

FEATURES: Q3 GROWTH EXCEEDS FORECAST P.32 | CULTURE: ENCHANTING XINJIANG P.44

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.66 NO.44 NOVEMBER 2, 2023

北方周末 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM

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Time to scale up mental
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AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914239

4 43

邮发代号2-922 • 国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2

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Cover Design: Cui Xiaodong

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EDITOR'S DESK

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BEIJING REVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine
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North America Bureau (New York City)

Chief: Yu Shujun
Executive Assistant: Zhao Wei
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: yushujun@cicgamericas.com
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Chief: Lin Yeqing
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoyamx@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 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

Mental Health Matters

Mental health issues have attracted increasing attention from both the Chinese Government and all sectors of society. World Mental Health Day, which falls on October 10 every year, sees diverse activities hosted across China, aiming to raise awareness of how to manage these issues and encourage self-esteem, confidence and optimism.

As the pace of life accelerates and work pressure increases, many people say they're feeling "stressed out." In January, nearly 100 members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Shanghai Municipal Committee, the local political advisory body, jointly submitted a proposal on improving mental care services in Shanghai. Political advisors' proposals inform the government's decision-making. According to the figures they provided, one in five people in Shanghai suffer from insomnia, anxiety, depression, social phobia or other psychological disorders.

The report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2022, which outlines the Party's priorities for the next five years, pledged to emphasize mental and psychological health as part of the Healthy China initiative. The initiative serves as a guideline for the promotion of public

health and the country's move toward higher wellness standards.

China has a fledgling mental healthcare system. For example, many hospitals have specialized psychiatric departments. Employers are called on to help employees cope with high work pressures through psychological assistance.

For children and adolescents, schools are required to strengthen health education. There are special requirements on care for rural children whose parents work in cities far away from home, suicide prevention for college students, and psychological trauma intervention for children and adolescents who have been bullied. For seniors, then, the focus is on psychological counseling, stress reduction and family dispute mediation.

As China moves to a more advanced stage of economic and social development and as the number of people with mental conditions continues to rise, there will be a greater demand for mental health services. As a result, the existing capacity is far from sufficient, the number of professionals is small, and management lags behind. Therefore, the country must continue to explore new models of delivering mental healthcare and make it more accessible to all those in need. **BR**



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JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
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NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位：中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位：中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）

地址：北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编：100037

编委会：李雅芳 李建国 贺鹏 刘云云 高丁博 曾文卉

主任：李雅芳

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

印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2023年 第44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



OFF THEY GO!

The *Shenzhou-17* manned spacecraft atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on October 26. The three taikonauts, or Chinese astronauts, on board are on a space station mission that will take about six months.

The *Shenzhou-17* crew, Tang Hongbo, Tang Shengjie and Jiang Xinlin, has the youngest lineup since in-orbit construction of China's *Tiangong* space station first started in 2021.



Time to Get Moving

The stadium of the Xiongan sports center is under construction in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province in north China, on October 24.

National Data Administration

China inaugurated the National Data Administration on October 25 to advance the planning and building of a Digital China, the digital economy and a digital society.

The administration is also responsible for fostering the construction of data infrastructure and coordinating the integration, sharing, development and application of data resources, according to a plan on reforming Party and state institutions released by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council in March.

Court Case

Chinese courts concluded 23.51 million cases in the first nine months of this year, 6.67 percent

more than in the same period last year, the Supreme People's Court (SPC), the country's top court, said on October 24.

Courts nationwide accepted 25.79 million cases from January to September, a 9.12 percent increase from the previous year, according to the SPC.

The courts mediated 11.83 million cases prior to litigation procedures from January to September, 26.58 percent more than in 2022, with 7.82 million of those cases resolved before litigation, according to the SPC.

It also noted that more cases related to intellectual property rights (IPR) were accepted by courts during the period, with 371,000 first-instance IPR cases accepted, an increase of 1.61 percent from the previous year.

Among these cases, patent contract dispute cases and patent

right ownership and infringement dispute cases accepted during the nine months increased by 42 and 27 percent, respectively, from the previous year.

