

FEATURES: AUDIO-STREAMING IS TRENDING P.38 | OPINION: THE DEMAND CRISIS P.42

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Cover Design: Wang Yajuan

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Executive Assistant: Zhao Wei
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: yushujun@cicgamericas.com
Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)
Chief: Lin Yeqing
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoyx@gmail.com
Peru Office (Lima)
Chief: Meng Kexin
Tel: 0051-959212702
E-mail: revistachinaperu@gmail.com

General Editorial Office
Tel: 86-10-68996252
Fax: 86-10-68326628

Editorial Desk
Tel: 86-10-68996250

Partnerships
Tel: 86-10-68995807
E-mail: yecong@cicgamericas.com

Distribution
Tel: 86-10-68310644
E-mail: circulation@cicgamericas.com

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Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)
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Attuned Measures, In Tune With Society

China is adjusting its COVID-19 control measures: Residents no longer need to register their personal information to buy medicine for fever, coughs, sore throats or similar afflictions; negative nucleic acid test results are no longer required to enter public areas, including shopping centers, supermarkets, parks, scenic spots, or take public transportation.

Since COVID-19 first hit China in early 2020, the Chinese Government has refined its related health policies as the virus mutated and clinical data accumulated. Omicron variants are now the principal cause of coronavirus flareups in China, so the country has optimized its control measures considering the changes in the transmissibility and potency of said variants, including the rates of severe illness and mortality. The aim is to maximize the protection of people's interests and minimize the impact of COVID-19 on social and economic development.

The adjustments are considered an easing of control measures, which benefit the food and beverage, tourism, culture and entertainment industries. The food and beverage industry in particular will be able to accelerate its recovery since the adjustments will stimulate consumption.

In the past three years, China adopted strict control measures to safeguard people's lives and prevent mass mortality. All these actions were useful, though they did significantly affect daily life and production. Today, some cities in China, such as Beijing, are seeing COVID-19 flareups, but expert analysis has demonstrated that the rates of severe illness and mortality are now lower than those of influenza. This makes the relaxation of measures a science-based and reasonable decision.

People will still need to protect themselves, for example, by wearing a mask and frequently disinfecting their hands. Negative nucleic acid test results are still required to enter public venues involving seniors, infants and children. In the meantime, China has been stepping up its efforts to upgrade the service capacity of COVID-19 treatment and medicine to prevent huge hospital runs and medicine shortages. For instance, the country continues to promote vaccination nationwide, accelerates the research and development of targeted medication and potent neutralizing antibodies, and uses rapid antigen testing in communities to reduce the time and medical resources used for virus screening. **BR**



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编委会: 李雅芳 李建国 闫颖 杨琪 刘云云 曾文卉
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SAFE AND SOUND

Astronaut Chen Dong is lifted out of the return capsule of the *Shenzhou-14* manned spacecraft at the Dongfeng landing site in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on December 4.

The return capsule, carrying astronauts Chen Dong, Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe, safely touched down at the landing site earlier that day.

After traveling to the *Tiangong* space station on June 5, they completed multiple tasks during their mission, including five dockings, three extravehicular activities, a live science lecture to students on Earth, and several sci-tech experiments.



Exploring Life on Earth

Visitors look at a bird specimen at a biodiversity exhibition at the Shanghai Natural History Museum in Shanghai on December 7.

Online TCM Services

China has detailed measures to promote the role of information and technology in the development of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) during the 2021-25 period, Xinhua News Agency reported on December 6.

By 2025, a TCM information system that works in coordination with China's medical and healthcare mechanisms will be established, according to a plan released by the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

The plan encourages the establishment of smart TCM hospitals around the country and the promotion of online TCM pharmacies and medical services.

Flexible inter-hospital patient transfer, mutual recognition and sharing of lab and examination reports and other services will be enhanced

among TCM hospitals, according to the plan.

Crested Ibis Population

The global population of crested ibises, a rare bird species, has increased from seven in 1981 to more than 9,000 at present, the forestry authorities of Shaanxi Province told a press briefing on December 5.

