

OPINION: THE U.S. AND THE WTO P.26

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FEATURES: REWILDING PANDAS P.34

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 Adapting to Extremes

THIS WEEK

COVER STORY

12 Learning a Lesson

How to deal with extreme weather?

16 To Be Food Secure or Not to Be

Mitigating the effects of climate on global food security

OPINION

20 A Wealthier China Powers Global Growth

The ripple effects of increasing prosperity

22 Peace Destabilizer Across the Taiwan Straits

The U.S. upholds a dangerous double standard

24 China Seas U.S. Lurking in the Shadows

Political manipulations over South China Sea issue fuel tensions

26 Pursuing a Single Standard

The U.S. should adhere to WTO rules

27 BYD and Beyond

The Chinese NEV market: The heat is on

FEATURES

30 Empowering Exchange

Expat youth share their stories

34 Returning to Nature

Rewilding pandas in Sichuan

36 A Song of Sand

Art on the fingertips makes waves

38 Stones Rocking 'Embroidery'

Carvings chiseled to creative perfection

40 A Twist of Fate

An Argentinian and her affinity for Fujian

CULTURE

44 Still Standing

Ancient architecture and the Beijing flood

46 Old Opera, Young Actors

Young students dressed to the Peking ones

FORUM

48 Complaining About Tutoring: Public Interest or Self-Interest?

Cover Photo: Rescuers evacuate villagers in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, on August 4 (XINHUA)

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Adapting to Extremes

Heavy rainfalls in north and northeast China in recent weeks have caused casualties and severe losses, and China is not alone. This summer, heatwaves swept East Asia, Western Europe and the west coast of North America, with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius. The World Meteorological Organization confirmed July 2023 as the world's hottest month on record.

Extreme weather events are occurring frequently around the world, inflicting great harm. According to a study by the World Health Organization, between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause 250,000 additional deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress. In addition, ecosystems and agriculture in many regions will be unable to adapt quickly enough to the changes in global temperatures and rainfall patterns, which will in turn affect food crop yields and crop distributions. Agricultural production will be disrupted and more people around the world will have to face the challenge of food insecurity.

Despite its efforts to strengthen capacity building for disaster monitoring, early warning and emergency response, China still often struggles to cope with disastrous

weather events, as evidenced by the havoc caused by recent floods in Beijing and other cities. Going forward, it therefore needs to continue to make itself more capable of responding to climate shocks. For instance, the idea of building "sponge cities," or equipping cities with designs and facilities intended to absorb rain and prevent flooding, is highly relevant.

In the face of extreme weather events, human communities must be prepared. Adaptation cannot be accomplished by one or a few countries, but requires the joint effort of all humanity.

Over the past few decades, the international community has set up a global climate governance system based on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to well below 2 and preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. Against the backdrop of a volatile international landscape, however, the road to climate governance is bumpy and results remain unsatisfactory. If human society fails to unite as one in coping with and adapting to climate change, nature may visit more calamities upon us. **BR**



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TOOLS OF TRADE

A view of Modern Plateau Agriculture Pavilion at the Seventh China-South Asia Expo in Kunming, Yunnan Province, on August 16. The expo kicked off in the city on that day.

The five-day expo, themed Solidarity and Coordination for Common Development, attracted more than 30,000 exhibitors from 85 countries, regions and international organizations, who participated in the event both online and offline.

First held in 2013, the expo has evolved into a vital platform fostering economic and trade cooperation between China and South and Southeast Asian countries.



A Matching Makeover

Chinese badminton players Chen Yufei (left) and Shi Yuqi model the Team China uniforms in Beijing on August 15 for the upcoming 19th Hangzhou Asian Games. The designs incorporate classic Chinese symbols like peony flowers and patterns often seen on China's blue and white porcelain. The games will take place in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province from September 23 to October 8.

Ecology Day

China celebrated its first National Ecology Day on August 15 as it moves steadily toward delivering on its carbon peaking and neutrality pledges, set to be achieved before 2030 and 2060, respectively.

The event has “Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets” as its theme, a core concept in China’s pursuit of ecological progress.

Issuing guidelines on the National Ecology Day, President Xi Jinping urged the whole of society to “vigorously promote and act as role models in practicing the concept.”

