

# BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.66 NO.3 JANUARY 19, 2023

北方周报 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



## AT LONG LAST

COVID-19 restrictions eased across the nation



# 济南国际机场

## Jinan International Airport

RMB6.00  
 USD1.70  
 AUD3.00  
 GBP1.20  
 CAD2.60  
 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

# Follow CICG Americas

And get in on the conversation



BeijingReview



BeijingReview



@BeijingReview



China Hoy



China Hoje



# CONTENTS

## EDITOR'S DESK

**02 Back to Normal**

## THIS WEEK

## COVER STORY

**12 Portrait of a Pandemic**  
COVID-19 as it happened

**18 Preparing for Takeoff**  
Relaxed restrictions for travelers

## OPINION

**24 Instability Must Be Met With Unity**  
Facing the challenges to come

**Cover Photo:** A girl awaits the return of her mother from the Republic of Korea at Jinan International Airport in Jinan, Shandong Province, on January 9 (VCG)

©2023 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.

## 26 Getting Chinese Modernization Right

Understanding the national path for prosperity

**28 Propping Up Property?**  
Modest demand recovery is in the cards

## FEATURES

**30 Scaling New Heights**  
RCEP is helping rebuild economies

**34 Guardian Angels**  
Beijing hospital keeps a cool head amid Omicron wave

**36 A Tale of Two Doctors**  
Managing COVID-19 infection in the countryside

**38 Mission Possible**  
Anti-desertification push gets results in Xinjiang

## 40 Off the Wall

Muralist gives his rural hometown a makeover

## 42 From Ecuador to China

Strengthening ties through academia and diplomacy

## CULTURE

### 46 A Ballet of Light and Shadow

Traditional art form recaptures past splendor

## EXPAT'S EYE

### 48 Helping Public Health

How China came to Sri Lanka's aid in dire times



www.bjreview.com



amazon

Follow us on



YouTube

BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader



Please recycle



# EDITOR'S DESK



## BEIJING REVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine  
Published Since 1958

**President:** Li Yafang  
**Editor in Chief:** Li Jianguo  
**Associate President:** Yan Ying  
**Associate Editor in Chief:** Liu Yunyun

**Executive Editor:** Yan Wei  
**Associate Executive Editor:** Ding Ying  
**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 Wenhan, Li Xiaoyang, Liang Xiao, Lu Yan, Ma Miaomiao, Pan Xiaogao, Peng Jiawei, Tang Yuankai, Tao Xing, Tao Zihui, Wang Jun, Wang Ruohan, Yuan Yuan, Zhang Shasha

**Visual Director:** Pamela Tobey  
**Photo Editor:** Wang Xiang  
**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 Deputy Director:** Li Fangfang  
**Director of Digital Media:** Yu Shujun  
**Director of Strategic Research:** Zan Jifang

**Administration:** Lu Ling  
**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:** 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

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.

## Back to Normal

China reopened its borders on January 8 in a final farewell to COVID-induced restrictions. The country scrapped quarantine requirements for overseas arrivals as it is no longer managing COVID-19 with measures designed for the most dangerous infectious diseases, e.g., the bubonic plague and cholera.

After three years of strict COVID-19 management, the country is now resuming normal life. The nationwide daily hustle and bustle and crowds livening up the urban landscape are becoming common sights once again.

Many have worked on the frontlines in the fight against the virus, including medical workers, vaccine developers and community volunteers. Other members of society have also contributed their bit as they stood united and abided by pandemic control rules, even when this happened at the cost of convenience and economic opportunity, to protect people's lives. History will remember all they have done and the sacrifices they have made for the greater good.

But now the time has come for a change. Considering factors such as the development of the pandemic, including the scientific evaluation of the Omicron variant,

which showed the virus had become less deadly, the increase in vaccination levels, and extensive prevention and treatment experience, China has entered a new phase of COVID-19 response.

The focus is on protecting people's health and preventing severe cases. Senior citizens, pregnant women, children and patients with chronic, underlying diseases have received special attention as hospitals and clinics across the nation do everything in their power to deliver the care these people need.

