

OPINION: RED STAR OVER CHINA P.34 | FEATURES: THE Q3 NUMBERS P.38

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.69 NO.44 OCTOBER 29, 2026

北京周报 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM

MARCHING FORWARD

Honoring the Long March victory at 90, and the road ahead



RMB9.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914260



邮发代号2-922·国内统一连续号: CN11-1576/G2

Follow CICG Americas

And get in on the conversation



BeijingReview



BeijingReview



@BeijingReview



China Hoy



China Hoje



CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

2 A Living Legacy

THIS WEEK

COVER STORY

12 A Story That Still Speaks

Taking steady steps through uncertain times

18 A Journey Without End

A great march's spirit inspires new achievements

20 The Long March at 90

The tides of history preceding the legendary trek

22 The Spirit of the Long March as a Legacy for Latin American Youth

The epic journeys of history creating parallels across the Pacific

Cover Photo: Visitors at an exhibition commemorating the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March in Beijing on October 20 (WEI YAO)

©2026 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.

24 Guardians of an Unfinished Long March

The father and son protecting the Red Army's legacy

26 Seeds of Success

Timothy grass has turned Minxian County into a star of China's pet economy

28 Walking the Red Route

The path is old; the footsteps are new

30 The Long March Lives On

The enduring connections built by the Red Army

OPINION

32 The Onus Is on China

International legal scholar on China's role in global governance and development

34 The Long Road Traveled... by a Book

Still shining: *Red Star Over China*

36 Right-Wing Japan's Affinity for the Yasukuni Shrine

Why so many leaders visit despite and because of international opposition

FEATURES

38 Steady Does It

Decoding the economic trends in the first nine months of 2026

40 New Links Between Lawmakers

World's legislators convene in Tianjin to discuss governance and development

42 Small Spaces, Big Potential

What cities forgot, cities now need

CULTURE

46 Grotto Grandeur

Buddhist cave art from ancient Xinjiang on show in Beijing

FORUM

48 Tesla's Roadster Takes Flight: Innovation or Just Hot Air?



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: Xin Feng

Associate Editor in Chief: Liu Yanyun

Vice Presidents: He Peng, Gao Dingbo, Yu Shujun

Program Supervisor: Zeng Wenhui

Executive Editor: Yan Wei

Production Director: Yao Bin

Editors: Wang Hairong, Zhang Shasha, Lu Yan

Researcher: Lan Xinzhen

Editorial Consultants: Elsbeth van Paridon, G.P. Wilson

Reporters: Ji Jing, Kang Caiqi, Li Qing, Li Wenhao, Li Xiaoyang,

Liang Xiao, Ma Miaomiao, Pan Xiaoli, Peng Jiawei, Tao Zihui,

Wang Jun, Wang Ruohan, Yuan Yuan, Zhang Yage

Photographer: Wei Yao

Art: Li Shigong

Design Director: Wang Yajuan

Chief Designer: Cui Xiaodong

Designer: Wang Boyan

Editorial Administrator: Zeng Wenhui

Planning Director: Xu Bei

Deputy Planning Director: Li Nan

World News Director: Ding Ying

Director of Digital Media: Li Fangfang

Director of Strategic Research: Zan Jifang

Deputy Director of Strategic Research: Lu Ling

Deputy Director of International Cooperation: Zhao Wei

Administration: Zhang Yajie

Legal Counsel: Yue Cheng

North America Bureau (New York City)

Chief: Yu Shujun

Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334

E-mail: yushujun@cicgamerica.com

Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)

Chief: Miao Ye

Tel: 52-55-55127271

Fax: 52-55-55332027

E-mail: chinahoyoung@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@cicgamerica.com

Distribution

Tel: 86-10-68310644

E-mail: circulation@cicgamerica.com

Published every Thursday by

CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,

Beijing 100037, China

Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading

Corporation, P. O. BOX 399,

Beijing 100048, 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 Burlingame, CA 94010-9997

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,

Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,

South San Francisco, CA 94080

A Living Legacy

On October 22, China held a grand ceremony to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the successful conclusion of the Long March in Beijing. It was a tribute to an epic of heroism and an occasion to reflect on a spirit that still feels alive in China today.

