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RAISING THE STANDARD

Schools reopen with greater resilience

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Cover Photo: First graders attend class
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on August 29 (XINHUA)

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post-pandemic growth



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A Fresh Start

The start of the fall semester as scheduled in late August and September, with schools across China reopening and students resuming normal study in classrooms on campus, is the latest sign of the success in containing the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country.

September 7 marked 23 consecutive days of zero locally transmitted cases in China. Work and production resumption progressed steadily, paving the way for resuming normal campus education in autumn.

However, since the pandemic is still spreading in many parts of the world, it has created severe pressure to prevent infected arrivals from abroad. Also, medical experts have warned that the risk of a resurgence remains high in fall and winter, which is also the flu season. So the education sector faces the pressing task of ensuring safety in schools.

All schools, in line with their conditions, are taking measures to ensure both epidemic prevention and normal education activities.

The fight against the epidemic has created a remarkable legacy. In the spring semester, schools had switched to online classes first. Then as the disease came under control, about 75 percent of China's 280 million students returned to school. Thanks

to the strict measures taken, there were no infections on campus.

The trend of online classes will improve the expertise to use technology for online education and benefit long-term development. But most importantly, the specter of COVID-19 has also created a strong spirit of solidarity, courage, optimism and determination amid hardship.

The school-going generations, who have witnessed heroic acts by people from different sectors of society who worked together fearlessly and selflessly to cope with COVID-19, will have a deeper understanding of responsibility and their duty toward the nation. It will encourage them to be part of the nation's development when they grow up.

From an even bigger perspective, as daily life in China regains vitality, it brings hope for a world still mired in uncertainties. As health experts have said, COVID-19 may continue to coexist with humans for a long time in the future. While the reopening of schools does not imply the threat to health has been conquered, nevertheless, the progress shows that with determination and concerted efforts, the course of the future can be changed, ultimately leading to a global victory over the virus. ■

WRITETOUS



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HITTING A NEW HIGH

A crane transports containers at the Port of Erenhot in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, north China, on September 3.

The number of China-Europe freight trains hit a record high of 1,247 in August, up 62 percent year on year, according to the China State Railway Group on September 9.

It marked the sixth consecutive month the number registered double-digit growth.



Market Reopens

The entrance of Xinfadi Market, Beijing's largest agricultural produce wholesale market, on September 7. The north area of the market reopened on September 6, marking full resumption of business after it was temporarily shut down due to the novel coronavirus disease in June.

Cleaner Air

The reduction in the concentration of PM2.5, a fine particulate matter, in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei area in north China is among the most substantial air quality improvements ever achieved in the world in the past five to six years, according to a report by the World Bank.

The World Bank team on Pollution Management and Environmental Health released the report at the 2020 Beijing International Forum for Metropolitan Clean Air and Climate Actions on September 8.

Jostein Nygard, a senior environmental specialist of the World Bank, said the management of fine particulate matter, particularly that

from industrial processes, power plants and clean household fuels, heavy-duty vehicles, passenger cars and industrial combustion sources, has worked well.

Zhang Dawei, Deputy Director of the Department of Air of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, announced at the forum that the average annual concentration of PM2.5 in Beijing dropped from 89.5 micrograms per cubic meter in 2013 to 42 micrograms in 2019, a decrease of more than 50 percent, while the carbon emission intensity fell by 43 percent from 2010 to 2019.

New Railway

A new railway passing through the southern region of Xinjiang Uygur

Autonomous Region in northwest China has made a foray into the country's largest desert as transport construction picked up pace after effective containment of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) locally.

Workers on September 7 started laying tracks on a section of the Hotan-Ruoqiang Railway in Qiemo County, Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, located in the southern rim of the Taklimakan Desert.

Sand-proof tarpaulins are being used to shield major parts of construction vehicles from sandstorms, according to Zhang Gang, a project manager with China Railway 14th Bureau Group Co. Ltd. overseeing the construction.

The railway spans more than 825 km, with a designed speed of 120 km per hour. After completion, it will form a part of the third major transportation line connecting east and west Xinjiang.

The railway will usher in a new era for five counties situated along the line that never had any rail connectivity. "It's a historic moment for us as the railway will accelerate the growth of the local economy," Xu Kai, a top official of Qiemo, said.

Background Check

Preschools must carry out background checks when hiring staff workers, according to a draft law on preschool education unveiled by authorities on September 7 to solicit public opinion.

Individuals barred from working at preschools include those deprived of political rights, those who have a criminal record as well as people who have received administrative penalties for child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and relevant acts, according to the draft law unveiled by the Ministry of Education.

Those who have records of illegal behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse and gambling, and people suffering from mental illness or having a history of mental illness, or having records of acts seriously violating teachers' ethics, are also banned.

Millet Museum

China's first millet museum opened on September 7 in Aohan Banner of Chifeng, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China, where the world's oldest millet, dating back about 8,000 years, was discovered.

Carbonized millet grains unearthed by archaeologists two decades ago are exhibited in the museum with a floor space of 7,700 square meters. The exhibition area of the museum features the cultivation of millet in China and the history of dry farming.

In 2012, the Aohan dryland farming system was listed among Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In 2014, Aohan was recognized as China's "hometown of millet" by the Chinese Food Industry Association.

Demand for millet has been rising rapidly in China, as it is considered a healthy alternative to rice. Millet-made cakes, ice cream and beverages have emerged as trendy delicacies in the market.

National Parks

Guangdong Province in south China will build two national parks, namely the national parks of Nanling and Pearl River Estuary, according to the Forestry Administration of Guangdong.

The provincial government has established a leading group to coordinate the construction of the two parks.

According to the group, the Nanling National Park will cover nine county-level regions and 30 villages and townships in the cities of Shaoguan and Qingyuan, with a total area of about 2,121 square km. The park will encompass 18 natural reserves and state-owned forest farms.

The Pearl River Estuary National Park plan has not been revealed.

Guangdong has established 1,359 natural reserves that are above the county-level, the most among provincial-level regions in China.

Health Centers

Five regional medical centers will be opened to promote health services for children, according to the National Health Commission (NHC) on September 4.

The centers will be based at leading children's hospitals in Liaoning Province in the northeast, Zhejiang Province in the east, Guangdong Province in the south, Shaanxi Province in the northwest, as well as Chongqing Municipality and Sichuan Province in the southwest, the NHC said.

In coordination with the national center for children's health, the regional centers will improve medical treatment, scientific research, and preventive healthcare for children in these regions.

China's national center for children's health was established in both Beijing and Shanghai in 2017.

Online Renting

About 96.8 percent of college graduates chose to rent apartments online this year, according to a recent survey by *China Youth Daily*.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, it has become increasingly difficult to view an apartment on site before signing the lease. Many real estate agencies have adopted virtual apartment viewing, enabling potential tenants to see the apartments online through pictures, virtual reality technology and videos.



A Good Harvest

A farmer classifies apples in Weichang Manchu and Mongolian Autonomous County in Hebei Province in north China on September 8. Local farmers have been growing apples in recent years taking advantage of ample sunshine and the big temperature difference between day and night.

Among the 1,974 college graduates surveyed, only 48.4 percent have tried on-site apartment viewing.

"I'm satisfied with online apartment renting, which is efficient and convenient; however, there are some drawbacks as well," Chu Wenjing, a 2020 graduate, said, adding that some apartments look more spacious online than they actually are.

The survey showed that 74.2

percent of graduates are content with their experience of online house renting, with those in second-tier cities having the best experience.

More than 80 percent of the respondents hoped contracts for online apartment renting could be standardized to protect the rights and interests of tenants, while 72.1 percent suggested strengthening supervision.



Economic Vitality

A Web hostess live-streams at an amusement park in Changxing, a county in Zhejiang Province in east China, on September 8. Activities were held that day as part of the national consumption promoting month to boost consumers' confidence and stimulate consumption.

EV Market

According to a market assessment published by the German Center for Automotive Research (CAR) on September 7, China is on its way to become the biggest market for electric vehicles (EVs) again by the end of the year.

In total, almost 400,000 fully electric cars and plug-in hybrids were sold in Europe in the first half of the year. In China, only 7,200 fewer electrified vehicles were sold in the same period, according to CAR.

In terms of sales of all-electric vehicles in the first half of the year, China was already a market leader while more plug-in hybrid cars were sold in Europe, it said.

China made a great leap in all-electric vehicles with Tesla. CAR data shows that the Tesla Shanghai gigafactory contributed the sales of

almost 50,000 fully electric cars in China in the first half of the year.

China and Europe were “decisive for the global breakthrough of electric mobility,” Ferdinand Dudenhofer, Director of CAR, said, noting that the two regions were “significantly supporting emission-neutral mobility.”

Industry Catalogue

Items on the industry catalogue will be significantly increased to encourage foreign investment and help foreign-funded firms to receive benefits from preferential policies, Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen said on September 8.

The Ministry of Commerce will continue to implement the negative list for foreign investment and expand the scope of businesses encouraging foreign investment,

sharing the market and opportunities in China with foreign investors, according to Wang at the launching ceremony of an online international fair for investment and trade.

Wang also said that the ministry will further improve the foreign investment service system, help foreign-funded firms solve difficulties and well implement the Foreign Investment Law and regulations to create a stable, fair, transparent and predictable business environment.

Ministry data showed paid-in foreign direct investment (FDI) on the Chinese mainland rose 0.5 percent year on year to 535.65 billion yuan (\$78.3 billion) during the January-July period.

In July, FDI expanded 15.8 percent year on year to 63.47 billion yuan (\$9.06 billion), marking the fourth consecutive month of positive growth.

