

BUSINESS

Strong sales for high quality livestreaming

Latest retail data reflect growing confidence of Chinese consumers

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Top-tier livestreaming sales host Li Jiaqi notched sales champion for the presale session of China's "Double Eleven" online shopping frenzy, which falls on Nov 11.

The value of consumer purchases made through his livestreaming sessions jumped by over 20 percent year-on-year, indicating an increasing enthusiasm to spend.

The eye-catching online sales transactions are a reflection of a growing willingness of Chinese consumers to make the most of promotions, further strengthening their online shopping habits, experts observed.

Together with other presenters, Li began his livestreaming sessions for the presale of the Double Eleven shopping extravaganza on Oct 14, and sales through his livestreaming sessions exceeded over 100 million yuan (\$14 million) within an hour.

The growing confidence of Chinese consumers is reflected in the latest figures. In the first three quarters of the year, total retail sales in the country amounted to 35.36 trillion yuan, up 3.3 percent year-on-year. Retail sales of merchandise stood at 31.41 trillion yuan, up 3 percent on a yearly basis, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Friday.

Over the same period, online retail sales in China totaled 10.89 trillion yuan, up 8.6 percent year-on-year. Of that amount, online retail sales of physical goods reached 9.07 trillion yuan, accounting for 25.7 percent of total retail sales, up 7.9 percent year-on-year, the NBS added.

"Online consumption has maintained a good growth momentum, and its growth rate has been faster than the overall retail sales growth, indicating that online shopping has

increasingly become a mainstream for consumers," said Fu Yifu, a researcher at the Star Atlas Institute of Finance. "The government has continuously introduced favorable fiscal and monetary policies since late September, which are expected to promote sustained economic recovery. Besides, a good recent performance of the capital market also helped consumers with income growth and further stimulated their consumption willingness."

Those favorable factors are expected to help contribute to a strong rebound of spending for the Double Eleven this year, Fu added.

On Oct 14 and 15, the livestreaming sessions of Li distributed a total of 500 million yuan of red envelopes, significantly driving the purchasing desire of consumers. Sending red envelopes during livestreaming sessions has been a common marketing tactic to attract new customers. Larger amounts of red envelopes and more discounts usually encourage consumers to buy more, industry insiders observed.

Other top livestreaming hosts also managed to achieve sales transactions of over 100 million yuan within an hour, and the sales speed and value both surpassed that of last year, according to Taobao, an online marketplace of Alibaba Group.

"An overwhelmingly high presale transaction for the Double Eleven signifies that e-commerce sales through livestreaming sessions have entered a new stage of high-quality growth, instead of a business model supported by influencers," said Yuan Yuan, general manager of store marketing and livestreaming at Taobao Live. "A quality livestreaming business model that combines professional anchors and high-quality platform service has become the mainstream of the sector."

Bayer sets up innovation center in Shanghai

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With an investment of approximately 20 million euros (\$21.69 million), Bayer Consumer Health launched the China Center of Innovation and Partnership (CCIP) in Shanghai on Wednesday, aiming to integrate more deeply into the country's innovation ecosystem.

The CCIP is committed to building an integrated innovation partnership network that connects efforts from the industry, academia and research, with the aim of accelerating and transforming R&D innovation and scientific achievements in China, a market expected to continue rapid growth in the coming years for the consumer health business of Bayer.

China is one of the strongest growth engines for Bayer globally, and the second-largest market for consumer health, mainly including categories such as nutrition, digestive health and skincare.

The establishment of CCIP is another important step for the company to increase investment in China, and helps further practice its principle of "in China, for China, benefiting the world".

Arturo Sanchez, head of commercial operations in Asia-Pacific and Latin America of Bayer Consumer Health, said: "China plays a crucial role in global innovation. The vibrant economic and societal landscape here presents unique opportunities to improve and expand self-care solutions."

David Evendon-Challis, chief scientific officer and chief marketing officer of Bayer Consumer Health, said the investment is mainly not in infrastructure, but in partnerships and innovation.

"CCIP brings together lots of different types of partnerships for the first time. As a flagship, we hope such a model to be rolled out around the world following its success in China," he said.