Border Control

China's National Immigration Administration has vowed to ramp up its crackdown on illegal border crossings associated with gambling and fraudulent activities occurring overseas.

According to the administration, in recent years, illegal gambling and fraud rings based overseas have lured in and organized Chinese citizens to illegally cross the national border for the purpose of engaging in criminal activity, threatening the lives and properties of the people involved.

Efforts will be made to step up border inspection, particu-

larly for exits, to detect and stop suspects in a timely manner, Lin Yongsheng, spokesperson for the administration, said at a press conference on October 24.

Severe measures will be taken against illegal activities involving producing and selling counterfeit entry and exit documents, Lin said.

Border security and patrols will be strengthened to block the channels for transporting personnel or supplies involved in illegal gambling and fraudulent activities, Lin added.

In the meantime, various publicity measures, including putting up posters, displaying educational videos and publicizing typical cases, are to be used to raise public awareness, he said.

Snow Leopard Conservation

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Snow Leopard Conservation Alliance was established on October 23 in Xining, capital city of Qinghai Province in northwest China.

The alliance was jointly initiated by the provincial forestry and grassland bureau, the municipal government of Xining, the Sanjiangyuan National Park administration, the Qinghai administration of the Qilian Mountain National Park, and Eco-Bridge Continental, a non-governmental organization dedicated to nature conservation in China. It has seen the participation of more than 90 government agencies, universities, research institutions, social organizations and enterprises from across the country.

The establishment of the alliance is expected to integrate and optimize the strengths and resources of all parties involved in snow leopard conservation, and establish an efficient system and collaborative mechanism

for the co-building, co-management and co-protection of snow leopards.

Known as the “king of snowy mountains,” the snow leopard is under first-class national protection in China and is listed as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Experts estimate that the population of snow leopards in Sanjiangyuan today has reached about 1,200.

Coalbed Methane Field

China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) announced on October 23 the discovery of a deep coalbed methane (CBM) field in Shaanxi Province in northwest China, with confirmed reserves exceeding 110 billion cubic meters.

The discovery of the Shenfu deep CBM field, located at the eastern edge of the Ordos Basin, in Yulin City will contribute to national energy security, CNOOC CEO Zhou Xinhui said.

CBM refers to natural gas stored within coal seams. Deposits discovered at depths exceeding 1,500 meters are known as deep CBM.

The coal seam of the Shenfu

deep CBM field is about 2,000 meters deep and the thickness of a single layer is between 6.2 and 23.3 meters, with average gas content per ton of coal reaching 15 cubic meters.

Currently, over 100 exploratory wells have been dug in the area, with a maximum daily gas output of 26,000 cubic meters per well.

CNOOC will continue to intensify its efforts to increase onshore unconventional gas exploration and development to ensure the national energy security, Zhou said.

Senior Care Standard

China has released a national standard for at-home senior care services, the first of its kind, in response to an urgent need to improve the country's elderly care service system and optimize seniors' life quality.

By late 2022, China's population aged 60 and above had reached 280 million. Most senior citizens prefer home care, prompting massive demand for related elderly care services.

The national standard, based on local experiences and achievements in this regard, clarifies the basic conditions that service providers should meet and the basic requirements



Mature Modeling

Senior models take to the stage during an art show in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China, on October 23. The art show celebrated Chongyang Festival, or Double Ninth Festival, which falls on the ninth day of the ninth month on the Chinese lunar calendar and is an occasion to send blessings to seniors.

for such services, according to a press conference held by the Ministry of Civil Affairs on October 20.

The standard specifies seven home care services for seniors, including health management, emotional comfort, and renovating the home environment to make it more comfortable for seniors.

It also clarifies necessary

procedures for providing said services as well as evaluation and feedback requirements.

The release of the national standard will help the home care services win more recognition from seniors, in turn boosting consumption confidence and willingness, as well as strengthening the management of the services, Zhen Bingliang, an official with the ministry, said.