Industrial Internet

The Committee for the Promotion of Industrial Internet was launched in Beijing on September 4.

It will focus on strategic research, standard system, industry solutions and other key areas of the industrial Internet to lay a solid foundation for consistent and healthy development in China, a report by Xinhua News Agency said.

It will also promote innovations in areas including workplace safety, energy, coal production and medical care. It will strengthen gathering, sharing and value exploration of big data in the industrial Internet.

The committee called for efforts to encourage enterprises to participate in the construction of 5G, big data centers and other new infrastructures, as well as improve intellectual property protection and deepen international cooperation.



XINHUA

Better Procurement

The government is setting up an open and transparent public procurement system and integrate into the international public procurement market, an official said on September 8.

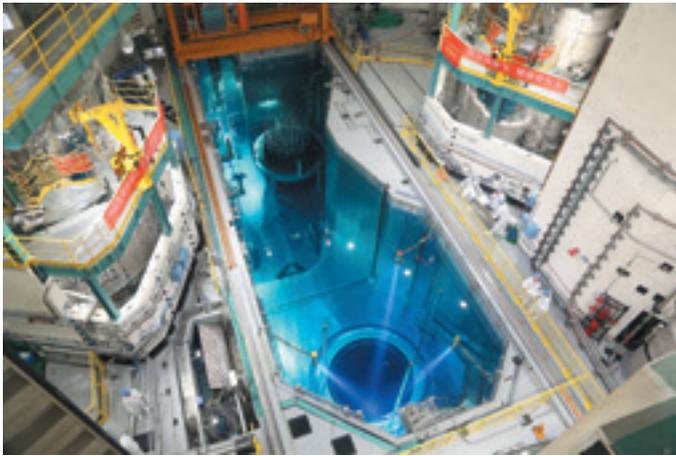
According to Zhang Shaogang, Vice Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), engaging in the huge market of international public procurement will help enterprises make full use of both domestic and international markets and resources, and strengthen cooperation with countries, regions, and international organizations.

Over 7,000 Chinese suppliers have registered at the basic level for the UN, making China second in the world in terms of the number of such suppliers, Zhang said, adding that there is still great potential for their participation in UN procurement opportunities.

He called for better introduction to rules and processes to encourage enterprises to take part in international public procurement,

Health Products

A worker dries goji berries, also known as wolfberries, in a village in Delingha, Qinghai Province in northwest China, on September 2.



Indigenous Technology

The No.5 nuclear power unit in Fuqing, Fujian Province in southeast China, on September 3, the day before fuel loading started. It is China's first nuclear power unit using Hualong One technology, a domestically developed third-generation reactor design. The unit, which began construction in 2015, is expected to start operation this year.

establishing platforms for Chinese enterprises to communicate with international organizations for cooperation, and making concerted efforts to enhance transparency, openness and impact of international public procurement.

The CCPIT will work with other organizations in encouraging Chinese companies to participate more in the procurement and trade of international organizations such as the UN, and make contributions to boosting recovery of the world economy, advancing global economic governance and building an open world economy.

Agricultural Fair

The 27th China Yangling Agricultural Hi-Tech Fair is scheduled to be held between October 22 and 26 in the northwestern province of Shaanxi.

According to organizers, the fair will have online and offline sessions this year. Offline events will take place in the Yangling Agricultural Hi-Tech Industrial Demonstration

Zone, with the attendance of government officials, experts and entrepreneurs.

With the theme of "innovation leads high-quality development," the fair will feature 14 major activities, including a round-table conference on the development of modern agriculture in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states.

Established in 1994, the fair is one of the largest and most influential events on agricultural science in China.

E-Commerce Bases

Vice Minister of Commerce Qian Keming gave licenses to 15 new national e-commerce demonstration bases at the China National Convention Center in Beijing on September 5.

The national e-commerce demonstration bases, with an aim to foster the fast development of the sector, are clusters of local e-commerce companies and entrepreneurship and innovation

platforms for the e-commerce industry.

The new ones bring the total number of official e-commerce demonstration bases to 127. China pays high attention to the development of the e-commerce, Qian said.

The sector has played a significant role in helping fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, driving consumption recovery and smoothing industrial and supply chains of foreign trade, especially since this year, according to Qian.

CPI and PPI

China's consumer inflation eased in August as economic activities gradually recovered after effective epidemic containment in the country, official data showed on September 9.

The consumer price index (CPI), the main gauge of inflation, grew 2.4 percent year on year last month, moderating from the 2.7-percent gain in July, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics

(NBS).

On a monthly basis, consumer prices edged up 0.4 percent. Food prices, which account for nearly one third of weighting in China's CPI, climbed 1.4 percent last month.

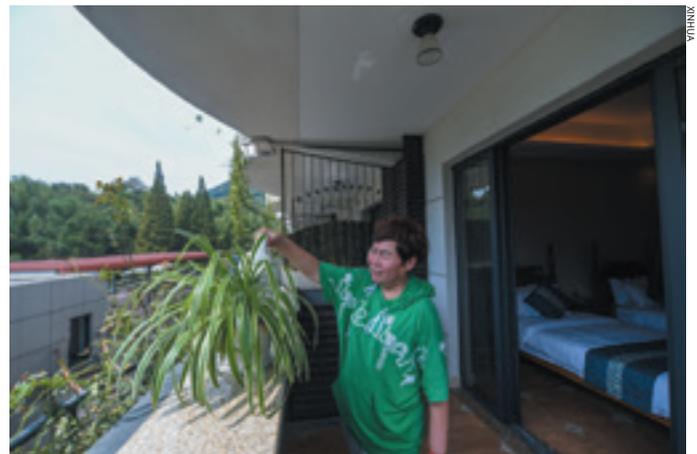
Producer price deflation continued to ease in August amid a recovery in industrial activities and market demand, the NBS data showed.

Producer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, fell 2 percent year on year in August, according to NBS. The reading narrowed from the 2.4-percent drop in July.

Month on month, the PPI climbed 0.3 percent in August.

NBS senior statistician Dong Lijuan attributed the rise to "improving industrial production and recovering market demand."

"International prices of commodities such as crude oil, iron ores and nonferrous metals extended their upward momentum, leading to price increases for domestic industrial products," Dong said.



Elderly Care

A woman waters the plants on the balcony of an apartment for the elderly at a community in Anji County, Zhejiang Province in east China, on September 9. The county is developing the elderly care industry, creating more job opportunities for villagers and promoting rural tourism.



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Photo taken on September 7 shows the waves caused by typhoon *Haishen* in Busan. The typhoon made its landfall on the southeastern coast that day



INDIA

A metro train in New Delhi on September 7. Metro rail services resumed that day after a suspension of over five months



BRAZIL

A guard of honor on duty during celebrations of Independence Day in Brasilia on September 7





GERMANY

The Caravan Salon, a trade fair for caravans and motorhomes, kicks off in Düsseldorf on September 4



ISRAEL

A student walks through a disinfection tunnel that sprays sanitation liquid at Bar-Ilan University in the central city of Ramat Gan on September 8



SRI LANKA

Fireboats extinguish an oil tanker blaze off the eastern coast on September 8



↓ PEOPLE'S HERO TITLES AWARDED

Zhang Dingyu, a 56-year-old doctor, became one of the three recipients of the national honorary title, the People's Hero, on September 8 for his outstanding contributions to the fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). At a ceremony for medical professionals at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, President Xi Jinping awarded four medical workers including Zhang for their outstanding achievement during the fight against COVID-19.

Zhang heads the Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, one of the major battlefields during the epidemic. He and his colleagues have treated and saved more than 2,800 COVID-19 patients, many of whom were critically ill.

"I never thought about being a hero. Everyone has made sacrifices and contributions. I'm just one of them," he said.

However, his contribution stands out. Zhang has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive degeneration of the nervous system that, it is feared, could eventually lead to absolute paralysis and death. He was diagnosed with ALS in 2018 but has never talked about his personal health problem when fighting the epidemic.



A Necessary Lull *Beijing Youth Daily* September 5

Summer is the golden season for agricultural production. However, for fishing, it is a period of moratorium.

Since 1995, a summer fishing ban has been in place in the Bohai Sea and the East China Sea, which plays a significant role in protecting fishery resources. The positive results made the Ministry of Agriculture in 1999 announced a fishing ban in the South China Sea too since then.

Today, the ban covers all the sea areas under Chinese jurisdiction, extended from

two months to three and a half or even four and a half months. Every year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs issues notices to clarify how long the ban is in different areas.

Millions of fishermen and over 100,000 fishing boats in coastal provinces follow the moratorium. Since the 1980s, excessive fishing put tremendous pressure on fishery resources though they are renewable. Therefore, from a long-term perspective, it is necessary to implement a summer fishing moratorium.

Some provinces offer fishermen subsidies during the off-season. For instance, Guangdong Province in south China subsidizes fishery production costs.



A waitress packs leftovers for customers at a hotpot restaurant in Beijing on August 20

Catch 'Em Young! *Guangming Daily* September 7

A video posted on September 1 showed the vice principal of a primary school in Wuyuan, a city in east China's Jiangxi Province, eating students' food leftover in front of them as an example of stopping wasting food. It aroused heated discussion on the Internet.

Some said eating leftovers is unhealthy,

"China has no ambition to seek hegemony, much less to replace the United States. However, China will resolutely safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests."

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister **Wang Yi**, at the China-ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting via video link on September 9

"If we were able to hand over an award for the best country in response to the coronavirus, China would have deserved the first, second, and third places due to its outstanding success."