Xi said that ecological conservation is of vital importance for the sustainable development

of the Chinese nation, calling it a major political issue that concerns the mission and purpose of the Communist Party of China (CPC) as well as a major social issue that bears upon public wellbeing.

Xi proposed the concept on August 15, 2005, when he was visiting Yucun Village in Zhejiang Province in east China, where he praised the villagers’ decision to shut down limestone mines and cement factories after the industry had severely damaged the local environment. Xi was then secretary of the CPC Zhejiang Committee.

Over the years, the concept has evolved into a collective belief among Chinese people, and the pursuit of green, circular and low-carbon development has become a joint endeavor for

all regions and authorities in the country.

Medical Anti-Corruption

An anti-graft campaign has swept across China’s medical field, with multiple hospital heads and medical officials under investigation.

Jointly initiated by the National Health Commission (NHC) and nine other departments in July, the campaign aims to rectify prominent malpractices such as power-for-money deals, favoritism in the procurement of drug and equipment, accepting kickbacks and offering or accepting bribes, the NHC said in a statement on August 15.

The year-long campaign

is expected to foster an atmosphere of honesty and integrity in the medical sector, it said.

In line with the campaign’s requirements, local authorities have taken measures to crack down on misconduct and illegalities in the sector.

According to media counts, the list of those apprehended in the campaign keeps growing, with more than 160 under investigation at the time of writing.

In addition to the swift and strong measures, China is also exploring a long-term mechanism that ensures the transparent operation of the medical sector.

The country is moving to intensify comprehensive regulation of the medical industry. For example, reforms in public hospitals, emphasizing the standardization of medical service pricing and the payment system, have been accelerated.

Space Innovation Competition

The finals of the 2023 National Youth Space Innovation Competition commenced on August 14 in Wenchang City of Hainan Province in south China, providing teenagers with an opportunity to share their knowledge of aerospace innovation.

Speaking at the finals, Fang Xiangming, a leader of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, said that young people are not only the hope of the country’s future but also an important force to promote innovation.

As a city striving to transform itself into a hi-tech innovation hub and an aerospace industry center, Wenchang will use the event as an opportunity to strengthen the selection and training of innovative talents, Wenchang’s Mayor Liu Chong said.

Hosted from August 14 to 16,

the finals attracted nearly 3,000 young contestants from across the country.

Tibetan Studies

More than 300 scholars on Tibetology from China and overseas gathered in Beijing on August 14 for the opening of a key international seminar promoting Tibetan studies.

The seminar, the seventh of its kind since 1991, lasted until August 16, according to the China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC), an organizer of the event.

As one of the largest international academic events in Tibetan studies, the seminar is an important platform for academics in Tibetology at home and abroad to showcase the latest research findings and deepen exchanges and cooperation, according to the CTRC.

Chen Zongrong, Deputy Director-general of the CTRC, said Chinese scholars on Tibetology have been expanding the depth and scope of their studies by drawing on research findings of other disciplines, as well as exploring new materials, issues and research paradigms.

Birgit Kellner, Director of the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (IKGA) of the Austrian Academy

of Sciences, noted that Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in Tibet have great historical and cultural value.

In recent years, the CTRC has signed a cooperation agreement with the IKGA to jointly research Tibetan Sanskrit manuscripts and has since achieved remarkable results.

Kellner expressed the hope to maintain close exchanges with Chinese researchers and further promote international academic cooperation in Sanskrit manuscript research.

Commerce System

The Chinese Government publicized a three-year action plan on August 14 aiming to strengthen the nation's county-level commerce system further, to promote the integrated development of urban and rural areas and rejuvenate the nation's rural regions.

The plan includes the creation of 500 "frontrunner" counties by 2025, which will have county-level logistics distribution centers, convenience stores for rural populations and rural commerce centers such as large and medium-sized supermarkets and farmers' markets.

The plan seeks to increase farming incomes, upgrade farmers' consumption trends and



Immersed in History

People take part in an interactive game at the Yingtianmen site museum of the National Archaeological Site Park of Sui-Tang Luoyang City in Luoyang, Henan Province in central China, on August 11. Luoyang served as the capital city of several dynasties in ancient China.

help meet the rural population's life and production needs.

Disaster Relief

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) announced on August 15 that it had allocated another 500 million yuan (\$68.5 million) to support the reconstruction of infrastructure and the resumption of basic public services in areas hit hard by floods and other rain-triggered disasters.