And with the country's travel restrictions lifted, worldwide people-to-people exchanges as well as investment and trade are revving up. Though international travel may not immediately return to pre-pandemic levels, companies, industries and countries that rely on Chinese tourists will surely get a boost in 2023. On January 9, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul went to the airport to welcome tourists from China.

One of the lessons the pandemic has taught us is the importance of solidarity and collaboration. Going forward, countries must all team up to secure a shared future. **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 闫颖 杨琪 刘云云 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3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



# ALL ABOARD!

Passengers wait in line to board a train at the Tianjin West Railway Station in Tianjin Municipality on January 7, the first day of the Chinese New Year (or Spring Festival) travel rush, also known as *chunyun* in Chinese.

The travel rush sees many Chinese return to their hometowns to reunite with their families for the Chinese New Year, which falls on January 22 this year. This year's rush will last 40 days and is the first since China adjusted its pandemic control policies in late 2022.

The number of passenger trips during this period is expected to surge 99.5 percent from the same period last year to reach nearly 2.1 billion, according to official estimations.



## A Winter's Tale

Tourists enjoy a horse-drawn sleigh ride in Beiji Village of Mohe, Heilongjiang Province, on January 10. Known as “China’s North Pole,” Mohe has an annual ice and snow period of up to eight months, with the lowest temperature reaching minus 50 degrees Celsius.

## Weather Forecasting Accuracy

The China Meteorological Administration announced on January 9 it would focus on improving the accuracy of its weather forecasting in 2023.

While ensuring full coverage of all types of meteorological disasters and terrains in its forecasts, the administration will ramp up its monitoring of imminent weather events using technologies such as artificial intelligence and multi-source information fusion. It will also improve its related warning procedures.

The administration will place emphasis on providing weather forecasts for unique climate during specific seasonal periods

in key regions, as well as predicting global climate anomalies, it said.

China has made continued efforts to build an intelligent weather forecasting system that is updated in real time and at a high resolution.

According to the administration, it can warn the public of severe weather events such as storms, extreme winds, hail and heavy rain 42 minutes in advance and has a 91-percent accuracy rate for rainstorm forecasts.

## Hydrogen Power Test Center

The National Hydrogen Power Quality Inspection and Testing Center, an organization dedicated to boosting the development

of China’s hydrogen fuel cell vehicle industry, began operation on January 9 in Chongqing Municipality.

With a total investment of 500 million yuan (\$73.8 million), the center covers an area of 12.67 hectares with labs for hydrogen-powered vehicles, hydrogen fuel cells and power assemblies.

It can provide testing services for the whole industrial chain, including hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, critical auto parts and hydrogen quality.

The center, the first of its kind in China, was established by China Automotive Engineering Research Institute Co. Ltd.

In recent years, Chongqing has ramped up efforts to promote the development of the hydrogen fuel cell vehicle

industry, with a number of auto-makers rolling out car models and key supporting enterprises establishing themselves there.

The city has cooperated with neighboring Sichuan Province to build a “hydrogen corridor,” under which around 1,000 hydrogen fuel cell logistics vehicles are expected to enter service by 2025.

## Urban Rail Transit Network

The combined length of rail transit lines in use in 55 cities on the Chinese mainland had reached 10,291.95 km by the end of 2022, Xinhua News Agency reported on January 8, quoting industry data.

Metro lines accounted for 77.85 percent of the total length, data from the China Association of Metros revealed, with the other portion made up of rapid transit systems such as Shanghai’s maglev train as well as tram networks.

In 2022 alone, Chinese cities put 1,085.17 km of rail transit lines into operation, nearly half of which were opened in the fourth quarter.

Metro networks accounted for 74.01 percent of the new lines opened last year, followed by rail rapid transit systems and tram networks with 19.57 percent and 5.64 percent, respectively, the association said.

Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province and Shenzhen in Guangdong Province added the longest urban rail transit lines in 2022, while five other cities across China started operating rail transit systems last year.

## Firecracker Ban

Beijing will continue to ban fireworks throughout the city during the Spring Festival holiday from January 21 to 27,

Xinhua reported on January 6, quoting municipal authorities.

According to Beijing's regulations on fireworks safety management, fireworks are strictly banned within the Fifth Ring Road. District authorities outside the Fifth Ring Road have been empowered to designate areas where fireworks are banned or restricted.

