

OPINION: CHINA-EU SUMMIT P.22 | FEATURES: CLIMATE AND FOOD P.26

# BEIJING REVIEW

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## BURGEONING BELT

Balancing prosperity along and beyond  
the Yangtze River

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COVER PHOTO: Ships carry cargo along the Yangtze River in Yichang, Hubei Province, on December 2 (CNSPHOTO)

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## Regional Synergy

The Yangtze is the longest river in China and the third largest in the world. It runs eastward from the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau in the west, through 11 provinces and municipalities, before entering the East China Sea. The regions through which the Yangtze flows cover economically developed regions in the east, but most of them are less developed areas in the country's central and western regions. The Yangtze Economic Belt development strategy addresses the country's overall economic imbalance, between rural and urban areas, and more importantly among different regions.

In a bid to promote coordinated development, China has hammered out a series of policies targeting the north-east, the east, the central region and the west. It has also identified several priority areas including the Yangtze Economic Belt and the Yangtze River Delta. These measures are aimed at stimulating new growth poles for the Chinese economy.

The population and total economic output of the Yangtze Economic Belt account for half of the country's total. More than one third of the country's higher education institutions and research institutes, and about half of its scientific and technological profession-

als cluster in this region. Moreover, three of the five national-level science and technology innovation centers are situated there. All this has made it one of the most innovative and dynamic regions of China.

President Xi Jinping pins high hopes on this economic belt. Xi has presided over four symposiums on its development respectively in Chongqing in the upper reaches of the Yangtze, Wuhan and Nanchang in the middle reaches, and Nanjing in the lower reaches, expecting innovation to play a big role in the region's economic lift-off.

From November 28 to December 2, Xi conducted an inspection in Shanghai, which sits on the Yangtze estuary. At a symposium on Yangtze River Delta integration held in the international metropolis, Xi emphasized the need to make new breakthroughs so that the region will take the lead in China's modernization drive. This burgeoning economic hub is expected to build a globally competitive ecosystem for innovation, pioneer ecologically friendly growth and create a first-class business environment. It will also play an exemplary role by strengthening industrial chain resilience and security, collaborating with central and western regions and opening up further in the financial sector. **BR**



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# SPACE FOR COOPERATION

China helped Egypt send a remote-sensing satellite into orbit from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on December 4.

The satellite *MISRAT-2* will be used in Egypt's land and resource utilization, water conservancy and agriculture. A landmark project of deep cooperation between China and Egypt in the field of aerospace technology, the launch is a milestone in aerospace cooperation between the two countries, according to the China National Space Administration.



## Take Them to Sea

*Haiyang Shiyou 122*, Asia's first cylindrical floating production, storage and offloading unit, is under construction in Qingdao, Shandong Province, east China, on December 4. Designed and manufactured in China, the offshore oil and gas processing facility recently entered its final assembly phase. With a diameter of about 90 meters and a design displacement of 100,000 tons, the plant is capable of operating at sea for 15 years without returning to dry dock.

## New ID Card

The National Immigration Administration (NIA) put into use a new version of the Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card of the People's Republic of China on December 1.

That same day, the first batch of 50 new cards was issued to qualified foreigners whose permanent residence applications had been approved, the NIA said.

These new cardholders come from over 20 countries including the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Russia, and have made outstanding contributions to China's socio-economic development.

Among them are foreign high-level management and technical personnel who have

been working in China for a long time, as well as foreign professors and scholars who have been teaching and conducting research at key universities and research institutions for a long time.

The new card adds five-starred elements symbolizing the Chinese national flag and incorporates advanced anti-counterfeiting technology.

## Promoting Employment

China has introduced a variety of measures to facilitate employment and entrepreneurship for the 2024 university graduates, according to a guideline released by the Ministry of Education, Xinhua News Agency reported

on December 5.

Chinese university presidents and other leaders are encouraged to step up corporate engagements to secure more job opportunities for their students, the guideline said.

Universities across the nation should invite employers for more campus recruitment events.

At the same time, universities should tailor their efforts to align with the career preferences of graduates, and provide high-quality career support and comprehensive information.

