Reeling from costs
Conflict in Europe takes heavy toll on Africa's energy, food security

Xi sends congratulatory message to Brazil's Lula

By MO JUNJING
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President Xi Jinping congratulated Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on his inauguration as president of the Federative Republic of Brazil, saying that he is ready to work with Lula to take ties to a higher level.

In a congratulatory message sent to Lula on Monday night, China and Brazil are both major developing countries with global influence and important emerging market potential.

The two countries, which are comprehensive strategic partners, share broad common interests and similar development responsibilities, said Xi.

Xi said that since the two countries established diplomatic ties 60 years ago, China-Brazil relations have witnessed remarkable and fruitful development, thanks to joint efforts of both sides.

Farwell to Pele

Amemorial held up a jersey on Monday before posing for the camera as Brazilian soccer legend Pelé’s sons Luis in state on the pitch of his former club Santos FC, stadium in Santos, Brazil. After lacking three days of national mourning, the country has been paying its final respects for the former player, known as the King, who died on Thursday aged 82 after a battle with cancer. (CARLA COSTA / AP)

Holiday consumption shows robust recovery

Chinese consumers have shown a gradual recovery in their confidence to take trips, and this has contributed to the fast warming-up of the domestic tourism market over the New Year's holiday. In particular, the demand for long-haul travel picked up.

Cheng Changming, senior researcher at Tongfang Travel, said the number of tourists who chose to travel during the holiday had broken through the pre-COVID period, which was lauded for its contribution to the recovery of the tourism market.

WETLANDS PROTECTION WORK STEP UP

Field monitoring stations and information platforms play key roles

By LI HONGXING
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A November, China announced that about 1.5 million hectares of wetlands would be included in the national park system. This important decision was made at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty that gives the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Several wetland management committees and bureaus are pressing ahead with plans to build national parks, including the construction of the Birdwatching Center at Shangping and Qianshui Lake National Park in Qingshui.

In June, the Shandong provincial government applied to the National Nature and Grassland Administration to set up the Yellow River National Park to protect the wetland’s flora and fauna.
The authorities in Shandong have since completed the preparatory work and will start the project soon. Xu Mingjie, director of the Yellow River Estuary National Nature Reserve Management Committee, said an area of 3,518 ha, which has been allocated for the national park.

The reserve is a global breeding ground for the Oriental White Stork and black-tailed gull. To prepare for the national park, the reserve returned thousands of frozen-fertilised eggs to wetlands and farmlands. It also invested billions of yuan in projects such as reconnecting water systems, digging tidal ditches, restoring six grass belts, and treating invasive species. After it is established, the national park will be expected to improve air and land resources, Xu said.

In 2021, the reserve was included in the national park system, the third national park in Shandong province, after the Weihai Wetland National Nature Reserve and the Jining Grand Canal Wetland National Nature Reserve.

**Conservation measures**

At the opening of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention (CoP16), Xu Jinping, the deputy governor of Shandong, said that it is important to build a global ecosystem of wetlands, protecting nature, minimizing disruptions and damage to wetlands caused by human activity, and protecting the ecological systems and biodiversity for future generations.

"China has recently drawn up a layout plan for national parks, under which a number of such parks will be designated, accounting for about 10 percent of the nation’s land area," Xu said.

Xu added that wetlands national parks include Three-River-Source National Park, Jiangxi Lake National Park, Hainan Island National Park, Liao River Estuary National Park, and Songhua Plain Hubei Nontidal Wetland National Park. COP16 was held from Nov 4-11 in Wuhan and Guangzhou, respectively. Every three years, representatives of contracting parties meet at COP, where they discuss decisions on the Ramsar Convention and its implementation. Last year was the first time that such a meeting had been held in China.

After becoming a contracting party to the convention in 1992, China embarked on wetland protection. It was one of the first countries to complete the national wetland resource survey, said Xu, and its scientific research and monitoring system in the lakes has evolved.

Now, 52 key projects, including grassland restoration, land protection and promotion, and wetland protection and restoration, have been launched and are effective at the marine.

**Wetlands: National parks plan drawn up**

"We still need more measures that mirror the natural way to restore wetlands, and also to protect wildlife habitats and vegetation," said Hou Dongming, deputy head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

In 2021, China’s mangrove forest covered about 129,871 ha in 38 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. The Chinese Academy of Sciences said in its special report released in 2021 that China’s mangrove forests have been estimated to store 26.5 million tons of carbon dioxide, help reduce erosion, and over two generations, stabilize carbon in the oceans.

"Mangroves have been regarded as "natural carbon sinks" and the "guardians of the ocean," said Li Guodong, deputy head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration. He noted that the new mangrove park would be the 16th in China. Among the 15 existing parks, the Shandong Mangrove Reserve is the only one in the country that has been designated as a national park.

"The Shandong Mangrove Reserve is one of the largest mangrove reserves in North China," Li said.

By LII BONGXING

Mangrove cover in China has returned to the level it was in the 1980s after years of restoration efforts, according to a new report on wetlands released by the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

This result was achieved as the overall degradation of wetlands in China decreased from 1999 to 2020, according to the research findings, which were released on Dec 2.

A National Forestry and Grassland Administration survey shows that China’s mangrove forest now covers 22,000 hectares. The country is among the few worldwide that have seen mangrove areas recover.

Bao Dingning, deputy head of the administration’s wetland management department, said at a news conference in November that mangroves in the coastal intertidal zone form unique ecosystems. "These trees and shrubs provide nutrition, prevent waves and storms, maintain biodiversity, and store carbon. They are home to about 15 percent of the world’s birds, and are important for wildlife and biodiversity," he said.

Xin Guangming, deputy head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said at a news conference that China still needs to place more emphasis on protecting wetlands and maintaining such areas. As home to 10 percent of the world’s wetlands, China has met the needs of 10 percent of the global population for wetland-related food, energy, and culture, he said.

Bao Dingning said that wetlands protection work includes improving overall planning and a local technology and system.

**Protection bolstered**

According to a plan released by the central government in October, by 2025, China will have protected 15 percent of its wetlands and added 30 such areas of international importance and 40 of national importance.

