

OPINION: THE WAR ON WARMING P.26 | FEATURES: AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE P.38

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GREEN IS GOLD

Strategy and actions of China's eco-civilization

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Cover Photo: An island village in the middle of Xihu Lake, a main water source of Erhai Lake, in Eryuan County, Yunnan Province, in September 2022 (XINHUA)

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Ecology, Economy and Society

A recent forum on promoting ecological progress has once again underlined the importance of simultaneously delivering economic and environmental benefits to society. As President Xi Jinping has famously stated, green is gold.

Centering on harmony between humanity and nature, the 2023 Erhai Forum on Global Ecological Civilization Construction gathered hundreds of participants from government bodies, international organizations, the business community and academia.

Erhai is a lake in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province in southwest China. Over the past few years, the ear-shaped body of water resting at some 2,000 meters above sea level has seen its natural beauty restored courtesy of unremitting rehabilitation efforts. It was only befitting the forum was launched there in 2021 to celebrate its achievements and, at the same time, raise awareness of the China-proposed notion that is ecological civilization.

The construction of ecological civilization in China is a discourse and a practical strategy that promotes harmony between human development, environmental protection and climate action.

China has prioritized ecological progress and embedded it in every dimension and phase of its economic and

social development. In creating the concept of ecological civilization featuring a deep-seated respect for Mother Nature, the country has lifted its efforts to establish a sound economic structure that facilitates green, low-carbon and circular development.

That green is gold is the core concept in ecological civilization. It represents a break with the idea that economic growth and environmental protection cancel each other. Instead, protecting and improving the ecological environment are important ways—the ultimate goals, even—of economic development, while new technologies and methods generated by said development can further enhance environmental governance.

For instance, as the economy keeps growing and people's basic material needs are met, they can start focusing on other wants and look at how to prioritize these to maximize enjoyment and quality of life. Travel is one such desire. Villages sitting in beautiful ecological surroundings have become popular holiday destinations, turning village tourism into a new trend.

Fostering ecological progress, stepping up environmental protection efforts, establishing a green economic system and realizing sustainable development will require all of society's long-term support. **BR**



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THUMBS UP!

A screen image captured at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on May 30 shows the *Shenzhou-16* crew joining the *Shenzhou-15* crew, who welcomed them by putting up Chinese couplets, referring to two complementary poetic lines often written on red paper, inside the *Tianhe* core module of China's *Tiangong* space station.

The space get-together kicked off the second in-orbit crew rotation in China's space station.

China launched the *Shenzhou-16* manned spaceship on May 30, sending three taikonauts, or Chinese astronauts, to its space station combination for a five-month mission.



Happy Go Lucky

Children play with water guns at a kindergarten in Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, on May 31 to welcome International Children's Day, which falls on June 1 every year.

Taking Commercial Flight

The C919, China's self-developed large passenger aircraft, completed its first commercial flight from Shanghai to Beijing on May 28, marking its official entry into the civil aviation market.

Flight MU9191, operated by China Eastern Airlines, took off at 10:32 a.m. from Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport, carrying 128 passengers.

The plane was then greeted with a water salute after touching down at Beijing Capital International Airport at 12:31 p.m.

The C919 is China's first self-developed trunk jetliner in

accordance with international airworthiness standards and owns independent intellectual property rights.

The C919 project was launched in 2007. Developed by the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC), the first C919 aircraft rolled off the production line in Shanghai in November 2015.

In 2017, the plane accomplished its maiden flight. "The first commercial flight is a coming-of-age ceremony of the new aircraft, and the C919 will get better and better if it stands the test of the market," Zhang Xiaoguang, Director of COMAC's marketing and sales department, said.

Volkswagen Investment

German automaker Volkswagen Group, one of the world's leading automobile manufacturers, will build a research and development (R&D), innovation and procurement center for fully connected electric cars in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province, according to an investment agreement signed in the city on May 30.