Start Them Young

A boy gets a taste of smart driving technology at the 2023 World Internet of Things (IoT) Exposition in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province in east China, on October 21. The four-day expo kicked off on October 20 and included a summit, an exhibition featuring the latest IoT applications and products, and a host of other activities ranging from forums and round table discussions to consumer experiences.

Bond Decisions

The Sixth Session of the 14th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, passed a decision on October 24 authorizing the State Council to allocate some of the new local government bond quota in advance.

According to the decision, the State Council could allow local governments to front-load part of their 2024 bond quota to maintain steady investment, expand domestic demand and strengthen weak links.

The State Council would determine the amount a local government could borrow ahead of time, and the measure would last for four years from October onward, through to late 2027.

The measure will help speed up the issuance and use of local government bonds and ensure the funding needs of major projects in key areas.

Another decision adopted by the NPC Standing Committee at the session approved the State

Council to issue 1 trillion yuan (\$136.8 billion) in additional government bonds in the fourth quarter of this year to support the reconstruction of disaster-hit areas and raise the country's disaster relief capabilities.

The bonds will be transferred to local governments. A total of 500 billion yuan (\$68.4 billion) will be used this year, and another 500 billion yuan will be carried over to next year.

The additional bond issuance will widen the country's 2023 budget deficit ratio to around 3.8 percent from 3 percent.

Sports Industry

China aims to develop outdoor sports into a 3-trillion-yuan (\$418 billion) industry by 2025, according to an action plan released by the Central Government on October 24.

The action plan, which covers the 2023-25 period, seeks to boost the construction of outdoor sports facilities and improve outdoor sports services.

It was jointly issued by five government departments, including the National Development and Reform Commission, the General Administration of Sport of China, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Water Resources and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The plan proposes that by 2025, the newly constructed outdoor sports facilities and the quality of services will be able to effectively cater to public demand as more population groups engage in outdoor sports activities. Meanwhile, the nation will improve its safety supervision policies and further enrich outdoor sports events.

The plan identifies multiple specific tasks that are to be carried out. This includes the promotion of green development through the proper use of natural resources, the construction of sports parks and the improvement of facilities for a wide range of outdoor activities such as ice and snow sports, mountain sports, and water sports.

Photovoltaic Cell Output

The photovoltaic cell sector maintained brisk expansion in the first three quarters of this year, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

China's output of photovoltaic cells reached 384.28 gigawatts (GW) from January to September, soaring 63.2 percent year on year.

In September alone, the country's production of photovoltaic cells jumped 65.4 percent year on year to 51.4 GW.