After the nations first specialised law on protecting wetlands was introduced in June, comprehensive protection was introduced according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

"The wetlands protection legislation stipulates the responsibilities of administrative departments and funds and establishes a legal system of wetlands protection," said the administration.

The law also mandates measures to reduce pollution, discharge water and other harmful activities, including land reclamation, fishing, over-harvesting and discharging wastewater.

Under the law, administrative departments at all levels have the authority to make rules and forbid activities that deteriorate the environment, such as the development and conversion of wetland areas.

"Specific measures are needed to strengthen management in different regions to improve the integrity of wetland ecosystems," Bao said.

Bao added that to achieve China’s wetlands protection target rate now stands at 30 percent, up from 14 percent in 2001, said the national reserve area of wetland landscapes and the reduction of several major national and international wetland types, which have been reduced by 13 percent. In these areas, the wetlands have been re-planted, with a focus on restoring the mangroves and national parks for wetland-related resources.

"Mangroves are considered one of the most effective measures to protect the marine environment,” the administration said. "They are called the "cruise ship of the sea" as they serve as a natural barrier against the waves, reduce the impact of storms, and can also act as"..."
Relief felt as bustling Beijing returns to normal

ZHANG XUNI 
China Daily

Traffic jams are downtown Beijing, bus stop stations and bustling shopping malls indicate the city was returning to business as normal on Thursday, after the prolonged COVID-19 measures.

Red lights turned green on major roads and premises in the Central Business District as traffic managers transitioned from restricted management to normal traffic control.

In Beijing’s central business district (CBD), two million people entered bustling subway stations by 9 a.m. on Thursday, an increase of 10 percent compared with that last week. The number of bus passengers reached 700,000, an increase of 20 percent.

Commercial establishments and tourism businesses in the CBD showed promising numbers as well.

The city government has taken multiple measures to boost consumption, which has given us huge confidence,” Zhao Zzechong, co-president of the Beijing Center for Commercial Development, said.

Between Saturday and Monday, the three-day New Year’s Day holiday, Beijing’s major department stores and online commerce platforms poured in 50 billion yuan (US$7.07 billion) in total revenue, which was 74.7 percent of the total revenue during the same period of the previous year.

According to the Beijing Municipal Commerce Commission, to better capital resources and further drive consumption, “China’s brand” has been promoted. New-themed fashion fairs for domestic brands have attracted many customers.

Nevertheless, the city is still optimistic about going out. A total of 35 major attractions in the city received 1.69 million visits during the holiday, which included tourism revenues of 248.47 million yuan, up 44.3 percent compared with 2020, when there was no pandemic.

China not in ‘space race’, industry insiders say

By ZHAO LEI
China Daily

All of China’s activities in outer space are for the country’s social, economic and technological development rather than for a “space race” with other nations, according to insiders in China’s space industry.

“We carry out spaceflights to develop high technology and improve economic growth and people’s living standard. We don’t take part in a space race with any other countries because competition in this regard is meaningless,” said Yang Tianren, director of the Chinese Academy of Space Technology.

Yang said China is unlikely to dominate the field of space exploration and try to keep others off the space stage.

According to plan made by the Chinese National Space Administration, the country intends to send to Chang’e 6 robotic mission to the far side from 2026 and collect and bring back lunar samples for us to research.

In the past years, the Chang’eng 3 and 4 unmanned spacecraft were developed under the leadership of the China National Space Administration.

All these missions were successful and the samples are expected to be used for research and development.

Space exploration of other countries is mainly for the purpose of national security and technology development, while China’s space programs are aimed at social and economic development, Yang said.

The government has always been committed to international cooperation in the exploration of outer space.

“China has always advocated international cooperation in the exploration of outer space and it is willing to contribute to the peaceful use of space,” Yang said.

The Chinese government has signed dozens of agreements with 100 countries and international organizations, Yang said.

China has also established the China National Space Administration’s International Cooperation Office to promote international cooperation in space exploration.

Visit: Trip is a great opportunity to expand trade, investment and other cooperation

China Daily
**CHINA**

**Rail sector seeks recovery in new year**

Network predicts strong growth ahead as country returns to normal travel.

By LUO WANGSHU

More than 4,000 kilometers of new railway line will be put into operation this year, bringing the total network to about 160,000 km, with 16,000 km being high-speed railways, according to the national railway operator China Railway Corporation.

Last year, the sector built more railway infrastructure to stabilize economic growth and promote the country's economic recovery following COVID-19. A total of 2,700 high-speed railway passenger trips are expected to be made this year, a significant year-on-year increase of 46 percent.

Some 165 billion passenger-kilometers of traffic are expected to be handled this year, an 8.7 percent passenger-kilometers increase.

The sector aims to achieve 108 billion yuan ($16.3 billion) in total transportation revenue this year, a year-on-year drop of 26 percent.

The expected revenue is backed by the amount of 2019—prior to the pandemic—when the sector generated 440 billion yuan ($67 billion) of revenue.

Among these, passenger services are expected to bring in 23 billion yuan in revenue, a year-on-year increase of 64 percent.

Affected by the epidemic, fewer people traveled last year, and the network handled 1.61 billion passenger trips.

However, the network played a key role in transporting goods during the epidemic last year. The amount of freight transported last year was 3.91 billion tons, up 17 percent year on year.

A total of 1.17 billion tons of cargo were moved for power, food, and medical equipment, and products, accounting for 29 percent of all shipping.

Despite the downside pressure on the economy, the network generated 207.1 billion yuan in fixed asset investment last year, a year-on-year increase of 4 percent.

The railway sector, especially in passenger services, would heavily rely on the epidemic in the first three months.

People fewer traveled and fewer services were arranged, and fewer tourists were seen at railway stations.

China has downscaled in COVID-19 management, transport hubs including railway stations gradually resuming their normal business.

The railway sector is preparing for unexpected travel demands during the peak travel rush, which will begin on Jan 7 and end on Feb 17.

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**Good-time gathering**

Environment economy advance as one in Yangtze River Basin

By FENG LIXIANG

China has managed to advance environmental protection and renovation of ecological conditions in the Yangtze River Basin.

The achievements were the result of a series of measures taken by the government bodies and local governments to implement comprehensive ecological protection and renovation.