Banned areas outside the Fifth Ring Road have seen continuous expansion since 2020. Beijing has implemented a citywide ban on fireworks since the beginning of 2022, the office of the Beijing municipal fireworks safety management coordination group said.

Since September 2022, Beijing police have been conducting a special operation to crack down on illegal sales and use of fireworks, punishing 147 people and confiscating 3,410 boxes of fireworks.

## Solar Data

A China-developed space-borne solar camera studying the solar transition region released its first group of scientific data on January 11.

The 46.5-nanometer extreme-ultraviolet imager or Solar Upper Transition Region Imager (SUTRI), mounted on SATech-01

satellite, was launched into space on July 27, 2022.

Starting operation on August 30, 2022, SUTRI obtained over 200,000 pictures within four months. The data released in its first group were acquired between September 5 and November 5 last year.

SUTRI is the first solar imager in the world to work at a wavelength of 40 to 110 nanometers based on a multilayer narrow-band filtering technique, according to the National Astronomical Observatories of China under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The device is capable of taking full-disk dynamic pictures of solar regions between the solar chromosphere and corona, thus building a key bridge for solar scientists for the lower atmosphere and higher one on the sun.

## Archaeological Discovery

Archaeologists in Henan Province have uncovered a sprawling layer of mulberry and cypress branches, believed to be the foundation of an ancient city wall.

Covering an area of nearly 400 square meters in the city



## Spring Fever

Residents select decorations for the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, which falls on January 22 this year, at a market in Bozhou, Anhui Province on January 9.

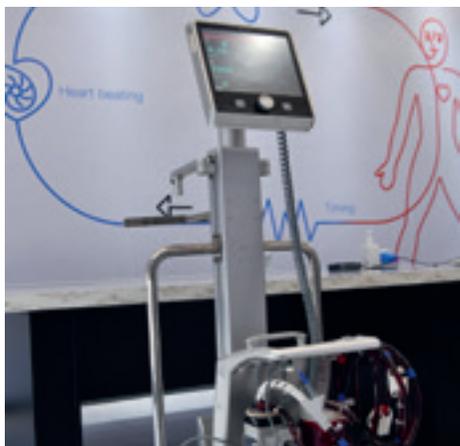
of Shangqiu, the branches are dated to the Song Dynasty (960-1279), according to the city's institute of cultural relics and archaeology.

The branches are believed to have been used to reinforce the foundation, as they were found below the rammed earth slope protection of the city wall and above a layer of soil, Yue Hongbin, head of the institute, said.

"[The discovery] indicates

there was a layer of soft soil underneath when the wall was built. Without tree branches, the rammed earth of the wall would have sunk or cracked," Yue said, hailing the ancient wisdom behind the design.

Researchers said the 1,000-year-old branches are relatively well preserved as they are buried 10 meters underground and protected by the red clay soil created by flooding of the Yellow River.



## Homegrown Medical Device

China's first homegrown extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) device on show in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, on January 6. China's National Medical Products Administration said on January 5 it had given emergency approval to the device and its accompanying kit. The ECMO device can take over the functions of a patient's heart and lungs when they suffer severe failure of these organs.

# THIS WEEK ECONOMY

## Tax Exemption

China will exempt small businesses with monthly sales of 100,000 yuan (\$14,740) or less from value-added tax (VAT) throughout 2023, according to finance and taxation authorities.

The Ministry of Finance and the State Taxation Administration also specified tax relief policies for taxpayers engaged in producer services such as postal and telecom services.

As part of efforts to support economic growth, China has carried out a wide range of tax and fee cuts over the years. In 2022, the country implemented record high VAT credit refunds, which totaled roughly 2.4 trillion yuan (\$353.76 billion)

## ChiNext IPOs

The initial public offerings of 150 companies on ChiNext, China's Nasdaq-style board of growth enterprises, raised 179.64 billion yuan (\$26.48 billion) in 2022, data from the Shenzhen Stock

Exchange showed.

By January 9, the number of listed companies on the ChiNext board reached 1,232, with total market capitalization exceeding 11 trillion yuan (\$1.62 trillion), the data revealed.