Local governments should stabilize and moderately expand the recruitment scale for university graduates in Party and government positions, public institutions and state-owned enterprises.

The guideline highlighted the importance of implementing established programs that encourage university graduates to pursue employment in the country's western regions, rural areas and communities.

## Community Renovation

China has initiated the renovation of about 52,800 old urban residential communities in the first 10 months of this year, as the country ramps up efforts to improve people's living conditions, official data showed, Xinhua reported on December 2.

These renovation projects are expected to benefit 8.7 million households, according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

The ministry said the renovation projects put into operation in the first 10 months accounted for 99.6 percent of the country's annual target of renovating 53,000 old urban residential communities in 2023.

As of late October, 24 provincial-level regions had started all their community renovation projects as planned.

## Chronic Disease

China's grassroots health institutions are providing advice and instructions on exercise and diet, among other things, to promote health management for patients with chronic diseases, officials from the National Health Commission said at a press conference in Chongqing Municipality, southwest China, on December 5.

Zhu Hongming, deputy head of the commission's Department of Primary Healthcare, stressed that grassroots health institutions have provided a significant amount of basic public health services, especially in the

management of patients with chronic diseases, and have established stable service links with urban and rural residents.

As part of measures to promote chronic disease management, community health service centers and township health centers are providing exercise and diet instructions or counseling for patients with diseases such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure, Zhu said.

Zhang Qian, a research fellow with the National Institute of Nutrition and Health under the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), emphasized the importance of prescribing exercise and diet plans in the daily management of chronic diseases.

Adequate physical activity is crucial for health because it can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases and mortality, she said.

## Vaccination Awareness

The China CDC has issued a public health advisory recommending influenza vaccination in response to a winter increase in respiratory illness.

The advisory emphasizes that

influenza vaccination is a cost-effective and efficient approach to prevent influenza viruses and reduce the risk of severe infections and deaths associated with influenza.

It will significantly reduce the burden on health care facilities from influenza-related health problems, the advisory said.

To address public concerns about the optimal timing of vaccination, the advisory clarifies that while the ideal time for influenza vaccination is before the peak of the influenza season, individuals can still benefit from vaccination throughout the season.

Influenza, a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the influenza virus, is a serious threat to public health. Certain population groups, including the very young, the elderly, pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions, are at higher risk of developing severe symptoms of influenza infection, according to the advisory.

## Passion for Poetry

The eighth Shanghai International Poetry Festival kicked off in Shanghai on December 2, with Nigerian Nobel Laureate and poet Wole Soyinka



## Legal Eagle's New Role

A staff member of the local justice bureau livestreams about China's Constitution at a park in Bo'ai County of Jiaozuo, Henan Province in central China, on December 4, China's 10th National Constitution Day.

receiving the festival's Golden Magnolia Award.

More than 20 poets from more than 10 countries and regions participated in the festival, and partook in discussions on poetry in the age of artificial intelligence (AI).

"In the current hi-tech era with the rapid development of AI, we need to pay attention to how AI and the humanities converge, explore how AI will support the creation of literature and poetry, and reexamine the relationship

between humankind and AI," said Zhao Lihong, Chairman of the Shanghai International Poetry Festival Art Committee and deputy head of the Shanghai Writers' Association.

"We also hope to connect the world with poetry and fully express the vitality and charm of Chinese culture," Zhao added.

Chinese and foreign poets invited to the poetry festival attended poetry recitals, dialogues and literary discussions for four days.



## Space Rendezvous

Wang Yaping (second right), a crew member of China's *Shenzhou-13* space mission, talks with students from Tong Nam Middle School in Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) in south China on December 3. Wang was a member of a delegation from China's manned space program that took part in a six-day visit to Hong Kong and Macao SARs at the invitation of the SAR governments.

## 6G Technology

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) announced on December 5 measures to expedite the country's development and innovation of 6G technology.

The ministry has collaborated with related departments to set development objectives, advance technological research and development, and foster global cooperation, Zhang Yunming, Vice Minister of the MIIT, said.

The ministry will solidify the foundations for 6G application and facilitate inter-sector collaboration to nurture a robust 6G ecosystem, while also propelling the formulation of globally unified 6G standards, Zhang said.