Ghanim Al-Hujailan, an infectious disease consultant at Al-Adan Hospital in Kuwait, to Xinhua News Agency on September 9

especially in the time of preventing and controlling COVID-19. But some said the vice principal's behavior would leave a deep impression on the children and inspire them not to waste food. Putting aside the debate whether it was an appropriate way, schools should play a crucial role in fostering good habits in young people.

One of China's achievements has been ensuring food and clothing security for over 1 billion people. So people born after 1980 have barely experienced famine or food shortage.

However, along with social progress and material prosperity, young people should not lose awareness of the importance of not wasting food. Not wasting food is a tribute to the labor of those who produce food, contributes to national food security, and is also a traditional virtue.

Students spend most of their time on campus, including meal times. That makes schools a vital place to teach them not to waste food. A report issued by the Institute of Geographic Science and Natural Resources Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences shows that primary and middle school children are also the major wasters of food.

It requires teachers to take the lead and set an example for students. Also, canteens should improve their operation. For instance, Tsinghua University has launched a reward program for those who empty their plates. Students have to take a photo of their plates after their meals and if their dishes are certified clean, they get points to win prizes. Hence, helping students develop good food habits is also a test of canteens' fine management.

Internet Celebrity Doctors

Yangcheng Evening News September 5

Today, the Internet has become a channel for people to seek medical advice. On live-streaming platforms, some doctors and pharmacists have grown into celebrities, winning people's trust. However, amid the promotion of medical science, there are some pretending to be experts who propagate quack remedies.

The therapies recommended by such charlatans can put patients at risk. For instance, if they prescribe hormone creams for skin problems for an extended period, while the symptoms may lessen in the short time, the abuse may worsen

the condition in the long term. That can result in netizens beginning to distrust the profession as a whole, and also some platforms becoming a hub of unscientific medical information.

Today, more and more doctors are participating in science popularization through the Internet, providing high-quality medical videos. According to a report released by www.DXY.com, a health service website, 62 percent of doctors offer online services 15.2 hours a week. In addition to providing regular diagnosis at hospitals, they can also become Internet celebrities and a vital force enhancing communication between doctors and patients.

Therefore, it is urgent to protect the online medical science channels and ensure that people get guidance from real medical personnel, whose activities should be encouraged.

The platforms should also verify their doctors' identity. Otherwise, they bear joint liability for any adverse outcome.

↓ YOUNG SCIENTIST WINS ALIBABA FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Zhao Baodan, a 29-year-old principal investigator at the College of Optical Science and Engineering, Zhejiang University in east China, has won a prestigious annual award founded by the Alibaba Group in 2017 for young Chinese scholars.

Zhao became an Alibaba Academy for Discovery, Adventure, Momentum and Outlook Young Fellow with nine other young scientists on September 9, an accolade for outstanding young scholars engaged in fundamental science and applied research with the potential to contribute significantly to science and technology.



A Ph.D. in physics, Zhao is also a visiting researcher at the University of Cambridge. She explores energy loss in calcium and titanium materials and application of new semiconductor materials in optoelectronics that are more efficient and environment friendly.

The award carries a purse of 1 million yuan (\$146,400) and provides other support for research such as open data resources.

“China is a major global manufacturing powerhouse of electronic products, its demand for semiconductors has been growing steadily, and it has become a major driving force of the global semiconductor market.”

Gao Feng, Ministry of Commerce spokesperson, at a press conference on September 10

“From live-streaming sales to building lasting business relationships online to adopting and adapting new production technology, China is giving the rest of the world a glimpse of the future.”

Mark Wang, President and CEO of HSBC China, in an article in *South China Morning Post* on September 7



COVER STORY

LEARNING LIFE'S LESSONS

As schools reopen, classes discuss battles against novel coronavirus epidemic and floods By Ji Jing



Students at a primary school in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in south China, get their temperature checked before entering school on August 31

A different learning

Many other schools also chose to mark resumption of classes by inviting medical workers to talk about their experience and insights when they took part in the battle against COVID-19 to inspire the younger generation to cherish life and shoulder their responsibilities.

In Beijing, Sun Jingya, a nurse from Peking University First Hospital, told her “anti-epidemic story” at the Shangyuan Central Primary School in suburban Beijing on September 1. During the epidemic, Sun had worked at a hospital in Wuhan.

China Central Television’s program *First Class of the New Semester*, aired at the beginning of every school year, featured medical experts who have contributed to epidemic control this year.

One of the guest speakers was Zhong Nanshan, the 84-year-old respiratory disease expert who had been at the forefront of the battle against severe acute respiratory syndrome in 2003 as well. The veteran doctor, who received the Medal of the Republic, China’s highest order of honor, this month, talked about how he decided to study medicine and wanted to save lives like his doctor parents did.

He also talked about the inspiring work done in Wuhan: “At 10 a.m. on January 23, Wuhan was put under lockdown. The lockdown of the heroic city for 76 days helped reduce infections by at least 700,000. People’s lives are the most important human right. We have saved so many lives, which is the best manifestation of our respect for human rights.”

Wang Rui, a medical student at Peking University’s medical school in Beijing, expressed his admiration for Zhong through video link during the program, saying he would try to become a doctor like the octogenarian.

For years Peng Weixu, a sixth grader at the Gezhi Middle School in port city Dalian in northeast China, had worshipped Superman and Ultraman, the fictional superheroes who have spawned a spate of films and TV series. But now he has new heroes.

When the school reopened on September 1, Peng had an unusual first class. It was an interaction with Zhang Kuijun, a traditional Chinese medicine doctor from the Dalian Municipal Central Hospital, who had been to Wuhan, the city

in Hubei Province, central China where the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic was first reported, to help with the medical treatment.

Zhang shared his experience of working in a temporary hospital in Wuhan for nearly two months, which awed Peng. The boy told Xinhua News Agency that after learning how medical workers like Zhang had so selflessly and courageously fought the epidemic, he felt they were the real superheroes.

School resumption

With the epidemic brought under control in China, the Ministry of Education (MOE) held a press conference detailing safety measures and teaching work on August 9 and as of September 1, the usual time for the autumn semester to start, kindergartens and primary and secondary schools in 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities resumed classes.

The MOE announced a staggered reopening for different schools between August 15 and October 10, and the Beijing Municipal Education Commission gave a

detailed guideline for epidemic control. Wang Dengfeng, an MOE official, said the schools should keep health records for every student, even if they have no illness, while university students and teachers should not leave their campus unless necessary.

In Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the northwest, which experienced a recent outbreak in July, schools resumed in a staggered manner from September 7.

University students returning to the capital had to take nucleic acid tests, with the expenses borne by their universities.

Students and staff in Beijing schools continue to wear masks on campus for the new semester, removing them only for outdoor activities, and serving chopsticks are used during meals.

This resumption after the summer holidays marks the full reopening of educational institutions.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in January, schools nationwide had switched to online classes for the spring semester. In March, some schools in Qinghai Province in northwest China took the lead to return to physical classrooms, followed by others.



Children at a kindergarten in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in east China, show off their empty plates after lunch. In the new semester schools are drumming it into students not to waste food

In the spring semester, 200 million students—about 75 percent of the total—had been able to return to school, and no infections were reported from the resumption, the MOE said.

Innovative measures

As classrooms start getting back to normal, it's a kind of "new normal" for students, who need to follow new routines.

At the Baijiazhuang Primary School in Wangjing, an area in northeast Beijing, students are required to have their temperature checked and disinfect their hands before entering the classroom every day. Different classes have been asked to arrive and leave at different times to avoid crowding.

Like other universities in Beijing, the Beijing University of Chemical Technology has advised students not to leave the campus unless necessary. Those who need to go out can apply and get approval online.

At the university canteens, two students eat at a table for four. They also need to scan a QR code on the table for record.

In south China, which suffered floods in summer, fighting floods was the keyword in some first classes in the new semester.

Shexian, a county in Anhui Province, east China, was ravaged by flood in July. As a result, the college entrance exam in the county was interrupted. The soldiers deployed for flood control built floating bridges overnight so that students could take the deferred examination on July 9. When the local schools opened, flood-fighting stories were shared in the first class.

Over 300 firefighters from Zhejiang Province, also in east China, went to the city of Tongling in Anhui to help with flood fighting and emergency rescue. The Experimental Primary School in Yian District, Tongling, was one of the places where they were berthed. During their stay, they would jot down details about their work on the blackboards in the school and encouraging words for the students.

When the school reopened, teachers used the blackboards to illustrate to the children the grit and hard work of flood fighters, and encourage them to be grateful and contribute their share to society and the country.

Food for thought

Both COVID-19 and the floods, which affected agriculture and food production for some time, have created greater awareness of the need to prevent wastage, especially



Students and parents at a primary school in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province in northwest China, make pillows as the first lesson of the new semester on September 5. These pillows will be gifted to children in remote areas

food wastage. A Clean Plate campaign has been launched to save food, which calls for eating up food on one's plate after a meal, without leaving any to be trashed. The campaign also became a topic in the first class.

In the Sixth Primary School in Ningdu, a county in Jiangxi Province in east China, fourth graders were taken to the rice fields to appreciate the place that produces the food put on their table and the work of farmers. Students recited a Tang Dynasty poem, "Who knows that for our food on the plate, every grain comes after hard toil?" Besides, researchers were invited to tell them about rice planting and the importance of not wasting food.

Li Yuxuan, a student of the school, told the press, "I know now how rice is grown. In future, no matter where I am, I will take only the amount of food I can eat and not waste any."

The principal of the school, Tang Shuying, said the school will hold more activities to teach students about grain planting so that "the traditional virtue of

saving food takes root in the children's heart."

