

CHINA

Winter rush



Competitors race down a snowy slope during the 24th Vasaloppet China at Changchun Jingyuetan National Forest Park in Jilin province on Sunday. The international cross-country skiing event drew more than 2,000 athletes and enthusiasts from 33 countries and regions. WANG ZHENDONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

New Year holiday drives travel peak

Demand for diverse tourism offerings, short-haul overseas trips on the rise

By CHENG SI
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China's tourism market hit its first travel peak of the year during the three-day New Year holiday period starting Thursday, with a strong festive demand drawing both domestic and international travelers to destinations across the country.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism said 142 million domestic trips were made during the holiday, generating about 84.8 billion yuan (\$12.13 billion) in tourism revenue. This year's three-day holiday lasted two days longer than last year, a likely contributor to travel demand.

Yan Lijie and three of her university dorm mates spent New Year's Eve on Wednesday night at Beijing's 798 Art District, an industrial heritage art zone, before staying in the city for a two-day tour through Friday.

"We are in our third year at a college in Tianjin, neighboring Beijing, and it's our dorm's tradition to spend New Year's Eve in a nearby city over the past two years," said Yan, 23. "There were so many activities, including art exhibitions, fairs and performances that night, and the rich festive atmosphere really touched us."

Qi Chunguang, vice-president of travel portal Tuniu, said tourism consumption during the holiday showed increasing diversification,

“We’ve noticed that younger travelers show stronger preferences for concerts, music festivals, drone shows or fireworks displays.”

Qi Chunguang, vice-president of travel portal Tuniu, said tourism consumption during the holiday showed increasing diversification,

towns also attracted large numbers of travelers welcoming the New Year.

"Hotels booked by our users span more than 1,000 counties nationwide this holiday, ranging from warmer Nan'ao in South China's Guangdong province to northern counties such as Antu in Jilin province, known for snow scenery and winter resorts," Qunar said.

Inbound and outbound tourism also recorded strong growth. Qunar said its users booked hotels in nearly 3,000 cities worldwide during the holiday, with short-haul overseas destinations including Seoul, Bangkok and Hong Kong among the top three choices.

The platform added that a growing number of international tourists chose to ring in the New Year on the Chinese mainland. Travelers holding non-Chinese passports booked flights to 97 cities across China, with Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing attracting the largest numbers.

"Most international tourists came from neighboring countries, including Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia, while visitors from Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and the United States also recorded significant growth during the holiday," Qunar said.

Figures released on Sunday by the National Immigration Administration showed about 6.62 million inbound and outbound trips were made by foreign nationals, representing a year-on-year increase of 29.8 percent.

Guizhou empowers its private sector

By YANG JUN and LIU BOQIAN
in Guiyang

Southwest China's Guizhou province plans to fully support the development of private enterprises to bolster its comparatively weak private sector, Governor Li Bingjun said.

At a conference on promoting the high-quality development of business entities on the first working day of 2026, officials warned the province would take a firm stance against any actions that hinder business operations or damage Guizhou's business environment. The meeting emphasized that Guizhou will safeguard the lawful rights and interests of all enterprises, whether state-owned or private.

According to Guizhou Daily, private entities account for 97.2 percent of all business entities in the province and provide more than 60 percent of jobs.

By the end of September 2025, taxable private-sector market entities in the province had increased by 21.9 percent year-on-year. Private enterprises grew by 17.3 percent year-on-year and represented 93.2 percent of the province's corporate entities, making them the dominant force in the business sector.

"Guizhou can nurture world-

class companies. Our entry into global capital markets proves that," said Chen Dafang, general manager of CNGR Advanced Material Co, which supplies new energy materials for lithium batteries, after listing on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Nov 17.

To better support the private economy, a draft revision of Guizhou's private sector promotion regulations was reviewed on Dec 1, according to the Guizhou Provincial People's Congress. The draft includes provisions to protect and support private business development, covering areas such as fair competition, facilitation of investment and financing, technological innovation, standardized operations and service guarantees, and rights protection.

Market-access optimization has been a provincial priority. A staff member at an energy firm in Wangmo county said a registration process that once took about two weeks now takes three days.