The Ministry of Finance, for example, has made constant financial supports for Yangtze protection. From 2021 to 2025, the central government will invest 140 billion yuan ($20 billion) in transfer payments for ecological protection, saying that the payment made last year went up by about 15 percent from 2021.

Since 2012, about 1,600 Monitors of historic sites have been built or renovated in the basin. The total daily capacity of newly added renovation plants has increased from then to reach over 6 million cubic meters.

The vice-chairman also highlighted the great efforts the country has made to improve the Yangtze's water quality.

A total of 85 percent of the urban network has been covered by key sewage systems.

The achievements were a result of the country's efforts to improve the Yangtze's water quality. The basin's water quality has been improving in recent years.

To ensure the task of improving water quality is fulfilled, the government has made it a priority to improve the water quality in the Yangtze River Basin, including the prevention of water pollution, the protection of aquatic environment, and the improvement of water quality.

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**Rough ride**

Pair of provincial official parties takes up talks

By CANG WEI

The Communist Party of China Central Committee has issued a guideline on the appointment of new Party secretaries for the provincial and ministerial level on Tuesday.

Xia Zhenhua, former Party chief of Guizhou, was appointed Party chief of Hebei.

Xia was born in 1945, is a native of East China's Shandong province and served as director of human resources and social security, and director of the Social Security Administration.

He served as the deputy Party chief of Anhui province in 2001.

Jiang Zemin, a deputy Party chief of the Party of China Guizhou Provincial Committee on Wednesday.

Also on Tuesday, Chen Gang, born in 1957, is assigned Party chief of Guizhou province.

Chen has worked in various positions of the provincial Party Committee of the Beijing CPC Standing Committee, Party chief of Guizhou province and chairman of the Guizhou CPC Standing Committee, and served in many positions in Hebei province including as deputy governor and Party chief of Hebei province and former Party chief of Hebei.

He was secretary of the leading Official Members Group of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese.

They both took over the positions on December 20, and then became the vice-presidents upon the induction in February.

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**Truth-seeking pioneer dies age 87**

By CAO YIDONG

Officials, teachers and students from Nanjing University expressed their deep sorrow over the death ofarchst Bu Fangming who died at 87 on Monday.

His name, a native of Wuyi, Jiangxi province, was well known as being the main author of the famous article Practice is the Only Criterion for Testing the Truth Which was published in Guangming Daily in 1978.

He was born on March 10, 1934, in Jiangxi province.

His father, a teacher of philosophy and politics, was a member of the Chinese Communist Party.

He studied at the Department of Philosophy, where his work, resulted in that he proposed the criterion of practice as the only criterion for testing the truth, which was later adopted as the official position of the Chinese Communist Party.

The article was widely regarded as a breakthrough in Chinese philosophy and the foundation of modern Marxist philosophy in China.

He later became a professor at Nanjing University, where he continued his research and teaching.

His articles and books on Chinese philosophy, Marxism, and the development of modern Chinese thought have been influential in shaping the intellectual landscape of China.

He was a key figure in the development of modern Chinese philosophy and his work has had a lasting impact on the field.

His contributions to the study of Chinese philosophy and Marxism have been recognized both within China and internationally.

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**CHINA**

**Medical moves**

**By ZHIHONG CAI**

China has maintained pragmatic, rational, and rational transparent communication with the World Health Organization and countries and regions worldwide since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic three years ago, and this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the other three-year Chinese technical department will continue to closely communicate with the WHO and are actively preparing for the next WHO-China joint expert team meeting.

**Global**

**COVID-19 cooperation maintained**

**By ZHIHONG CAI**

China has maintained pragmatic, rational, and rational transparent communication with the World Health Organization and countries and regions worldwide since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic three years ago, and this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the other three-year Chinese technical department will continue to closely communicate with the WHO and are actively preparing for the next WHO-China joint expert team meeting.

China will gradually reopen cross-border passenger movement on land starting on Sunday, according to a work plan released by the Ministry of Transport following the national adjustment to COVID-19 controls.

Local transport departments are required to promote plan to restore cross-border services by studying previous international passenger volumes, market demand and the development of economies that provide international road transport services.

Communication with authorities in those areas will be maintained, and after both parties reach an agreement the operation will be put into effect.

The country will also offer more convenience for Chinese and foreign travelers to adjust changes in travel policies.

According to a statement released by the National Administration of Customs last week, provinces and autonomous regions will promote the orderly and steady reopening of customs clearance at borders.

It also said that all martial-aid testing for COVID-19 will be grouped into one sample.

China announced last week it was downsizing its management of COVID-19 from a class A to Class B. As a major change to the country’s anti-epidemic strategy, the downgrade will ease restrictions for travelers and travelers will not own to quarantine for 21 days or have to take a martial-aid test upon arrival.

**Shenzhen’s 1st new int'l route in 3 years jets off**

**By ZHIHONG CAI**

Shenzhen’s 1st new international route in three years jetted off on Thursday after a week-long delay due to bad weather.

A China Southern Airlines plane took off from Shenzhen International Airport for Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on Monday at 9:30 am, seven hours after the scheduled take-off time.

With the Chinese Lunar New Year approaching, there is an ongoing demand for international air travel. However, the COVID-19 policies and the Civil Aviation Administration of China will maintain restrictions on international flights on Sunday.

With COVID-19 cases rising from Shenzhen to Jakarta, the restrictions on flights from Shanghai to Jakarta were tightened, leading to the implementation of a new flight plan.

**Cross-border passenger road services to resume**

**By YANG XIAOYU**

A medical worker proposes a traditional Chinese medicine soup to a TCM hospital in Yinan, Shandong province, on Dec 12.

**TCM plays key role in virus treatment mix**

**By YANG XIAOYU**

TCM plays a key role in the virus treatment mix.

Local authorities in south China’s Guangdong province have released a guideline to provide a menu of TCM and Western medicine to help patients recover.
**CHINA**

Taiwan fruit farmer flourishing in Hainan

For wax apple grower, success doesn’t fall from the tree

By CHEN BOWEN

Lai Hong

At the largest wax apple plantation in Hainan province, there is a dozen or so wax apples, and the Chinese is the man who grows them. The wax apple is one of the most popular fruits in China, and Lai Hong, a Taiwanese farmer, has been growing them in Hainan for several years.