The species' habitat has expanded from under 5 square km to about 16,000 square km, and the distribution range of the rare birds has gradually expanded to its historical area, Dang Shuangren, Director of the Shaanxi Provincial Forestry Bureau, said.

The crested ibis, with its iconic red crest and long black beak, was widely distributed across East Asia and Russia's Siberia in the past. It was thought to be extinct in China until seven

wild birds were observed in Shaanxi's Yangxian County in 1981, a discovery that prompted captive breeding and enhanced the species' protection.

Currently, about 7,000 crested ibises live in Shaanxi, Dang added.

Since the 1980s, Shaanxi has exported 14 crested ibises to Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and more than 1,000 crested ibises have been bred in the two countries. With the gradual release of the birds into the wild in Japan and the ROK, crested ibises will soon reappear in their historical distribution area in East Asia, Dang said.

Lake Ice Phenology

Chinese scientists have reconstructed a complete dataset of the lake ice phenology of 132 lakes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau covering the period from 1978 to 2016, according

to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Xinhua reported on December 7.

The dataset was recently presented on the data-sharing platform National Tibetan Plateau Data Center.

Lake ice phenology is a perceptible indicator reflecting changes in lake thermodynamics in response to global warming. Due to the limitations of conventional ground-based observations, the lake ice phenology over the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is rarely observed and recorded.

The research team has integrated remote sensing and numerical modeling techniques to develop a complete, consistent and continuous time series of reconstructed ice phenology for 132 lakes on the plateau.

Based on the dataset, the research team found that for nearly 40 years, the plateau's lakes have been characterized by a delayed ice-on time, an earlier ice-off time, and shorter ice durations.

Space Experiments

Chinese scientists have completed the life-cycle growth experiments of rice and *Arabidopsis*, a small flowering plant related to cabbage and mustard, in China's *Tiangong* space station and successfully obtained their seeds, the CAS announced on December 5.

The seeds and other samples were brought back to Earth in the *Shenzhou-14* spacecraft's return capsule on December 4.

According to the CAS, scientists worldwide had previously managed to obtain the seeds of a few crops like *Arabidopsis*, rape, wheat, and peas in space, but not those of rice.

The experiments, undertaken by the Center for Excellence

in Molecular Plant Sciences under the CAS, were conducted from July 29 to November 25.

During this period, the astronauts collected the rice samples at the germination stage on September 21, the *Arabidopsis* samples at the flowering stage on October 12, and both samples at their seed maturity stage on November 25. The samples were then stored in the cryogenic storage device.

According to the CAS, the samples will be transferred to a laboratory in Shanghai for further scientific testing and analysis.

Delicacy Goes Global

More than 20,000 individually packaged ready-to-cook *Fotiaoqiang*, a traditional Chinese delicacy, have recently been boxed up in the coastal county of Lianjiang, Fujian Province, and sent off to the U.S. and Canada.

This is the first time Juchunyan, a time-honored food brand in China, has exported its signature meal—a thick soup made with varieties of seafood and meat—to North America.

The delicacy dates to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and the original recipe was created

at the Juchunyan restaurant in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian.

In 2008, the recipe of Juchunyan *Fotiaoqiang* was listed as state-level intangible cultural heritage.

“For many overseas Chinese, *Fotiaoqiang* is a must-have for the Spring Festival spread,” said Wang Yue, Deputy General Manager of Fuzhou Juchunyan Group Co. Ltd., which owns the Juchunyan brand.

The company has registered a logo trademark for Juchunyan *Fotiaoqiang* in the U.S. and Canada. In June, Juchunyan *Fotiaoqiang* received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The recently exported batch of *Fotiaoqiang* will be sold to major stores and restaurants in North America, according to Wang.

In June, Fujian rolled out its safety standards for making *Fotiaoqiang*. The first exported batch of ready-to-cook Juchunyan *Fotiaoqiang* was produced in compliance with these requirements.

There are around 60 million overseas Chinese worldwide, promising huge potential for the export of ready-to-cook Chinese foods.



Snow Season

People snowboard at a ski resort in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on December 5.