Between October 1934 and October 1936, the Communist Party of China-led Red Army crossed snow-capped mountains, trudged through desolate marshes, and fought off enemy troops trying to pursue and block them. It was a turning point for the Party and China's revolution, and it laid the foundation for final victory. It showed the world the original purpose of the Chinese Communists and the unyielding spirit of the Chinese nation.

Time has passed, and the country has changed profoundly. Yet the spirit of the Long March remains a core part of the Party's spirit, a lasting banner that inspires the Chinese people to overcome great challenges and press forward with courage.

Following in the footsteps of the Red Army, generation after generation has forged a path of independence, self-

reliance and prosperity toward renewal. They turned an impoverished, weak China into a thriving, dynamic China. Since 2012, for instance, China has achieved the eradication of extreme poverty, while steadily raising living standards and advancing across all industrial sectors to the forefront globally.

Today's China has long left behind the era of war, poverty and hunger. Yet on its journey of national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization, the country still faces challenges such as rural-urban disparities, an aging population and a volatile international landscape. On this new Long March, China still needs to draw wisdom and strength from the spirit of the old one. That is why China commemorates the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Long March: It guides the nation as it moves forward on this new march.

The commemoration also sends the world a set of values that matter to all humanity: Faith helps people overcome desperate situations; self-reliance is the key to controlling one's own destiny; unity is essential for weathering crises and peace is a shared hope. **BR**



WRITE TO US

Send an e-mail: editorsoffice@cicgamerica.com

Please provide your name and address along with your submissions. Submissions may be edited.

CHINA.....RMB9.00 U.S.A.....USD1.70
AUSTRALIA.....AUD3.00 UK.....GBP1.20
CANADA.....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND.....CHF2.60
JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
TÜRKIYE.....TRY5.00 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)

出版单位: 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: 辛峰 贺鹏 刘云云 高丁博 于淑均 曾文卉

编委会主任: 辛峰

主编: 闫威

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2026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9.00元

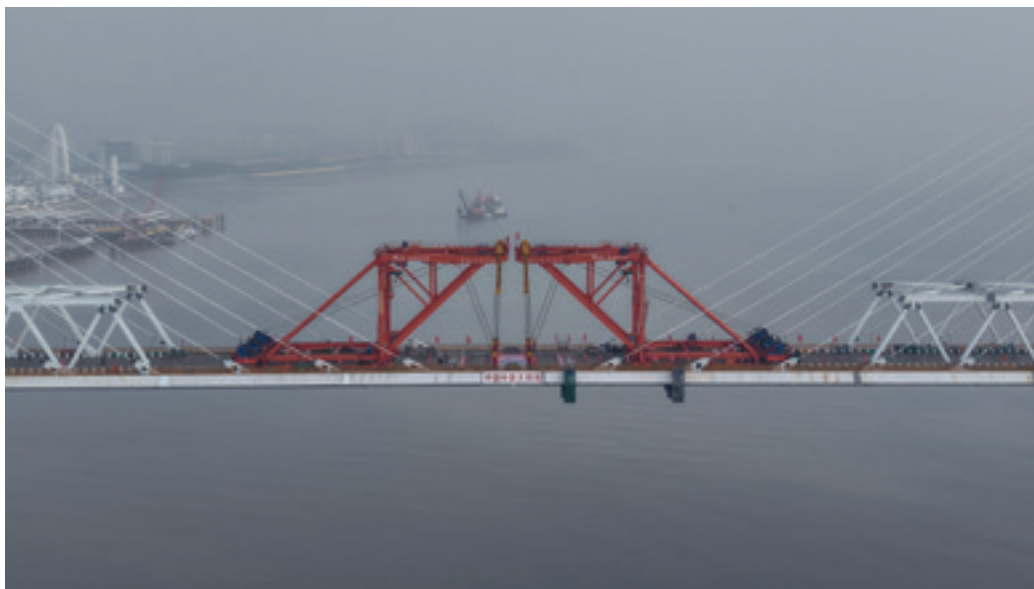


COMMEMORATING VICTORY

The gold and silver coins issued by the People's Bank of China, the central bank, on October 22, in honor of the 90th anniversary of the successful conclusion of the Long March (1934-36).