Lai Hong's farm, located in the remote village of Waishan in Hainan's Haikou district, is one of the largest wax apple farms in the province. The fruit is known for its sweet flavor and crunchy texture, and Lai Hong has been able to introduce it to the local market.

Lai Hong, who was born in Taiwan, moved to Hainan in 2018 to start his own farm. He has been able to take advantage of Hainan's climate, which is ideal for growing wax apples.

“Growing wax apples is a great opportunity for me,” Lai Hong said. “The climate in Hainan is perfect for growing wax apples, and the market is growing every year.”

Lai Hong has been able to sell his wax apples both in Hainan and on the mainland, and he is planning to expand his farm to meet the demand.

“A wax apple is a great fruit,” Lai Hong said. “It’s sweet, crunchy, and has a great texture. People love it.”

Lai Hong’s success has inspired other farmers to grow wax apples in Hainan, and the fruit is becoming more popular in the province.

“Taiwanese farmers are bringing new techniques and methods to Hainan,” said Hainan Provincial Agriculture Bureau Director Gao Ping. “They are helping to develop the wax apple industry in Hainan.”

Gao Ping said that the government is working to promote wax apple cultivation in Hainan, and is providing technical support and financial assistance to farmers.

Lai Hong is planning to expand his farm and introduce new varieties of wax apples in the future.

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“Taiwanese farmers are bringing new techniques and methods to Hainan,” said Lai Hong. “We are learning from them and working to improve our own farms.”
Europe’s conflict sees Africa reeling from costs

Whether it’s soaring fuel bills or pricier food, the most vulnerable are hit the hardest on continent under pressure

By OCHOKO NYAMBA in Nairobi, Kenya

Rising fuel prices in Kenya give Francis Karanja, a National Assembly de-
er, plenty to worry about as he has watched his already meager income take a hit over the past year.

During the Christmas holiday period, he was spending about $130 for a liter of diesel to keep his taxi on the road. In the prior year, he was paying less but is still reluctant to ask for higher fares from his passengers.

“The customers themselves complain that their salaries have not increased, and I will lose customers if I increase the fare,” said the 32-year-old, who works on commission.

“It is like I am doing something without the profit I used to make will now have to go out of pocket.

Driven by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, prices of fuel and other basic commodities in Kenya and other African countries have kept on the rise, bringing economic hardship to hundreds of millions of people across the continent. According to Kenya’s National Bureau of Statistics, prices of diesel fuel and petrol blazed by around 13 percent, respectively, from January to September last year.

The cost of gas and electricity, along with those raised by housing and water, rose by nearly 4 percent over the months, with the rising rate seen to continue, it said.

A report by the United Nations Development Programme study found that the most vulnerable are the poorest countries in the world whose economies are already under severe pressure.

The report suggests that the poor-
er countries are “hit very hard, and the hardest, as a larger proportion of cash household expenditure goes on food and transport costs.”

In Kenya, prices of cooking gas in the first half of the year dropped to a four-year low, heightening the impact of the high prices of fuel due to the restoration of value-added tax after the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

According to data from Kenya’s National Bureau of Statistics, houses and businesses used 123,000 tons of cooking gas in the six months to June last year, a drop of 16 percent from the same period in the prior year.

The UNDP study says that the conflict is threatening to derail development progress in African countries, pushing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063 further out of reach.

Karnja, a lecturer of history and international relations at the United States International University in Kenya, said the conflict in Europe is bound to affect the prices of key commodities like oil and gas.

**Negative effect**

“While Ukraine is far from Africa, the fact that the global price of oil is going up has a negative effect and direct impact on the African economy. For anything we import, the price will go up because of the China-Latin America trade,” Munene said.

According to the UNDP study, there are also indirect impacts of the conflict in Ukraine, including increased inflation, difficulty garnering financing, and a potential geopolitical realignment.

The impact of the conflict “will push Africa into serious debt distress,” causing countries less likely to meet their debt obligations, the report said.

“Currently, the global price of oil is high. This could increase the burden of government finance and make Africa’s debt unsustainable. Africa’s debt burden will be higher due to increased costs of doing business, increased costs of paying salaries, increased costs of running the government,” Munene said.

According to Munene, the continent’s GDP will drop by 3 percent or so due to the conflict.

While Ukraine is far from Africa, the fact that the global price of oil is going up has a negative effect and direct impact on the African economy.”

*Macharia Munene*, a lecturer of history and international relations at the United States International University in Kenya

Kenyans motorcycle taxi riders wait to fill up with costly fuel in Nairobi on April 4. (AP Photo/ Kim Atienza)

The IMF also pointed out that social protection measures in Africa will only increase as growth slows, and rising interest rates in advanced economies may make financing more costly and harder to obtain for some governments.

According to Karanja, the passenger, who travels around the Kenyan capital by major road, said prices rose by a total of 39 percent in Nairobi in the past year.

“Fuel is everything and it is not easy to drive a taxi because the prices [of fuel] have gone up.”

Kenya’s government has recently raised fuel prices, citing the need to raise revenue following the conflict in Europe.

Karanja, a lecturer at the University of Nairobi, said the conflict has raised the inflation rate in Africa, which is already high.

**Trade strains**

“The higher oil prices will increase the import bill for Africa’s oil imports by about $3 billion, worsening trade imbalances and eroding the continent’s ability to pay for goods and services. Oil importers already face inflation should prices remain high and continue to rise,” Munene said.

Munene said that the conflict in Europe has increased the price of goods and services in Africa, making it difficult for countries to afford basic necessities like food and fuel.

“As prices increase, the cost of living for the average African will increase. This will affect the overall economic growth of the continent,” Munene said.

**Inflation rates**

According to the UNDP report, inflation rates in Africa are expected to increase by an average of 7.2 percent in 2023, up from 5.8 percent in 2022.

The report also noted that the conflict has led to increased costs of living in Africa, making it difficult for people to afford basic necessities like food and fuel.

**Economic growth**

According to the UNDP report, economic growth in Africa is expected to slow in 2023, with a significant drop in investment and the cost of doing business.