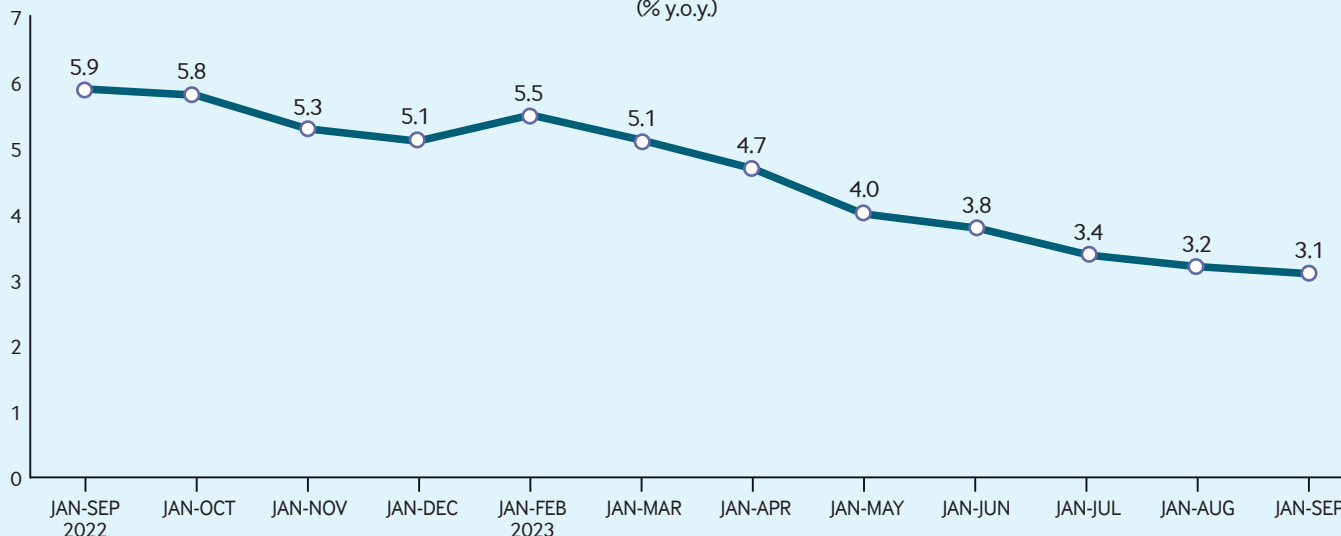
Courier Sector Milestone

China's courier sector saw its delivery volume exceed 100 billion parcels 39 days earlier than in 2022. The milestone came amid the ongoing expansion of the country's courier business, the State Post Bureau said.

Since March, single-month parcel volume has exceeded 10 billion and the monthly business

NUMBERS

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



income of the sector has topped 90 billion yuan (\$12.3 billion), according to the bureau.

The courier market is seeing accelerated growth in China's central and western regions, with improving industry-wide infrastructure and the promotion of digitalization, automation and unmanned technology, Xu Liangfeng, an official with the bureau, said.

The two-way flow of parcels in and out of rural areas has also picked up speed as more agricultural products are sold throughout China via the express delivery network, Xu added.

Banking Assets

China's banking financial institutions saw an increase in total assets in the third quarter of this year (Q3), according to the National Financial Regulatory Administration.

Total assets of these institutions amounted to 409.8 trillion yuan (\$56.1 trillion) at the end of Q3, up 9.5 percent year on year.

The country's commercial banks reaped combined net profits of 1.9 trillion yuan (\$260 billion) at the end of Q3, up 1.6 percent year on year.

By late Q3, the non-performing loan ratio of commercial banks stood at 1.65 percent.

The regulatory body said it will continue to improve the ability of financial services to serve the real economy and ward off financial risks.

GACC Reform

The General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) announced on October 20 that starting on November 1, exporters would be able to directly apply for a certificate of origin through several platforms.

These platforms include the China International Trade Single Window, the Internet+ Customs platform, as well as the online application system of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the GACC said in a statement.

Previously, exporters had to go through an administrative process with customs authorities when applying for the certificate. The new adjustment will eliminate this process, according to the announcement.

The GACC added that this most recent reform aims to further optimize the cross-border trade business environment and enhance trade convenience.

FDI Inflow

Paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) on the Chinese mainland stood at 919.97 billion yuan (\$125.9 billion) in the first nine months of this year, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said.

The figure decreased 8.4 percent from a year earlier. The decline was due to the slow pace of the global economic recovery and the high base recorded last year, according to the ministry's Department of Foreign Investment Administration.

During the period, 37,814 new

foreign-invested firms were set up across the country, up 32.4 percent year on year.

FDI in manufacturing rose 2.4 percent year on year, with that in hi-tech manufacturing up 12.8 percent.

During the period, FDI from France, the United Kingdom and Canada surged by 121.7, 116.9 and 109.2 percent, respectively, MOFCOM data showed.

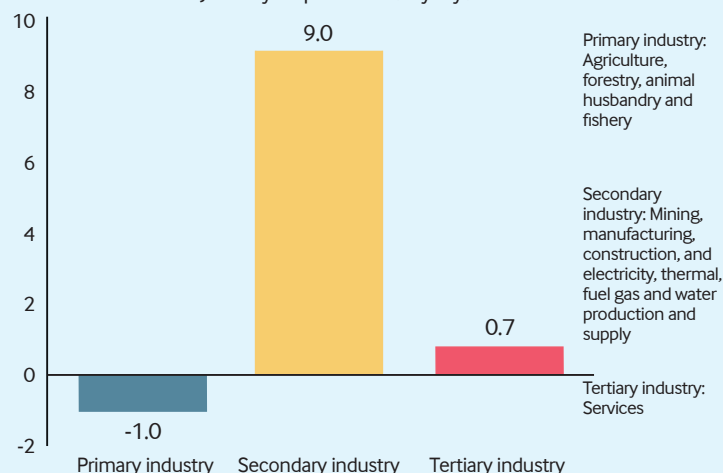
China's FDI remains on a positive trajectory over the long run, the ministry said.