The Central Government funding will be allocated to

Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Fujian provinces, as well as Beijing and Chongqing municipalities, according to the NDRC.

In this year's flood season, continuous heavy rainfall has triggered floods and secondary geological disasters, leading to casualties and property losses in many parts of the country.

The new funding, on top of the 200 million yuan (\$27.4 million) allocated previously, lifted the NDRC's special-purpose funding for emergency reconstruction to 700 million yuan (\$96 million).



Swimmingly!

Staff members release fry at the Dateng Gorge water conservancy project in Guiping City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in south China, on August 15. More than 1.6 million fry of rare, endangered and economically significant fish species were released into the water that day.

Steady Recovery

China sustained its economic recovery momentum in July and made solid progress in high-quality development despite lingering downward pressures on the global economy, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Retail sales of consumer goods, which indicate the country's overall consumption strength, registered a stable 7.3-percent increase from a year ago in the first seven months, and fixed assets investment went up 3.4 percent.

The service sector remained vibrant as its production index gained 5.7 percent year on year in July, and value-added industrial output climbed 3.7 percent.

The Chinese economy continued the upward trend, with increases in both production and demand, stable employment and prices, and steady industrial upgrades, NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui told a press conference on August 15.

Services consumption logged a stellar 20.3-percent expansion in the January-July period, with robust summer vacation tourism. In July, China's box office revenue surged 111 percent from the previous month, and new-energy vehicle (NEV) sales jumped by over 30 percent year on year.

Industrial upgrades picked up pace and the innovation momentum has gathered steam. Hi-tech investment gained 11.5 percent year on year in the first seven months, and the funds for scientific research and technologies went up 23.1 percent. The production of NEVs and solar batteries rose 24.9 and 65.1 percent in July, respectively.

The NBS spokesperson dismissed concerns over price changes in China, saying, "The Chinese economy has no deflation."

Fu pointed out that consumer price growth will gradually return to a reasonable level and the price decline at the factory gate

will further narrow, propelled by the positive trajectory of the broader economy.

Inbound Investment

Authorities will promote and strengthen policy support for inbound foreign investment, Vice Minister of Commerce Chen Chunjiang told a press conference on August 14.

The Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) will work with related departments to implement the guidelines for the further optimization of the country's foreign investment environment, and to intensify efforts to attract foreign investment as published by the State Council on August 13, he said.

The ministry will continue to deepen reform and opening up, effectively optimize the country's business environment, and make every effort to stabilize foreign trade and investment, according to Chen.

In addition to the actions set out in the guidelines, MOFCOM

will continue to implement the policies and measures that have been introduced since the beginning of the year.

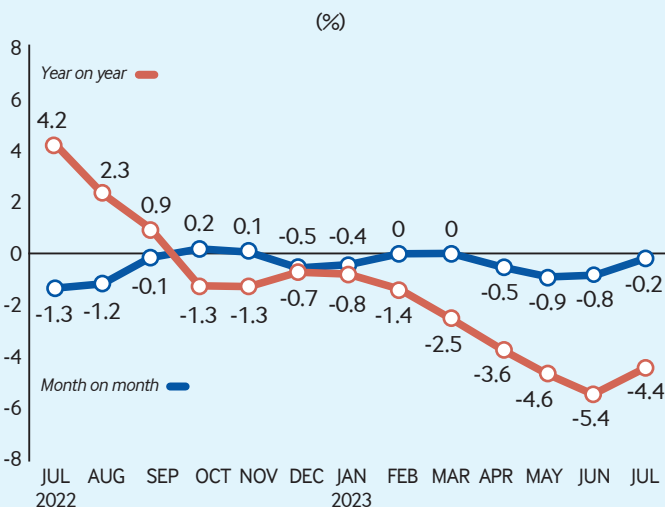
These policies and measures include those introduced in April to stabilize the scale and optimization of the structure of foreign trade, as well as those introduced in June to deepen reforms in certain eligible free trade zones and the Hainan Free Trade Port to align with high-standard international economic and trade rules.

The country in January issued a circular requesting that related departments and regional authorities provide further support for foreign investors in their establishment of research and development centers.