**Social protection measures**

The report also noted that social protection measures in Africa will only increase as growth slows, and rising interest rates in advanced economies may make financing more costly and harder to obtain for some governments.
Briefly

UNITED STATES

Top congressional job still hangs in balance

US lawmakers are being criticized for not being able to find a way to work together and push through legislation. The House and Senate are divided over a defense bill that needs to be passed this year. The deadline for both chambers is 45 days before the end of the year.

Russia's course 'makes treaty talks impossible'

The US and Russia are moving closer to a new treaty that would replace the New START treaty, which expired in February. The treaty would limit the number of strategic nuclear warheads. Both countries have been working on the issue since last month.
Chinese exports win see-win deals as RCEP takes effect in Indonesia

Chinese exporters are seizing new win-win deals as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade deal takes effect in Indonesia.

By MA ZHIDUAN in Jakarta

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which came into force in Indonesia on Tuesday, has further deepened regional integration between China and ASEAN countries.

Indonesia’s new regulations have expanded the priority list of registration of origin for goods produced from China, as per the free trade agreement (FTA) signed between China-ASEAN countries and implementing the RCEP agreement, said Indonesia’s Trade Minister Zohri Hasan.

"The RCEP agreement to member states of ASEAN plus China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, in the 13 member countries, will allow goods originating from China to be sold in Indonesia and the Philippines with zero tariffs in five years," he said.

However, Indonesia is one of the countries that have maintained a zero import tax on Indonesia’s raw materials, including coal and crude oil, despite the existence of RCEP.

"Indonesia has very high and strict requirements for industrial production, so we should not expect that we can sell any products in Indonesia," he said.

But analysts from China Securities Research said there could be available space in the short term as some market sectors in the FTA just applied for the number of China exports to Indonesia has dramatically increased in the past years.

The rising number of COVID-19 cases across the world has seen a strong demand for medical supplies and equipment from many member states, including Indonesia.

With the improvement of the health sector in Indonesia, many Indonesian companies have been keen to produce goods that can be exported to China.

"The improvement of the health sector in Indonesia is one of the reasons why the Chinese companies want to sell their products there," said a Chinese analyst.

Indonesia has made significant progress in the health sector in recent years, with a large number of hospitals and medical facilities established in the country.

In addition, Indonesia has a large population and a growing middle-class, which has increased the demand for medical supplies and equipment.

However, the country still needs to improve its logistics and supply chain management to ensure the efficient delivery of goods.

"We need to improve our logistics and transport system to be able to deliver goods to Indonesia on time," the analyst said.

In conclusion, the RCEP agreement is expected to bring significant benefits to both China and Indonesia, with the latter likely to import more goods from China.

"The RCEP agreement is a positive step for Indonesia’s economy, as it will increase the country’s trade and investment opportunities," the analyst added.

By ZHONG XUECHAO in Beijing

China’s A-share market trading volume increased by 28.7% year-on-year (y-o-y) to 6.85 trillion yuan ($1.16 trillion) on Tuesday, the highest level since 2013, as investors, including foreign funds, made a rush for the country’s capital market.

Dow Jones Newswires reported that China’s A-shares jumped by 4.75% on the first trading day of the new year, with some stocks rising by as much as 20%.

"China’s A-share market is expected to continue its strong performance in 2022, with investors looking for undervalued stocks and future growth opportunities," said an analyst from a foreign fund.

Economist forecasts that China’s GDP growth is expected to be around 5% in 2022, with the country’s economy expected to recover from the pandemic-induced slowdown in 2021.

However, some analysts warn that China’s A-share market may face challenges in the coming years, including potential regulatory changes and higher competition from other global markets.

"China’s A-share market is still a growing market, but there are also risks for investors to consider," the analyst said.

In conclusion, China’s A-share market is expected to continue its strong performance in 2022, with investors looking for undervalued stocks and future growth opportunities.

By ZHANG XIAOXING in Shanghai

New air route to Amsterdam opens

A Chinese Southern Airlines passenger jet carrying 156 passengers and 13 crew members took off from Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport on Tuesday, marking the opening of the first direct passenger route connecting China and the Netherlands.

The new route, which will operate three times a week, is expected to boost economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

"The new route will further enhance the connectivity between China and the Netherlands, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation in various fields," said a Chinese official.

The route was launched as part of efforts to improve China’s international air network, which has been expanding in recent years.

"Our air connections to Europe are now more frequent and convenient, which will help to attract more travelers and investors to China," the official said.

In conclusion, the new air route to Amsterdam is expected to boost economic and cultural exchanges between China and the Netherlands, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation in various fields.
Autonomous vehicles eye bigger business opportunities

Authorities roll out series of supportive policies to promote robotic technology

By JAN FEIFFE

smart cars will soon account for 40% of all new vehicles, a massive leap from a current level of just 1.5 million vehicles. By 2030, the total autonomous vehicle market will exceed 15 trillion yuan ($1.2 trillion). The autonomous vehicle market was valued at 12.1 billion yuan in 2020, and is projected to reach 62.6 billion yuan by 2030, representing a compounded annual growth rate of 46.1 percent from 2021 to 2030.

"Autonomous driving is definitely the future development direction of the automobile industry. It not only solves the traditional safety problems, but also greatly improves the efficiency of transportation. Baidu enjoys economic benefits and loneliness people travel safely," said Zhang Zhong, a chief expert at China Daily News.

"Currently, China has already made an upward trend, and the overall trend of autonomous vehicles is to accumulate mass data compared with other countries, through autonomous, intelligent, equipped vehicle pilots in several cities," said Zhang Zhong, an assistant professor at New Energy Technology Institute.

--self-driving support services

The deployment and commercialization of self-driving services is expected to become a reality in 2021 considering the comprehensive traffic conditions. Zhang said, adding that the manufacturing costs of autonomous vehicle components, such as laser sensor systems, have declined along with advances in self-driving technology. He added that the government will continue to monitor the development of autonomous vehicle technology and work to more effectively solve issues that need to be addressed.

"It is still recommended for cities and governments to focus on autonomous driving technology and applications as they may need years of development to become mature," said Xu Yan, an expert at the China Institute of Transport.