## Growth Prospects

China is disappointed with American rating agency Moody's decision to revise the outlook for China's sovereign credit rating, as the Chinese economy has

recorded a continuous and steady recovery against the backdrop of the global economic recovery's weakening momentum, a finance official said on December 5.

In response to a media inquiry about Moody's change of outlook from stable to negative, the Ministry of Finance official said the agency's concerns about China's growth prospects and fiscal sustainability were unwarranted.

This year marks the first year that China's economy has recovered from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has withstood risks and challenges from abroad and downward pressure from multiple factors at home, with its gross domestic product (GDP) up 5.2 percent year on year in the first three quarters of 2023, the official said.

Recent forecasts from multiple international institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and

the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, all showed that China can achieve its growth target of around 5 percent this year, the official said.

The Chinese economy has great resilience and potential, and its long-term sound fundamentals remain unchanged, the official said. He further noted that the country will remain an important engine for global economic growth in the future.

China's huge domestic market has great demand potential, and the employment situation and prices remain generally stable, the official said. He added that the economy's internal momentum will steadily increase as the country accelerates the promotion of its high-quality development.

## Express Delivery

China has handled its 120 billionth express parcel this year, setting a new record for its annual express delivery

volume, official data showed on December 5.

The historic parcel consisted of flowers sent from Kunming, Yunnan Province in southwest China, at 6:26 p.m. on December 4, according to the State Post Bureau. The parcel was swiftly loaded onto a high-speed train and reached its buyer in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in southwest China the next day.

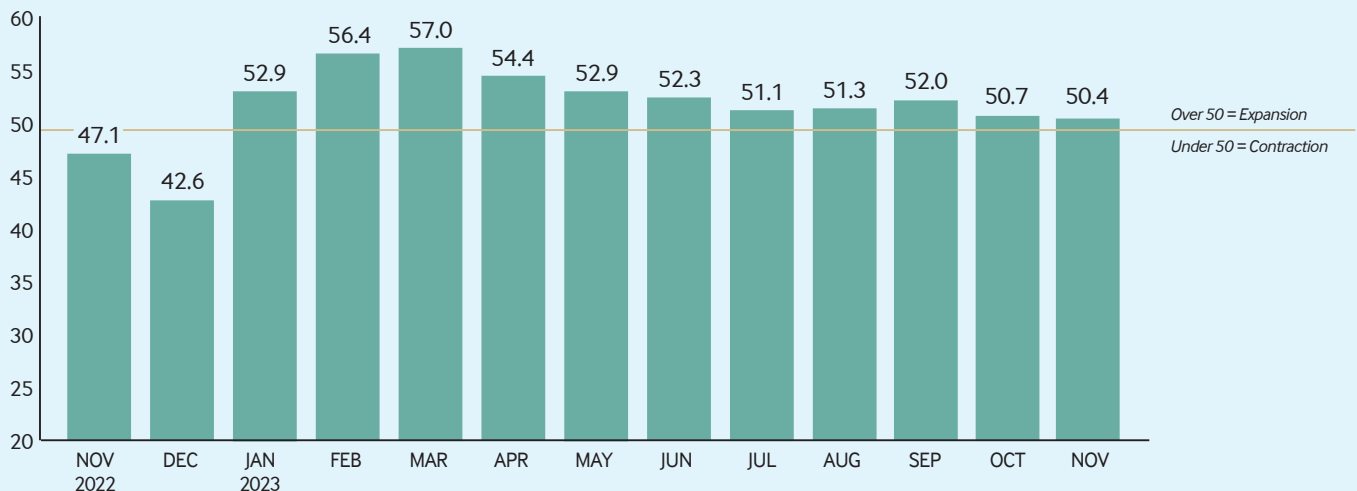
China's express delivery industry has seen booming growth this year as a steady economic recovery, particularly a rebound in consumption, has boosted logistics demand.

The monthly express delivery volume has consistently been above 10 billion parcels since March, with an average business income over 90 billion yuan (\$12.6 billion).