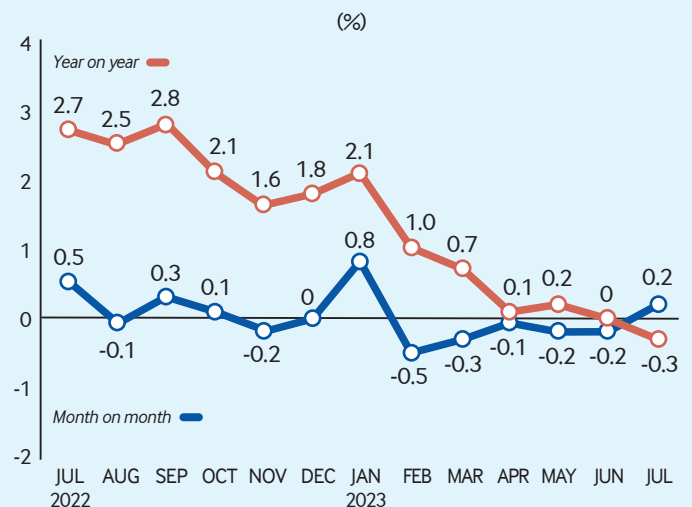
The ministry will take further steps to strengthen policy support in the future. It will work with related departments to shorten the country's negative list of sectors off-limits to foreign investors and continue to expand market access for foreign investment.

NUMBERS

China's Producer Price Index Growth



China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth



In the meantime, it will continue to relax restrictions on foreign strategic investment in listed companies in China, according to MOFCOM.

Power Use

China's power consumption neared 5.2 trillion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in the first seven months of this year, up 5.2 percent from a year ago, the National Energy Administration said.

Power consumed by primary, secondary and tertiary sectors increased 12.3, 4.6 and 9.8 percent, respectively.

Residential power use saw a year-on-year increase of 2.1 percent to 782.7 billion kWh during the first seven months.

In July alone, the country's power consumption rose 6.5 percent year on year to 888.8 billion kWh.

Block Trading

The China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and the

Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) jointly announced the introduction of block trading under the Stock Connect mutual market access program on August 11.

Block trades are large trades made by institutional investors. Under Stock Connect, offshore investors will be able to conduct block trades on the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges through the northbound trading link, while mainland investors will be able to conduct manual trades on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Ltd. through the southbound trading link.

The initiative will further enhance the Stock Connect arrangements, make available more trading mechanisms, improve trading efficiency and promote the mutual development of both capital markets, the announcement said.

The CSRC and the SFC will supervise the respective exchanges and clearing houses on both sides in studying the

business, technical and regulatory arrangements to introduce block trading, conduct market consultation and develop an implementation proposal.

Soybean Imports

China imported 62.3 million tons of soybeans in the first seven months of this year, up 15 percent from a year earlier, customs data showed.

In July alone, the country's soybean imports reached 9.73 million tons, down from 10.27 million tons in June but more than the 7.88 million tons imported in the same month last year, according to data from the General Administration of Customs of China.

The per-ton value of the soybean imports increased 1.3 percent year on year in the first seven months to 4,334.6 yuan (\$594.4).

The country, as the world's largest soybean importer, imported a total of 91.08 million tons of soybeans last year. China

processes over 80 percent of its imported soybeans into protein-rich soybean meal-based animal feed, used primarily in its pork industry.

