

OPINION: GROSS ECOSYSTEM PRODUCT P.26 | FEATURES: BIODEGRADABLE BAMBOO P.38

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Cover Photo: Future Close-Up program participants pose for a selfie in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province, on June 18 (ZHANG WEI)

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Reform Drives Progress

On April 1, 2017, a brief piece of news grabbed worldwide attention. China had decided to break ground on a “city of the future” that would advance coordinated development between Beijing, the busy capital city, and its neighboring Tianjin Municipality and Hebei Province. The city, Xiongan New Area, some 100 km southwest of Beijing, has since become a symbol of China’s futuristic urban planning.

With its emphasis on an open and innovative economy, green and low-carbon living and a high quality of life, Xiongan focuses on developing avant-garde industries such as next-generation information technology. Several Beijing-based universities have begun to build campuses there, which will assist in creating a large talent pool. The Beijing-Xiongan Intercity Railway, which opened in 2020, has strengthened connectivity between the two with one-way travel taking about 50 minutes.

The establishment of Xiongan is just one of the transformative steps China has taken since the 18th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress in November 2012. The congress marked the beginning of China’s new era. A year later, at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC

Central Committee, a master plan was adopted on deepening reform across the board, mindful of the specific needs of this era. Thirty-five years after the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee initiated China’s reform and opening up in 1978, it was imperative to begin taking the country’s reforms to a deeper level.

The reforms outlined in 2013 have now mostly come to fruition. For instance, since the first pilot free trade zone was launched in Shanghai in 2013, 22 such zones have been established across the country, with the latest one inaugurated in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region last November. These zones are intended to test special policies on trade liberalization as part of the country’s efforts to foster new economic drivers.

All China’s reforms are problem-oriented. By resolving problems that crop up, the CPC steers the country along a path of healthy growth. Just as Xiongan is now a showcase of China’s high-quality development, the upcoming Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee will offer the international community an opportunity to observe the Party’s hands-on approach to governance. **BR**



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UNLOCKING MOON MYSTERIES

Researchers carefully open the returner of the *Chang'e-6* lunar probe during a ceremony at the China Academy of Space Technology, under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp., in Beijing on June 26.

The *Chang'e-6* probe was launched on May 3.

The probe's returner touched down in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on June 25, bringing back to Earth the first samples ever collected from the far side of the moon.



Legends Unite

Actors perform at a ceremony worshipping Fuxi, a mythical ancestor of the Chinese nation, in Tianshui, Gansu Province, on June 21. Simultaneously, a similar event took place in Taiwan Province's New Taipei City, marking the 11th consecutive year of commemoration for the legendary figure on both sides of the Taiwan Straits.

Drug Control

The China Coast Guard (CCG) announced on June 26 it had seized 8.729 tons of narcotics in maritime operations over the past five years.

The narcotics apprehended since June 2019 include 3.066 tons of methamphetamine (also known as crystal meth), 2.136 tons of ketamine, 2.322 tons of cocaine, 0.778 tons of marijuana, and 0.427 tons of heroin.

Additionally, 2.182 tons of materials used for drug production were intercepted, and 16 major cross-border drug trafficking rings were dismantled.

As a main force in maritime anti-drug efforts, the CCG has been implementing special operations to curb the smuggling of drugs and precursor chemicals, delivering heavy blows to

drug-related criminal activities.

Weight and Wellness

Chinese authorities, including the National Health Commission (NHC) and the ministries of education and civil affairs, have jointly issued a document launching a three-year campaign to enhance the public's weight management.

According to the document published on the NHC's official website on June 26, 16 Chinese departments and organizations are teaming up to create a supportive environment for weight management in China.

Over the next three years, efforts will focus on improving public awareness and techniques in weight management, promoting healthy lifestyles more widely.

The document calls for initiatives to encourage employers to provide fitness infrastructure and convenience for their employees. It advocates for the promotion of healthy canteens and restaurants, avoiding the sale of high-salt, high-sugar and high-fat foods on campuses.

The action plan aims to improve students' physical fitness by ensuring they have at least one hour of physical activity both in school and after school daily.

Fraud Awareness Campaign

The Ministry of Public Security on June 25 revealed the 10 most prevalent telecommunication and cyber scams in the country, one day after it co-initiated a monthlong nationwide fraud awareness campaign.

The ministry said the average age of telecom and cyber fraud victims in 2023 was 37, with 62.1 percent of victims aged between 18 and 40, and 33.1 percent between 41 and 65.

Nearly 88.4 percent of all telecom and cyber fraud cases reported across the country involved 10 common scam types, including false investment schemes, the impersonation of e-commerce logistics support, and fake credit repair services.