Both coins are legal tender of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The obverse of each coin features the PRC's national emblem, along with inscriptions of the country's name and the year of issue.

The reverse of the 8-gram circular gold coin features a scene of Red Army soldiers crossing snow-capped mountains and grasslands. The reverse of the 30-gram circular silver coin shows a sculpture of the Red Army arriving in north Shaanxi Province at the end of the Long March.



Steel Over Water

The northern navigation channel bridge of the Hangzhou Bay Cross-Sea Railway Bridge in Zhejiang Province on October 20. The bridge's successful joining that day is a major step toward completing the main structure of the 29.2-km-long bridge. A crucial part of the Nantong-Ningbo high-speed railway, the bridge spans three navigation channels and is designed for trains running at 350 km/h.

Export Control Measures

China has decided to optimize and adjust its export control measures on certain drone-related items, with the new rules taking effect on November 18, according to a government announcement on October 19.

Items with specified characteristics cannot be exported without a license, the announcement said, which was jointly issued by the Ministry of Commerce, the General Administration of Customs, and the Equipment Development Department of the Central Military Commission.

These items include autopilots specially designed for unmanned aircraft, some technologies for developing, producing or using unmanned aircraft, some unmanned aircraft or unmanned airships

meeting specified characteristics, and engines specially designed for unmanned aircraft or unmanned airships, the announcement noted.

The drone-related items involved have a clear dual-use nature that can be applied for both military and civilian purposes, a spokesperson for the commerce ministry said.

China's move to optimize and adjust the measures in accordance with related laws and regulations aims to safeguard national security and interests, and fulfill international obligations such as non-proliferation, the spokesperson explained.

Vocational Education

In recent years, China's vocational education system has provided an annual average of almost 10 million skilled per-

sonnel to industries, according to a white paper released on October 17.

The white paper on China's vocational education was issued at the 2026 World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference in Tianjin Municipality, which ran from October 15 to 17.

The white paper revealed that the average length of education among China's newly added skilled personnel had reached 14.35 years.

In 2025, 5.82 million students graduated from higher vocational education institutions, while nearly 5.22 million graduated from secondary vocational schools, the white paper said.

China has the world's largest vocational education system, with 9,151 secondary vocational schools, 1,554 higher vocational colleges and 124

vocational undergraduate institutions.

Higher vocational institutions account for more than half of the country's higher education institutions. In addition, 52 regular higher education institutions offer vocational undergraduate programs.

Traditional Medicine Alliance

The Global Alliance for Traditional and Integrative Medicine was established on October 17 in Beijing as the first international non-profit, non-governmental scientific organization dedicated to traditional medicine.

The alliance, whose secretariat is based in Beijing, was launched at the World Conference on Traditional Medicine 2026, which opened that day.

The alliance aims to promote international exchange, scientific and technological cooperation, capacity building and common development in traditional, complementary and integrative medicine, helping traditional medicine better contribute to human health.

It has so far attracted 117 organizations and individuals from 19 countries and regions, according to the conference.

Outdoor Sports Participation

The number of outdoor sports participants in China exceeds 500 million, with the total scale of the outdoor sports industry reaching approximately 3.17 trillion yuan (\$450 billion), according to the China Outdoor Sports Industry Development Report (2025-26), released at the opening of the 2026

China Outdoor Sports Industry Conference on October 16.

According to statistics from the Sports Economy Department of the General Administration of Sport, outdoor sports are gaining popularity in third- and fourth-tier cities, where strong consumer enthusiasm has driven consumption to 42 percent of the national total.

Demographically, outdoor sports consumers are relatively evenly distributed across age groups and genders. People aged 19-49 account for 76.16 percent of all consumers, while women and men make up 50.82 percent and 49.18 percent, respectively.