Retail Rebounds

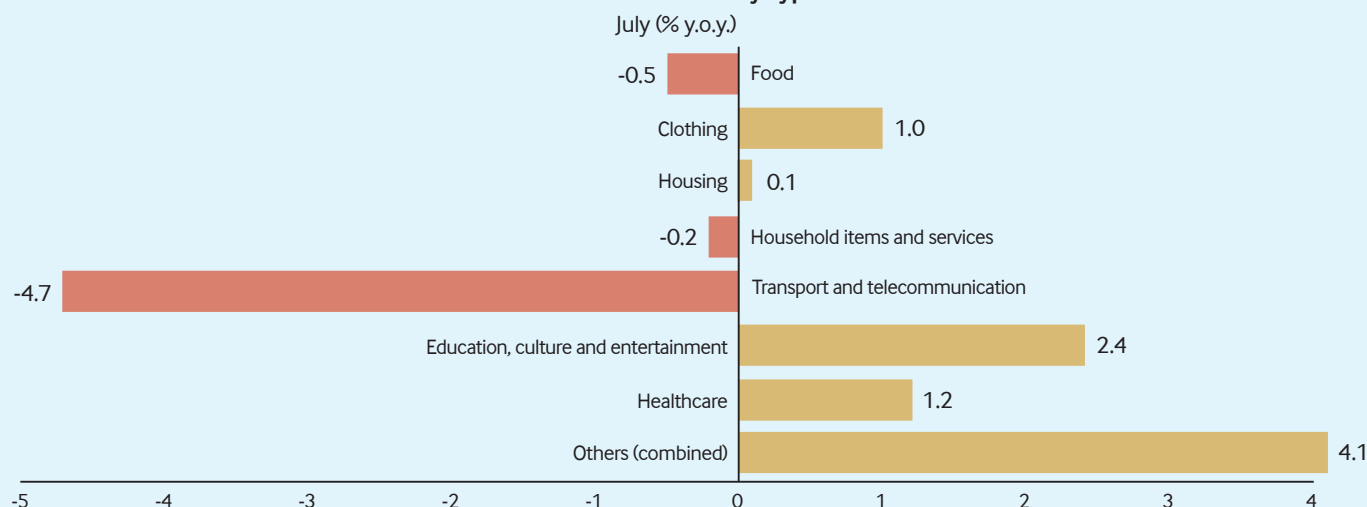
The China Retail Performance Index, a barometer of retailers' expectations for the sector, stood at 50.3 percent in August, edging up 0.2 percentage points from July and staying in the expansion zone for eight consecutive months, according to the China General Chamber of Commerce.

A reading above 50 indicates expansion and below that mark, contraction.

The upward trend of the index since the start of this year serves as evidence proving the resilience of the Chinese economy, the chamber said.

China has rolled out a series of pro-growth policy measures, which is of great significance in restoring the confidence of both businesses and the public, it added.

China's CPI Growth by Type



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



JAPAN

An inflatable Pikachu at Minatomirai in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, on August 13. A Pokémon festival took place there from August 11 to 14



RUSSIA

People dance in a circle in St. Petersburg's Palace Square on August 15. More than 100 cities celebrated the Seventh Russian Circle Dance international festival, with the main venue being St. Petersburg



BELGIUM

Participants take part in the International Bathtub Regatta on the Meuse River in Dinant on August 15. Since 1982, participants have vied to create the most impressive raft and cruise the Meuse every year on August 15



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

A fisherman attends a rally protesting against Japan's planned discharge of radioactive wastewater into the Pacific Ocean in the southern coastal county of Goheung on August 16



KENYA

A child poses for a picture in front of children's drawings on display during a carnival in Mathare Valley slum of Nairobi on August 11



UNITED STATES

Aerial image taken on August 10 shows houses destroyed in a devastating wildfire on Maui Island, Hawaii. The death toll from the Maui wildfires had reached 106 as of August 17



↓ PIANIST HONORED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Liu Shikun, an 84-year-old Chinese piano maestro, was honored on August 12 with the Most Outstanding Asian Artist Lifetime Achievement Award, one of the most significant honors in the U.S. dedicated to recognizing excellence in the Asian arts community.

Liu has been a judge of many international piano competitions and his albums have been released internationally. He is not only a pianist, composer, music educator and entrepreneur, but also a pioneer in China-U.S. cultural exchange.

In 1978, Liu toured the U.S. as the deputy head and chief performer of a delegation of Chinese artists, becoming one of the first artists from the People's Republic of China to visit the country. He was received by then U.S. President Jimmy Carter.



Beware of Shared Chairs

Guangzhou Daily
August 9

Shared massage chairs, which have in the recent years spread through Chinese cinemas, railway stations and shopping centers, are losing their charm among consumers, who are now pushing for a removal of these chairs from public places. "Can cinemas get rid of shared massage chairs" is now a trending hashtag on major microblogging platform Weibo. A video of a woman in considerable pain as her hair became caught in a massage chair has also triggered a massive online buzz, with many netizens opening up about their own unpleasant memories related to the chairs.

Multiple factors have driven the downfall of this once popular product. Most massage

chairs are bulky, meaning that they take up a lot of space that normally should be used to provide regular seating in public areas. Many people use the chairs as free lounge chairs on which to doze off, which is usually not a great sight to behold. Hygiene is another issue. The public nature of unstaffed chair massage makes it impossible to sanitize the chair between each use. Therefore, these chairs have become a natural hotbed of infective agents, which has led to numerous cases of severe skin infections.

