

BEIJING REVIEW

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THE X FACTOR

What makes the

injiang Pilot FTZ appealing?



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AUD3.00
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COVER PHOTO: A container terminal in Alashankou, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on November 4 (CNSPHOTO)

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Xinjiang Pilot FTZ

Though located in China's hinterland, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is becoming a new frontier of opening up. The China (Xinjiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ) was officially inaugurated on November 1, making it the 22nd FTZ in China and the first in the country's northwestern border regions.

Covering an area of 1.66 million square km, about one sixth of China's total land area, Xinjiang borders eight countries—Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. It has a larger land area, a larger number of neighboring countries and a longer land border than any other provincial-level administrative region in China. Home to all 56 of the country's ethnic groups, the autonomous region has a population of 25.8 million, of whom 11.6 million belong to the Uygur ethnic minority.

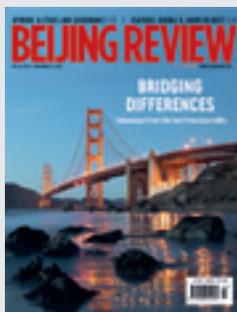
According to a plan issued by the Central Government, the Xinjiang Pilot FTZ will be given greater autonomy in carrying out reforms and encouraged to cultivate industries unique to the region. The pilot FTZ has three subzones—in Urumqi, Kashgar and Khorgas, also known as Horgos. Urumqi is the capital city of Xinjiang, while Kashgar and Khorgas are both border cities.

The Urumqi subzone will focus on

international trade, modern logistics, advanced manufacturing, textile and garment industries as well as emerging industries such as biomedicine, new energy, new materials, software and information technology services. The Kashgar subzone will focus on labor-intensive industries such as deep processing of agricultural products and assembly lines for electronic products. The Khorgas subzone will prioritize cross-border logistics, cross-border tourism, financial services, exhibitions and other modern services industries.

The plan has outlined detailed measures in 25 areas. These include promoting trade facilitation and strengthening economic and trade cooperation with neighboring countries. Xinjiang's geographic location makes it a hub along the New Eurasian Land Bridge, an international passageway linking the Pacific and the Atlantic and one of the economic corridors of the Belt and Road Initiative, a China-proposed initiative that aims to strengthen connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

The Xinjiang FTZ is poised to serve as a bridgehead for China's westward opening up, help build a China-Central Asia free trade area and cement the bond between Asia and Europe. **BR**



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CANADA.....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND.....CHF2.60
JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
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HOME AT LAST

Chinese honor guards receive coffins containing the remains of Chinese People's Volunteers soldiers during a handover ceremony at Incheon International Airport, the Republic of Korea (ROK), on November 23.

China and the ROK jointly held a ceremony at the airport to hand over the remains and belongings of 25 Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War (1950-53).

Chinese honor guards then escorted the coffins to a Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force aircraft, which carried the fallen heroes back to their homeland.



A Great Photo Op

The Dingdongpo Wind Power Photovoltaic Project in Shiqian District, Tongren City, Guizhou Province, southwest China on November 16. With a combined power generation capacity of 100.1 Megawatts, the project was successfully connected to the grid. The county has stepped up the use of green energy by taking advantage of its high altitude.

Homegrown Helicopter

China's independently developed AC313A large civil helicopter has successfully completed the first round of plateau flight tests, according to the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), Xinhua News Agency reported on November 20.

The AC313A has successfully completed a series of flight tests at a range of plateau airports. The move paves the way for airworthiness flight tests, said AVIC, the country's leading aircraft manufacturer.

The first round of flight tests took place at Anshun Huangguoshu Airport in Guizhou Province, Ninglang Luguho Airport in Yunnan Province and

Daocheng Yading Airport in Sichuan Province, the AVIC said.

These plateau airports in southwest China are located at altitudes of about 1,600 meters, 3,300 meters and 4,400 meters, respectively.

This round of flight tests verified the AC313A helicopter's flight performance and quality on plateaus, as well as the adaptability of its major systems, the AVIC said.

Developed by the AVIC, the AC313A is a large 13-ton civil multi-purpose helicopter with a single main and tail rotor. It took to the skies for its maiden flight on May 17 last year.

Hospital Branch

Peking University People's Hospital, one of Beijing's top

hospitals, began construction of a new branch in Xiongan New Area in neighboring Hebei Province on November 20.