Forty companies went public on Shenzhen's main board last year, raising 31.88 billion yuan (\$4.7 billion).

In 2022, Shenzhen-listed companies completed 235 refinancing deals, raising 332.29 billion yuan (\$48.98 billion). They also completed 43 major asset reorganization deals, with transaction value reaching 161.13 billion yuan (\$23.75 billion).

## Carmaker Shifts Gears

Hongqi, a car brand under China's leading automobile manufacturer FAW Group Co. Ltd., will accelerate its expansion in the overseas high-end market with a focus on the European region, the company said on

January 9.

The brand will establish more than 700 experience sites, over 1,000 service stores and 600,000 charging terminals in overseas countries, the company said.

Hongqi, meaning red flag in Chinese, has grown into an iconic trademark of China since its establishment in 1958 through years of limo services for national ceremonial events. The brand achieved sales of 310,000 units in 2022, up 3 percent year on year.

It now plans to boost overseas sales to account for more than 10 percent of its total sales by 2025 and 25 percent of total sales by 2030.

According to the company, Hongqi aims to achieve total sales of more than 1 million units by 2025, including over 500,000 units of new-energy vehicles (NEVs). By 2030, sales are expected to exceed 1.5 million units, with NEVs being the majority.

## Gas Pipeline

The China-Central Asia Gas Pipeline supplied 43.2 billion cubic meters of natural gas to China in 2022, according to PipeChina West Pipeline Co.

Currently, the pipeline transports around 100 million cubic meters of natural gas per day. By late 2022, it had delivered 423.2 billion cubic meters of natural gas to China since it first entered operation in 2009.

Its highest daily transport volume exceeded 163 million cubic meters, the company said.

As China's first transnational gas pipeline, it runs from the border of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, passes through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and links up with China's West-to-East Gas Pipeline in Khorgas, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The pipeline has provided gas to more than 500 million residents in 27 provincial-level regions of the Chinese mainland

## NUMBERS

(\$1=6.76 yuan as of January 12)

### China's Service Outsourcing Industry in January-November

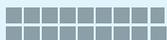
(All growth rates are y.o.y.)

#### Service outsourcing contracts inked by Chinese firms

Total value



Up 17.9%



Executed contract value



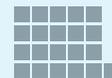
Up 11.4%



Offshore service outsourcing contract value



Up 21.0%



#### Service outsourcing executed contract value

With members of the RCEP



With the United States  
154.2 bln yuan



With the European Union  
90.1 bln yuan



and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

## Civil Aviation Upturn

The civil aviation industry is expected to rebound to around 75 percent of its pre-pandemic level in 2023, Song Zhiyong, head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, said on January 6.

The sector also aims to break even amid a solid recovery this year, Song added.

Total air transport turnover in 2022 recovered to 46.3 percent of the pre-pandemic level.

Last year saw 250 million passenger trips and some 6.08 million tons of cargo and mail transported by air, according to Song.

China built or relocated eight airports in 2022, lifting its number of cargo airports to 254 and that of general airports to 399.

## Trade in Services

Total value of China's trade in services went up 15.6 percent

year on year in the first 11 months of 2022, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

It stood at more than 5.4 trillion yuan (\$795.96 billion), according to the ministry's spokesperson Shu Jueting.

Exports expanded 15.5 percent year on year to 2.58 trillion yuan (\$380.29 billion) in the reporting period, while imports totaled over 2.82 trillion yuan (\$415.67 billion), up 15.6 percent from a year ago, resulting in a deficit of 237.62 billion yuan (\$35.03 billion).

Trade in knowledge-intensive services raked in nearly 2.25 trillion yuan (\$331.65 billion) in the first 11 months of 2022, up 10.1 percent year on year, Shu said.

Their exports gained 13.4 percent to hit over 1.26 trillion yuan (\$185.72 billion), led by categories such as intellectual property royalties and computing and information services.

Travel services continued to recover in the period, as trade in

this sector advanced 8.2 percent from a year earlier to over 758 billion yuan (\$111.73 billion), according to Shu.

## Central SOE Income

Centrally administered state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are likely to see a steady expansion in revenue and profit in 2022, the country's top state assets regulator said on January 5.