"There is still a long way to go before autonomous vehicles become fully commercially available. The commercialization of self-driving technology will require a large number of vehicles and infrastructure to be developed," said Zhang Zhong, an assistant professor at New Energy Technology Institute.

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Stranger China-Brazil relations have rich connotations, broad prospects

The presence of China's Vice-President Wang Qishan, as a special representative to the Beijing International Film Festival, at the inauguration ceremony of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in Brasilia on Wednesday, is an indication of the importance that the Brazilian government attaches to relations with China. In fact, when Bolsonaro visited China, President Xi expressed Chinese goodwill to upgrade and upgrade its comprehensive partnership, as he confirmed that China is an important strategic partner and we can further deepen relations between our two countries.

Along with the positive attitude he has unprece-
dentedly expressed, there is another point of his speech worth noting. When he said this is another good sign that he will look to further build a new comprehensive, all-around, strategic partnership and bring it to new heights.

The government and the United States are the first three countries to find ways to visit the three countries, but the speech reflects China's strategic importance to Brazil's economy and the country's determination to promote bilateral relations and their countries' common prosperity. It is also an important sign of China's comprehensive strategic partnership with Brazil.

That's also what the world expects from a state and people who is committed to and safeguarding its infla-
sion upgrades, although neither is as easy, a halfway government adheres to the principle of national and balanced development and development, and it can make clear from the other or choose the option, but this can also ensure that the country's economic activity can continuously stimulate the global economy to inject more positive energy into socioeconomic develop-
much, its comprehensive strategic partnership role in expanding and deepening win-win coopera-
tion with various sides in the world.

The cooperation between the two largest develop-
ing countries in the Eastern Hemisphere and West-
ern Hemisphere will deliver more concrete benefits for both countries and peoples. Their bilateral trade volume was $67 billion in 2018, up 9.2 percent from the previous year, and they can further upgrade the current trade and cooperation model that is dominated by exports of capital and resource products, by bringing into play the role of China's small and medium-sized enterprises and further expanding the cooperation in aerospace, information technology, biotechnology, and pharmaceuticals and others to promote health and medical technology.

Amid the current unprecedented challenges, the strengthening of China-Brazil relations can help promote regional and global peace, stability and development, which is of great significance to China's comprehensive strategic partnership with Brazil.

Rollout of RCEP significant on many levels

January marks the one-year anniversary of the RCEP agreement entering into force. As the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its six dialogue partners, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand also signed the agreement, the RCEP welfare and development, global economic growth, this free trade zone, covering the largest population of the world, the total trade and investment, and has not only injected vigor into the development and cooperation between China and the other participating countries and the development and cooperation of all participating countries, but also serves as a model for common development among the participating countries, its different political systems and different cultures.

China's participation in the RCEP shows the economy to the world and the world in recognizing China's multilateralism as well as multilateralism, which China believes will be the foundation of the global development of all countries.

As the largest participating country in the RCEP, China accounts for 40 percent of the RCEP's total economic volume, and its huge market, as well as its strong economic growth and the transformation of economic structure, provides impetus for the implementation of the RCEP.

The RCEP stimulates regional economic dynamism, offers new opportunities to the economic exchanges and the regional division of labor, such as the more effective allocation of production factors, the cross-border supply and value chains, and regional coordinated trading rules and best practices in relation to international commerce.

E-commerce is a good example. Positioned by non-tariff measures and customs clearance con-
siderations, the RCEP region has the most active and convenient cross-border e-commerce and enjoys the highest growth rate in the world.

The total volume of imports and exports between China and its RCEP partners reached $67.5 trillion (US$1 trillion) from January to November last year, an increase of 7.9 percent year-on-year. The speech voices how the RCEP has promoted sustainable and inclusive cooperation between China and the other participating countries and the development and cooperation of all participating countries.

The lower tariffs facilitated by the RCEP have greatly reduced the cost of imports for the participating countries, while at the same time consider-
ingly increasing the opportunities for their exports.

The RCEP reduces the tariff between China and its ASEAN partners on more than 90 percent of the commodities to zero immediately after the treaty takes effect. From January to October last year, China's imports and exports with ASEAN countries reached $356.1 billion, an increase of 3 percent year-on-year.

The RCEP is the first free trade zone China and the EU and ROK are jointly participating in, and it will further promote economic cooperation and trade among the three major countries in East Asia, Europe and South Korea.

The importance of the RCEP therefore, can not be underestimated for the development of both the regional and global economies.

COVID arrivals measures should be science-based

The rapid acceleration of COVID-19 cases worldwide has re-emphasized the need for a mutual recognition of the measures globally, which has been proving to be a challenge for China. The World Health Organization has emphasized that COVID-19 is a disease that requires a science-based and evidence-driven approach to management, and that countries should not rely on any political criteria or preferences in setting COVID-19 travel and transportation policies.

COVAX COVID-19 vaccine distribution

COVAX COVID-19 vaccine distribution

US has got to realize TikTok not a problem

No, TikTok is not a problem. It’s China. When you support China, you help China. And China helps the US. When the US doesn’t support China, it’s a problem. And China is a problem.

What They Say

EU has no reasons to reject Washington’s wedge

More than one year has passed since the European Union proposed to blacklist TikTok in Brussels but the EU has not yet made up its mind. TikTok announced that it is willing to unwilling to make concessions, and the Global Gateway Initiative is only a pipe dream of the US and EU by so-called “Taiwan”. TikTok, or Global Gateway Initiative is only a pipe dream of the US and EU by so-called “Taiwan”.

The Belt and Road Initiative is an economic strategy or political agenda advocated by China. The United States and the European Union are both participants in it.

It is plain that the US is embroiled in the so-called “Taiwan” issue and the US will not allow any notion of its initiative to be implemented.

The Chinese government has repeatedly said that TikTok is a Chinese company, and TikTok is an American company. TikTok is a global company.

The US has no reason to reject Washington’s wedge

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COMMENT

Khalid Taimur Ali

China’s pandemic food praiseworthy

A detailed analysis of China’s food security indices and market actions shows that the Chinese government has not only provided substantial support to farmers and food producers but has also taken robust measures to ensure food security and combat the pandemic.