Volkswagen signed the contract with the Hefei Economic Development Zone, announcing an investment of around 1 billion euros (\$1.07 billion) to launch the new company in early 2024, which is expected to gather

2,000 R&D and purchasing specialists.

"Headquartered in Hefei, the company, under the project name 100%TechCo, will be the biggest group facility of its kind in the world. It will combine vehicles and components R&D teams with purchasing while integrating cutting-edge technologies from local suppliers," Ralf Brandstaetter, Chairman and CEO of Volkswagen Group China, said at the signing ceremony.

He said the new center is expected to gradually shorten the development time of new products and technologies by around 30 percent.

"Thanks to the support of the government departments and officials involved, we have been able to reach an agreement in a very short time. This sort of 'China speed' is crucial for pushing forward our 'in China, for China' strategy to address market-defining trends at an early stage and significantly increase the pace of innovation," Brandstaetter added.

Scientific Education

China plans to strengthen scientific education in its primary and secondary schools, and will ensure a sounder system is in place in three to five years, the Ministry of Education said on May 29.

There should be notable improvements both in the quality of scientific education and in the scientific literacy of students in primary and secondary schools, according to a newly released guideline.

Efforts should be made to ensure students have complete science curricula, access to sufficient courses and quality scientific education, per the document.

It further called for the standards of science courses and textbooks to be improved and emphasized the importance of experiments in the teaching of science.

The document stated authorities should establish platforms to identify young talent in the field of science and guide these young people to dedicate themselves to science and research.

COVID-19 Situation

Overall COVID-19 infections in China have entered a low-prevalence level since mid-May, and the vast majority of COVID-19 patients show mild symptoms, medical experts said according to Xinhua News Agency on May 28.

Despite a recent increase, the total number of fever clinic patients is well below that during the peak of the previous infection wave in late 2022 and most patients only have mild symptoms, Wang Liping, a researcher with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), said.

Wang said infections caused by the XBB subvariants of Omicron will continue to exist for some time, but the overall situation is stable and under control, with little impact on the normal

operation of medical services and society.

Another China CDC researcher Chen Cao noted that according to monitoring data, the XBB subvariants are now the predominant COVID-19 strains in both imported and local infections, with no significant change in pathogenicity.

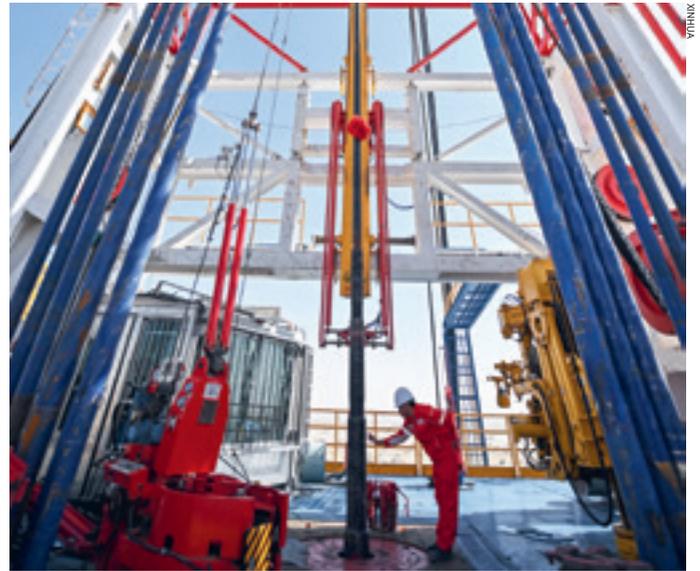
Myopia Prevalence

The overall prevalence of myopia, or nearsightedness, among Chinese students in primary and secondary schools has reached 64.85 percent, according to a report released on May 27.

Titled White Paper on National Prevention and Control of Myopia Among Children and Adolescents, the report was jointly released by China Charities Aid Foundation for Children and Huaxia Eye Hospital Group.