The combined annual revenues of the companies, which are under the direct regulation of the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC), are expected to climb 8.3 percent year on year to 39.4 trillion yuan (\$5.8 trillion), according to the commission.

Their profits during the period are estimated to hit 2.55 trillion yuan (\$375.87 billion), up 5.5 percent from the previous year.

By late November 2022, the average debt-to-asset ratio

of centrally administered SOEs stood at 64.9 percent, down 0.2 percentage points from a year earlier.

## Railway Cargo

China's railway cargo delivery volume reached 3.9 billion tons in 2022, up 4.7 percent year on year, according to the national railway operator.

Railway cargo services raked in 478.6 billion yuan (\$70.55 billion) last year, rising 9.8 percent over 2021, data from China State Railway Group Co. Ltd. showed.

China saw some 4,100 km of new railway lines go into operation in 2022, with more than half of these high-speed railways.

This year, the national railway operator estimates overall transportation revenue will rebound to the pre-pandemic level.

Over 3,000 km of new railway lines will enter service in 2023, with 2,500 km of these high-speed railways.

### Executed contract value of outsourcing services

Of private enterprises

Of foreign-funded enterprises

220.7 bln yuan

313.8 bln yuan

31.1%

of the total

44.2%

of the total



In January-November 2022

14.84 mln people

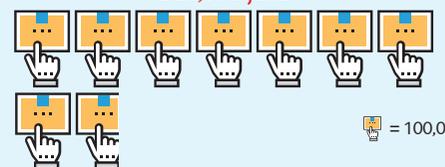


worked in China's service outsourcing industry

⚙️ = 1 mln

The industry added

880,000 jobs



🖥️ = 100,000

(Source: Ministry of Commerce)

# THIS WEEK **WORLD**



## BELGIUM

Revelers pose in costumes ahead of the annual New Year's Dive in Ostend on January 7. Diving into the North Sea is seen as a refreshing and healthy way to begin the new year



## UGANDA

People examine the wreckage of a bus on the Kampala-Gulu Highway on January 6. The bus crashed into a stationary truck that day, killing at least 16 people



## UNITED STATES

People visit the booth of Chinese appliance and electronics brand Hisense at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas on January 6



## BENIN

Voters check the electoral list at a polling station in Abomey on January 8, the day the country held parliamentary elections



## BRAZIL

Supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro gather near Brazil's Congress building in Brasilia on January 8. Some protesters stormed the presidential palace, the Congress and the Supreme Court in the capital city that day. Authorities later regained control of the main government buildings



## JAPAN

A chef examines a 212-kg bluefin tuna that sold for 36.04 million yen (\$273,000) in Tokyo's New Year's tuna auction on January 5. The annual event takes place at the city's Toyosu Fish Market



## TABLE TENNIS' NEW MATCH

**Li Sun** has been appointed head coach of China's national table tennis team.

Li, 59, started his sports career in 1977 and began coaching Team China in the 1990s. As a trainer, he has mentored Grand Slam winners Wang Nan, Zhang Yining and Li Xiaoxia. He has been head coach of the country's women's team since 2017.

He was on the list of coaching staffs for the national team at the Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil, in 2016 and Tokyo, Japan, in 2021.

World champion Wang Hao was named men's head coach and Olympic gold medalist Ma Lin was appointed head coach of the women's squad. Veteran trainer Xiao Zhan will lead the mixed-doubles team.



## The Rise of Bathing Assistants

**Guangzhou Daily**  
January 6

Chronic pain, restricted mobility and cognitive impairment are tough realities that older adults with disabilities have to live with. These conditions all contribute to the challenges that physically or mentally handicapped seniors encounter when bathing.

In answer to this need, recent years have seen the rise of professional bathing assistants, a new type of healthcare worker that helps the elderly take baths and showers.

Despite strong demands for assisted

bathing services, certain worries do exist. Some seniors consider bathing assistance as an intrusion on their privacy, while some young adults fear that hiring professionals to help bathe their parents may seem to violate the codes of filial piety.