Located in the Rongdong area, the new branch covers an area of 7.64 hectares and will have 1,000 beds, according to the Xiongan New Area Management Committee. Wang Jun, Director of Peking University People's Hospital, said the Xiongan branch will serve as a national medical center and contribute to the coordinated development of medical and healthcare services in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

China in April 2017 announced plans to establish the Xiongan New Area, which is located about 100 km from Beijing.

As an important step to

promote the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, Xiongan was designed as a major recipient of functions offloaded from Beijing that are not essential to its role as China's capital, and to explore a new model of development in densely populated areas.

Buzzwords of the Year

Candidates for China's 2023 buzzwords have been released, with Chinese characters and expressions for rejuvenation, prosperity, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Games on the shortlist, Xinhua reported on November 20.

The list also includes Chinese words for turmoil, crisis, the Palestine-Israel conflict, and China-United States relations.

The list was compiled through a combination of expert recommendations and big data analysis, and includes characters and expressions related to both China and the world.

The buzzword selection is an annual event that aims to represent domestic and international changes through a single Chinese character or phrase.

Now in its 18th consecutive year, the event invites the public to nominate candidate characters and phrases and vote for the shortlisted ones. The result will be announced on December 20.

This year's buzzword selection is a joint effort by the National Language Resources Monitoring and Research Center, the Commercial Press and Xinhuanet.

Giant Panda Conservation

The National Center for Giant Panda Conservation and Research, a world-class

platform for giant panda research cooperation and exchange, was inaugurated on November 17 in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province in southwest China.

The center integrates the resources of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda and the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, bringing together outstanding giant panda research teams from all over the country.

According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, the center has established an academic committee on giant panda conservation and a national innovation alliance. In the future, the center will build a key laboratory for giant pandas and promote the establishment of similar laboratories for other endangered animals.

Pharmaceutical Industry

China now has more than 10,000 major pharmaceutical industrial enterprises, and the country's ability to ensure medical supply has improved, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said on November 17.

The industrial output of major pharmaceutical companies

currently accounts for about 4 percent of the country's total industrial output, according to the ministry.

The industry's investment in research and development (R&D) has continued to grow, with the average annual R&D expenditure exceeding 20 percent over the past three years.

As a result, the industry has made some progress in developing innovative drugs and high-end equipment, the ministry said, adding that China now ranks second in the world in the number of new drugs under research.

China will speed up the construction of a modern pharmaceutical industry system and improve supply security, said Jin Zhuanglong, Minister of Industry and Information Technology.

Multinational companies will be encouraged to set up R&D centers and innovative drug production bases in China, while domestic pharmaceutical companies will be encouraged to explore overseas markets, Jin added.

Documentary Film

A documentary film project chronicling the epic adventure of a herd of wild Asian elephants was launched at a ceremony in Yunnan Province, southwest China, on November 16.



On the Fast Track

The construction site of the Louwan Grand Bridge on the Chongqing-Kunming high-speed railway in Chongqing Municipality, southwest China, on November 21. The 699-km railway, which connects Chongqing and Kunming in Yunnan Province in southwest China, has a design speed of 350 km per hour and is an important part of the railway corridor linking Beijing and Kunming.

The film, titled *The Elephant Odyssey*, follows the improbable journey of the wandering Asian elephants in Yunnan, which captivated viewers around the world and brought them to global movie screens for the first time.

In March 2020, the elephants left a forest nature reserve in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, and trekked about 500 km north to the provincial capital of Kunming, arriving in

June 2021. Since then, they have continued their journey south, arriving safely back at the reserve.

The documentary is being produced by IMAX Corporation, Beach House Pictures and the China Review Studio of the China Center for International Communication Development.

It is scheduled for release in IMAX theaters and commercial cinemas worldwide upon completion in 2024.



Child-Friendly

A mother does handicrafts with her child at Shangwei Village, a child-friendly art village, in Longhua District of Shenzhen, Guangdong Province in south China, on November 19. Since issuing China's first guideline on creating a child-friendly city eight years ago, the city has rolled out a series of measures to spearhead construction toward the goal.

Capital Cooperation

The Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) and the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on November 20 to strengthen cooperation and exchanges between the capital markets.

The partnership facilitates the exchange of knowledge, expertise and information between the SSE and the DFM and aims to enhance efficiency and transparency in both markets, the SSE said.

The SSE and the DFM will jointly explore developing ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and sustainability-linked products and focus on products relevant to both markets, according to the MoU.

Both sides will facilitate joint product development, such as index and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), introduce companies and issuers to the advantages of each market, and provide them access to better services. Index

funds replicate the performance and composition of a financial market index. ETFs are baskets of assets that are traded like securities. They can be bought and sold on an open exchange just like regular stocks.