The State Council has issued guidelines to optimize China's foreign investment environment and boost foreign investment inflows.

As a next step, MOFCOM will continue to shorten the negative list for foreign investment, a list of industry sectors where foreign investment is limited or prohibited, push forward the reform and opening up of pilot free trade zones and free trade ports, and deepen comprehensive tests to further open up the service sector, the ministry added.

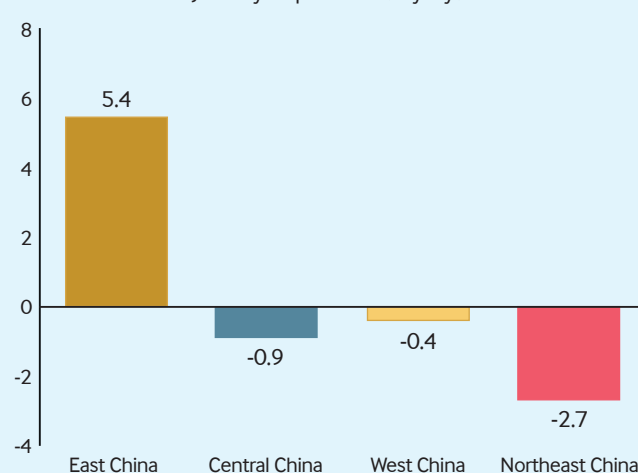
Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Sector

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



Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Region

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



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



AUSTRALIA

A handover ceremony for the repatriation of Chinese cultural objects is held at the Chinese Embassy in Canberra on October 25. The ceremony witnessed the return of five items to China, three of which were returned by the Australian Government



BANGLADESH

Rescuers work to lift an overturned carriage following a train collision in Kishoreganj District on October 23. At least 15 people were killed after two trains collided



CUBA

A worker stands on the Chinese-built floating dock inaugurated at Havana's port on October 24. The advanced technology platform has a lifting capacity of 22,000 tons



ARGENTINA

Economy Minister Sergio Massa (center), representing the ruling Union for the Homeland coalition, speaks at his campaign headquarters in Buenos Aires on October 22. Massa and National Deputy for Buenos Aires Javier Milei, from the far-right Liberty Advances coalition, will head to the presidential runoff on November 19 after getting the most votes in the first round



UNITED STATES

Newly elected House Speaker Mike Johnson takes the oath of office in the House Chamber in Washington, D.C., on October 25



MALAYSIA

Artists perform during the opening ceremony of the Fifth ASEAN-China Media Week in Putrajaya on October 21



↓ FORMER PREMIER DIES

Former Premier of the State Council **Li Keqiang** died of a sudden heart attack in Shanghai on October 27. He was 68.

Li was member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 17th, 18th and 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) central committees from October 2007 to October 2022, and served as premier of the State Council from March 2013 to March this year. He was vice premier of the State Council from March 2008 to March 2013.

A native of Dingyuan County, Anhui Province, Li was born in July 1955. He began his first job in 1974 and joined the CPC in May 1976.

Li was a graduate of Peking University's Law Department where he earned a Bachelor of Law degree, and of the university's School of Economics where he completed an in-service graduate program and obtained a Ph.D. in economics.

Prior to October 2007, he held several local Party and government posts.



Strategy to the Top

Ce.cn

October 18

Stunning mountain-top views are usually the reward after a grueling hike. But for visitors to several scenic spots in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, post-hiking fatigue is no longer an issue. Massive outdoor escalators have been built on hillsides in these areas to provide tourists with a means to reach the top without having to go through the toils of climbing.