From both R&D and market perspectives, China has become an important source of global innovations for Bayer Consumer Health. By 2023, innovations in China accounted for 15 percent of Bayer Consumer Health's global innovation portfolio, and it is expected to contribute over 30 percent to local business growth in 2024, one of the highest proportions in the world.

In addition to empowering local innovation partners, CCIP will further integrate consumer needs in China, Asia-Pacific and the world, leveraging Bayer's global network to accelerate innovation achievements from China to go global, according to the company.

The company already has two supply centers in the country, one in Kunming, Southwest China's Yunnan province, and the other in Qidong, East China's Jiangsu province. On Friday, the company broke ground on its second center in Qidong.

"The investment in the first phase of the new Qidong site is about 600 million yuan (\$84 million). It is scheduled to complete construction by 2026 and kick off operation by 2028," said Julio Triana, president of Bayer Consumer Health and member of the board of management of Bayer AG.

The company said it chose to set up CCIP in Shanghai, as the city is one of those in the country with the most concentrated resources in healthcare industry, the most comprehensive R&D fields, and the richest achievements in new drug development.



Visitors try out an intelligent operating system at the booth of Jinneng Holding during an expo in Taiyuan, Shanxi province.  
ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Smart tech set to help beef up coal output

By LI JIAYING in Beijing  
and ZHU XINGXIN in Taiyuan

As energy demand in China peaks during the winter, Shanxi province, one of the major power hubs in the country, is strengthening efforts to ensure stable coal supply through intelligent transformation.

The province has established 30 green mining demonstration projects, with over 50 percent of its coal production utilizing smart mining technology and over 80 percent of its coal production capacity recognized as advanced capacity, said Zhang Xiang, deputy director of the Shanxi Provincial Development and Reform Commission, during a news conference this week.

Data from the province's statistics bureau show that Shanxi's coal production stood at 813.22 million metric tons in the first eight months of the year, about 26.6 percent of the national total.

Zhang said Shanxi will continue to push forward energy reforms by accelerating the development of a modern energy system.

The system aims to prioritize non-fossil energy sources, maintain coal and coal-fired power as essential safeguards, and apply advanced power systems as key infrastructure,

while emphasizing green, intelligent and efficient energy use.

The coal sector, which is Shanxi's pillar industry, is steadily transitioning toward more sustainable and intelligent practices during its energy reform process.

The provincial government issued a plan last year to accelerate intelligent coal mine construction and the development of a coal industry internet platform, aiming to establish Shanxi as a leader in the digital transformation of China's energy sector.

According to the plan, nearly all coal mines in Shanxi are expected to be equipped with smart technologies by 2027.

The Tashan coal mine in Shanxi's Datong is one of the first intelligent mining demonstration sites in China. With an annual production capacity of 25 million tons, Tashan has continuously upgraded its smart mining capabilities since initiating its digital transformation in 2020.

The mine has achieved safer, greener, and more efficient coal extraction, with major frontline positions fully automated, saving tens of millions of yuan in labor costs each year, said Tongmei Datang Tashan Coal Mine Co Ltd, the coal mine's operator.

Tashan has 30 smart mining pro-

jects and has established an integrated platform with 10 core systems, 27 subsystems and 12 unmanned workstations. The mine has also employed robots for belt inspections, pump room maintenance, substation checks, intelligent sorting, and emergency rescue, pioneering a new model of intelligent mining that integrates comprehensive sensing, 5G transmission, autonomous decision-making and coordinated control.

"Building intelligent mines is crucial for improving safety and productivity," said Wang Lei, Party secretary and chairman of Tongmei Datang Tashan Coal Mine Co Ltd.

As of the end of August, Shanxi had built 134 intelligent coal mines and developed 1,564 smart mining faces, with 3,200 underground fixed positions now fully automated, ensuring a high level of coal mine safety, said Yan Zhongli, head of Shanxi's data bureau.

Similarly, in the coal-rich city of Yangquan, Shanxi Huayang New Energy Group Co Ltd's second division began its transition to intelligent mining in 2021.

"We have made significant progress, establishing nine intelligent longwall mining faces and 19 smart development faces so far,"

said Wu Ruiming, deputy mine manager for electrical and mechanical operations at the company.