Train Numbering System

China will adjust its national train numbering system and introduce a new "X" series for future trains with maximum operating speeds above 350 km/h, China State Railway Group Co. Ltd. (China Railway) announced on October 16.

The change will be implemented in two batches in late November and late December. China Railway said train

services will continue to operate according to the current timetable after the adjustment.

China's newest high-speed train, the Fuxing CR450 electric multiple unit (EMU), which has a maximum test speed of 450 km/h and an operating speed of 400 km/h, had passed all type tests as of late March, Zhao Hongwei, chief researcher at the China Academy of Railway Sciences Corporation Limited, said. It is currently the world's fastest high-speed train by operating speed.

Under China Railway's numbering system, prefix letters indicate a train's speed category or service type. After the adjustment, the new X-series will be used for trains with maximum operating speeds above 350 km/h, while the G, T and K series will denote trains with maximum operating speeds of 350 km/h, 300 km/h and 200-250 km/h, respectively.

Job Market

China's job market remained stable in the first three quarters of 2026, with the unemployment rate staying within a reasonable range.

Latest figures unveiled by



Hainan Reaches New Heights

An aero-engine maintenance base of the comprehensive bonded zone of Haikou Airport in Haikou, Hainan Province, on October 19. Leveraging policy benefits and regional advantages, the Hainan Free Trade Port has now fully developed its aviation maintenance industry, establishing an international aviation maintenance hub.

the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on October 19 show that the nation's urban surveyed unemployment rate stayed 5.2 percent on average in first nine months, pulling even with the same period of last year.

Specifically in September, the surveyed unemployment rate in urban areas nationwide was 5.2 percent, down by 0.1 percentage point from the previous month, the NBS said.

The situation was the same in the nation's 31 major cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, where the surveyed unemployment rate stayed around 5.2 percent in their urban areas in September.

The NBS added that, by the end of the third quarter, the number of migrant workers who work out of their hometowns totaled about 192.7 million, registering a year-on-year rise of 0.4 percent.



Happy Faces

Simola Wa Village in Qingshui Town of Tengchong City, Yunnan Province, on October 19. This historic village, over 500 years old and home to multiple ethnic groups including the Wa, Han, Bai and Dai, derives its name "Simola" from the Wa language, meaning "a place of happiness." In recent years, the village has successfully tapped into its rich ethnic cultural resources to develop related tourism, drawing a continuous stream of visitors.

Cross-Border Capital Inflows

China's non-bank sectors, including enterprises and individuals, recorded net cross-border capital inflows of \$40.7 billion in September, down 35 percent from August, as trade in goods continued to generate substantial inflows, the country's foreign exchange (forex) regulator said on October 20.

Cross-border receipts and payments rose 9 percent month on month, while forex settlement and sales increased 17 percent, according to the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE).

Banks settled \$294.2 billion in forex and sold \$238 billion in September. In the first nine months of 2026, settlement totaled nearly \$238 trillion, against sales of \$1.98 trillion, SAFE data showed.

Li Bin, deputy head and spokesperson of SAFE, said China's forex market remained generally stable amid continued volatility in international financial markets. Net inflows under trade in goods remained substantial, while the

services trade deficit was relatively stable, he added.

Strong demand for overseas travel among Chinese residents and for trips to China among foreign visitors kept travel receipts and expenditures high, Li said.

Outward direct investment by Chinese companies increased, with financing from domestic firms to overseas affiliates rising particularly rapidly, Li said.

The trend reflected changes in domestic and overseas interest rates and, to some extent, the renminbi's growing role as a financing currency, he added.

Cross-Border Trips

Chinese border authorities handled 192 million entries and exits in the third quarter of 2026, up 7.9 percent from a year earlier, officials said on October 20. Foreign nationals made 23.27 million border crossings from July to September, up 15.6 percent year on year, according to the National Immigration Administration.

Visa-free entries by foreign

nationals reached 8.99 million, accounting for 77.5 percent of all entries by foreign nationals, a 24.1-percent increase year on year.