Everyone has his or her own preferred mode of travel. While many tourists, especially seniors, people with disabilities and parents with toddlers, hail the hillside

escalators as a great invention, climbing enthusiasts still choose to take the hard road by climbing to the top. Some people do it for the physical challenge, others do it for the sense of adventure, and still others simply won't miss out on the scenery along the way.

There is no right or wrong, only a difference in travel behaviors. What these mountainside escalators provide is a choice that meets the diverse demands of tourists. However, whether an escalator can be built into the landscape of a mountain depends on rigorous research. Instead of blindly copy-pasting others' escalator designs, tourist spots should focus on providing unique travel experiences.



City of Parks

Oriental Outlook

October 19

As fall arrives, parks in Beijing have been tinted with a broad palette of autumnal shades. Top tourist destinations of this season include the Olympic Green, an Olympic park where the hairawn muhly, a plant with fluffy, purple-pink flowers, is in full blossom, and the Fragrant Hills Park, which is blanketed with red and yellow fall foliage. Extending into every corner of the city, parks are a longstanding witness to not only the shifting seasons, but also the evolution of the capital. As of now, Beijing has a total of 1,050 parks,

"The hope and foundation of the China-U.S. relationship lie in the people, and its future lies in the youths."

Xie Feng, Chinese Ambassador to the United States, at the annual Gala Dinner of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations in New York City on October 24

"The international community's inability to solve conflicts or prevent new ones is driving displacement and misery."

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on October 25, as the agency revealed the number of people displaced by war, persecution, violence and human rights violations globally had likely exceeded 114 million as of late September

making it one of the Chinese cities with the largest number of parks.

The first modern public park in Beijing was an experimental farm built in 1907. The farm consisted of a botanical garden, a small menagerie and a silkworm breeding center. It was renamed the Beijing Zoo in 1955. From then on, new enclosures were continuously added to shape the area into a modern zoological park.

Technology has played a role in driving the evolution of local parks. One example is Haidian Park, which became the country's first artificial intelligence park in 2018. Partnerships with Chinese tech giants, such as Huawei and Baidu, have transformed the park into a futuristic space equipped with driverless shuttle buses, smart trash cans that can sort at the point of disposal and sensor-powered benches that can heat automatically.

People's conception of parks is also evolving alongside technology. In recent years, the city has been committed to the construction of fenceless parks to facilitate further integration of these green spaces into their surrounding environment. The idea is to create an open space where nature and urban landscapes completely blend.

Mukbang Mania

Rednet.cn

October 23

A mukbang, which in Korean means "eating show," is a pre-recorded or livestreamed video where the host eats food on camera, often in large quantities, for the entertainment of viewers. First arising in the Republic of Korea in the early 2010s, the genre is now immensely popular on Chinese social media, where hundreds of eating influencers have emerged.

Many subgenres have also emerged in China's mukbang scene. A prominent category is the silent mukbang, which focuses on creating soothing sounds from the process of eating crispy food. Other

popular subgenres are mukbangs that evolve around themes such as colors, countries and holidays.

While mukbangs may have a certain therapeutic effect for lonely people seeking a shared experience while eating their dinner in front of their phones, some are worried that these shows encourage binge eating and can lead to the spread of eating disorders, as well as massive food waste. What's more, as many mukbang stars have been exposed for fake eating, netizens fear that the genre may become a hotbed of marketing fraud.

Therefore, people should always keep in mind that there is a huge gap between reality and mukbangs, which is, in essence, a kind of performance.

↓ PHYSICIST MAKES HISTORY

Xue Qikun, President of the Shenzhen-based Southern University of Science and Technology, has won the 2024 Oliver E. Buckley Condensed Matter Physics Prize, an international award that recognizes outstanding contributions to condensed matter physics presented by the American Physical Society. It is the first time a Chinese scientist has won the prestigious prize since it was first awarded in 1953.