At the height of the epidemic, online education played a key role in keeping classes going virtually. Realizing the strength of online education and in preparation for future emergencies, the MOE will continue to develop online learning.

It has chosen 90 districts to pilot integration of offline-online education. It has also developed courses for primary and secondary schools to be used in the autumn semester and is working with China Education Network TV (CEN TV) for video courses that can be accessed at the national cloud education platform.

Besides, students in remote and impoverished areas will still be able to access classrooms in premier schools through satellite links so that they can take classes taught by outstanding teachers in the capital through CEN TV broadcasts. ■

Copiedited by Sudeshna Sarkar
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COVER STORY

A NOBLE CAUSE



At the well-lit Bund, a famous waterfront area in Shanghai in east China, the Chinese characters for Happy Teachers' Day flashed on large screens on skyscrapers as a three-day light show started two days before Teachers' Day, celebrated in China on September 10.

The day arrived soon after the reopening of schools across the country in the fall semester. In the spring semester, the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic had forced them to close down and teachers switched to online classes. Now, most teachers have returned to their brick-and-mortar classrooms.

In the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, teachers across the country braved difficulties, continued working and made important contributions to fighting the epidemic by dedicating themselves to the world's largest-scale online teaching. President Xi Jinping said in his greetings to teachers and educational professionals ahead of Teachers' Day.

Xi also commended their work to halt the intergenerational transmission of poverty and light up the dreams of rural children with love and wisdom.

Official statistics show China has 17.32 million teachers and 280 million students across the country. ■

(Photos by Xinhua News Agency)



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1. A teacher gives first graders a physical education lesson in a primary school in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in east China, on September 4

2. Zhang Mengjie, a teacher at a primary school in Cangzhou, Hebei Province in north China, joins students in a game on September 8

3. A representative of freshmen speaks at the opening ceremony for undergraduates at Tsinghua University in Beijing on September 9

4. College students hold signs of gratitude and best wishes for teachers at an activity in the Bund in Shanghai on September 8

5. Lin Xiaolian, a teacher at Beili Primary School, Xuwen County in Guangdong Province in south China, gives an English lesson on September 1



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COVER STORY

RESHUFFLING AN INDUSTRY

Epidemic changes after-school tutoring services By Yuan Yuan

With the return of students to in-person classes after the abatement of the novel coronavirus disease outbreak and summer vacation, K-12 after-school tutoring services have also seen a revival after more than half a year. While students file into their afterschool classes, all virus prevention measures are required—masks, 1-meter distance lines, contact-free hand washing equipment—the same as those in regular schools.

After decades of development, after-school tutoring services have become a large industry in China. Sprouting in the 1980s, the industry has entered a stage of rapid growth since the 1990s, becoming an important choice for many parents and students.

In 2019, the market scale of this industry was over 700 billion yuan (\$102.4 billion), with offline education dominating the market at over 95 percent, according to iResearch, a leading provider of online audience measurement and consumer insights in China.

Offline vs. online

Luo Aihua, a 50-year-old teacher working for Shuren Education and Technology Group, a major K-12 after-school tutoring service provider, moved her classes from online to offline in Nanjing, capital city of Jiangsu Province in east China, in late May after moving in the opposite direction in early February.

It was a revolution for her to go online in February. She had never given it any serious thought before since she taught all her classes in person. "Online teaching is very different from face-to-face classes in many ways. You need more knowledge about digital things, which is preferred by younger teachers," Luo said. "But both my students and their parents prefer offline classes since it is easier to communicate that way."

However, the epidemic forced them to change. With the help of her daughter, Luo finally set up her classes online. It took her much longer to prepare her classes, while talking with students via webcam was also

strange to her. She forced herself to adapt and learned to encourage students with virtual gifts.

The new platform put more pressure on Luo. "In face-to-face classes, it is just me and the students," she said. "But during online classes, it is the parents and students listening to the class together and our class video may be uploaded online for more viewers as well."

That is one reason why she still likes the traditional way of teaching in person, as do many of the parents, since online education has also tasked them to prepare online tutoring equipment and help upload homework for their children.

But at the time, going online was the only choice for many after-school tutoring companies after the epidemic hit China in late January. Since it was in the middle of winter vacation, companies had already charged in advance for upcoming classes and had to contend with the expenses of renting classrooms and paying for tutors. In the end, they had to offer discounts to parents to move classes online.

Some parents agreed, while others demanded a full refund. This "financial winter" swept away many tutoring companies and by early February, some started to declare bankruptcy, while those that survived struggled to move their offline classes quickly online, which proved to be a big challenge.

"It's more than just uploading PowerPoint and connecting a webcam," a teacher surnamed Li from Xi'an, Shaanxi Province in northwest China, said. "The teaching method is very different. Teachers proficient in online education have begun exploring various new ways to achieve better class results, while offline teachers had to adjust to the new sphere. Some parents complained that the efficiency of online classes is much lower than offline ones."

After the epidemic situation was largely relieved in May, offline tutoring classes gradually began resuming, while Beijing and other cities hit with outbreaks for the second time in June had to delay their transitions.



A child learns taekwondo in a training institution in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province in east China, on July 18



Digital education

The epidemic has presented opportunities for a small number of companies focused on online education. Zuoyebang, one of China's leading online education startup set up in 2014, took the lead in launching free online classes right after the epidemic broke out. This brought it 33 million new registered students in five weeks, leading it to quickly hire more tutors and record more classes.

From the beginning, Hou Jianbin, Zuoyebang's founder, insisted on promoting online education even though many didn't understand the concept. "It takes some time to accept new things," Hou said. "It's like when smartphones first came out, there were complaints about the batteries' short duration. But new products came along and these problems were dealt with."

By August 31, the total number of paid Zuoyebang users was up to 7.8 million, a year-on-year increase of more than 390 percent. During the China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing, the company launched some of its new inventions, including a product that can intelligently

print questions, mark incorrect answers and correct problem-solving steps.

"We hope to help promote new infrastructure construction in education to drive the industry to be more digital, intelligent and individual," said Su Jing, executive president of the company.

EF Education First, a Swedish-owned global language teaching company, successfully transferred over 500,000 students online, designing specific online classes to ensure sufficient communication between tutors and students.

"In 1996, EF launched the world's largest online school and has constantly made innovations in the field," Adele Bai, President of Kids & Teens at EF Education First China, told *Beijing Review*. "We have adopted artificial intelligence (AI) for teaching and have developed various virtual study tools."

During the epidemic, it launched a series of free online classes, including over 2,000 hours of online English learning resources, along with the free EF Hello app, which helps students with their English pronunciation using AI.

A special challenge for the company is the large number of foreign tutors that it employs, many of whom were unable to return to China due to the pandemic situation in other countries.

"It is estimated that the serious lack of foreign teachers will last for a while," Bai said. The government has taken measures to deal with the situation. An e-government platform was launched to help issue visas for foreigners working in China, which is timely and effective.

Although many tutoring services have moved online, and some assume it is a turning point for the online education industry, Bai said they still don't believe online education can totally replace offline education, especially for children and adolescents, who have weaker self-control and need supervision during online education.

"Ultimately, it is the combination of offline and online classes that will make education better," Bai said. ■

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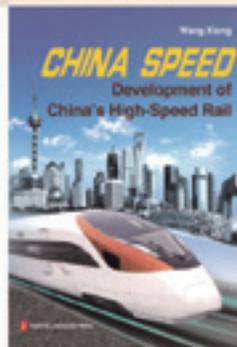
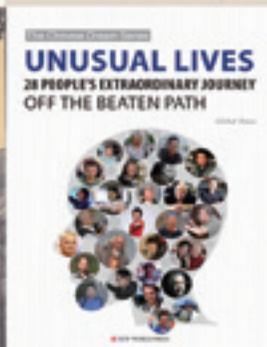
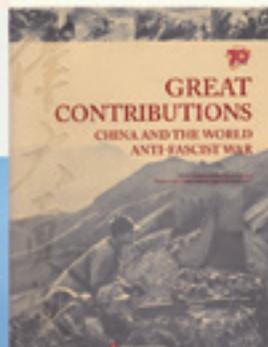
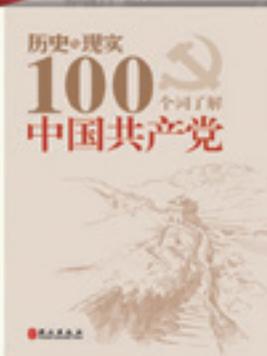
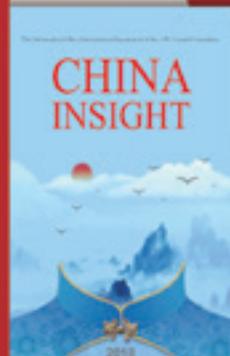
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Remembering History's Legacy

China commemorates the 75th anniversary of the victory against fascism

By Ma Miaomiao



Chinese President Xi Jinping straightens the ribbons of a floral tribute at the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in Beijing on September 3

Seventy-five years ago, the Chinese people, together with the rest of the world, won a victory against fascism. For today's generation, qualities such as patriotism, heroism and the strong will exhibited during the war remain pertinent and highly valued.

At a symposium commemorating the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War on September 3, President Xi Jinping said the great spirit of resisting aggression bred during the war is an invaluable source of inspiration, and will always motivate the Chinese people to overcome all difficulties and obstacles.

Major battlefield

China's contribution to the World Anti-Fascist War has somehow been underestimated and even ignored by the West, Ruan Zongze, a researcher with the China Institute of International Studies, said.

China was the first country to suffer invasion by a fascist state in World War II. It was also the weakest of the principal Allied powers, which included the United Kingdom, then Soviet Union, the United States and France.