Since December 2023, when China launched a trial policy granting unilateral visa exemptions to visitors from six countries, it had expanded unilateral visa-free entry to travelers from 50 countries as of September. The policy allows eligible visitors to stay for up to 30 days.

It had also extended the visa-free transit period for certain countries from 72 or 144 hours to 240 hours in December 2024, with 57 eligible countries to date.

State-Owned Data Enterprise

China National Data Group Co. Ltd., a new state-owned enterprise (SOE) directly administered by the Central Government, was officially inaugurated at a ceremony in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province, on October 20.

Headquartered in Xiongan, the newly established enterprise

is tasked with specializing in the development and utilization of data resources, bringing the total number of SOEs directly administered by the Central Government to 100.

It is positioned as a national team for data services, a leader in data infrastructure connectivity and a strategic force for national data sci-tech innovation.

The group said it will provide clients with inclusive and secure data services, and industry data governance services.

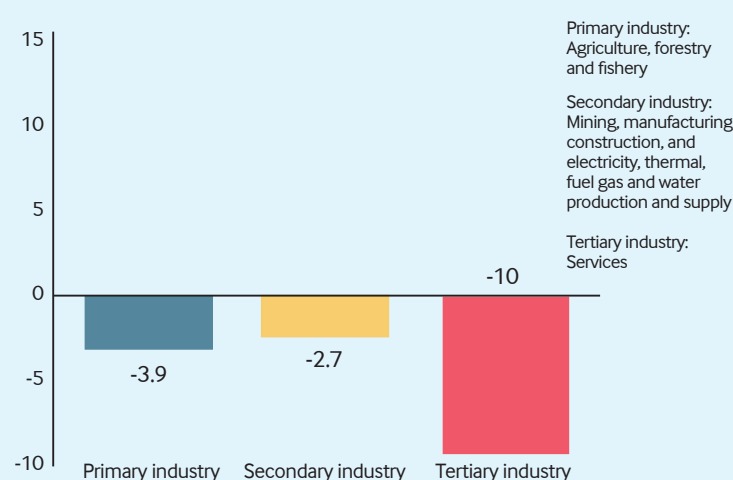
Focused on advancing China's AI Plus initiative, the group also vowed to provide high-quality datasets and corpora to further the development of the AI industry.

Smart Manufacturing

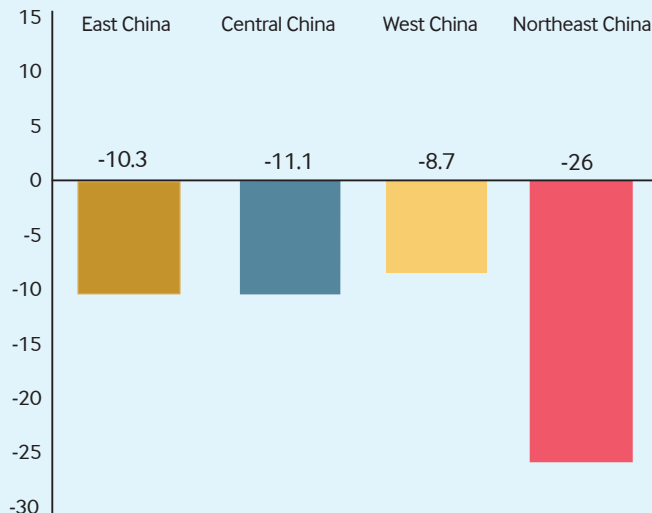
China is drafting policies for next-generation smart manufacturing to deepen the integration of AI and manufacturing, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) said on October 20.

NUMBERS

Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Sector
January-September (%; y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Region
January-September (%; y.o.y.)



Wang Weiming, MIIT chief engineer, told a press conference that the measures intend to integrate AI across the entire manufacturing chain and develop new manufacturing models that help firms cut costs, raise efficiency and better meet diverse market demands.

To that end, a tiered approach will be taken to build smart factories and upgrade equipment, with basic and advanced factories expanding digital systems and AI use while top-tier plants explore next-generation architectures and future manufacturing models.

Support will also target smarter machine tools, robots, inspection and control equipment, as well as industry-specific models and industrial AI agents, Wang said.