Bank Card Clearing

The People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank, announced on November 19 that it and the National Financial Regulatory Administration have approved an application by MasterCard's Chinese joint venture to conduct bank card clearing operations in the country. Clearing in the banking system is the process of settling transactions between banks.

MasterCard NUCC Information Technology (Beijing) Co. Ltd., a joint venture of MasterCard and NetsUnion Clearing Corp. (NUCC), could authorize its member institutions to issue MasterCard branded renminbi bank cards in China, the PBC said.

MasterCard is the second overseas bank card clearing institution to enter the Chinese market. In 2020, the PBC approved an application by American Express' Chinese joint venture to conduct such business in the country.

The PBC said it would promote work on bank card clearing market access in an orderly manner, while improving the regulatory system to balance development and security.

Vehicle Sales

Nationwide commercial vehicle sales soared 19.8 percent year on year to about 3.3 million units in the first 10 months of this year, industry data showed.

Specifically, sales of trucks rose 19.5 percent year on year to 2.91 million units, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Some 389,000 buses were sold in the same period, surging 22.2 percent from the same period last year.

During the January-October period, China exported 616,000 commercial vehicles, jumping 28.3 percent over one year earlier.

Shipbuilding Expansion

China has maintained its top position in the global shipbuilding market in the first 10 months of 2023, with strong growth in both output and new orders, according to the China Association of the National Shipbuilding Industry.

The country's shipbuilding output climbed 12 percent year on year to 34.56 million deadweight tons (DWTs), used to describe the total weight in metric tons a ship can safely carry, during the January-October period, accounting for 49.7 percent of the world's total, figures from the association showed.

New orders surged 63.3 percent year on year to 61.06 million DWTs, taking up 67 percent of the world's total during

NUMBERS

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



the period.

The volume of orders on hand, orders that have been placed but not yet filled or completed for the industry, stood at 133.82 million DWTs as of late October, up 28.1 percent from one year earlier and accounting for 54.4 percent of the world's total.

The country's shipbuilders exported a combined \$21.14 billion worth of ships in the first 10 months, up 21 percent from the same period last year, according to the association.

Foreign Firms

A total of 41,947 new foreign-invested companies were established in China during the first 10 months of the year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

The figure marked a 32.1-percent increase from the same period a year earlier.

During the period, paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Chinese mainland came in at 987.01 billion yuan (\$138.2

billion), down 9.4 percent year on year.

Specifically, FDI in manufacturing rose 1.9 percent year on year to 283.44 billion yuan (\$39.7 billion), with that in hi-tech manufacturing logging an increase of 9.5 percent.

FDI from Canada, the United Kingdom and France surged 110.3, 94.6 and 90 percent, respectively, the data showed.

China has reiterated the country's commitment to market opening up and its efforts to ensure a level playing field for foreign investors.

FDI in China is subject to a negative list, which specifies the areas out of bounds for foreign investors. The country will shorten its negative list for foreign investment in a reasonable manner and scrap all restrictions for foreign investors entering the manufacturing industry, Li Chao, a spokesperson for the National Development and Reform Commission, said at a press conference on November 16.

Intelligent Connected Vehicles

China will test market access for intelligent connected vehicles (ICVs) and allow them on the road, authorities announced.

The authorities will select some ICV models equipped with automated driving functions that can be mass-produced to give them market access and test the selected vehicles on designated roads, according to a recent circular issued by four ministries, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Ministry of Transport.

The pilot program is expected to promote innovative ICVs, ensure safe operation and integrate the automobile industry with other sectors such as new energy, artificial intelligence and communications.

The program follows earlier open road tests for the research and development of ICVs, which proved that some models could be mass-produced. Official data

shows that as of late August, China's open road testing of ICVs had exceeded 20,000 km.

Non-Financial ODI

China's non-financial outbound direct investment (ODI) increased 17.3 percent year on year to 736.2 billion yuan (\$103 billion) in the first 10 months of the year, official data showed.