Bogus investment and financial products were among the major threats, with scammers creating credibility through investment advice before eventually blocking victims' withdrawals after gaining access to their funds.

Fake online shopping scams also saw a surge, with fraudsters posting deceptive advertisements online and luring victims into direct transactions. Once payments are made, scammers demand additional fees under different pretexts before eventually blocking the victims. One victim in Sichuan Province lost over 13,000 yuan (\$1,789) while trying to purchase equipment from a fraudulent company online.

Other prominent scams included fake loans, impersonation of authorities and online dating deceptions.

By publicizing typical cases of fraud and the latest scam tactics, authorities aim to improve the public's awareness of fraud and ability to prevent it.

Skills Competition

Nearly 600 skilled professionals from 61 countries and regions took part in an international skills competition in Chongqing Municipality from June 24 to 26.

The second Belt and Road International Skills Competition provided a platform for young

talents to communicate and exchange skills, as well as to promote international exchange and cooperation in the field of vocational skills and to further advance the Belt and Road Initiative, a China-proposed initiative aiming to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

Themed “Skills cooperation for common development,” 18 events covered a wide range of fields, including digital construction, logistics, electronic technology, electrical installation, automotive technology and digital marketing.

The competition’s first edition took place in Chongqing in 2019, featuring contestants from 44 countries and regions.

Inbound Tourism

China’s inbound tourism market continues to recover this year and is expected to reach as much as 80 percent of the pre-pandemic level in 2019 in terms of the number of foreign tourists, according to the latest tourism industry report released on June 25.

The China Tourism Academy released the China inbound tourism development report (2023-24) in Sanya City, Hainan Province.

The number of overseas

tourists searching for flights to and accommodation in China has increased markedly, suggesting the growing potential demand for traveling in China, according to the report.

With the continuous resumption of international flights, further improvement of entry convenience and inbound tourism supply chain, and active promotion of tourist destinations across China, the prospect of the inbound tourism market looks relatively optimistic, said the report.

Chinese culture and high-quality life experiences are the core attractions of the destinations, as more than 60 percent of the surveyed listed experiencing Chinese culture as their top reason for visiting the country, the report said. Fascinating experiences such as food tastings, healthcare services and shopping are on their to-do lists, it added.

Some 1.98 million foreigners enjoyed visa-free entry into China during the first three months of this year.

Theater Festival

Nearly 30 theatrical productions from 17 countries took to the stage at the Aranya Theater Festival in the coastal city of Qinhuangdao in Hebei Province from June 20 to 30, highlighting



Eco Oasis

The Wenquan River Wetland Park in Fuping County, Weinan City of Shaanxi Province, on June 21. In recent years, the local government has taken measures to manage the Shichuan River and its tributary Wenquan River, improving their ecological environment.

the country’s commitment to international cultural exchange.

More than 300 foreign theater artists are attending the festival, including directors from esteemed theater festivals in France, Austria, Japan, Australia, Greece, Egypt, Poland and Colombia, according to Meng Jinghui, the festival’s artistic director.

The festival opened with *Drama*, a production by the Volksbühne in Berlin, Germany, that blends elements of cabaret, French revue, Spanish music and Italian farce.

The domestic opening work was *Blossoms*, an adaptation of Jin Yucheng’s eponymous novel, exploring social change and individual destiny in 20th-century Shanghai.

The festival also featured theater readings, theatrical competitions, seaside screenings, dialogues and exchanges, art exhibitions, theatrical parades and bonfire parties.

First held in June 2021, the festival aims to erase the boundaries of art with diverse, contemporary, open and inclusive expressions and forms.



Silk Road Revival

Visitors watch a performance at the Malaysia booth during the eighth China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on June 26. The expo ran until June 30, attracting over 1,900 participants from 50 countries, regions, and international organizations. It showcased over 6,000 products, serving as a platform for economic and trade cooperation between China and Eurasian countries.

FDI Inflow

Paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Chinese mainland totaled 412.5 billion yuan (\$56.8 billion) in the first five months of 2024, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

The amount was 28.2 percent lower than that recorded in the same period last year, the ministry said on its website on June 21.

Despite the decline, 21,764 new foreign-invested firms were established across China in the reporting period, marking a 17.4-percent increase, the data showed.

The scale of foreign investment in actual use is still at a historically high level, according to the ministry. It attributed the decline mainly to a high comparison base last year.

The manufacturing sector attracted 28.4 percent, or 117.1 billion yuan (\$16.1 billion), of the total FDI inflow, up 2.8 percentage points from the same period last year and indicating continued improvement in investment structure.