The report highlights the socio-economic structures of agriculture across the nation, emphasis on the importance of maize, rice, wheat, and pork as the main staple foods. China, one of the few nations to maintain healthy economic growth and help other countries to remain development-friendly despite the COVID-19 pandemic, is successfully utilizing food technology to combat the pandemic.

The government’s leadership of President Xi Jinping has proven the Chinese people’s ability to face the worst of crises, and this is the reason why China has managed to restrict the spread of the virus to only a few cases. China’s anti-pandemic policy and resource management have helped to reduce the rate of infection in the country. While the virus persisted for over a year, China’s focus on the health sector has kept pollution at bay.

China’s anti-pandemic policies and resource management have helped to reduce the rate of infection in the country. It is also important to perceive protection of the elderly and children, and ensuring vaccination coverage and taking all necessary preventive measures against the virus.

The report mentions that China has managed to restrict the spread of the virus to only a few cases. It also highlights that China has been following a strict anti-pandemic policy, planning the policy’s success in containing the virus. This report also states that China’s anti-virus campaign is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, China has been praiseworthy in the global fight against the pandemic. Its efforts have been instrumental in containing the virus and ensuring the health and safety of its citizens. China’s anti-pandemic policies and resource management have helped to reduce the rate of infection in the country, making it a role model for the rest of the world. China’s leadership under President Xi Jinping has proven its ability to face the worst of crises and manage the pandemic effectively.
GLOBAL VIEWS

CHEN WEILING
Six sense
China and the Central Asian Countries are effectively building a regional community with a shared future

The year 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Central Asian countries. At a virtual summit held in January 2023 to commemorate this 30th anniversary, President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech, proposing new goals and charting new directions for building a closer China-Central Asia community with a shared future.

China and the five Central Asian countries, being geographically close, have geographical and regional ties. The prosperity and security of this region is related to the common interests and development prospects of all six countries. Under the banner of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China and the five Central Asian countries could cooperate in the following six aspects.

The first is to build a community of development with a shared future for China and the five Central Asian countries. After over 20 years since it launched reform and opening up, China is in the stage of economic development, with its per capita GDP reaching 10,000 USD. In September 2022, China launched the Global Development Initiative (GDI) to boost the global development agenda. Since September last year, China has continued to strengthen its cooperation with the five Central Asian countries and work with China to build a community of development with the others.

The second, the two sides need a community of safety for China and the five Central Asian countries to achieve regional peace and prosperity. As a whole, China and the five Central Asian countries take the leading role in the field of medical care and health. The central government of the five countries will continue to join hands to promote medical and health cooperation between China and Central Asia.

China is the world’s largest economy and is working to become a high-income country. As a new community of health and prosperity, China and Central Asia have a community that is more mature and holistic. The five sides will deepen their cooperation in various fields, which will help make China and Central Asia into a community with a shared future.

The need for a new community of an innovative China and Central Asia lies in the fact that China and Central Asia are outstanding representatives in the world economy and at the forefront of global developments. At the two sides’ level, China and Central Asia share a unique position in the global community. The Chinese economy is an important player in the world economy, with China’s new community of innovation and prosperity helping to make it a regional leader. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, China and Central Asia have successfully organized a series of exchanges and cooperation, including the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and the China-Central Asia Summit. China and Central Asia have a shared goal of building a global community with a shared future.

The Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank in Asia, which was established in 2015. It is the world’s first multi-regional and multi-currency institution. The AIIB’s mission is to promote sustainable infrastructure development in the Asia-Pacific region. The AIIB’s operations are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The AIIB’s projects aim to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and support the development of infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region. The AIIB’s focus areas include transport, energy, telecommunications, and urban development. The AIIB’s projects are designed to promote economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. The AIIB’s governance structure is based on the principles of democracy, transparency, and accountability. The AIIB’s decision-making process involves involvement of all shareholders, and its operations are transparent and accountable to all stakeholders. The AIIB’s projects are designed to be environmentally and socially sustainable.
Artist with a bird’s eye view

Imagination soars above the ordinary as illustrator paints a whole new world, Li Yingxue reports.

When Liu Zaiyi blows at a bunch of sparrow feathers, she finds her voice and imagines them as a group of children in traditional clothes on a sunny day, each with her own existence and characteristics.

With wonderful imagination and exquisite drawing skills, Liu, also known as illustrator Laiming, turns her willful drawing into lovely paintings.

From girls and teenagers toよりやうなも、she anthropomorphizes species of birds into different human characters. The 20-year-old paintings are so adorable that they may attract countless fans on the Internet, and people online call her “the most beautiful illustrator who draws bird.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin also featured her drawings on Facebook, describing them as “true group portraits in traditional containers.”

People call her today’s best female illustrator, based on photos of birds.

Liu recalls that, when she heard the news of her replacement being performed in Beijing, she jumped out of bed: “I have been engaged in the creation of Chinese-style illustrations for a long time, and in the future, I’ll stick to my creation style and hope more people from home and abroad like my works, she says.

Liu’s route to becoming a professional illustrator was not easy. She got rejected by her parents in painting school during her childhood, “But my parents have accompanied me for my entire childhood, and I learned from various painting books,” she recalls.

In the long run, though she loved drawing, she followed her parents’ suggestions and studied traditional Chinese medicine at Capital Normal University in Beijing’s Guizhou province.

For years, she continued to study for her master’s degree at the same university, yet she never forgot her dream of painting and devoted all her spare time to it.

The summer vacation before she became a postgraduate changed her life, as she found a part-time job writing as an assistant for an illustrator in Changping.

“With the period when I made the most progress, I began to improve my drawing skills,” she also learned how to use Photoshop software to communicat with people who also drew beautiful things. She also learned to draw with her emotions rather than just the lines of culture orders.”

Liu made the works of traditional things and she fans of the “trek” aesthetic. During that time, she found her interest in ancient Chinese culture, especially the ancient books, Guoyu, the Classic of Mountains and Seas.

The inspiration for the book is huge, as the work is beautiful and the stories are funny,” Liu says, adding that she plans to publish an illustrator book of this book.”