"To China, the battle on Chinese soil was existential: their country invaded, partially occupied, and suffering unspeakable horrors.

To the U.S., the battle on Chinese soil was diverting Japanese forces and resources, reducing Japan's capacity to wage war against the U.S. and American interests throughout the Pacific Theater," Robert Lawrence Kuhn, a leading U.S. expert on China, told Xinhua News Agency.

Rana Mitter, Director of the China Centre at Oxford University, wrote in his book *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* that the marathon struggle China waged was not just for its own dignity and survival, but for the good of all the Allies. Had it not been for the resistance of the Chinese, it would have been difficult for the U.S. to avenge Pearl Harbor after Japan's attack in 1941.

When China began the war of resistance, it was up against two thirds of Japan's land forces and much of the latter's naval and air forces. But it still managed to keep the Japanese forces at bay on the Oriental battlefield, which gained time for the Allies on the European battlefield to defeat Germany and Italy.

On March 12, 1942, China established an expeditionary force of nearly 100,000 people to help fight in Myanmar, then known as Burma, saving more than 7,000 British soldiers and stopping the Japanese army's advance into India. Then in 1944, Chinese troops went to Myanmar again and helped build the Ledo-Myanmar Road, from Ledo in India's northeastern state of Assam through Myanmar to Kunming, Yunnan Province in southwest China, which opened a new channel for the Allied forces to fight back.

China helped crush the fascist forces' attempt to connect the Eurasian battlefields. The Allies were fully committed to countering the Japanese army until the war in Europe ended in 1945. But the victory came at a heavy price. China suffered over 35 million military and civilian casualties during the war.

Drawing lessons

The victory was a historic turning point at which the Chinese nation rose from severe crisis in modern times and embarked on a journey toward rejuvenation. It was also an integral part of the world's triumph over fascism. Xi said the victory, which belongs to both the Chinese and people across the world, will go down in the history of the Chinese nation as well as in the history of humanity's fight for justice. The purpose of the annual commemoration was to draw a lesson from history, look to the future, and jointly cherish and safeguard peace.

After the end of the war, the international community reached consensus to ensure world peace and avoid a repeat of the tragedy, Ruan said. Whether it was the establishment of the UN or an international system with the organization at its core, the efforts of the international community were all about upholding this consensus. It runs counter to the consensus if a country acts on its own strength to provoke disputes and seek hegemony, he added.

As for all the Asian countries that suffered from the Japanese aggression, and Japan itself, it is meaningful to keep the memory of that war as a reminder of how important it is for countries to coexist in a peaceful manner.

China and Japan are close neighbors, and maintaining peaceful and friendly



Students lay flowers at a monument during a memorial activity in Shanghai on September 3

relations is in accordance with the fundamental interests of the two peoples, and essential to maintaining peace and stability in Asia and the world, Xi said.

According to Ruan, currently, China continues to make contributions to safeguarding the fruits of the victory and upholding multilateralism. It has, for example, put forward new concepts such as building a community with a shared future for humanity.

These ideas are in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. They also serve to enrich and develop multilateralism under new circumstances and make the international order more just and equitable, he added.

CPC's role

The Communist Party of China (CPC) fought as a central pillar of the national effort. Since the victory won 75 years ago, significant changes have taken place in China, with the CPC rallying the Chinese and leading them on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, stressed in his speech that the Chinese will never allow any individual or any force to distort the CPC's history or separate the CPC from them.

It's the first time that China's top leader has made comprehensive remarks in the face of the recent attacks on China, especially the smear campaign against the CPC, Li Haidong, a professor at the Institute of

International Relations at China Foreign Affairs University, told *Global Times*.

The Harvard Kennedy School has conducted surveys in China for 13 years, with the findings indicating that over 93 percent of the people are satisfied with the Central Government led by the CPC.

"What is worth remembering about U.S.-China cooperation in fighting Japanese aggression in World War II is that, at the time, the interests of the U.S. and China differed, yet they still cooperated, united by a common foe," Kuhn said.

Such reflection is urgently needed again as China and the U.S., once wartime allies, are experiencing difficulties in their relations with the U.S. pursuing strategic competition against China—developments that are reshaping the world's geopolitical structure, Chen Xiaohe, a professor at the School of International Studies of Renmin University, said.

According to Kuhn, the two countries have many common foes that are still dangerous and deadly. Pandemics, climate change, poverty, inequalities and terrorism are all foes to fight against jointly.

"The burden is on us, especially the leadership in the U.S. and China, to find the right road on which both great countries and peoples can walk in peace and harmony, with honesty, dignity and mutual respect," he said. ■

Copiedited by Sudeshna Sarkar
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The United Nations' Role

In today's turbulent world, China supports strengthening UN for multilateral cooperation
By Niu Zhongjun



The author is professor of international affairs at China Foreign Affairs University

In October 1945, after the world achieved victory in the Anti-Fascist War, to avoid another such disaster, the major countries proposed to establish the UN. Over the following decades, the organization has played an irreplaceable role in maintaining peace, promoting development, protecting human rights and boosting international exchange. It has also safeguarded justice and enhanced understanding among different countries. Broadly speaking, it has fulfilled the founding mission of being the coordination center of member countries.

Mandate fulfilled

Compared with the League of Nations, the first worldwide intergovernmental organization that was founded in 1920 and dissolved

in 1946, the UN is far bigger, now with 193 members. It is composed of six major institutions, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, and dozens of funds and special organizations, with over 100,000 staff working for it.

The past 75 years with the UN has been a relatively peaceful period, witnessing rapid economic growth and strengthened cooperation in most countries. Worldwide war has been avoided, regional conflicts mitigated and peace safeguarded with the UN's efforts. It has creatively developed peacekeeping operations. Since 1948, when the UN Truce Supervision Organization was founded, hundreds of thousands of peacekeepers from more than 120 countries have participated in over 70 missions. Blue helmets have increasingly become a symbol of the UN and peace.

The UN has promoted education and the rights of women and children as well as poverty eradication. The UN Millennium Development Goals halved the number of the world population living in extreme poverty from 1990 to 2015. In 2015, a grander agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, was initiated. With some of its 17 goals already having made some progress, it is set to further promote sustainable development.

The UN adopted the Paris Agreement in December 2015, bringing major countries into a common cause to tackle climate change and respond to ensuing challenges. Looking through the UN's efforts, it could be said that it is leading the world to a better future; a world without it might be poorer and more unequal and turbulent.

New challenges

But despite the contributions and efforts, in today's world full of uncertainty and turbulence, the UN is being increasingly questioned. With the expansion of human activity and new technology, it not only faces traditional threats such as regional conflicts, displacement and extreme nationalism, but also new challenges, including mass extinction of species, population explosion and aging. In addition, it is also troubled by difficult reform and arrears in member countries' contributions.

All such issues together with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has seen the anti-UN sentiment peak this year as most members are suffering from rising unemployment and a crippled economy. Some countries have tried to stigmatize others for the pandemic instead of taking effective containment measures. Such moves eroded international cooperation and solidarity, posing unprecedented challenges to the UN.

By alienating the UN, these countries are forgetting why our predecessors established this organization. Seventy-five years ago, the UN carried people's goodwill to prevent war and conflict, promote economic growth and human rights and enhance international equality. Today, countries are more interdependent and intertwined and the challenges we face, such as epidemics, climate change and Internet crimes, cannot be addressed by a single country alone, even if it is the most powerful one. Only through cooperation in the framework of multilateral mechanisms such as the UN can we respond to such issues and create a better world.



Chinese peacekeepers repair a road in a village in south Lebanon on October 10, 2018

China and the UN

China was the first country to sign the UN Charter at the signing ceremony on June 26, 1945, which was arranged in alphabetical order, and is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In 1971, the lawful seat of the People's Republic of China in the UN was restored after the representatives of the Kuomintang authorities in Taiwan were expelled from the UN and its related organizations.

As a developing country, China has always put protecting the interests of developing countries as an important principle of its UN diplomacy.

With the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, China has been more open and fully participated in the UN and its agendas.

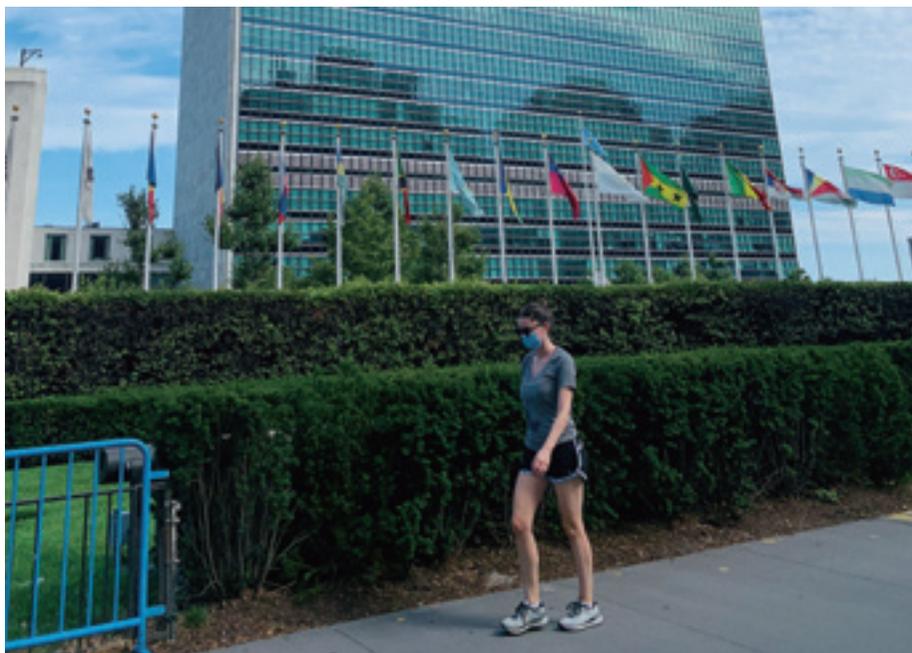
China believes that the UN's historical mission and impact on the world are irreplaceable. Since the 21st century, with the rise of China's national strength and international influence, it has been advocating upholding multilateralism and collective action to respond to the challenges in the complex international situation. As the biggest multilateral platform, the role of the UN must be strengthened, and its authority must be maintained. For this reason, China fully supports the work of the UN and fulfills its responsibilities as a major country. It is not only a beneficiary of UN activities but also a contributor.