FDI inflows into smart consumer equipment manufacturing and professional technical services increased 332.9 percent and 103.1 percent year on year, respectively.

FDI from Germany and Singapore increased 24.2 percent and 16.2 percent year on year, respectively, the ministry said.

Huawei's Operating System

Chinese tech giant Huawei's HarmonyOS operating system, a rival to Apple's iOS and Google's Android, has established an ecosystem featuring more than 900 million devices, the company said on June 21.

Yu Chengdong, Huawei's executive director, made the announcement during the company's annual developer conference in the city of Dongguan, Guangdong Province.

A total of 2.54 million developers have joined the construction of the HarmonyOS ecosystem, according to Yu.

More than 1,500 apps are available for use, he added.

Launched in 2019, HarmonyOS, or *Hongmeng* in Chinese, is an open-source operating system designed for different devices and scenarios, including intelligent screens, tablets, wearables and cars.

Yu said the HarmonyOS, now in its fourth iteration, has reshaped the dichotomy of mobile operating systems, offering the world an independent and reliable new option.

Fair Competition Reviews

China will implement regulations for fair competition reviews starting from August 1 to help ensure a level playing field for all market participants and build a unified domestic market free from regional protectionist practices, according to the State Administration for Market Regulation, the country's top market watchdog.

The regulations aim to

prevent authorities from rolling out measures that exclude or restrict market competition, Zhou Zhigao, an official with the administration, told a press conference on June 21.

When formulating laws, rules and policies related to business activities, the authorities will be required to conduct reviews in areas including market entry or exit, free flow of goods, and business operation costs and practices, Zhou said.

For instance, official policies should not contain unreasonable or discriminatory conditions regarding market access, or restrict the entry of products from the outside into the local market. Without legal support or the approval of the State Council, the country's highest state administrative organ, authorities are forbidden to grant specific businesses tax breaks or hand out selective or differentiated incentives or subsidies.

To safeguard businesses' operational autonomy, governments are prohibited from

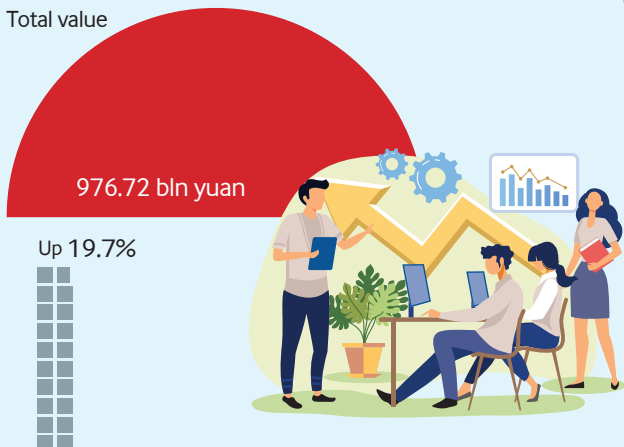
NUMBERS

China's Service Outsourcing Industry in January-May

(All growth rates are y.o.y., \$1=7.12 yuan as of June 27)

Service outsourcing contracts inked by Chinese firms

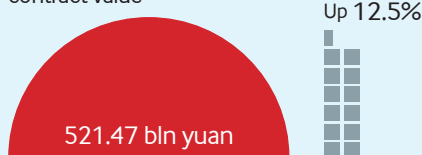
Total value



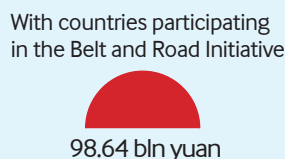
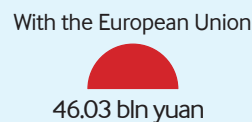
Executed contract value



Offshore service outsourcing contract value



Service outsourcing executed contract value



illegally interfering with price levels that should be regulated by the market or exceeding their legal authority to set guided prices.

China established a fair competition review system in 2016. Over the past eight years, some 93,000 policies and measures that limit competition have been abolished or revised, and many practices that hinder fair access and restrict free flows of factors have been corrected.

AI Companies

China now hosts more than 4,500 artificial intelligence (AI) companies, reflecting the country's efforts to embrace the AI boom, according to official figures released at an industry event on June 20.

The data were made public by Shan Zhongde, Vice Minister of Industry and Information Technology, at the 2024 World Intelligence Expo in Tianjin Municipality.

Shan said China has built 421 national-level demonstration

factories featuring intelligent manufacturing and over 10,000 provincial-level digital workshops and smart factories.

China's core AI industry reached a scale of more than 578 billion yuan (\$80 billion) in 2023, up 13.9 percent year on year, official data showed.