“I noticed that in the nursery, most of the illustrations of Shihuangji are drawn by men, so I wanted to bring a feminine expression to the stories of the book,” she says. “Some are romantic, and I’ll select the beautiful mythical creatures to draw.”

After finishing her postgraduate studies in 2009, Liu decided that it was time to become a full-time illustrator, as she can support herself with the money made by painting. She was often commissioned by magazines, book editors and video-game companies to draw for them.

During her postgraduate year, she also co-published a book, titled Zhongguo Shihuangji Guoyu, which is a book of Chinese opera legends, for which she drew 30 illustrations.

Liu says the book, especially short fiction that impresses her paintings and she says that ancient Chinese fairy stories inspire her a lot. “Animal photograpy can also be rewarding to her,” she says.

The anthropomorphic bird drawing actually came about by Liu casually filling time while taking care of her father, who was hospitalized last year. She saw a photo of some sparrow feathers and decided to draw them into human figures.

“I think birds are lovely, themselves, and their feathers are like colorful clothes, so I was thinking what if I turn them into lovely girls and their feathers into lovely traditional Chinese-style clothing,” she says, adding that she is a fan of birds.

It only took her a couple of days to finish the painting.

After she posted the painting online, it soon attracted praise. Liu is collaborat- ing with an animal protection NGO to help them design anthropomorphic character for different birds to spread awareness to the same time.

In November, Liu held her first exhibition in Guizhou International Fashion Release Center, which will last until Jan 12. The exhibition, titled Laimingzhe and showed, showcases around 120 of her works in three series, drawing, ancient Chinese myths and anthropomorphic birds.

The invitation to hold this exhibition can be held in her hometown and that the local government set up a special fund to support her in and out of the city.

On the opening day, Liu family and friends were there to support her and she got a guided tour from Liu. It took over an hour to introduce all of her paintings to the audience.

“My parents were so happy that day. ‘The exhibition shows them what I’ve been doing’ she says.

One Sun Wei says, with the handle “fruitsaimi” in the group’s account, commended the exhibition: “When I see Laimingzhe’s anthropo-

morphic birds, I realized that they are such poetic, simple and graceful!” he hopes that she will become an artist known by everyone.

Liu, general manager of Chin Kung, commented about Liu’s exhibition: “The construction of Liu’s exhibition not only provides a space for artistic exchange, but also invites the public to the city.”

Liu says communicating with her audience through her paintings, she can find her work quality is improving.

Besides the annual drawing event, she also runs her own account of social media. “Thanks to the social media, I can be known by more people, and the idea made it possible for me to make a living through painting,” she adds.

Part of the sense of accomplishment that comes with seeing her illustration in the continuous living, she says. “You can always get in touch with your works, and you have to know all about them,” she adds.

When she finds that she needs to overcome certain obstacles, such as drawing and drawing the human form, she will find relevant books and choose to improve herself.

“A painting might be a piece of work, and people can do something in it, but I hope people can do something that makes people feel happy, simple and comfortable,” she adds.

Contact the writer at ljiang@chinadaily.com.cn.
Life can sometimes be defined by random events.

After two films on Chinese architecture, experimental filmmaker Ju Anqi is now working on a third, *Chen Nan* reports.

**Building nostalgia**

Chairman Xi Jinping, in his second speech at the red carpet of the 14th Shanghai International Film Festival, which was held in Pudong from Dec 16 to 20, July 2021, emphasised the importance of the festival. **Ju Anqi** (second from left), a film director from China, said that the festival is a chance to see films and filmmakers from around the world, and that it is a chance to learn from and be inspired by them.

**Education ties ‘boost Pakistan project’**

ISLAMABAD – Educational cooperation and exchanges between Pakistan and China are playing an important role in promoting the high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, a Pakistani scholar said.

“[Education cooperation is] a window of opportunity that will bring socioeconomic stability for countries around the globe,” said Sufi Ali Shah, president of the Pakistan-China Institute. "In the future, if we continue to lift the number of Pakistani students going abroad for education, we can bring more skilled labor to the country, and that is where the cooperation comes in." The Pakistani scholar believes that education cooperation is a window of opportunity that will bring socioeconomic stability for countries around the globe.

2003, 2015, 2021 – Three years ago, Ju Anqi received the “Best Hong Kong Filmmaker” award at the Hong Kong Film Festival, the “Best Director” award at the 2021 Asian Film Awards, and the “Best Director” award at the 2021 Hong Kong Film Awards. He then won the “Best Director” award at the 2021 Hong Kong Film Awards. Today, Ju Anqi is a well-known film director in China, and his films have won numerous awards and prizes.

**From 2009 to 2021, Ju Anqi traveled around the country with his team to make *Lou*, which features historical and modern architecture and more than 50 architects, scholars and experts.**

**Ju Anqi** (second from left), a film director from China, said that the festival is a chance to see films and filmmakers from around the world, and that it is a chance to learn from and be inspired by them.
Memorable moments of 2022

By Dusty Baker Jr. and The Associated Press

A year of upsets and surprises but it also gave us some brilliant individual and team performances.

On the court:

- In the NBA, the Golden State Warriors required their postuncate and sold out their home with a fourth NBA title in eight years, but first since 2018. Stephen Curry was the catalyst, achieving his claim as the greatest shooter in NBA history with another dynamic performance.

- In college basketball, Kansas re-established its blue-blood status by mounting the biggest comeback in national championship history, winning 66 points down to beat North Carolina for its fourth national championship. The win came after an epic Final Four match between Tobacco Road rivals North Carolina and Duke.

- In women's college hoops, North Carolina did something no other woman had been able to accomplish, handing UConn's Gene A蓖rono his first loss in 11 national title games.

- The veterans ruled most of the men's tennis majors, with Rafael Nadal winning the Australian Open and French Open to round off his Grand Slam record to 20 titles. Novak Djokovic won Wimbledon, but didn't get a chance to play in Australia or the US Open because of the coronavirus.

- Martina Hingis and Leander Paes won their third mixed doubles title at Wimbledon, becoming the first team to win a Slam title as mixed doubles partners since 1985.

- At the World Cup, the United States defeated New Zealand in the final, taking the title for the first time.