The study draws on data collected from 2019 to 2021, covering 4,027 fulltime primary and middle schools across 51 cities in 19 provinces, involving more than 4.55 million students.

The findings reveal that the prevalence of myopia is 54 percent among primary school students, 78.18 percent among middle school students and 87.05 percent among high



Scratching the Surface

Drilling of China's first borehole over 10,000 meters deep for scientific exploration begins in the Tarim Basin, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on May 30. It represents a landmark in China's deep-Earth exploration, providing an unprecedented opportunity to study areas of the planet deep beneath the surface.

school students. The research also indicates a higher prevalence of myopia in girls than boys, with the right eye being more affected than the left.

Hu Qinrui, one of the lead researchers and a postdoctoral fellow at Peking University,

emphasized the importance of promoting healthy eye habits among students, such as reducing the time spent on electronic devices and encouraging outdoor activities, as part of a comprehensive approach to preventing myopia.



Yay for Ya Ya!

Female Giant Panda Ya Ya is seen at the Beijing Zoo on May 29. She had returned to Beijing earlier that day after first being quarantined in Shanghai. Ya Ya arrived in Shanghai from the United States on April 27.

Business Environment

Foreign-funded companies operating in China have expressed their respect for the country's favorable business environment and show great confidence in the market, according to a recent survey.

Some 97 percent of surveyed foreign firms said they are satisfied with China's policies on boosting foreign investment rolled out from the beginning of the fourth quarter of last year to date, Wang Linjie, an official with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), told a press conference on May 30.

Foreign enterprises remain upbeat about the prospects of the Chinese market as the country continues to improve its business environment, enhance industrial and supply chains, and facilitate cross-border trade, Wang said.

According to a report released by the CCPIT that same day,

foreign companies are optimistic about their development in China, with over 90 percent of respondents expecting their return on investment to remain flat or increase in the next five years.

The survey revealed that foreign firms demonstrate a strong will to expand their business operations in China. Over 70 percent of respondents said they would further localize their industrial chains in the country or maintain the status quo.

The Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta, as well as the southwestern cities of Chengdu and Chongqing are the main destinations for foreign investment, according to the survey.

Logistics Market Growth

Social logistics rose 4.4 percent year on year in the first four months of the year to 107.6 trillion yuan (\$15.2 trillion), according to the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing.

In the January-April period, lo-

gistics for industrial products went up 3.6 percent year on year, up 0.6 percentage points from that in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023.

Total revenue of the logistics industry rose 7.5 percent year on year in the first four months, 0.8 percentage points higher than that of Q1.

Vehicle Sales

Industry data showed that nationwide sales of commercial vehicles rose 8.8 percent year on year to about 1.29 million units in the first four months of the year.

Around 1.15 million trucks were sold in the country, up 7.7 percent from the same period last year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Sales of passenger commercial vehicles surged 18.7 percent year on year to 138,000 units in the same period, with coaches and light buses both registering double-digit growth.

In April alone, China's commercial vehicle sales reached

348,000 units, jumping 60.5 percent year on year.

New Futures Company

China has approved the establishment of Morgan Stanley's futures company in Beijing, the country's securities regulator said on May 26. A futures market is an auction market in which participants buy and sell commodity and futures contracts for delivery on a specified future date.

The move came as China has stepped up efforts to expand the opening up of its futures market, the China Securities Regulatory Commission said.

China will support eligible overseas institutions to invest in domestic futures companies and continue to improve its futures market to serve the high-quality development of its real economy, the regulator said.

China's futures market has maintained steady operation in 2022, with trading volume of its commodity futures and options

NUMBERS

(\$1=7.09 yuan as of June 1)

Industrial Enterprise Profit by Business Type

January-April (bln yuan)



Industrial Enterprise Growth by Business Type

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



accounting for 72.3 percent of the global total, the China Futures Association said.

Telecom Expansion

The telecommunication industry logged a steady expansion in the first four months of the year, buoyed by emerging businesses, official data showed.