The 2024 World Intelligence Expo, running from June 20 to 23, was co-hosted by Tianjin and Chongqing municipalities, merging the former World Intelligence Congress in Tianjin and the Smart China Expo in Chongqing.

The municipalities will take turns to host the expo in the future.

Financial Asset Growth

Total assets of China's financial institutions had surged to 476.49 trillion yuan (\$65.6 trillion) as of late March, according to data released by the People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank.

The figure represented a

year-on-year increase of 8.5 percent, the PBC said.

Of the total, the assets of the banking sector reached 429.58 trillion yuan (\$59.1 trillion), up 8.1 percent year on year, while the assets of securities institutions rose 2.5 percent year on year to 14.05 trillion yuan (\$1.9 trillion).

The insurance sector's assets gained 15.8 percent year on year to 32.86 trillion yuan (\$4.5 trillion), the data showed.

The liabilities of the financial institutions totaled 434.97 trillion yuan (\$59.9 trillion), up 8.5 percent year on year, according to the data.

Overseas Investment

China reported a robust expansion in overseas investment in the first five months of this year, official data disclosed on June 20, indicating the country's improved cooperation with global partners.

The country's non-financial outbound direct investment (ODI) came in at \$60.2 billion in

the first five months, up 16.3 percent year on year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

Cooperation with countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, a China-proposed initiative which aims to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, continued to show growth momentum as ODI in these countries came in at \$12.81 billion in the January-May period, rising 12.7 percent from the same period a year earlier.

The turnover of contracted overseas projects rose 8.8 percent year on year to \$58.79 billion. The value of newly signed contracts hit \$87.3 billion, marking a rapid increase of 21.7 percent, the data revealed.

To facilitate Chinese investment in foreign countries and regions, the ministry issued a regulation on the contracting of overseas projects, which took effect on July 1. This new directive streamlines procedures for related businesses.

Executed contract value of outsourcing services

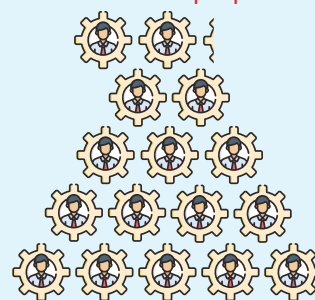
Of foreign-funded enterprises

160.33 bln yuan

Up 7.9%



By the end of May 2024, 16.201 mln people



worked in China's service outsourcing industry

= 1 mln

(Source: Ministry of Commerce)



MADAGASCAR

A military parade as part of a celebration marking the 64th anniversary of the country's independence in Antananarivo on June 26



UNITED STATES

Protesters appear in the background as Boeing President and CEO Dave Calhoun (center front) testifies during a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs hearing titled "Boeing's Broken Safety Culture" in Washington, D.C. on June 18



BOLIVIA

President Luis Arce and his cabinet appear on the balcony of the presidential palace to greet his supporters in La Paz on June 26. A failed coup attempt erupted on that day, resulting in the arrest of the rebel military leader, General Juan José Zúñiga





REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Rescue workers inspect the site of a battery plant fire in Hwaseong on June 24. The fire claimed the lives of 23 people, including 19 Chinese citizens



DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

A missile is launched in a test involving the separation and guidance control of mobile warheads on June 26



FRANCE

Minister of Higher Education and Research Sylvie Retailleau (seventh right) and Chinese Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng (sixth left) attend a Sino-French higher education forum in Paris on June 21

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ TOP SCI-TECH AWARD WINNER

Li Deren, a photogrammetry and remote sensing expert, became one of the two winners (see opposite page) of China's top sci-tech award for 2023 on June 24. He was given the award, officially known as the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award, for his contribution to advancing the country's capabilities in surveying and remote sensing for Earth observation.

Li, 85, is celebrated for his knowledge of the core technologies of high-precision global positioning and mapping via satellite remote sensing. His team's efforts have significantly advanced China's satellite imaging capabilities for civilian applications, achieving a resolution of 0.5 meters and reducing the processing time for remote sensing data from hours to a mere eight minutes. These advancements have positioned China as a global leader in this field.

Li is a professor at Wuhan University and a member of both the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering.



Standardizing the Gaokao Economy

Yangtze Evening News
June 24

Parents' strong desire for their children to be successful in the college entrance examination, known as the *gaokao*, has inspired a so-called "*gaokao* economy." Currently around 1,500 companies have names or business that relate to college application, and nearly 90 percent of them were founded within the last five years. Fees for the services they provide range from several thousand to tens of thousands of yuan (hundreds to thousands of U.S. dollars).

