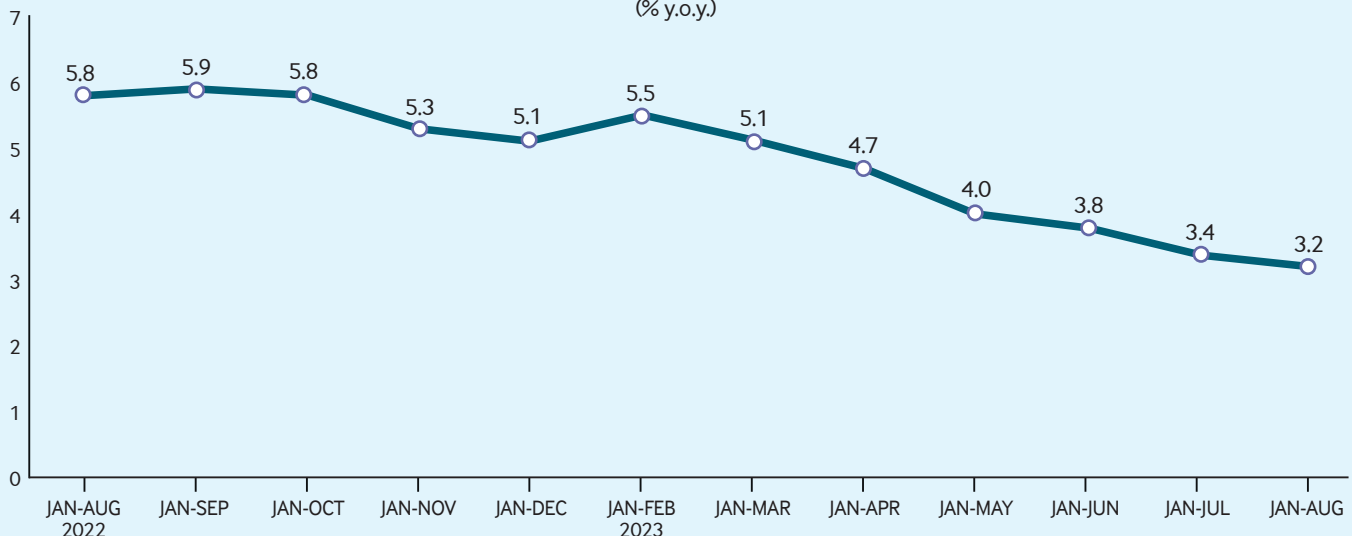
## FDI Inflow

Paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Chinese mainland stood at 847.17 billion yuan (\$116.2 billion) in the first eight months of the year, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said.

The figure decreased 5.1 percent from a year earlier due to the slow pace of the global

## NUMBERS

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





economic recovery and the high base recorded last year, according to the ministry.

During the period, 33,154 new foreign-invested firms were set up across the country, up 33 percent year on year, showing foreign businesses' confidence in long-term investment in China, MOFCOM data shows.

FDI in manufacturing rose 6.8 percent year on year, with that in hi-tech manufacturing up 19.7 percent, indicating an improved quality of Chinese industry in terms of drawing foreign investment.

During the period, FDI from the United Kingdom, Canada, and France surged by 132.6 percent, 111.2 percent, and 105.6 percent, respectively, the data shows.

## Huawei Patents

Chinese tech giant Huawei has obtained more than 120,000 authorized patents worldwide, the company said at an intellectual property forum on September 19.

The large patent holder attributed the achievement to its long-term commitment to research and development. Over the past 10 years, its accumulated research and development (R&D) expenditure has reached 977.3 billion yuan (\$134 billion), Wang Jianfeng, head of the company's Public and Government Affairs Department, said at the 12th China Intellectual Property Annual Conference from September 19 to 20 in Jinan, Shandong Province in east China.

In 2022 alone, Huawei's R&D investment reached 161.5 billion yuan (\$22.1 billion), equal to a quarter of its sales revenue, according to Wang. Huawei ranks fourth among global tech enterprises in R&D spending.

The company also likes sharing its innovations with the world. Wang said Huawei has been the largest open-source contributor in Asia, with several of its operating system projects benefiting thousands of developers and users.

## Economic Recovery

The Chinese economy gained stronger traction in August, evident in positive indicators such as robust factory production and improving consumer sentiment. These encouraging signs point toward a steady recovery.

Value-added industrial output went up 4.5 percent year on year in August, higher than the 3.7 percent recorded in July, and retail sales of consumer goods reported a quicker 4.6-percent increase after a slowdown lasting three consecutive months, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows.

The service sector also gathered steam as its production index went up 6.8 percent, 1.1 percentage points faster than the previous month.

The surveyed urban jobless rate was 5.2 percent, lower than the 5.3 percent recorded in July.

Services emerged as an important growth driver. In the first eight months, service

consumption surged 19.4 percent from a year ago, driven by contact-based services, in particular the hospitality sector.

Investment in key fields maintained rapid expansion as funds put into infrastructure and manufacturing rose 6.4 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively, in the January-August period.