Hitting the Slopes

Most of the ski resorts in Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province, which hosted the snow events for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, have been open to the public since early November and witnessed a boom in winter sports in the first snow season since the Winter Olympics, *China Daily* reported on December 7.

Six major ski resorts in the city's Chongli District have opened to skiers, including

Genting Snow Park, which was a major venue for the Beijing 2022 Games.

According to the *Hebei Daily*, the district has opened six snow slopes and play areas for kids. Five other slopes for halfpipe, slopestyle, parallel giant slalom, ski or snowboard cross and moguls will open to skiers in mid to late December.

For the new snow season, the resort has rolled out a series of measures to prevent COVID-19, such as self-service ticket-purchasing machines.



Roaming the Wild

A snow leopard, a species under top-level protection in China, is released back into the wild in Lhunzhub County of Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, on December 4, months after being rescued in Lhasa's rural area.

Used Car Exports

Fourteen more regions, including Liaoning, Fujian and Sichuan provinces, have been allowed to export secondhand cars, a notice jointly issued by the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Public Security and the General Administration of Customs of China read.

These regions shall formulate the admission standards for local enterprises, standardize the selection procedures and support companies with access to secondhand cars for sale, overseas marketing channels and after-sales services to carry out the export business, it said.

More efforts should be made to facilitate vehicle transaction registration, license application and customs clearance to create a sound environment, the notice added.

China officially kicked off its export of secondhand cars in May 2019, with Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangdong

Province among the first batch of 10 regions allowed to conduct such trade.

Industrial data showed 13.3 million used cars were traded in China in the first 10 months of 2022.

Saving Energy

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has introduced a catalogue of recommended energy-saving technologies and equipment to help enterprises improve their energy efficiency and reduce costs.

The document lists energy-saving technologies in the industrial and information fields, such as iron and steel, non-ferrous metal, data centers and telecommunication.

It further recommends eight categories of energy-efficient equipment, including the likes of electromotors, transformers, industrial boilers and compressors.

Furnishing Profits

During the January–October period, profits of major Chinese furniture-making enterprises stood at 34.42 billion yuan (\$4.9 billion), up 3.8 percent year on year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The combined operating revenue of these firms went down 6.2 percent from a year ago to 610.75 billion yuan (\$87.46 billion), the data showed.

China is the world's largest furniture manufacturer and exporter, with total furniture export value hitting \$75.14 billion last year, according to the China National Furniture Association.

Futures Market

The futures market reported a 3.95-percent year-on-year growth in trading turnover in November, industrial data showed.

Turnover reached 52.79 trillion yuan (\$7.56 trillion)

that month, up 58.09 percent from October, according to data from the China Futures Association.

The market's trading volume climbed 55.68 percent from a month earlier to 700 million lots, the data showed.

In the first 11 months of the year, trading volume fell 11.74 percent year on year to 6.1 billion lots, with a total turnover of 486.93 trillion yuan (\$69.73 trillion), the association said.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission announced in a statement on December 2 it has greenlighted the trading of industrial silicon futures and options in the Guangzhou Futures Exchange.