Alongside domestic efforts, China will expand international cooperation in smart manufacturing, leveraging mechanisms such as BRICS to share standards and experience, and help partners build smart factories, he added.

R&D Spending

China's research and development (R&D) expenditure rose 8.2 percent year on year to 3.93 trillion yuan (\$585 billion) in 2025, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) announced on October 16.

Over the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), the country's R&D spending rose at an average annual rate of 10 percent, making China the world's second largest R&D investor, Luo Qiushi, an NBS statistician, said.

China's R&D intensity, which measures spending as a share of GDP, rose 0.11 percentage points to 2.8 percent last year, exceeding the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average of 2.72 percent for the first time and ranking 12th in the world.

By type of R&D activity, spending on basic research, applied research and experimental development grew 13.3 percent, 3.2 percent and 8.4 percent year on year to 283.46 billion yuan (\$42 billion), 444.16 billion yuan (\$67 billion) and 3.2 trillion yuan

(\$479 billion), respectively.

Enterprise R&D spending exceeded 3 trillion yuan (\$449 billion) for the first time, accounting for 77.4 percent of the total.

Enterprises have accounted for more than 77 percent of the country's total R&D spending for four consecutive years, and their contribution to the overall increase reached 73.7 percent, cementing their role as the main engine of China's R&D spending expansion, according to the NBS.

Domestic Passenger Jets

China's C919 passenger jet has carried more than 8.4 million passengers and served 27 cities since entering commercial service, Shen Bo, President of the Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China (COMAC), said on October 15.

Speaking at an industry conference in Dunhuang, Gansu Province, Shen said COMAC has also continued to expand the regional aviation network served by its C909 aircraft, a regional jet

designed for short- and medium-haul routes.

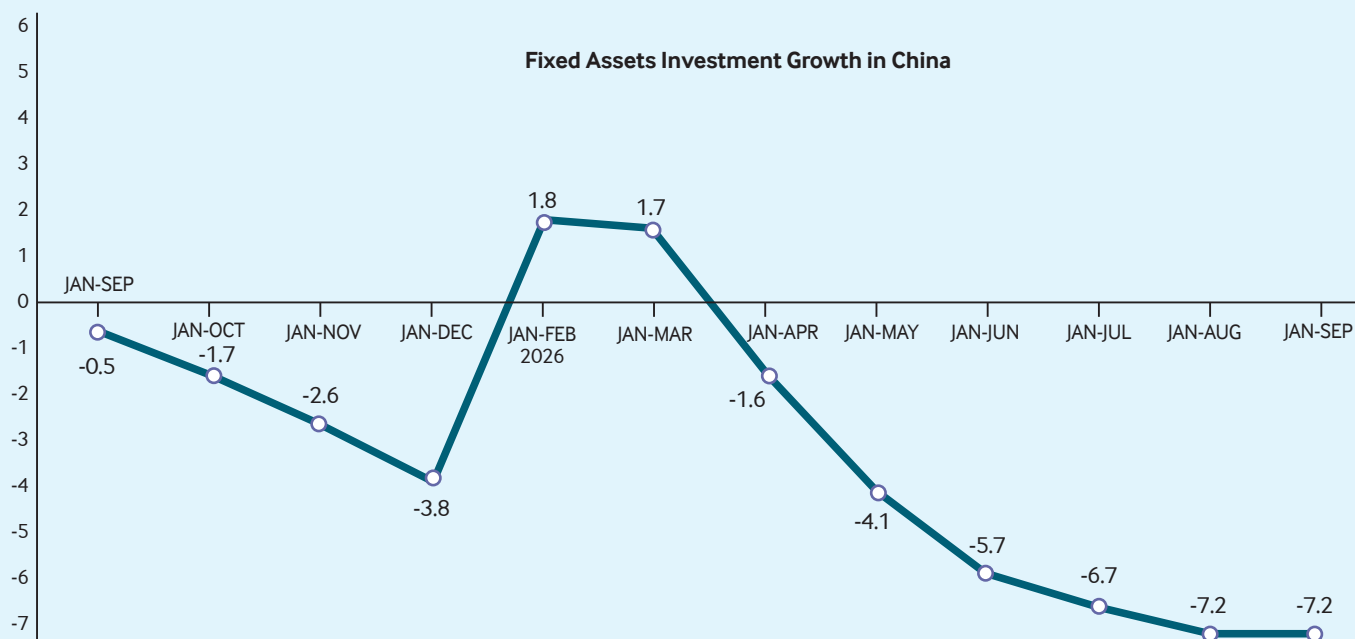
The C909 has safely carried more than 41 million passengers since entering commercial service, Shen said, adding that the aircraft is providing travelers with more convenient options.