In the peak season, which began in November, the industry continued its robust trend, driven by the annual Double 11 online shopping festival. During this

## NUMBERS

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)





period, daily deliveries exceeded 430 million.

The new annual record demonstrated “a vibrant express delivery market of higher quality, a warming domestic consumer market, and a stable and upward economy,” the bureau said.

## Construction Land Use

By the end of 2022, China’s construction land use per unit of GDP had dropped 18.9 percent in five years as the nation has been working to conserve resources and protect its natural ecology, Minister of Natural Resources Wang Guanghua said recently.

During a forum on natural resources and ecological civilization on December 4 in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in east China, Wang said that through the strict control of sea reclamation, the nation has ensured a natural coastline retention rate of no less than 35 percent.

The natural coastline retention

rate refers to the ratio of the retained length of the mainland natural coastline to the total length of the mainland coastline.

The ministry has also supported the development of clean energy, such as photovoltaic power and wind power, in an effort to steadily push forward the nation’s goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060, Wang said.

According to the official, China has organized and implemented an integrated protection and restoration project covering mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes, grasslands and sands, with a total treatment area of 5.33 million hectares in recent years.

## New Oilfield

Changqing Oilfield, a subsidiary of PetroChina, one of the largest oil and gas companies in China, has discovered a large, well-preserved oil field with geological reserves of over 100 million tons in Huanxian County,

Gansu Province, northwest China., Xinhua News Agency reported on December 1.

To date, Changqing Oilfield has found proven oil reserves of 50.24 million tons and estimated oil reserves of 56.2 million tons in the area, according to Niu Xiaobing, deputy general manager of the Changqing Oilfield company.

“Currently, the new oilfield’s daily crude oil output has reached 504 tons, and the discovered oil reserves have formed a crude oil production capacity of 500,000 tons per year,” Niu said.

Previously, Changqing Oilfield built a world-class ultra-large oil and gas field with an annual output of 65 million tons in the Ordos Basin in northwest China.

## Duty-Free Shoppers

Hainan, an island province in south China, recorded 6.23 million duty-free shoppers in the first 11 months of this year,

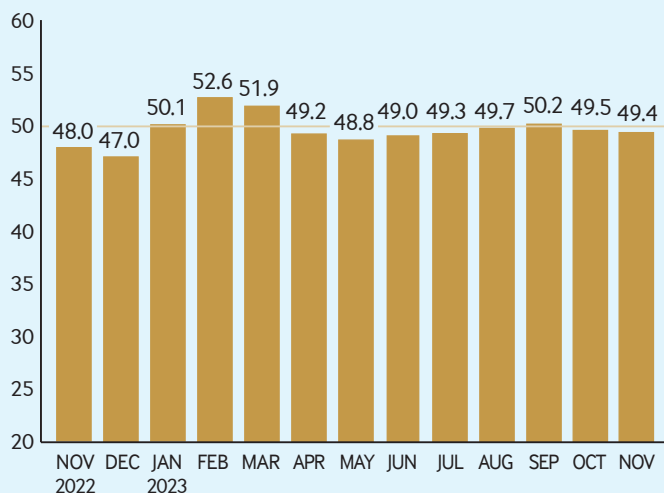
surging by 59.6 percent year on year, Xinhua News Agency quoted Haikou Customs on December 2. Haikou is the provincial capital.

During the period, the shoppers bought offshore duty-free products worth 40.7 billion yuan (\$5.7 billion), up 26.1 percent year on year. Meanwhile, nearly 48 million duty-free products were sold, up 4.5 percent, the customs said.