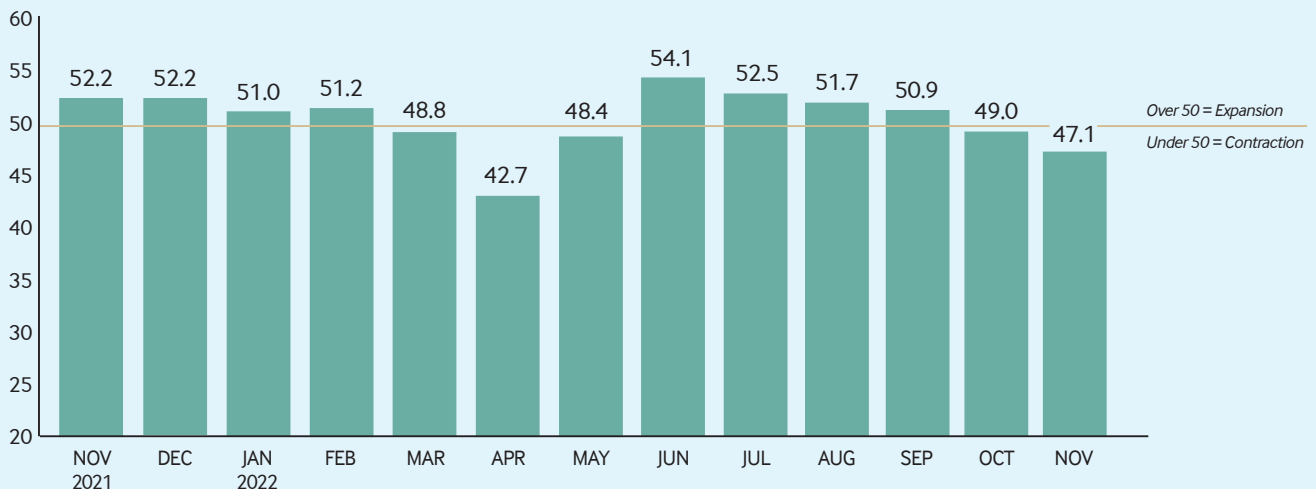
Road Logistics

The road logistics price index came in at 103.3 in November, up 1.8 percent year on year, according to a survey jointly conducted by the China Federation of

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.97 yuan as of December 8)

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



Logistics and Purchasing and Guangdong Lin'an Logistics Group.

The subindex for the full-truckload logistics price, which mainly measures bulk commodity and regional transportation, rose 1 percent over one year earlier to 102.9.

The survey attributed the stable prices that month to factors including e-commerce promotion and the market regulation mechanism but did note a declining demand and excessive market capacity.

Panda Bonds Rules

China will improve fund management rules for panda bonds in its latest step to progress the two-way opening up of its financial market, according to a circular issued by the People's Bank of China and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange on December 2.

Panda bonds are yuan-denominated debts sold by

overseas issuers in China.

The new regulations, which will come into effect on January 1, 2023, facilitate the financing of overseas institutions in the domestic bond market, the circular read.

Management rules for panda bonds, including those related to funding registration, fund remittances and the opening of accounts, will be unified in China's interbank bond market and exchange-traded bond market, according to the notice.

Overseas institutional investors will also be allowed to conduct foreign exchange derivative transactions with qualified domestic financial institutions to manage their exchange rate risks.

The issuers can keep funds raised in China or remit them overseas, the notice said.

China's panda bonds issuance registered stable growth in the first three quarters of 2022.

Approximately 75.4 billion yuan (\$10.8 billion) of such bonds were issued in the period, up 8.7 percent from a year ago, official data showed.

Pension Trials

The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC) announced on December 1 it will run commercial pension trials in 10 cities and regions nationwide for one year starting from January 1, 2023.

The pension scheme, which will be voluntary and operate in market-oriented and law-based manner, will be piloted in cities and regions such as Beijing, Shanghai, and the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the commission said.

The pension plan is a part of the third pillar of China's pension system, supplementing the private pension system that was recently implemented, according to the CBIRC.

China has a three-pillar

old-age insurance mechanism, covering national basic old-age insurance, enterprise and occupational annuities, commercial old-age financial products and the private pension plan.

Economic Census

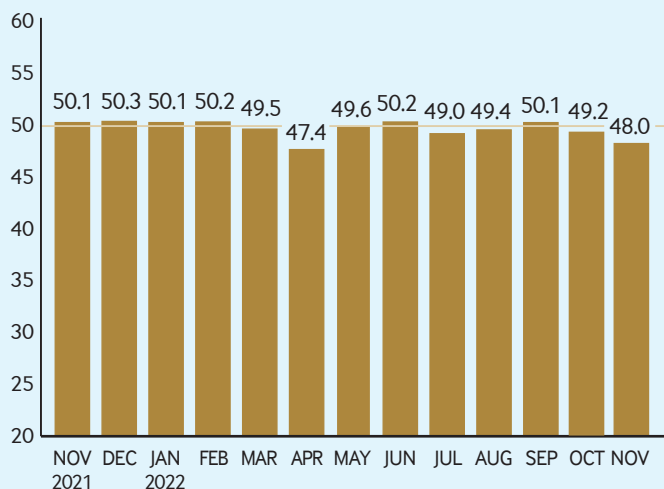
The fifth national economic census will be conducted in 2023 to take stock of the country's economic and social development, the State Council said in a notice.