The market should not be allowed to

control the process of college application. College admission departments should provide authoritative information to college candidates and their parents to help with the process of college and program application. High schools should be prohibited from filling out application forms on behalf of candidates or charge any fees in the name of recommending students to colleges. In short, the buying and selling of college opportunities should be strictly prohibited.

As for institutions offering college application services, fees must be standardized. Those who exaggerate their ability to send students to good colleges or charge too many fees must be punished to ensure the rights of college candidates.



Enterprise Inheritance

China Newsweek
June 10

Since 2010, the average retirement age for founders of private enterprises in China has been 59, but of the founders who are yet to retire, 58 percent are over 55 years old, and 26 percent are over 60. This means that in the next few years, China's private enterprises will enter a period when the first generation of founders will hand over the mantle of their business to a second generation.

In this coming era of immense

"These relationships between New York City and Beijing are a powerful example of how international cooperation can lead to shared success. Both cities benefit immensely from their collaborative spirit."

Edward Mermelstein, Commissioner for International Affairs of New York City, during an event in celebration of the sister city relationship between the two metropolises in New York on June 24

"Tackling climate change and promoting energy transition are a common responsibility for all of humanity."

Wen Shugang, Chairman of energy giant China Huaneng Group, at the 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos, which took place in Dalian, Liaoning Province, on June 25-27

changes, the more assets a company possesses, the greater its social responsibility is. However, it takes at least 10 years for a nominal successor to grow up into a true controller of a company. Young entrepreneurs of the second generation are inheriting decades of accumulated wealth and bravely flying into the future. Most of them have graduated from elite overseas universities, thus possess an international perspective and are willing to try novel things. They usually have a strong sense of innovation and a pioneering spirit.

However, the intergenerational conflicts brought about by different experiences of the two generations are far more complex than could have been imagined. They face totally different social environments. At a time of economic slowdown, these young entrepreneurs are facing challenges no less than those once facing their parents.

Given wildly different challenges, steering their enterprises steadily through the fluctuating economic cycles, keeping their enterprises alive, and handling issues relating to succession are the main tasks Chinese private enterprises are working hard to accomplish.

Less Pressure and Better Services

Rednet.cn

June 24

Recently, staff in two outlets of Manner Coffee, one of China's most popular domestic coffee brands, came into conflict with customers on the same day. A male shop assistant had a tussle with a customer, while a female one threw ground coffee at a customer.

The Manner Coffee brand is expanding fast, and in order to save costs, some of its outlets are severely understaffed. Strained by heavy workloads, shop assistants often find it difficult to maintain professional service,

leading to conflicts with customers.

Customers have the right to demand quality services, but this is not an excuse to disrespect the basic dignity of shop assistants. If they are dissatisfied, customers should try to express their grievances through reasonable channels, rather than taking extreme measures. The management of Manner Coffee should pay more attention to work pressures on their employees and increase staff training.

The recent conflicts concerning Manner Coffee are not isolated cases, and are an example of the problems that exist throughout the service industry. All three sides—employees, customers, and employers—should work together to improve the situation.

TOP SCI-TECH AWARD WINNER

Xue Qikun, 61, a Chinese physicist, was the other of the two recipients to win the country's top sci-tech award for his lifetime dedication in fundamental research in materials physics.

Xue is a professor of physics at Tsinghua University and president of the Southern University of Science and Technology. He is also a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In 2012, Xue and his team were the first to experimentally observe the quantum anomalous Hall effect, which would contribute to the development of low power consumption electronics if verified.



He 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 top prize in condensed matter physics since the prize was first awarded in 1953.

“Gastronomy contributes to the promotion and branding of tourist destinations. It likewise helps maintain local traditions as well as preserving their authenticity.”

Junard Chan, Mayor of Lapu-Lapu City, the Philippines, at the First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Asia and the Pacific that kicked off there on June 26

“People have become accustomed to watching films on their phones, altering the traditional cinema experience. I believe we need to rebuild the appeal of theaters.”

Daniela Elstner, Managing Director of the French Film Union, during the opening ceremony of the French Film Panorama in China in Beijing on June 24

The Closing Ceremony of
2024 Future Close-Up
2024 智见青年行结营仪式

创新之路 WAYS TO INNOVATION



The 2024 Future Close-Up program concludes in Beijing on June 20

COVER STORY

VISIONARIES IN MOTION

Global youth delve into China's development landscape By Tao Xing

Juan Camilo Camargo Amaya, from Colombia, was excited after attending a weeklong youth exchange program

in China in June, describing it as “an outstanding experience.”

It was his first time traveling to the country. “Getting to know China has been a dream of mine for a long time. I do think China is an example of

innovation, of progress... And being able to be here to experience that and see this beautiful scenery and how China has progressed over the past several years, is outstanding,”