According to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the combined business revenue of firms in the sector totaled 569.9 billion yuan (\$80.3 billion), up 7.2 percent year on year.

Of the total, emerging sectors, such as Internet data centers, cloud computing and the Internet of Things, saw their revenue rise 22.3 percent year on year, driving the revenue of the telecom business up 4.3 percentage points, the ministry said.

The data also revealed the spread of 5G services. The country had over 2.73 million 5G base stations by late April and saw a net increase of 73.08 million

5G phone users in the first four months.

Insurance Solvency

The insurance sector maintained steady operation and adequate solvency in Q1, the country's financial regulator said.

The average comprehensive solvency ratio of the 185 insurers reviewed at a regulatory meeting was 190.3 percent by late March and their average core solvency ratio was 125.7 percent, according to the National Administration of Financial Regulatory.

The sector saw better-than-expected development and its solvency ratio remained within an appropriate range in the first three months, the administration said.

Specifically, the average comprehensive solvency ratios of property insurance companies, life insurance companies and reinsurance companies stood at 227.1, 180.9 and 277.7 percent, respectively.

The solvency ratio is a key

metric of an insurer's ability to pay for claims and meet other financial obligations.

Sci-Fi Industry

The revenue of China's sci-fi industry reached 87.75 billion yuan (\$12.4 billion) in 2022, according to a report released at the China Science Fiction Convention (CSFC) 2023.

The report focused on the five sectors of the country's sci-fi industry, including readings, films, games, tourism and related byproducts.

The sci-fi readings industry pocketed 3.04 billion yuan (\$428.6 million) in 2022, up 12.6 percent from the previous year, while the total box office of 21 sci-fi films screened last year was 8.24 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion), with domestic movies accounting for 67 percent, according to the report.

In 2022, total revenue of the sci-fi game industry reached 56.5 billion yuan (\$8 billion), among which 56.2 billion yuan (\$7.9 billion) came from mobile games.

The CSFC 2023 took place in Beijing from May 29 to June 4.

Public Offering Funds

Assets under the management of China's public offering funds totaled 27.29 trillion yuan (\$3.8 trillion) at the end of April, data from the Asset Management Association of China showed.

The scale of closed-end funds reached 3.67 trillion yuan (\$517.4 billion), while open-end funds stood at about 23.62 trillion yuan (\$3.3 trillion), the association said. A closed-end fund is a type of mutual fund that issues a fixed number of shares to raise capital, while an open-end fund is a diversified portfolio that can issue an unlimited number of shares.

A total of 143 fund management companies operated more than 10,000 public offering funds.

Of all the fund management companies, 47 were foreign-funded and 96 were domestic firms, the association said.

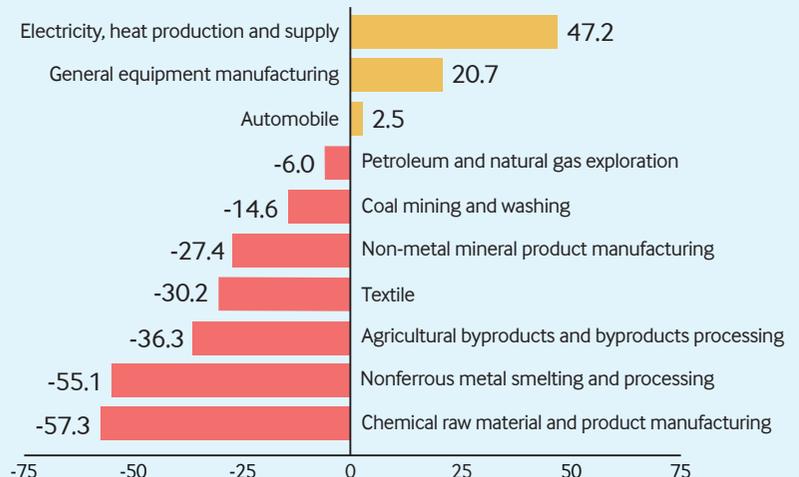
Industrial Enterprise Profit by Sector

January-April (bln yuan)