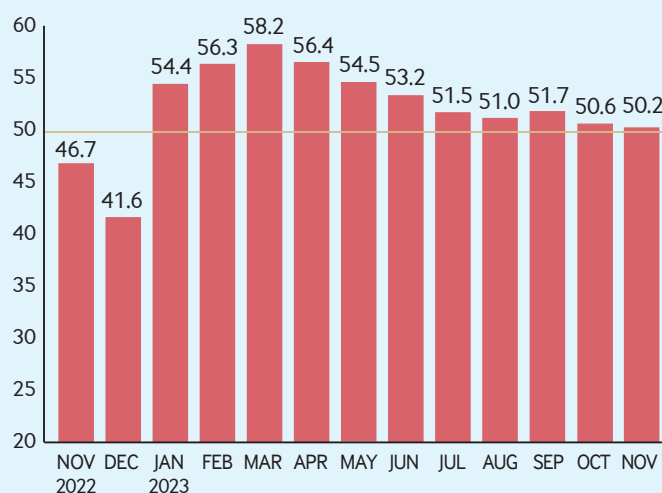
In June 2020, China released a master plan to develop Hainan into a globally influential and high-level free trade port by the middle of the century. In recent years, the island province has become an attractive shopping destination for domestic consumers. A free trade port belongs to a special economic zone within a country’s territory and has a relatively relaxed principle of goods control and industry access.

Following years of efforts to enhance the local tourism and shopping sectors, Hainan now boasts 12 offshore duty-free shops.

China’s Manufacturing PMI



China’s Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

# THIS WEEK **WORLD**



## EGYPT

Visitors view pharaonic statues displayed on the Grand Staircase of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza on November 30. The Grand Staircase has been open to visitors since December 1



## INDONESIA

Rescuers evacuate victims after the Marapi volcano in West Sumatra Province erupted on December 4, spewing volcanic ash as high as 3,000 meters into the air



## UNITED STATES

The Holiday Nostalgia Train in New York City on December 2. This year, the special subway train with eight cars, in service from 1932 to 1977, operates on Saturdays in December



## KENYA

People wade through floodwaters caused by recent heavy rainfall on the Bangali-Garissa Road in Tana River County on December 1



## BRAZIL

Performers from the Beija Flor samba school participate in the samba parade at Cidade do Samba in Rio de Janeiro on December 1. A two-day event was held to celebrate National Samba Day, which falls on December 2



## SRI LANKA

People take part in a World AIDS Day awareness march in Colombo on December 1



# THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

## ↓ RUNNER BREAKS RECORD

Marathoner **Yang Shaohui** set a new men's national record at the 2023 Fukuoka International Marathon in Japan on December 3. Yang clocked 2:07:09 to finish second in the race, improving his personal best by 40 seconds and lagging one second behind winner Michael Gitshae of Kenya.

Yang broke the previous record of 2:07:30 set by He Jie at the Wuxi Marathon in Jiangsu Province in March. Born in Kunming, Yunnan Province, in July 1992, Yang began professional training after winning two county-level competitions at the age of 17.

During the 19th Asian Games in October in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, Yang took bronze in the men's marathon, while He won the title, both securing a Chinese men's marathon ticket to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.



## Objections to Objectification

**Rednet.cn**

**November 30**

The vase-shaped waist of actress Wu Xin has recently hit the hot topic list on social media platform Weibo. In a controversial picture circulated online, Wu wears a tight black dress that binds her waist into the now-infamous vase shape. A related term, A4 waist, refers to waists smaller than a sheet of A4 paper. These thin waists have become the

goal of many young women in China, causing them to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as extreme low-calorie diets and constricting undergarments.

This trend has raised a storm of objections online, with many netizens complaining about it as a form of "constraint on women." Many online say that aside from lifestyle factors such as maintaining a healthy diet and exercising, other factors including height, weight and build also contribute to one's waist circumference, so it is unfair to judge women's waists using the standard of vases and A4 paper.

## An Evolving Shopping Festival

**China Newsweek**

**November 13**

Double 11, the phenomenal online shopping festival held each year on November 11, this year appeared to have lost its reputation as the biggest annual price battle between online retailers.

The festival dates back to 2009, when online shopping platforms were still emerging. Only about 30 brands participated in the first Double

"Human rights have not failed. It is the cynical disregard for human rights, and the failure to respect and heed warnings on human rights that has got us here."

**Volker Turkat**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, at a news conference ahead of Human Rights Day on December 10, stressing current conflicts around the world should serve as a wakeup call

"Global collaboration can help us establish ethical standards, adapt to the changing job market, improve global governance and spread knowledge about AI (artificial intelligence) education."