Xue, also a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, won the award together with Harvard University Professor Ashvin Vishwanath for their pioneering studies in the field of topological insulators, the unique quantum properties of which make them ideal for more energy-efficient electronics.



In 2012, Xue and his team were the first to experimentally observe the quantum anomalous Hall effect in a magnetic topological insulator, a significant discovery in fundamental research worldwide.

"It is in everyone's interest that China continues to develop. China will continue to be a country that will enable the whole of Asia and the world to develop."

Ljubo Jurcic, a leading Croatian economist, commenting on China's better-than-expected economic performance in the third quarter of this year in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

"As for me, canoeing is a rebirth. It gave me confidence and a new life."

Xie Maosan, a world-class Chinese canoeist, as she claimed the first gold medal of the Hangzhou Asian Para Games on October 23, after winning the women's KL1 canoe final. KL1 is for paddlers with highly affected movement in the trunk and legs

HEALING THE HIDDEN HURT

Illuminating the mental health challenges of young adults By Li Fangfang

Do you ever feel, feel so paper thin; like a house of cards, one blow from caving in?

When Nana (username), a blogger on China's wildly popular lifestyle and e-commerce app Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book), first heard the lyrics to American singer Katy Perry's 2010 song *Firework*, the words immediately resonated with her. "Especially after a long day at work, constantly being bombarded with comments from a 'not so nice' boss and being annoyed by colleagues. Those moments made me want to instantly recharge," she wrote on a poster published on October 19 to promote her latest livestream groupchat themed Self-Care on the platform, which mainly targets millennials and Gen Zs.

"Sometimes, it almost seems impossible to have a little ME time between all the tasks we need to accomplish in a day," she added in a post on her account. "When was the last time you turned off your phone and just focused on YOUR life?"

Thirty-something Nana is a freelancer originally hailing from China's Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR). She moved to the Chinese mainland after getting married and now lives in the city of Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province. Together with two other

hosts, Jasper (username), an education professional from the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan who is now a Ph.D. student in China's Hong Kong SAR, and Jenny (username), a certified counselor based in Singapore, she initiated a series of livestream talks called Space Hug to discuss the psychological difficulties different people face.

This part-time career evolved rather "unexpectedly" from an online chat between the three of them, who are actually strangers in real life. Their Space Hug conversations soon got pinned to Little Red Book's front page and their fourth livestream was viewed over 100,000 times. This boost was a huge encouragement and catalyst for them to develop it into a safe space for anyone to share their stories.

It's sometimes just easier to talk to someone you don't know. "But since we don't know each other in real life, it's also hard to know where the boundaries are," Nana told *Beijing Review*. "I think this is why we decided to initiate this [online English-language psychology corner]—for better privacy protection."

With the guest participation of experienced professionals in the field upon the invitation of the hosts, Space Hug raises awareness of mental health and is a place to share and listen, especially for young people in the workforce who live alone, making millennials and Gen Zs the corner's main participants. The most popular topics include relationships with parents, partners or colleagues.

But what still shocks the organizers is the lack of real knowledge about mental health.

"Many people are talking about depression nowadays, but they don't have a deep understanding of what it actually *is*. And sometimes they just label themselves as being depressed, but they're actually not, or they have different types of mental health issues, but they only know the term 'depressed,' so that

becomes their self-diagnosis," Nana said.

"If we realize that the listeners interacting with us are experiencing severe depression, we will suggest they seek professional help as soon as possible," Jasper said. Meanwhile, the space also provides some small tools, tips or tricks to help in certain urgent situations.

A range of remedies

But the English-language counseling does require some serious language skills on the part of anyone who turns to Space Hug for a comfort zone and constructive feedback.

Young people generally prefer to immerse themselves in nature or outdoor activities to take a break from their busy daily schedules, especially those residing in cities.

The things that make young people feel "healed" can be roughly divided into five categories: cute small animals, ideal lifestyles, social interaction, the natural environment and cultural creations, according to the research findings of a paper titled *Why Not Have Some Tea: The Healing Psychological Experience of Contemporary Youth* published by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Beijing Forestry University.

"Contact with nature is an important factor that positively affects