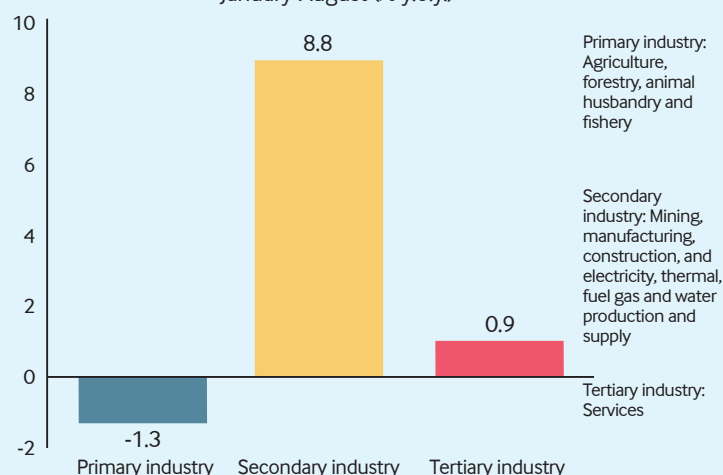
Consumer prices resumed growth in August and the decline of producer prices narrowed for two months in a row, indicating better supply-demand balance.

In August, the output of service robots and civil aircraft surged 73.7 percent and 33.3 percent, respectively, suggesting strengthened innovation impetus.

The rapid development of new-energy vehicles, clean energy and the digital economy are evidence of the country's expedited drive for environmental sustainability, NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui told a press conference on September 15.

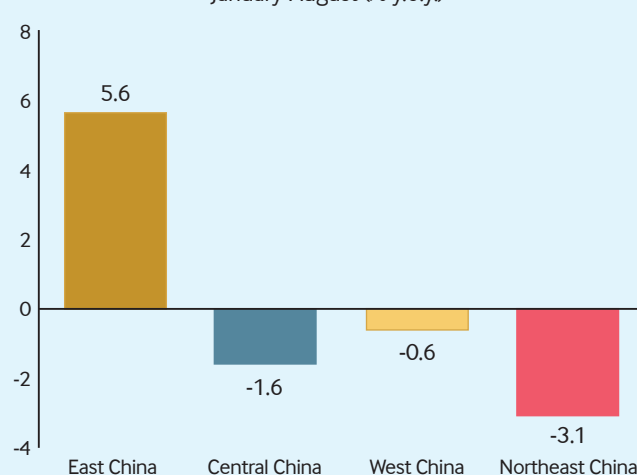
Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Sector

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



Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Region

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



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



## UNITED NATIONS

Secretary General António Guterres (on stage and on screen) speaks at the opening of the General Debate of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York on September 19



## SPAIN

A visitor tests the Huawei Watch GT 4 series during Huawei's new product launch event in Barcelona on September 14



## SOUTH AFRICA

The Seventh China (South Africa) Trade Fair in Johannesburg on September 20. The event ran from September 20 to 22





## BANGLADESH

A health worker collects a blood sample from a boy for a dengue test at a hospital in Dhaka on September 18. As of that date, the country had reported 170,768 dengue cases including more than 800 deaths so far this year



## THE PHILIPPINES

A volunteer collects rubbish during an activity to mark International Coastal Cleanup Day along the coast of Manila Bay in Manila on September 16



## MEXICO

Soldiers participate in a military parade for the country's 213th Independence Day at the Zocalo Square in Mexico City on September 16



# THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

## ↓ WRESTLING CHAMPION

Freestyle wrestler **Zhang Qi** won a gold medal for China in the women's 59-kg competition at the 2023 World Wrestling Championships in Belgrade, Serbia, on September 19.

Zhang defeated Yulia Tkach of Ukraine 4-1 to claim the title. Zhang's gold medal was China's first at the championships, which took place from September 16 to 24.

Born in Baishan City in Jilin Province in 1998, Zhang was trained as a runner as a teenager and later was chosen to train in wrestling at the provincial sports school. In 2016, she was selected to join the national wrestling team.

Inaugurated in 1904, the World Wrestling Championships is an annual international event. China ranked number 11 on the all-time medal table at the time of writing, and sent 30 wrestlers to compete in this year's championships.



## Time-Traveling Trains

**Beijing Evening News**  
**September 15**

One month after its first trial run, a special "time-travel train" went into operation on Beijing Subway Line 1 on September 12.

Running across the west side of the city, the train comprises six compartments that each represent a different era from the 1960s to the present. Featuring green faux leather seats, vintage oscillating electric fans and chestnut-brown floorings, the first and rear compartments of the train take passengers back to the 1960s and 1970s. The second and fifth compartments recreate the red plastic

benches from the 1980s and 1990s. As passengers enter the middle part of the train, which is decorated with all kinds of smart devices, they arrive in the 21st century.

The fact that this train is running on Line 1 carries a great deal of historical significance. On October 1, 1969, Line 1, China's first subway line, went into operation. From then on, a domestic system of underground rails has gradually expanded across the country. Today, the capital has 27 subway lines stretching over 807 km. Extending its reach to every part of the capital like a vascular network, Beijing Subway is a longstanding witness to the city's evolution.