**Shen Yang**, Director of the Metaverse Culture Laboratory at Tsinghua University, in an article titled *AI Governance Cannot Go Without Sino-U.S. Cooperation*, published in *China Daily* on December 6

11 event hosted by Taobao, Chinese tech giant Alibaba Group's main e-commerce platform, achieving a transaction volume of 52 million yuan (\$7.16 million). The volume rose to 936 million yuan (\$128.92 million) in 2010, catapulting the event into a nationwide shopping gala that broke record after record in the following years.

In 2016, Double 11 became even more competitive with the emergence of livestream selling. That year, online retail platforms began nurturing batches of livestream influencers to boost their sales. The increase in online shopping is linked to China's increasing urban population, but challenges including proper management of logistical systems and use of social resources mean some experts have called for a change.

The festival has been losing steam in recent years, with major platforms refraining from publicizing transaction figures since last year. Two main reasons for the decline are the emergence of competing annual online shopping festivals on other dates, and a move toward attracting customers with quality and value throughout the year, rather than relying on occasional deep discounts.

## Cosmetic Livestreaming Needs Regulation

**Workers' Daily**  
**November 30**

Livestream marketing is a popular form of selling products on e-commerce platforms. Lately, the low operating cost and large flow of online customers have drawn many business people to sell cosmetic medical products and services using this method.

Some presenters have been making bold promises about the results of these products. However, many have failed to submit their products and claims to

the strict certification procedures that apply to all medical advertisements nationally.

Unqualified presenters are one of the main causes of improper conduct, as presenters without medical backgrounds have been more likely to mislead customers. Experts suggest that livestreamers selling aesthetic medicine should be trained and properly certified.

Other necessary measures are the better regulation of the products themselves to ensure safety is prioritized, and better education of consumers about pricing, quality, expectations and claims.

### POP ICON PARTNERS WITH UNIVERSAL

Singer-songwriter **Jay Chou** entered into a strategic partnership with Universal Music Greater China, a division of the world's leading music company Universal Music Group, on December 6.

The agreement includes the global marketing and distribution rights for the pop star's extensive catalog, covers future projects, and supports rising talent signed to his record label JVR Music.

Chou has been a music phenomenon since his debut in 2000, with the album *JAY*. The 15 studio albums he has produced throughout his career have consolidated his status as King of Mandopop.

The strategic partnership marks a new chapter for Chou and JVR in their pursuit of promoting Mandarin pop music globally. Leveraging Universal's extensive network will help amplify Chou's artistic impact on a global scale, according to JVR.



**“You don't need to worry about currency exchange during your time in China, as [mobile payment systems] Alipay and Weixin Pay now accept international bank cards.”**

**Luigi Gambardella**, President of non-profit association ChinaEU, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency, as he lauded China's decision to implement a visa-free policy for ordinary passport holders from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia on a trial basis

**“The PV (photovoltaic) project allows us to enjoy heating free of charge.”**

**Tseyang**, a rural resident in Nyainrong County, Xizang Autonomous Region, speaking about how solar panels ensure warmth and coziness in her home 4,500 meters above sea level, in an interview with Xinhua



COVER STORY

# IN THE ZONE

The integrated development of municipalities and provinces along China's longest river By Yuan Yuan

**A**t the crossroads of Shanghai and its neighboring Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, a quadrangle complex is under construction as part of a demonstration zone for integrated ecological and green development in the Yangtze River Delta, one of China's most robust, open and innovative regions.

Built directly over the Taiapu

River, which flows through Shanghai, Zhejiang and Jiangsu, the complex will be designed as four pavilions connected by three bridges over the river, showcasing Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui provinces.

The quadrangle, named the Square Hall and Water Courtyard, is a milestone in the development of the entire demonstration zone, known as the Watertown Parlor, which spans three cities at the provincial crossroads and covers about 35.8 square km, even larger than the area of Macao Special Administrative Region in south China.

The cross-provincial zone focuses on a natural and ecological layout with a combination of water, forest and farmland; and promotes the coordinated protection and treatment of the water, air and soil environment.

Based on the layout of the zone released in May, the zone's interconnected ecological system and transportation network will take shape by 2025, and the zone will become a model "world-class water