Like shared Karaoke booths, phone chargers and bikes, shared massage chairs are part of a larger trend that sees the country's shared economy fad running out of steam. Creating a set of rules for something that is so widely shared is a task that every business in the sector has to face.



Battery-Powered Growth

Lifeweek
August 14

For China's new-energy vehicle (NEV) sector, the past three years has been a period of exponential growth. Apart from clean energy initiatives and robust government backing, the rise of China's power battery sector has also contributed to its surge.

China's lithium-ion battery sector emerged in 1978, the year in which Chen

"Cooperation between China's local regions and African countries can better leverage regional strengths and promote bilateral complementarity."

Zhou Ping, Deputy Director General of the Department of African Affairs of the Foreign Ministry, during a conference on collaboration between Jiangsu Province and African countries in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, on August 10

"These projects are contributing greatly to connectivity in Europe, with high quality, low cost and reduced construction time."

Hussein Askary, Vice Chairperson of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden, on projects constructed under the initiative such as the Port of Piraeus in Greece, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

Liquan, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, established the country's first lithium-ion lab. The 45 years that followed saw this burgeoning sector grow from a cluster of small manual workshops into a massive industry headed by multiple tech giants, the most famous of which is undoubtedly BYD, a globally leading producer of NEVs and batteries.

These domestic battery manufacturers have turned their factories into modern production complexes that integrate highly automated assembly lines, offices, and recreational areas. In BYD's factories in Shenzhen, Xi'an and Changsha, a driverless rail transit system has been installed to connect the various facilities. EVE Energy, another major lithium battery manufacturer in China, has set up cafes, snack bars and kitchens within its factories to foster a positive work environment.

Industrial clusters centering on the battery industry have also started to take form in cities such as Yibin in Sichuan Province and Changzhou in Jiangsu Province, which have risen to become two major battery manufacturing hubs in China. Hopefully, with the continuous support of local governments, these industrial clusters can evolve into ecosystems that are deeply integrated with local economies.

Banter for Beds

Rednet.cn
August 10

Some nursing homes in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, are currently recruiting young people to partake in a senior care program that pairs lonesome elders with cash-strapped young adults. First started in 2019 with a pilot project at Sunshine Home, a senior care center in Hangzhou, this companionship program offers young people free retirement home apartments as long as they can keep the elderly company for at least 10 hours a month.

The program is a win-win for both

budget-conscious young adults and lonely seniors craving company. The idea that one can live in a free apartment by spending technically only 2.5 hours a week chatting with seniors is a draw for many freshly graduated youngsters, who are trying to stay afloat by juggling lean wages. For many nursing home residents whose offspring are often too busy to keep in touch, having someone physically around is enough to relieve the boredom that comes with retirement life.

By allowing young participants to understand the importance of companionship, the program also serves as a constant reminder for these youngsters to spend more quality time with their aging parents.

↓ PAIR SKATING CHAMPION ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Pair skating Olympic champion **Han Cong** announced on August 15 that he will withdraw from all competitions of the current Olympic cycle because of injuries.

It means the 31-year-old Han and his 28-year-old partner Sui Wenjing will not be able to defend their Olympic title at the Milan-Cortina Winter Games in 2026.

Sui and Han, two-time world champions and runners-up at Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018, have not competed since their victory at the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. The two have separated multiple times because of injuries in the 16 years since they became partners in 2007.

In his announcement, Han confirmed his continued involvement in figure skating. Last September, he was appointed as a skater member of the Single and Pair Skating Technical Committee by the International Skating Union.



“The New Development Bank (NDB) is seeking to increase its presence in the local capital markets of its member countries, to fund its robust portfolio of local-currency loans.”

Leslie Maasdorp, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the NDB, as the bank, established in 2015 by BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), issued its first rand-denominated bond in the South African bond market on August 15

“Gen Z has become a force to reckon with in terms of performance arts consumption, and their needs and preferences cannot be ignored.”

Zhu Min, an associate professor at the Communication University of China, commenting on research that shows over 30 percent of live performing arts consumption is by young audiences born after 1995



COVER STORY

LEARNING A LESSON

The occurrence of extreme weather events sends a strong warning signal

By Ji Jing