Chinese leaders attach great importance to the UN and attend high-level meetings. In September 2015, President Xi Jinping attended the general debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly, when he announced a \$1-billion China-UN Peace and Development Fund to support UN operations and multilateralism.

In May, when the world lay under the shadow of COVID-19, Xi pledged that China will provide \$2 billion over two years to help with COVID-19 response and with economic and social development in affected countries, especially developing countries. This showed again that China supports the UN and World Health Organization to play a core role in the fight against the pandemic.

China also supports UN efforts to promote North-South dialogue, advance South-South cooperation, and promote development assistance. It participates in the communication and cooperation on the establishment of a new international economic order, sustainable development, climate change, humanitarian relief, and disaster reduction and preparedness under the UN framework.

China is the second largest contributor of membership dues, and shoulders more



A woman passes the UN headquarters in New York City, the U.S., on July 20. The organization began reopening after four months of closure due to the novel coronavirus pandemic



World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (center) and his colleagues attend a press conference on the novel coronavirus disease at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on March 20

than 12 percent of the regular budget and more than 15 percent of UN peacekeeping funds. It also provides the largest number of peacekeepers among the five permanent members of the Security Council.

It has implemented the international conventions under the framework of the UN and is an advocate of the rule of law in outer space, cybersecurity and other new areas.

All this shows that China has always been a supporter, defender and promoter of the UN, multilateralism and international justice, and has fulfilled the due responsibility of a major country to promote world peace and development. ■

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The Tireless Bridge Builder

Confucius' descendant is committed to China-U.S. harmony despite growing unfavorable environment By Josef Gregory Mahoney



The author is professor of politics at East China Normal University, Shanghai

Born in Wuhan in central China in 1947, Professor Hsiang-te Kung is a 75th-generation descendant of Confucius. Shortly after he was born, his father left for Taiwan to help revive the sugar industries abandoned following Japan's defeat in World

War II. He and his mother and brothers followed soon after. Changes in relations across the Taiwan Straits subsequently made it impractical for him to return to the mainland.

In 1969, he left Taiwan for doctoral studies in the U.S., eventually settling as a professor of geography at the University of Memphis (UM) in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1986, with China's accelerating reform and opening up, he first visited East China Normal University in Shanghai, and then traveled onward to Wuhan, looking for opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges while reconnecting with his roots.

The first Confucius Institute, a non-profit

education organization aiming to promote cross-cultural exchanges, was opened in the Republic of Korea in 2004. In 2006, 20 years since his first visit to the Chinese mainland, Kung submitted an application for starting one of the first Confucius Institutes in the U.S. at UM, in partnership with Hubei University in Wuhan.

Under his direction, it quickly became the center of Chinese language and culture learning throughout the mid-south, supporting universities, colleges and school education. It also hosted international conferences and scholarly exchanges, organized exhibitions, dragon dances and kungfu performances, and provided advice for local businesses seeking input on better serving their Chinese customers in the U.S. or reaching out to customers in China.

The Memphis-Wuhan connection was a good fit, with both cities having much in common. While neither are first-tier cities in cultural and educational spheres, both are centrally located logistics hubs and serve outsized roles in regional, national and even global commerce. Memphis, for example, is home to the headquarters of FedEx, while Wuhan is famous for manufacturing, culture and healthcare centers, and is also known as a major trade hub in central China.

As of 2019, there were 550 Confucius Institutes worldwide. They drew inspiration substantially from similar organizations operating globally for the purpose of promoting language and cultural exchanges, including the United Kingdom's British Council (founded in 1934, now with an estimated 229 centers in 110 countries), France's Alliance Française (founded in 1883, now with more than 800 institutions in 133 countries), Germany's Goethe-Institut (founded in 1951, now with 159 centers in 98 countries), and Spain's Instituto Cervantes (founded in 1991, now with 86 centers in 45 countries).

The establishment of the Confucius Institutes coincided with the rising dominance of the business model in American higher education. In fact, many U.S. universities welcomed these institutions, taking advantage of their high-quality instruction and testing but without having to foot the bill.



COURTESY PHOTO

Professor Hsiang-te Kung in his office at the University of Memphis, Tennessee, the U.S.



Local students perform a lion dance at a Confucius Institute Day event in Minsk, Belarus, on October 5, 2019

Different treatment

Confucius Institutes have always operated transparently and legally and by some accounts have been more disciplined in this respect than some of their European counterparts. Yet the latter have received no sanction as “foreign missions” by the U.S. Government despite having similar organizational and financial structures and governmental funding.

More importantly, from the beginning, Confucius Institutes avoided above all any political propagation or surveillance activities, used locally vetted texts, curricula and staff, in part because it was the right thing to do but also because they knew if they didn't it would invite trouble.

There was also another reason they remained apolitical: Chinese politics and foreign policy are complex and dynamic, not monolithic or static, despite portrayals by detractors. Therefore, not only would it be impractical, if not impossible, to use such centers to convey such messages, but also the need to shift narratives at speed would quickly undermine their ability to convey them authoritatively or even focus on their core mission—providing access to high-quality instruction in the Chinese language, which no one has questioned.

Conversely, several studies have demonstrated that even leading American universities directly accept with little to no transparency millions of dollars from competing foreign interests, especially from

the Middle East, and also from those with anti-China agendas, with the direct intention of influencing the political leanings of American scholars and students. And the U.S. Government and U.S. universities themselves pursue numerous ventures with the objective of doing the same overseas.

But this hasn't stopped McCarthyist allegations against the Confucius Institutes operating in the U.S. The U.S. Government, following President Donald Trump's lead and followed in turn by some state legislatures, has targeted Confucius Institutes as “foreign missions,” characterizing them as occupying a gray area between soft and hard power, functioning as beachheads for promoting the Chinese political system and surveilling American institutions and the Chinese students who attend them.

Some people with anti-China sentiments demanded the Confucius Institute at the UM be investigated for inappropriate activities and the university complied, only to find nothing to substantiate those fears. Indeed, no such claims have been substantiated anywhere in the U.S., despite obsessive attempts to do so. Nevertheless, state legislators in Tennessee, following Trump's lead, pushed through legislation to compel state universities to cut ties with Confucius Institutes. Consequently, this year, the UM's Confucius Institute has closed.

Committed to open mind

Kung is circumspect. It's been a hard year for the man and his family. Wuhan, the place of his birth, was hard hit by the novel coronavirus disease. His wife's mother passed away

after a battle with cancer. His institute's staff and language teachers from China were forced to leave the U.S. on charter flights given travel restrictions. And much, if not all, of their good work has been swallowed up by a cloud of darkening circumstances.

For someone who has worked so diligently to build bridges and conscientiously avoid politics, it seems like an awful pill to swallow. But like a lot of Chinese of his generation, he's unbroken by setbacks, particularly those that follow in the destructive wake of ideologues. He carries the weight but keeps his levity. He's sorry some of his staff and teachers have been forced to return to Wuhan but glad that Wuhan is healthy again. Perhaps it's a blessing in disguise given the growing anti-China sentiments and unchecked coronavirus spread they faced in the U.S.

But this descendant of Confucius and long-time Confucius Institute director doesn't dwell on such matters. More importantly, while the institute's massive dragon dance costume has been sent to another Confucius Institute in the U.S. that is still clinging to life but facing a similar fate, Kung assures his work to build bridges and foster mutual understanding and harmony, to be “responsible and open-minded” in a post-truth and angry world, is now more important than ever, and that he remains eager to work to those ends. ■

Copiedited by Sudeshna Sarkar
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People's Heroes

China awards individuals and groups for their extraordinary contributions to the fight against COVID-19 By Lu Yan



President Xi Jinping with Zhong Nanshan (front second right), who was awarded the Medal of the Republic, and recipients of the national honorary title People's Hero, Chen Wei (front left), Zhang Boli (front second left) and Zhang Dingyu (front right), for their work against the novel coronavirus disease at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 8

Recalling the national fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic, Zhong Nanshan, China's top respiratory disease specialist, couldn't help getting choked up.

The 84-year-old recounted that one day one of his students working at Tongji Hospital in Wuhan, then the hardest-hit area in the country, sent him a message saying that residents

in his neighborhood were singing the national anthem to cheer each other up amid the raging epidemic.

"This is the Chinese nation. These are the Chinese people. Nothing can defeat us," Zhong told state broadcaster China Central Television in an interview aired on September 8, adding that it was this kind of national morale that enabled the country to overcome difficulties.

On the same day, a ceremony was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to commend role models in the fight against COVID-19. Zhong received the Medal of the Republic, the highest state honor.

In his speech, Zhong said that despite success in COVID-19 prevention and control in China at this stage, there should be no relaxing of epidemic response. "We

will work hand in hand with medical staff across the country and the rest of the world... to make greater contributions to the global anti-pandemic cause and the building of a global community of health for all," he said.