## Rescuing Real Estate

**China Newsweek**  
**September 4**

Financial regulators released a set of measures to prop up the country's property sector in August, including reducing minimum down payment. Covering almost all Chinese cities, these new policies are the second nationwide attempt at boosting domestic demand by stimulating the housing market, the first being a campaign launched during the global financial crisis in 2008.

Real estate has long been one

**"China is still the biggest growth market in the world."**

**Darren Hulst**, Vice President of Marketing for Boeing Commercial Airplanes, as the American company recently released its latest forecast saying China is expected to receive one fifth of the world's new commercial airplane deliveries over the next 20 years

**"I want to tell all girls who love football that it's more than a competition; it's a lifestyle."**

**Wang Shuang**, a female soccer star and a key player for Team China, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency ahead of the Hangzhou Asian Games

of China's most important economic pillars. However, the sector has seen continuously slowing growth over the past few years. According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, between January and July, 660 million square meters of property were sold nationwide, down 6.5 percent from last year. As many experts have observed, real estate businesses have been trapped in a vicious cycle in which slumping property sales result in debt failures, which in turn lead to project shutdowns. In recent years, unfinished buildings have popped up in major cities.

In the latter half of 2022, the authorities offered special loans through banks to help ease ailing real estate companies' debt burdens and ensure the sound delivery of housing projects. However, this kind of financial support can serve only as a temporary relief, not a long-term solution.

As for the recent drop of down payment and mortgage rates, the extent to which these new measures will turn the tide remains unknown. Nevertheless, many believe that they are a good place to start.

## 3D-Printed Fraud

**Qianjiang Evening News**  
September 14

In an attempt to recreate the classic mask reveal scene in *Mission: Impossible*, a Chinese online influencer purchased a customized 3D-printed face piece that looks exactly like his own face. As shown in his videos, the hyper-realistic replica can not only unlock cellphones and mobile payment apps, but also slip through facial-recognition payment systems installed in supermarkets. Having garnered over 2 million views, these videos have both captivated and unsettled many netizens, who are worried about the possible use of 3D printing in cyber fraud.

In fact, this much-feared scenario has

already become a reality. According to a case report published by a local court in Sichuan Province, an organized group of criminals, having acquired a picture of a stranger's face, created a three-dimensional face mask of the victim and logged into his bank account, from which they drew 24,000 yuan (\$3,288).

In the current age of facial recognition, the protection of personal data has become an increasingly important issue. While the face-printing technology does have obvious application for prop-making in movies and theatrical performances, it needs to be kept within legal boundaries. Therefore, authorities and online platforms should co-create a set of standards to ensure that no masks are created without explicit consent from the owner of the face.

## ↓ GOLDEN PANDA BEST ACTOR

Argentine actor **Nahuel Pérez Biscayart** won the Best Actor in a Leading Role Award at the inaugural Golden Panda Awards on September 20.

Pérez Biscayart won the honor for his role as Gilles in the film *Persian Lessons*, a 2020 German-Russian-Belarusian war drama about a young Jewish man in a concentration camp trying to stay alive. He was born in Buenos Aires in 1986. He won a French César award, France's equivalent to the Oscars, for playing an AIDS activist in the 2017 movie *BPM (Beats per Minute)*.



The global event to honor outstanding international film and TV works took place in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on September 19-20. Twenty-five awards in four categories—including film, TV drama, documentary and animation—were presented.

“Huawei is committed to laying a solid groundwork for China's computing power and offering the world a second option.”

**Meng Wanzhou**, rotating Chair of telecom giant Huawei Technologies, at the Huawei Connect 2023 conference in Shanghai on September 20

“We can tell ancient civilization stories together.”

**Eltayeb Sayed Abass Adris**, Assistant Minister for Archaeological Affairs at the Grand Egyptian Museum, at the Third Shanghai International Art and Science Forum on September 15



COVER STORY

# BRIDGING THE DISTANCE

Exchange and cooperation are vital to China-LAC relations

By Ma Miaomiao

Shipyard workers visit the state-of-the-art China-built floating dry dock in Havana, Cuba, on October 30, 2019

‘Venezuela is going to the Moon!’ Gabriela Jimenez, Venezuela’s Vice President and Minister of Science and Technology, wrote in an X (then known as Twitter) post in July, after the country became the first in the Americas to join the China-initiated International Lunar Research Station program.

When meeting with visiting Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros in Beijing on

September 13, Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated the country for deciding to join the program.

Noting China attaches great importance to the development of relations with countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region and that next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the China-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Forum, Xi said China is ready to work with Venezuela and other countries in the region to promote cooperation and build a community with a shared future.

Back in January, when addressing the Seventh Summit of the CELAC in Buenos Aires, Argentina,

via video link, Xi called LAC countries important members of the developing world and said they take an active part in global governance and make important contributions to it. CELAC has grown to be an indispensable driving force behind global South-South cooperation, Xi said, adding that the intergovernmental mechanism for dialogue and political cooperation has played an important role in safeguarding regional peace, promoting common