Profit Changes for Major Sectors

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



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



OMAN

Visitors take photos of the Zheng He Monument at a seafront site in Salalah on May 30. The Chinese Embassy hosted a monument completion ceremony to commemorate the Chinese mariner and explorer Zheng He (1371-1433) who once traveled to the coast of Oman and laid the solid foundation for friendship between both countries



KENYA

An exhibitor introduces avocado products to a visitor at the Second International Africa Avocado Congress (Avocado Africa 2023) in Nairobi on May 31. The country is now Africa's largest producer of avocados, exporting about 80,000 tons annually



RUSSIA

Contestants are ready for lift-off at a hot air balloon championship in Leningrad Oblast on May 27





GHANA

The site of a collision between a bus and a fuel tanker in Central Region on May 30. The accident claimed at least 16 lives



TÜRKIYE

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan delivers a speech in Ankara on May 29 following his victory in the presidential election, securing another five years in power. Erdoğan has been the country's president since 2014



YEMEN

The United Nations *Ndeavor* engineering ship arrives at the site of the decaying super oil tanker *Safer* off the coast of Ras Issa in western Yemen on May 30. The ship will make the first preparations for an emergency rescue plan to offload oil from the tanker

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ CHINA SENDS FIRST CIVILIAN INTO SPACE

Three Chinese astronauts, or taikonauts, flew the *Shenzhou-16* spaceship to the *Tiangong* space station on May 30 and, for the first time, two of them are professionals without backgrounds as military pilots.

Gui Haichao (left), 36, is a professor of space vehicle technology at Beihang University's School of Astronautics in Beijing. He is participating in the mission as a payload expert, responsible for undertaking scientific experiments in the space station. He is the first civilian China has sent into space.

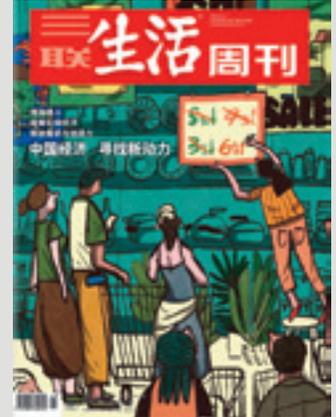
Zhu Yangzhu (right), also 36, is China's first flight engineer heading to space. He is a former associate professor with a research focus on dynamics. In 2005, he joined the military as a student at the National University of Defense Technology before going on to teach at the Space Engineering University of the Strategic Support Force.

Jing Haipeng, a veteran pilot, is the country's first taikonaut to make a fourth trip to space. He was in the *Shenzhou-7* mission in 2008 and commanded the *Shenzhou-9* and *Shenzhou-11* crews in 2012 and 2016, respectively.

After Jing, Zhu and Gui joined the three *Shenzhou-15* crew members, they lived and worked together for several days before the *Shenzhou-15* crew's return.

The *Shenzhou-16* is the first mission after China's space station program entered the stage of application and development late last year, following the completion of its construction. The three taikonauts will stay in orbit for approximately five months.

They will carry out several spacewalks to mount equipment outside the station. Other major tasks will include assisting with the docking and departure of visiting spacecraft, conducting experiments in fields such as general relativity and the origins of life, and giving science lectures to students on Earth.



In Search of New Engines

Lifeweek
May 22

In recent months, the word “deflation” has frequently surfaced in news stories and online discussions across Chinese social media platforms. According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, in March, the consumer price index (CPI) increased by 0.7 percent year on year but was down 0.3 percent from February. Given that China has adopted a moderately easy monetary policy, which normally would lead to fast economic growth, the atypical slow

“Our common interest in preserving the domain of outer space, a province of humankind that benefits us all, requires agile and multi-stakeholder governance responses.”