The gradual formation of new consumer habits is an enduring process that cannot be rushed. It takes time for people, when presented with something new, to pass from the stage of resistance, to acceptance, then to recognition, and finally arrive at active participation.

Bathing assistants are just one point on the increasingly extended spectrum of personalized senior care. With new services constantly emerging, life for these handicapped seniors will hopefully be more dignified.



## Small Budget, Big Business

**China Newsweek**  
December 26, 2022

Live-streams featuring real-time interaction between hosts and viewers on short video platforms have become the new vogue in China. According to data released by the China Internet Network Information Center, the number of short video platform users grew from 648 million in 2019 to 962 million in 2022—equivalent to 91.5 percent of the country's total Internet users.

The rapid expansion of short video

“In terms of contributions to the global fight against the pandemic, China has provided significant assistance to other countries through donations of medical support, equipment and other forms of aid.”

**Bilal Ahmad**, a public health scientist at Pakistan's Central Care, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“Without today's China, even the U.S. cannot develop its own economy well. The basic consensus should be that Japan, the U.S. and China, along with the rest of the world, are a community of shared interests.”

**Yasuo Fukuda**, former Japanese Prime Minister, in a recent interview with Japanese newspaper *Mainichi Shimbun*

platforms means that everybody, not just influencers, has the opportunity to show their personalities, insights and capabilities online. This not only allows obscure artists and entertainers to become widely recognized and adored, but also brings endangered arts and crafts back into the spotlight.

Live commerce, a new type of e-commerce sales offering live updates, is the mainstay of China's live-stream market. The opening of online channels has helped turn the tide for many traditional manufacturing businesses, which saw dwindling sales during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once hampered by the pandemic, these companies have set up live broadcasts, boosting their sales.

Apart from live commerce, online streaming has been applied to an increasingly diversified range of settings, which include professional training lessons, career fairs, and virtual room tours for real estate businesses. Online streaming forges new alliances between different industries and facilitates interactions between individuals—between sellers and buyers, performers and members of the audience, teachers and students, recruiters and candidates, who can all come together to reshape the country's digital economy.

## Shorter Workweek

**Rednet.cn**  
**January 5**

On January 3, LeEco, a Chinese conglomerate specializing in video streaming and consumer technology, announced the inauguration of a four-and-half-day weekly work model, granting its employees an extra half day off every Wednesday. Many netizens now hail the company as one of the best employers in China's Internet sector.

With the rapid expansion of Chinese Internet companies has come the rise of a "wolf culture," which encourages employees to maintain a fiercely competitive work spirit and work a nine-to-nine, Monday-to-Saturday work schedule, colloquially

known as "996."

While pursuing maximum profits, these companies should also be committed to promoting employee wellbeing. A better work-life balance can bring multiple benefits. On top of increased productivity and heightened motivation, employees now have more quality time to not only be with loved ones, but also improve their skill sets through self-directed learning and training. These small individual progresses will ultimately contribute to the sustainable growth of the company.

Therefore, LeEco's new work model suggests a new way forward—not just for the Internet industry, but for the entire country. Only when productivity is completely unleashed can the country gather full momentum as it forges ahead on its unique path toward modernization.



### Spokesperson Moves to Border Role

Ex-Foreign Ministry spokesman **Zhao Lijian** has been appointed deputy head of the ministry's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs.

Born in 1972, Zhao joined the foreign service in 1996. He worked in the ministry's Asia Department and served in different roles at Chinese embassies in the U.S. and Pakistan. He became deputy head of the ministry's Information Department in August 2019. He had been a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since February 2020.

The function at the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs includes developing policies concerning land and maritime boundaries, managing land boundary delimitation and demarcation and conducting joint inspections with neighboring countries.



**"For those countries in our region introducing precautionary travel measures at this time, we are calling for these to be rooted in science, to be proportionate and non-discriminatory."**

**Hans Kluge**, Regional Director for Europe of the World Health Organization (WHO), in a statement released on the WHO's official website on January 10

**"Chinese enterprises are now eager to venture outside [China's borders]."**

**Shi Yonghong**, Vice President of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, in a recent interview with Xinhua



COVER STORY

# PORTRAIT OF A PANDEMIC

Looking back on three years of COVID-19 in China By Liang Xiao