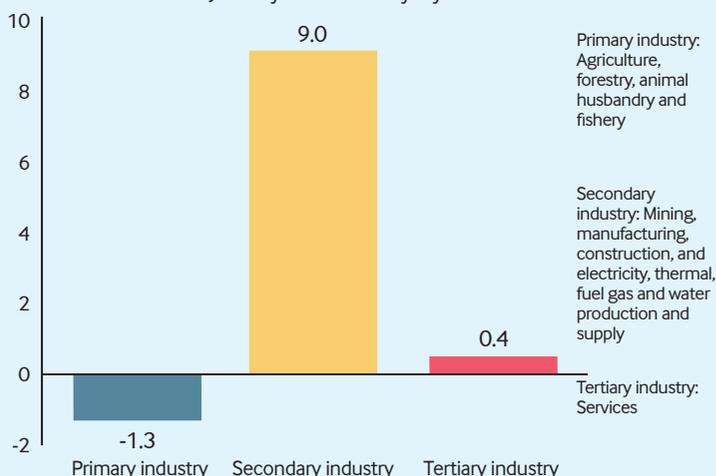
In U.S. dollar terms, the ODI went up 11 percent from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The non-financial ODI in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by China 10 years ago aiming to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, came in at 181.69 billion yuan (\$25.4 billion) during the January-October period, up 27 percent year on year.

The turnover of contracted projects overseas grew 8.3 percent year on year to 856.88 billion yuan (\$120 billion), the ministry said.

Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Sector

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



Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Region

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



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



BANGLADESH

Dengue patients receive treatment at a hospital in Dhaka on November 20. The total number of cases in the country's worst dengue outbreak ever, has risen to 301,225, including 1,549 deaths, since January this year



LEBANON

Mourners carry the coffins of the two Al-Mayadeen TV journalists killed in an Israeli air strike on November 21. The funeral procession is shown in front of the station's headquarters in Beirut on November 22



INDONESIA

Houses are flooded after heavy rains in Aceh Barat District, Aceh Province, on November 22





FRANCE

Chefs serve up their finest amuse-bouches at the LA LISTE 2024 World Restaurant Ranking presentation at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris on November 20



EGYPT

People visit Tutankhamun—The Immersive Exhibition at the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza on November 20. The exhibition about the ancient Egyptian King Tut, as he is colloquially known, had opened at the museum earlier in the day



ISRAEL

Pictures of Israeli and international hostages held in the Gaza Strip are displayed in Jerusalem's Old City on November 7. On November 22, Israel and Hamas confirmed their agreement to a proposal for a temporary ceasefire in Gaza. In exchange for Hamas releasing hostages, the Israeli side agreed to release Palestinian prisoners and allow more humanitarian aid into the besieged enclave



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ LITERATURE PRIZE WINNER

Novelist **Yang Zhijun** received the Mao Dun Literature Prize, one of the country's most prestigious literary accolades, on November 19.

Yang won the prize for his novel *Xueshan Dadi*, or *The Snow Mountain and the Homeland*, which features the lives of ethnic minorities living on grasslands in Qinghai Province. Born in Xining, Qinghai, located on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, in 1955, Yang has been hailed as China's finest teller of stories about the highlands, known as the Third Pole.

The Mao Dun Literature Prize, named after one of China's most influential modern authors Mao Dun (1896-1981), is hosted by the China Writers Association and awarded every four years. Since its inception in 1981, 53 works have been honored. This year, five works, including Yang's, were selected for the prize from among Chinese novels published from 2019 to 2022.



Tanghulu on Trend *Global Times* November 16

Tanghulu is a traditional fruit snack typically made of fruits coated in a clear, crystalized sugar shell. Over the past year, this classic street food hailing from north China has become one of the trendiest desserts among young people in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Data show that, as of October, the number of *tanghulu* shops in the ROK had increased tenfold within a year.

Part of the reason why *tanghulu* has become a hit is its successful adaptation to Korean tastes. In an effort

to address rising concerns over the snack's high sugar content, *tanghulu* franchises have opted for a thinner layer of sugar. These franchises have also combined *tanghulu* with a wide range of Korean delicacies. Hawthorn berries, strawberries, grapes and other regular options have been swapped for *tteokbokki* (Korean rice cakes) and *yakgwa* (a deep-fried biscuit made with honey and ginger).

It remains unclear as to whether this fad will last. But the *tanghulu* craze does speak to a larger trend that sees Chinese food, as well as other forms of Chinese culture, extend its fame to other parts of the world.



The Land of Renewed Abundance *Oriental Outlook* November 16

Nicknamed the Land of Abundance, Sichuan, a southwestern province in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, has long been one of the country's most important agricultural hubs.

During the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), locals constructed the Dujiangyan irrigation system, which captures the torrential flow of the Minjiang River, a tributary of the Yangtze River, turning the gently graded Chengdu Plain into fertile farmland. During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), the province served as a major

“China is steadily expanding institutional opening up in the financial sector, and foreign banks are increasing the pace at which they access a variety of financial markets in China.”