The upcoming census will carry out an input-output survey, it added.

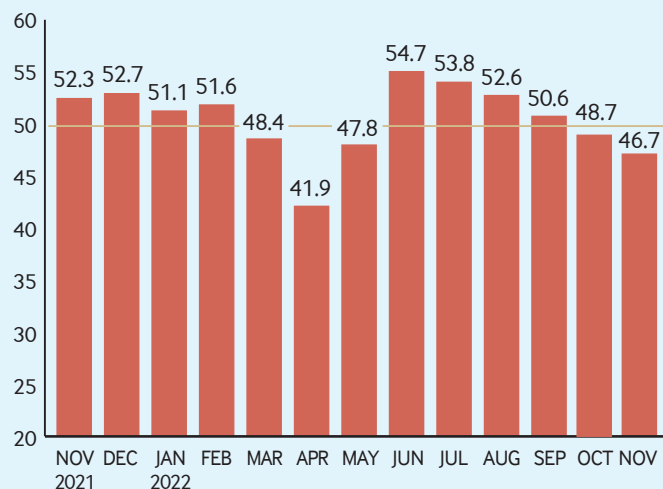
The objects of the census include all legal entities, industrial activity units and self-employed households engaged in secondary and tertiary industry activities in China.

The notice emphasized data quality, calling for efforts to ensure the census data are true, accurate, complete and reliable.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



SAUDI ARABIA

The Chinese-Arab Media Cooperation Forum, gathering more than 150 government officials, representatives of media organizations and scholars from China and 22 Arab countries, takes place in Riyadh on December 5



HUNGARY

Drivers line up to purchase gas in Budapest on December 6 after the Hungarian Government announced that evening it would cease capping fuel prices. The government blamed EU sanctions on Russian oil for the disruption in the nation's fuel supply



ALBANIA

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel (center) and Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama attend a press conference at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Tirana on December 6. Participating leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strategic partnership and cooperation





INDONESIA

Police officers stand guard near a police station in Bandung, capital of West Java Province, on December 7. Two people were killed and nine others injured in an earlier suicide bombing at the site



THAILAND

An electric vehicle on show at the Thailand International Motor Expo in Bangkok on December 1. The annual event attracted 35 carmakers and 17 motorcycle brands from over 10 countries and regions and concluded on December 12



MALAYSIA

New cabinet ministers are sworn in before Malaysian King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah in Kuala Lumpur on December 3. They are part of the government led by Anwar Ibrahim, head of the Pakatan Harapan coalition, who took the oath of office on November 24 to become Malaysia's new prime minister



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ PADDLER CO-CHAIRS ITTF ATHLETES' COMMISSION

China's **Liu Shiwen** and India's Sharath Kamal Achanta were elected as joint chairs of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Athletes' Commission ahead of the ITTF Summit in Amman, Jordan, on December 2.

Liu, 31, was a member of China's gold medal-winning team at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and took silver in the mixed doubles in Tokyo 2020. She is a five-time World Cup, one-time World Championships, three-time ITTF World Tour Grand Finals and four-time Asian Cup champion.

This is the first time the ITTF Athletes' Commission has elected two chairs—one woman and one man—to lead the body, which is regarded as the voice of table tennis athletes in the federation.



Telekinetic Tech

Economic Daily
December 5

Recently, Elon Musk, co-founder of Neuralink, shared a video of a monkey with one of the company's brain implants "telekinetically" typing characters on a computer screen. The company is seeking government approval to test the technology on humans, which, according to Musk, could begin in as little as six months.

Based on research first undertaken in the 1970s, brain-computer interface (BCI) technology strives to directly connect human brain activity to external devices, aiding those with disabilities and ultimately releasing humans from many

physical limitations.

Powered by recent breakthroughs in core technologies, interventional BCI allows for a minimally invasive surgical procedure that prevents irreversible brain damage, a common side effect of traditional BCI.