Wu added that the mine's working conditions have vastly improved since its early days, with staff members now able to manage operations remotely through an intelligent platform, significantly boosting both safety and efficiency.

"We have installed over 1,200 video surveillance units across key underground and surface areas, enabling real-time monitoring and comprehensive safety oversight," Wu said.

The mine has also integrated data from ventilation, compressed air, drainage, power supply, and main transportation systems into a centralized intelligent control platform, overcoming long-standing data isolation issues.

"Going forward, we will expand the application of 5G technology, artificial intelligence and autonomous driving to achieve green, intelligent mining, clean and efficient energy conversion, and the development of an energy internet," he said.

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Weifang Port certified as China's first zero-carbon emission port

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Weifang Port, which is part of Shandong Port Group subsidiary Bohaiwan Port, said it had become China's first zero-carbon emission port, marking a milestone in the country's push toward sustainability and green development.

China Classification Society Certification Co Ltd, affiliated with the Ministry of Transport, awarded Weifang Port the carbon neutrality certification earlier this week.

Experts said the achievement is a major step toward China's carbon peak and neutrality goals and serves as a model for the port sector across the country.

Wang Ruizhi, general manager of CCSC's Shandong branch, said the certification process, which evaluated carbon emissions and offset measures from June 10 to Sept 10, was conducted according to international standards.

Weifang Port's carbon neutrality was achieved through a combination of emission-reduction measures, including the construction of wind power facilities, the use of hydrogen-powered vehicles, the promotion of electric energy alternatives, and the automation of key operations.

These measures led to the offset of 9,010.62 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, said Wang.

"This is the first time that an entire port area has achieved carbon neutrality," Wang said.

Sun Chao, vice-general manager of Bohaiwan Port, said all major facilities at Weifang Port now operate using eco-friendly electric and hydrogen energy.



Wind turbines seen at Weifang Port, Shandong province.  
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"Weifang Port has achieved full energy self-sufficiency by building an integrated green energy system powered by wind, solar, and energy storage technologies," he said.

With a coastline of 5,382 meters, Weifang Port benefits from abundant wind and solar resources.

On Sept 30, the port successfully connected its onshore distributed wind power project to the grid, making it the first of its kind in Shandong.

According to the port's estimates, compared to traditional coal-fired power plants generating the same amount of electricity, this wind power project will save 21,000 tons of standard coal annually, significantly benefiting the environment.

Recently, the port also launched an electricity-to-hydrogen project. It will become China's

first integrated demonstration project at a port for green hydrogen production, transportation, storage, and usage, providing 5 million kWh of green electricity annually.

Liu Gang, executive vice-manager of Bohaiwan Port, said that Weifang Port has now achieved what he referred to as the "narrow definition of a zero-carbon port".

"The broader definition of a zero-carbon port, however, means zero emissions across the entire port region," he said, adding that the port will further establish a green logistics chain with upstream and downstream partners and work to adjust its transportation structure.

"We will collaborate with logistics stakeholders to introduce eco-friendly vehicles and reduce emissions from ships docking at the port," he said.

Briefly

PBOC launches new swap facility

China's central bank launched the Securities, Funds and Insurance companies Swap Facility (SFISF) on Friday, with the first batch of application quotas exceeding 200 billion yuan (\$28.1 billion). The People's Bank of China announced the decision to set up the SFISF in a statement last week, as part of efforts to support the healthy and stable development of the capital market. The tool will allow eligible securities, funds and insurance companies to use their assets, including bonds, stock ETFs and holdings in constituents of the CSI 300 Index, as collateral in exchange for highly liquid assets such as treasury bonds and central bank bills, according to the central bank. The central bank on Friday also launched a special re-lending facility in guiding banks to provide loans to listed companies and their major shareholders for buybacks and increasing shareholdings.

High-grade iron ore deposit found

A high-grade iron ore deposit has been discovered in East China's Shandong province, with estimated reserves at 104 million metric tons. The department of natural resources of Shandong province has identified 16 high-grade iron ore bodies in the Qihe-Yucheng region. High-grade iron ore typically has a total iron content of over 45 percent, making it a strategic mineral resource in short supply in China.