Zhang Xiaolei, China Chief of Standard Chartered, speaking about the expansion of the UK-based multinational bank's business in China in recent years, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency

“You can establish confidence and self-reliance and discipline through wushu practice and then you can build up the passion of your own.”

Audrey Meeks, a U.S. martial arts athlete, during the 16th World Wushu Championships, which took place in Texas on November 16-20

lifeline for grain production, regularly supplying agricultural products to food-deprived war zones.

However, the Land of Abundance now faces a great challenge, as the region's rapid urbanization not only means less farmland, but also alters the pattern of local food production. With the changing dietary habits of urbanites, which have led to a shift in consumer demand, farmers are moving away from traditional grain production to the cultivation of fruits, vegetables and other more profitable crops.

To address these critical changes, Chengdu, capital of Sichuan, has taken the lead in building a highly industrialized agricultural sector. Drones, large-capacity tractor sprayers, highly automated machines and other smart facilities have all been applied to facilitate the mechanization of the entire grain production process, including seeding, fertilizing, weeding, harvesting and transportation.

Local agriculture has also used urbanization to its own advantage by turning farmland into attractions. One such example is the Tianfu Agricultural Expo Park. Covering an area of 113 square km, the park combines farmland and greenhouses with trade fairs, tourist accommodation and high streets where boutiques and restaurants are clustered. It showcases a new form of agriculture: agritainment.

School Stampede

Guangzhou Daily

November 16

On November 13, a deadly stampede occurred while students were rushing to the bathroom during break time at a middle school in Wuzhi County, Henan Province. According to an announcement by the local government, one student was killed and five others were injured. A full investigation into the incident is underway.

This tragic incident has renewed public concerns over the many risks and hazards lurking in the school environment. Apart from the school's incredibly short break periods, factors that might have led to the stampede include improper risk management and a lack of

emergency training. In fact, these are common issues that any Chinese school may encounter.

On November 14, the Ministry of Education issued a notice on piloting emergency training programs in 1,000 more schools. First initiated in 201 schools across China in January 2022, this program aims to raise safety awareness among school staff and students by incorporating emergency preparedness courses and workshops into the curriculum. In the near future, it will continue to expand to more academic institutions.

The program encourages schools at all educational levels to implement safety training, so that students can build up the skills and confidence required for dealing with emergencies.

NEW ADB VICE PRESIDENT

Senior finance official **Yang Yingming** has been appointed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as its vice president (South, Central, and West Asia). He will be responsible for the management of the ADB's operations in these regions for the next three years.

Yang has over 30 years of experience in economic development, working in fields including operations and policymaking. He has held leadership positions in the Ministry of Finance and currently heads its Department of International Economic Relations.



He has served as executive director for China at the World Bank and the ADB, as well as the country's authorized negotiator for creating the New Development Bank, a multilateral development bank established by the founding members of the BRICS group of emerging economies—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—in 2015.

“Global companies who want to stay at the cutting edge of technological innovation need to be in China for producing, selling and innovating. Otherwise, they just can't maintain their global competitiveness.”

Simon Lacey, head of digital trade and geopolitics at the World Economic Forum, in a recent interview with *China Daily*

“Observing without disturbing and safeguarding without over-intervention—we see this as the greatest respect humans can show to the elves of nature.”

Shan Kai, a senior engineer at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve in Dongying, Shandong Province, in a recent interview with *Xinhua*



COVER STORY

A PORT OF CALL

Old Xinjiang border pass gets a contemporary restyling By Ji Jing

Trucker Guo Rui was waiting for customs clearance at the highway port in Khorgas, also known as Horgos, in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China. That was on November 7, when he was transporting domestically made cars to Kazakhstan.

With the rapid development of China's automobile industry, overseas demand for Chinese cars is growing. To facilitate the export of domestic cars, Khorgas Customs has simplified related clearance procedures.

Since October 4, more than 5,000 cars have been exported to Central Asian countries through the highway port. Domestic new-energy vehicles of Li Auto, BYD and Geely are proving particularly popular in Central Asia and Russia.

"By booking customs clearance online, it has be-

come faster to go through customs," Guo said, adding that in October, he had transported about 20 truckloads of cars, five to eight vehicles at a time.

As of November 3, more than 100,000 cars had been exported through the Khorgas Highway Port this year, up 177.3 percent year on year, according to port data.