António Guterres, UN Secretary General, in the introduction to a new policy brief titled *For All Humanity—the Future of Outer Space Governance* published on May 31

“Dialogues cannot continue when no principles are followed and communication cannot be conducted without a baseline.”

Tan Kefei, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, commenting on May 31 in response to U.S. claims that China declined its request for a meeting between the two countries' defense chiefs in Singapore

increase in CPI has led many people to worry that the country is sliding toward deflation.

So, has deflation already begun? The answer is no. In economics, deflation is defined as a continuous decline in CPI for two consecutive quarters. Therefore, technically speaking, China has not entered a phase of deflation.

That does not mean that China can simply dismiss the possibility of falling into deflation. Since last October, a drastic price war has swept across China's vehicle sector. The huge drop in car prices was rooted in the prolonged weakening of consumers' intent to purchase cars. Like car prices, rental rates have also dropped in comparison to last year. Faced with a rising youth unemployment rate, many Chinese youngsters nowadays are more cautious about spending money on rent.

China has withstood the blows of multiple rounds of deflation. The major reason why China successfully recovered was the rise of several major drivers of growth, such as real estate and foreign trade. Therefore, the key to clearing the threat of deflation lies in the identification of a new engine of economic growth.

Culture in a Cup

Guangming Daily

May 29

The Fifth China International Tea Expo, an annual event that gathered exhibitors from tea industries around the world, kicked off in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, on May 20. Besides traditional teas, this year's event presented a vast assortment of interesting products, such as tea latte, tea-flavored ice cream and sparkling tea. With artistically designed packaging and ever more creative sales strategies, these products reflect the increasing popularity of tea among young Chinese consumers.

China is considered the first country to cultivate tea. Throughout history, the

beverage, seen both as a drink that reflects the refined tastes of the elite and an everyday refreshment to be enjoyed by everyone, has retained an enduring appeal to all ages and across all social groups. The beverage can also be blended with milk, juice, spices, sugar and alcohol, thereby allowing a continuous generation of new flavors.

The country has a huge market for the consumption of tea. However, there is also a great divide between the older generations' preference for traditional teas and Chinese youths' inclination toward new varieties. This is not a problem to be corrected, as many would think. Instead, the division showcases the inclusive spirit of the tea culture and the beverage's incredible ability to evolve with time.

Small Portions, Big Savings

People's Daily

May 29

Small portions are one of the hottest trends in China's food and beverage sector. Restaurants across China have upgraded their menus to include small portion sizes, which are usually a half or a third of the standard size, as an alternative to regular dishes.

According to a report released by the China Hospitality Association, last year, over 900,000 restaurants offered 5.6 million kinds of small-sized dishes. These

smaller portions not only are more affordable than standard-sized meals, but also can reduce potential food waste, prevent over-eating and help consumers create healthy eating habits.

Furthermore, studies have shown that each small portion of rice sold throughout the nation reduces carbon emissions by an average of 92.4 grams. Every step of food production, from cultivation, harvest, processing, transportation and cooking, to disposal, consumes energy and releases greenhouse gases. Therefore, by reducing the amount of food produced, processed and thrown away, smaller meals are conducive to tackling global warming.

“We are very pleased to find ourselves not alone in these places and to know that the Chinese medical teams can carry out the work that neither health authorities nor humanitarian organizations can cope with on their own.”

Micaela Serafini, head of the Health Unit of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency. Over the past six decades, China has dispatched medical teams to 76 countries and regions

“Science fiction has the power to transcend time and space and to connect reality. It prompts us to think and care about humanity's past, present and future.”

Martin Woesler, a German Sinologist, at the China Science Fiction Convention 2023, held from May 29 to June 4 in Beijing

构建生态经济体系 助力高质量发展

BUILDING THE ECOLOGICAL ECONOMY FOR HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

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洱海

COVER STORY

DEVELOPMENT IN HARMONY

Forum underlines importance of balancing environmental protection and economic growth By Ji Jing