The 2024 revision of Guizhou's measures for registering power-market entities removed the requirement of government approval from the entry process. New energy companies can register directly with the trading center, cutting market entry time from 15 days to three days. The

amendment enabled 21 new renewable energy firms to enter the market.

The latest draft seeks to strengthen rules on fair competition. It states that, aside from a negative list for market entry, all types of economic organizations, including private firms, may enter markets on equal legal footing.

It prohibits county-level and above governments and their departments from creating disguised market-entry barriers through measures such as extra filings, registrations or annual inspections.

The regulations also address public concerns about the "distant-water fishing" incidents — a term referring to improper cross-regional law enforcement. The draft explicitly bans unlawful cross-regional arrests of entrepreneurs and the seizure, freezing or transfer of out-of-province corporate and personal assets.

It calls for standardized procedures and an improved system for cross-regional law-enforcement assistance, stressing that cross-regional enforcement must respect legal authority, conditions and procedures and must not be abused for economic gain.

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Action plan targets youth health issues

By WANG XIAOYU
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China has launched a five-year action plan to improve the overall health of children and adolescents, targeting five key issues that include obesity, myopia, mental health disorders, spinal curvature abnormalities and dental health.

The plan, jointly issued by the National Health Commission and 12 other government departments on Tuesday, sets a goal to effectively curb obesity among children and teenagers by 2030. It also aims to raise the proportion of primary and secondary school students who meet the national physical fitness criteria to at least 60 percent.

To achieve these goals, medical institutions are required to incorporate weight management into prenatal care. They will provide guidance through nutrition clinics and prenatal classes to promote healthy gestational weight gain and prevent high birth weight.

Primary care facilities will strengthen feeding assessments and health management for children aged 6 and under. Schools will incorporate nutrition and physical education into their curricula, regularly monitor students' height, weight and waist circumference, and refer cases of growth delays, overweight or obesity to hospitals for further intervention.

The plan emphasizes that primary and secondary school students must be guaranteed at least two hours of physical activity each day and are encouraged to master one

or two sports skills. Sports authorities will broaden the range of youth sports events to ensure activities are available year-round.

To address myopia, China aims to gradually increase refractive screening rates among children and adolescents. By 2030, the myopia rate among 6-year-olds should be kept at around 3 percent. Rates for primary school students should fall below 32 percent, for junior high school students below 60 percent, and below 70 percent for senior high school students.

Efforts will be made to strengthen eye health care and vision screening at both medical institutions and schools. Parents will be guided to encourage children to spend more time outdoors, reduce the use of electronic devices and develop good visual habits from an early age.

The plan also requires all primary and secondary classrooms to meet national lighting standards and calls on schools to better manage screen use during tutoring sessions.

Excess weight and myopia remain the two most pressing health concerns among young people in China. Official data show that in 2020, the overweight rate was 6.8 percent for children under 6 and 11.1 percent for those aged 6 to 17. The obesity rate among children under 6 was 3.6 percent, rising to 7.9 percent for those aged 6 to 17.

Latest monitoring results show that while overweight and obesity rates among children under 6 have declined in recent years, the trend is rising among those aged 6 to 17.

In 2020, the overall myopia rate

among children and adolescents stood at 52.7 percent, down 0.9 percentage points from 2018. Authorities said myopia rates across different school-age groups have shown a downward trend in recent years due to coordinated prevention efforts.

To strengthen mental health services, the action plan seeks to increase the proportion of children aged 6 and under receiving psychological and behavioral development monitoring to 90 percent by 2030. All schools will be required to have full-time or part-time mental health education teachers and to hold at least one mental health lecture or related educational activity each academic year.

To promote bone and spinal health, schools and parents are urged to ensure preschool children engage in three hours of physical activity daily. Primary and secondary school students should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate- to high-intensity exercise each day, including muscle-strengthening activities at least three days a week.

Annual screening for spinal curvature abnormalities will be conducted for students aged 10 to 16 as part of routine health checks.

The plan also outlines measures to improve children's oral health by increasing access to relevant knowledge and skills, while strengthening annual oral examinations for students to curb tooth decay. By 2030, China aims to achieve effective intervention for dental decay among children aged 5 and 12.



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