The C919 is the first trunk jetliner independently developed by China in accordance with international airworthiness standards and with fully proprietary intellectual property (IP) rights.

The baseline model is designed for 158 to 192 passengers and a range of 4,075 to 5,555 km. It completed its first commercial flight in May 2023. After successful operations on multiple domestic routes, the aircraft completed its first scheduled international commercial passenger flight in August.

The C909, formerly known as the ARJ21, entered commercial service in 2016. According to COMAC, it is suitable for regional airports or sub-hub airports to build route networks and supplement transport capacity for hub airports.

Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



ARMENIA

The opening ceremony of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity takes place in Yerevan on October 19



KENYA

Military personnel parade during the Mashujaa Day, or Heroes' Day, celebrations at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret on October 20



BANGLADESH

Residents surround a crashed passenger bus in Natore District on October 20. At least 14 people were killed in the head-on collision between a passenger bus and a sand-laden truck and 20 others were injured



INDIA

Barricades seal the entrance to the site of a stampede at a religious event amid the ongoing annual festive season, in the Chorbagan Sarbojanin neighborhood in Kolkata, West Bengal, on October 18. At least 19 people were killed in the accident, with 25 injured having received treatment



UNITED KINGDOM

An exterior view of the Broadcasting House of the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) in London on October 20. The BBC will close two television channels in the spring, as the corporation pursues a target of 500 million pounds (\$669 million) of savings over two years



MEXICO

Revelers at the Monumental Alebrijes Parade 2026 in Mexico City on October 17. Alebrijes are brightly colored folk art sculptures of fantastical creatures



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ SAND-CONTROL PIONEER NAMED AS HERO

Chinese sand-control pioneer **Yin Yuzhen** was named on October 15 among the FAO 100 Women Heroes in Agrifood Systems and Rural Development, a global recognition initiative launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Yin has spent more than four decades combating desertification in the Maowusu Sandy Land in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. After decades of consistent tree planting, she and her family have transformed stretches of the once-barren landscape into a green expanse, overcoming harsh conditions and shifting sands.

Launched by the FAO to celebrate 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, the global initiative recognizes 100 women for their outstanding contributions to agriculture, food systems and rural development. Farmer Dong Minfang and moxibustion therapist Yu Jinxiu were the other two from China recognized on the list.



From Papers to Practice

Nanfang Daily

October 21

China is diversifying the ways in which postgraduate students can earn their degrees, introducing a pilot program that allows degrees to be awarded based on practical achievements instead of a traditional thesis. The pilot covers degrees in five fields: translation, agriculture, clinical medicine, accounting and the arts.

The new policy builds on the 2025 Academic Degrees Law, which recognized practical achievements alongside academic

theses for the awarding of degrees.

In June, Tie Dazhao, a student at Peking University's Third Clinical Medical College, became China's first to earn a doctorate through practical achievements in the medical field. His clinical classification system has been used by several institutions.

To ensure the success of the pilot, determining the quality of practical achievements will require both industry involvement and reliable methods to assess individual contributions.

Although the reform remains experimental and cannot yet be applied across the board, it signals a shift toward valuing practical skills and problem-solving.



The NPC Economy

China Newsweek

October 19

Recently, a tourist attraction in Jincheng, Shanxi Province, announced it would spend 30 million yuan (\$4.2 million) on recruiting 100 non-playable characters (NPCs). More than 7,000 people have applied.