Role models

As a renowned respiratory disease expert based in Guangdong Province in south China, Zhong saved many lives during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak back in 2003 by formulating therapeutic solutions which helped Guangdong become one of the regions with the highest recovery rate and the lowest mortality rate among SARS patients in the world.

During the early stage of the COVID-19 epidemic in China in January, Zhong alerted the public by announcing that the novel coronavirus was transmissible from person to person, a discovery that was critical at a time of confusion and helped change China's anti-epidemic work.

Zhong also gave advice and other information through the media on the prevention and control of the virus to inform and educate the general public. "During the epidemic, ordinary Chinese people said they would listen to Zhong's advice when they needed to decide whether to go out or not. It showed people's genuine trust in and appreciation of him," Ran Pixin, Director of the State Key Laboratory of Respiratory Diseases of Guangzhou Medical University, who has been studying and working with Zhong since 1993, told Xinhua News Agency.

Upon receiving the award, Zhong said, "The honor is not just for me, but for the entire health community. It is a remarkable recognition and respect for the staff of the epidemic prevention and control system." In September, Zhong was selected as a member of a panel appointed by the World Health Organization to review the worldwide COVID-19 response.

Chen Wei, a military medical scientist who made major contributions to the development of a vaccine for COVID-19, was awarded the title of People's Hero at the meeting.

Led by Chen, the vaccine developed by her research team was the first in the world to enter phase-two clinical trials in April. The study results were published online by the medical journal *The Lancet*.

Chen said the title is both an honor and a shared responsibility. "As a military medical researcher, I believe that only through overcoming difficulties and steady progress can we live up to this era and our mission," she told China News Service.

Two other outstanding medical profes-

sionals were given People's Hero recognition at the meeting: Zhang Boli, a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) expert who presided over research of the COVID-19 treatment combining TCM and Western medicine, and Zhang Dingyu, head of Wuhan's designated coronavirus-treating Jinyintan Hospital.

President Xi Jinping presented the medals to the recipients at the ceremony, attended by about 3,000 people.

Xi said China has achieved another heroic feat in humanity's fight against disease by securing major strategic advancements in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic.

The country managed to contain the rapid spread of the virus in just over a month. In about two months, the daily increase in domestic coronavirus cases fell to single digit, while a decisive victory was secured in Wuhan in about three months. In addition, it has effectively contained sporadic outbreaks in other parts of the country.

Xi went on to summarize China's spirit of combating the COVID-19 epidemic, which featured putting people's lives first, practicing nationwide solidarity and sacrifice, respecting science and having a sense of mission for humanity.

"We are willing to do whatever it takes to protect people's lives," he said. Xi lauded the people for uniting as one and commended the heroes emerging from all walks of life amid the epidemic.

National inspiration

In addition, 1,499 individuals, 500 groups, 186 members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and 150 primary-level Party organizations were commended for their roles in fighting the epidemic. Fourteen Party members were also posthumously commended.

Watching the live broadcast of the ceremony, Lin Zhenguo, a postgraduate student



A meeting commending role models in the country's fight against the novel coronavirus epidemic is held in Beijing on September 8

at the School of Public Health of Xiamen University, felt proud that the university's National Institute of Diagnostics and Vaccine Development in Infectious Diseases was one of the groups awarded.

"As a public health major, I was very grateful to, touched and inspired by the national heroes and unsung heroes who made the containment of the epidemic possible," Lin said.

Liu Xing, a teacher at a primary school in Tianjin, said that her students were inspired by the national heroes awarded at the meeting. "They told me during class recently that they want to be doctors and military personnel so they can help others and serve the country," she told *Beijing Review*.

"The stories of those national heroes can plant the seed of integrity and courage in children's hearts. These types of award ceremonies should be greatly promoted as they have a positive impact on them." ■



Digital Dividends

Businesses pool innovations for post-epidemic growth at service fair reaching out globally By Li Fangfang



A traditional Chinese medicine robot checks a patient's pulse at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing on September 7

to ease market access in the service sector and expand import of quality services. He also highlighted the development of the digital and sharing economies.

Postponed for three months, the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) has grown from the humbler Beijing Fair that debuted in 2012 to one of the three expos meant to boost China's opening up, besides the China Import and Export Fair in Guangdong in the south and the China International Import Expo in Shanghai.

Held at a time when COVID-19 was still a pandemic and many events worldwide have been canceled or rescheduled, CIFTIS shows "China's willingness to join hands with all of you in this trying time and work together to enable global trade in services to thrive and the world economy to recover at an early date," Xi said.

The service industry has become an important pillar of the world economy. Two thirds of the employment in developing countries and four fifths in developed countries come from services.

Last year, China became the world's second largest importer of services. In the first half of 2020, the added value of China's service industry accounted for 56.5 percent of the GDP.

Unlike the trade surplus in goods, China faced a deficit in the trade in services for years. However, changes have begun to take place since 2019, according to Liu Chunsheng, a professor at the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing.

In an article on the *China Pictorial* website, Liu said the total import and export volume in 2019 increased 2.8 percent year on year, while the deficit decreased 10.5 percent. The exports of financial and insurance services increased steadily.

In 2020, the growth of knowledge-intensive service trade, as represented by computer information services, has given new impetus to global economic recovery, Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Bingnan said on September 5. Next, China will move faster to open up healthcare, culture, education and telecommunications sectors, and introduce a negative list of off-limits items for cross-border trade in services, he added.

Sci-fi touch

This year, besides education, CIFTIS mainly covered six more themes: culture, tourism, finance, 5G communication, winter sports and robots.

At the entrance of the CIFTIS exhibition hall in the China National Convention Center, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered machines measured visitors' temperature. Guide robots took them wherever they wanted to go and robotic servants made fancy coffee. These remarkable assistants were the super stars at the fair not only because of their sci-fi concept but also because of the real services they offered.

Besides robots, the use of hi-tech ensured smooth integration of online and offline events to take CIFTIS to audiences worldwide. More than 20,000 companies and organizations from 148 countries and regions, as well as 190,000 people registered for the fair with exhibitors from abroad mainly participating through cloud services.

The epidemic pushed the fair to become fully digitalized. Even after the offline fair ended on September 9, the online version will stay open for a whole year.

To support intensive live-streaming conferences for the six days of the offline fair, plus nearly 7,000 virtual exhibition demonstrations and online chatrooms for private negotiations, JD Cloud & AI, the technological arm of e-commerce giant JD.com, created a comprehensive digital platform for the fair.

"Exhibition, forums and business negotiations were the three main scenarios where we digitized the fair," JD.com's Vice President Wang Peinuan said. AI, big data, cloud computing and the Internet of Things were used to create the platform.

Security was a prime consideration. In the chatrooms, the exhibitors could set the duration for their message to show. When it ended, the messages were automatically deleted. If anyone took screenshots of messages, they could be tracked.

An important element of CIFTIS was demonstration of extensive industrial application of hi-tech services. The mini logistics center at the fair was another sci-fi-meets-real-world scenario. At the center, mechanical arms sorted items with the help of cameras while robotic vehicles transported them to different destinations, guided by QR codes.

The logistics center was the brainchild of Megvii, a company providing AI solutions and products. After social distancing measures were implemented worldwide following COVID-19, robots have become a welcome business.

"We helped a world-leading fashion company build an automatic logistics center ►►

When this year's first international trade fair in China opened in Beijing on September 4, eight months after the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) hit the country, President Xi Jinping's video message at the inauguration outlined what this digitalization-oriented event wanted to present: global services and shared prosperity.

Xi emphasized that China will continue



A microbiological laboratory robot shows its skills at CIFITS

in Shanghai in April. It can handle 400,000 garment pieces in eight hours daily,” Cheng Changshun, Vice President of Megvii, said.

The Shanghai logistics center will have 800 smart vehicles and overall, thousands of pieces of equipment. “This will be the largest logistics center with flexibility,” Cheng told *Beijing Review*. The robots are not fixed to any place, which makes it easy to change their deployment. It will also save 60 percent of human resources costs.

While the client owns the online-to-offline central control platform, “if they want to open the control platform to us, we can help deal with problems from afar without obtaining any data. If not, we can help on-site,” Cheng said.

In his eyes, China still lags behind in automatic manufacturing and logistics and Megvii’s products will help improve industrial digitization in the country. It is not the first smart logistics center in the world but its relatively low costs can be a significant competitive edge.

Due to the large market in China, Chinese companies have more opportunities to test their products and upgrade them. Also, human resources costs are relatively low compared to developed countries. So Chinese companies have the advantage of low cost without compromising quality, he explained.

Japanese companies are known for their exacting requirements. “That’s why we want to cooperate with them,” Cheng said. Megvii also has clients from Singapore and Thailand.

“We help clients from overseas lower production cost and realize automation and digitization of logistics,” Cheng said. “For people abroad, this fair is an opportunity to see our products.”

Megvii was also the main supplier of the AI temperature check equipment for the fair. Portable with a small camera on a tripod, the machine can run 200 checks per minute. It was first used in a subway station in Beijing in early February, followed by many hospitals and supermarkets.

With the epidemic spreading, the equipment has become popular abroad too, with buyers from more than 30 countries including Japan, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

Another Chinese company Iben Robot’s dry-mist robots are serving hospitals in Wuhan in the central province of Hubei, Shanghai and Beijing, where frequent sanitizing is needed.

With safety of medical workers one of the main concerns during the epidemic, the domestically developed robot is a nifty tool that can issue a super dry mist of disinfectant to disinfect areas at high speed. The robots have automatic navigation, can disinfect the target place 360 degrees and can be activated by iPad control.