Despite technological difficulties and ethical issues, including a lack of ethical standards and relevant policies to safeguard technological development, one must face the fact that the future will soon arrive with all its challenges and opportunities.

Hopefully, with the continued convergence of machine and human intelligence, the technology will one day offer patients suffering from physical and neurological impairments an increased quality of life.



Mercantile Metropolis

Oriental Outlook
November 24

Situated in the heartland of the Pearl River Delta, Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, has long been a major gateway for foreign trade.

As a key terminus of the ancient Maritime Silk Road, Guangzhou became one of the cities spearheading China's reform and opening-up agenda. Now, it is part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, a newly integrated megalopolis on the country's southern coast.

Having become a world-class factory hub, the city is now shifting its focus from low-end manufacturing to hi-tech industries.

"We must also identify and eradicate contemporary forms of slavery, such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labor, forced marriage and the use of children in armed conflict."

António Guterres, UN Secretary General, in a message to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery on December 2

"We need inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness in the Asia Pacific."

Moon Chung-in, Chairperson of the Sejong Institute in the Republic of Korea, at the Beijing Xiangshan Forum Webinar on December 1-2

The electric vehicle (EV) sector is one of the main frontiers of Guangzhou's industrial upgrade. In the past few years, the city has become home to a cluster of domestic EV makers' headquarters, including those of Xpeng Motors and GAC Aion, and is striving to become a leading player in the global EV market.

Another example of industrial upgrade is SHEIN, a Chinese fast fashion cross-border platform. Taking full advantage of the city's rich traditions of textile manufacturing and e-commerce, SHEIN developed an ultra-fast business model that has transformed the brand into a top retail giant.

The city's innovative spirit also drives a continuous flow of cultural creativity. Guangzhou has served as an incubator for multiple creative designs, the most world-renowned example of which is Bing Dwen Dwen, the roly-poly Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics mascot designed by Cao Xue, a professor at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts.

In a way, Guangzhou is China in miniature. The aspirations for modernity, openness and innovation are deeply ingrained in both local culture and China's national identity.

Standards in Psychology

China Youth Daily
November 30

Online therapy platforms, organizations and training programs have sprouted across China. However, deliberately confusing the concepts of training certificates and certificates of professional competence, a few training programs are offering crash courses that guarantee the swift transformation of rookies into counseling experts in just a few months.

This phenomenon reflects a general lack of practice standards and an overly vague definition of professional proficiency. The practice of counseling psychology requires years of training, an

accredited graduate degree, clinical experience and a strong work ethic.

Merely focusing on extracting short-term profits from trainees and patients may end up inhibiting the profession's long-term growth. For those who finally turn to psychotherapy, encountering unqualified therapists may not only worsen their mental health issues but also lead to a complete rejection of assistance.

To tackle this problem, government departments, psychological associations, universities and scientific research institutes should join forces to establish professional standards and entry qualifications. Only like this can the profession of counseling psychology avert its own crisis of trust.

NEW VICE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Wu Zhaohui was appointed vice minister of science and technology, and no longer serves as president of Zhejiang University.

Wu was born in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, in December 1966. He obtained a Ph.D. in computer application from Zhejiang University in 1993 and worked there for more than two decades. He was named president of the university in March 2015.

Wu's major research is focused on computer science and technology. He has worked as an expert in several national projects and is a recipient of national science and technology awards. In 2017, he was named a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

He is also chairperson of the China Association of Inventions and a fellow with international agencies including the World Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the world's largest professional technical organization.



“China cannot develop in isolation from the world, and the world also needs China for its prosperity. China will continue to pursue high-level opening up and share development opportunities with other countries.”

Mao Ning, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, at a regular press briefing on December 6

“The world is set to add as much renewable power in the next five years as it did in the previous 20 years.”

Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, as the agency released its annual report on the outlook for renewables on December 6



Personnel remove a nucleic acid testing site in Shanghai on December 8

COVER STORY

SWEEPING CHANGE

China optimizes COVID measures in response to actual situation
and public concern By Lu Yan