In video games, NPCs are the back-

“AI-assisted diagnosis could make traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) diagnostic information more objective and quantifiable, reducing subjectivity in manual assessment.”

TCM expert **Huang Luqi**, also a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, as a report noting that AI is transforming traditional medicine around the world was released at the World Conference on Traditional Medicine 2026 in Beijing on October 18

“I’ve learned the importance of discipline, patience and hard work through martial arts in this ancient city.”

Altayeb Abdallah, a Sudanese student at Lanzhou Jiaotong University, after taking third place in the Piguaquan (a powerful martial style) event at the First Dunhuang International Wushu Open in Dunhuang, Gansu Province, on October 13

ground figures controlled by the game rather than the player. But across Chinese tourist attractions, the term has taken on a new meaning: character performers who interact with visitors.

Among the earliest NPCs to achieve viral fame was Zhao Mei, who plays a matchmaker at Wansui Mountain Martial Arts City in Kaifeng, Henan Province. Her wit and humor turned a routine interactive performance into “Granny Wang’s matchmaking,” a live show that helps young visitors find romance. After videos of her went viral in March 2024, ticket sales reportedly rose more than 23-fold.

The lesson was clear: A charismatic NPC can put a park on the map. But the rush to replicate that success has produced a glut of lookalike characters. Repeat-visitor rates at large domestic theme parks are generally below 20 percent, compared with 40-60 percent at Disney and Universal parks.

The difference lies partly in the ability to create distinctive worlds. Whereas Disney and Universal have spent decades cultivating beloved characters and franchises, many Chinese attractions rely on existing folklore or viral sensations. Drawing crowds is one thing; giving visitors a reason to return is quite another.

Beyond the Ballroom

Global Times

October 21

Instead of traditional hotel banquets, more couples are taking their wedding ceremonies to mountains and historic towns, combining marriage registration, the ceremony, wedding photos and a honeymoon into one trip. What was once a niche choice is becoming part of a national trend.

The shift reflects changing priorities: Couples are putting less emphasis on lavish displays and more on experiences and emotions, and destination weddings often offer a more affordable alternative to elaborate banquets. In China, a policy allowing couples to

register their marriage anywhere in the country has further reduced practical barriers.

The trend is pushing wedding businesses to move beyond standardized packages. Natural landscapes provide backdrops, while existing transport and accommodation make these destinations practical choices. Rather than follow standardized scripts, couples increasingly want ceremonies that reflect their tastes, prompting providers to tailor packages to different settings and personal preferences.

As the market grows, local efforts to develop clearer service standards are helping destination weddings evolve from an emerging consumer trend into a more established industry, allowing couples greater freedom to make their ceremonies personal and meaningful.

↓ SCIENTIST WINS GLOBAL BIONIC ENGINEERING AWARD

Wang Shutao, a researcher at the Institute of Physical and Chemical Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), won the Outstanding Contribution Award of the International Bionic Engineering Award on October 21.

He led his team to break through tough problems in early cancer diagnosis, with their research results being included in clinical diagnosis and treatment guidelines and offering new technology for early cancer screening.

Wang, 48, finished his doctoral studies at the CAS Institute of Chemistry. He has long studied bionic interface materials and is also a professor at the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The triennial award is presented by the International Society of Bionic Engineering. Only two scholars are selected per cycle. Wilhelm Barthlott from the University of Bonn in Germany was the other recipient this year.



“When people from Western countries went to China 30, 40 years ago, China insisted on a transfer of technology into their supply chains. Now China is so well ahead in so many technological areas that Western countries are increasingly looking to attract Chinese investment and technological expertise.”

Vince Cable, former Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills of the UK, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“The fundamental challenge is that biodiversity cannot remain the responsibility of environment ministries alone. Progress increasingly depends on decisions by finance, agriculture, energy and other economic ministries.”

Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), on the sidelines of the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, which began in Yerevan, Armenia, on October 19



COVER STORY

A STORY THAT STILL SPEAKS

The Long March spirit resonates in a world that knows uncertainty and division all too well By Lu Yan