Iben Robot’s sales manager Liu Yunfei told *Beijing Review* that it took them three weeks to

Service Trade in 2019

Average annual growth rate of global trade

Since 2005



Services as a part of global economic output

At least



Percentage of jobs from services

More than



Developing countries

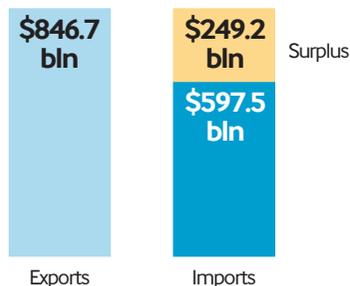


Developed countries

China’s service trade exports and imports



U.S. service trade exports and imports



(Sources: World Trade Report 2019: *The Future of Services Trade* published by WTO, Chinese Ministry of Commerce; designed by Pamela Tobey)



COURTESY PHOTO

Robots and intelligent equipment for warehousing, logistics and manufacturing processes and supply chains developed by Megvii, an AI solution provider, are displayed at CIFTIS on September 6

get the machines ready for use in February.

During COVID-19, one sector that has maintained rapid development is e-commerce. Li Mingtao, an e-commerce expert with China International E-commerce Center affiliated to the Ministry of Commerce, drew attention to the delivery of medical supplies around the world through cross-border e-commerce. "It played a key role in the global anti-COVID-19 effort," Liu said at the CIFTIS Cross-Border E-Commerce Forum on September 6.

E-commerce achievements

Amazon and eBay both saw massively increased sales in the first half of this year. Amazon's first quarter sales rose 26 percent and second quarter sales 40 percent year on year, according to Sun Jianwei, Chairman of the Micang Supply Chain Group, a Shenzhen-based freight forwarder.

The Alibaba Group's revenue grew 34 percent year on year in the second quarter, according to the company's quarterly results published on August 20.

"We mobilized our entire digital infrastructure to support the recovery of businesses across a wide range of sectors, while broadening and diversifying our consumer base by addressing their changing preferences in a post-COVID-19 environment," Daniel Zhang, Chairman and CEO of Alibaba, said.

"Taobao.com (Alibaba's consumer-to-consumer platform) grew rapidly in 2003 when the severe acute respiratory syndrome broke out, as well as other Chinese e-commerce companies including JD.com," Sun said. "The epidemic is changing people's consuming habits, which will boost the development of e-commerce."

However, cross-border e-commerce faces some uncertainties due to some politically

driven restrictions, Sun said.

"We should promote consistency of legal frameworks and policies among countries to form consensus to beef up market confidence," Chai Yueting, a professor at Tsinghua University, said at the e-commerce forum.

Chai mentioned the significance of digital logistics platforms. "The epidemic has little adverse impact on e-commerce, especially cross-border e-commerce, to a large extent because our logistics are not disrupted," he said.

For greater cross-border e-commerce, he advocated reducing logistics costs and improving efficiency. Also, many logistics platforms are still regional and have not yet achieved global interconnection. They need to buck up. ■

Copiedited by Sudeshna Sarkar
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New Offers

African countries find business opportunities at service trade fair

By Ge Lijun

Rwanda made a splash during the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing. Interested business people flocked to its investment and trade promotion seminar on September 6 and raised a lot of questions. The event had to be greatly extended from its initially planned 1.5 hours. After its close, James Kimonyo, Rwandan Ambassador to China, and Samuel Abikunda, Commercial Counselor of the Rwandan Embassy in China, were still surrounded by crowds of people waiting to talk to them.

"I can feel that many people are serious about cooperation, so we will stay in touch with them. If they need local cooperation partners, we will help find competitive and reliable enterprises to connect with them," Abikunda said.

Located in East Africa, Rwanda has

made notable progress in development, ranking second and first in the continent for economic growth rate and government transparency, respectively. Seventy percent of the population is under 30 years, and 95 percent of the country is covered by 4G network. Boasting such a sound business environment, Rwanda is confident that it can attract investment from China.

"Chinese companies can invest in e-commerce by taking advantage of Rwanda's mobile Internet facilities. Many Chinese enterprises are also interested in areas like medical care and transportation," Kimonyo told *Beijing Review*. The ambassador recommended Rwandan coffee, chili sauce and other special local products during talks with potential investors after the promotion seminar.

Many other African countries also sought out business opportunities at CIFTIS held on September 4-9. Former World Bank economist Mwangi Wajira said the event provided a powerful platform for African airlines, banks and logistics companies to develop cooperation with Chinese companies. More importantly, China's 5G, big data and cloud computing capabilities, which were highlighted at the fair, could create fresh opportunities for economic and social growth for African countries, he added.

Building closer links

Rwanda suffered a great deal of domestic turmoil. Since 1996, the people have put great effort into rebuilding their country and resuming the economy under a new government. After a series of reforms, Rwanda is now one of the best places to do business in Africa.

According to a World Bank report, Rwanda ranks second in the ease of doing business index among African countries this year, second only to Mauritius, and first in East Africa.

"You can be working for others when you get up at 6 a.m., but by noon, you can



A Ghanaian exhibitor plays an African drum to attract visitors at the tourism services exhibition area during the China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing on September 6

have your own company and become a CEO," Abikunda said. In Rwanda, it takes just six hours to register a company and the whole process can be completed online.

Chinese investors can focus on Rwanda's manufacturing, energy and mining, agricultural products processing, infrastructure and tourism industries, Kimonyo suggested. Moreover, the country is an entry point to greater business opportunities on the rest of the African continent, he added.

Rwanda is a member of the Eastern Africa Community and part of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, which covers a population of about 500 million. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which was officially launched on May 30, 2019, will cover 1.2 billion people once all participating countries approve it. That means that when foreign enterprises register and invest in Rwanda, they will also gain potential access to other African markets. "The AfCFTA is set to facilitate cross-border trade activities," former Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Guo Chongli said at the Fifth Africa Theme Day Forum on September 7, which was part of CIFTIS.

Guo was positive about Africa's huge potential in the digital economy, citing the fact that Africa is the second largest mobile phone market after Asia, and it's also the world's fastest-growing mobile telecommunications market.

Moreover, e-commerce is developing very rapidly in Africa, and its advantages have been fully demonstrated during the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. "Industries performing prominently during the pandemic, such as online education, cross-border e-commerce and cold chain transportation, will be the focal points of future cooperation," Guo said.

The forum enabled communication and information sharing between Chinese and African participants on their countries' business environment, according to Mamadou Sarr, Commercial Counselor of the Senegalese Embassy in China.

Revitalizing tourism

Black wood carvings from Angola, African drums from Zimbabwe and other local cultural and special food items were on display at the Fifth Colorful World Cultural Exhibition of Countries Along the Belt and Road, which was held on the sideline of CIFTIS. The exhibits were from over 30 African countries and regions, including Algeria, Togo, Ghana, Sudan, Namibia,



A worker harvests paddy rice in an agricultural park developed by a Chinese private enterprise in Kalungu District, Uganda, on June 13, 2019

Ethiopia, Botswana and Burkina Faso. African singers and dancers were invited to present performances featuring tourism and cultural resources of their countries.

Tourism is as an important area of trade in services. According to a report released by the China Youth Travel Service in 2018, the annual growth rate of Chinese tourist arrivals in Africa surpassed 40 percent in recent years. Chinese tourists are not only interested in natural sites but also in cultural heritage attractions.

"Today we have a great opportunity to gather here and deepen the understanding between our two peoples," Marcelina Gomes, Cultural Attaché of the Angolan Embassy in China, told *Beijing Review*. "We showed tourism-related photos, artworks and books, hoping to find what interests Chinese people the most and therefore is able to attract more of them to travel and learn about Angola's culture."

Rwanda also promoted tourism during CIFTIS with a poster of three silverback mountain gorillas greeting attendants at the venue of its promotion seminar. The gorilla is one of the most endangered animals on

Earth and according to Abikunda, Rwanda is one of the few countries where silverback mountain gorillas live.

"The entire gorilla family can easily be seen in Rwanda and many people travel thousands of miles to see them," he said, adding that investment in tourism can drive development in related fields, such as catering, accommodations and culture.

Zhang Yaodong, a Chinese businessman who opened the first five-star hotel in Rwanda, Rwanda Marriott Hotel, has benefited greatly from its preferential policies for foreign investors. His hotel opened in 2016 and the business has been good. "I am in the midst of my second project in Rwanda now. It is a comprehensive property project, with apartments, hotels and villas," he said.

As Chinese investors continue to expand their business in Africa, the hope is that it will lead to greater mutual understanding and benefits. ■

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New Free Trade Forces

Six new FTZs bring in results on their first anniversary **By Wang Jun**

From the Caoqiao Subway Station in southwest Beijing, it takes only 20 minutes to get to the Beijing Daxing International Airport, which is located in the junction between Daxing District and Hebei Province. With this new state-of-the-art airport, which is part of the China (Hebei) Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ), the FTZ has become the latest test field for opening up in north China.

According to Shen Jianmin, head of office for the Daxing Airport Area, with its unique advantages, including a comprehensive bonded zone, and Beijing's policy support for opening up the service sector, the FTZ has greater space for policy innovation in developing industries and attracting talents. "It can become an integrated innovation highland for reform and development," Shen told *People's Daily*.

On August 26, 2019, the State Council approved six new pilot FTZs in six provinces: Shandong, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Yunnan, Heilongjiang and Hebei. They are the fifth batch of pilot FTZs in China, bringing the total number to 18.

A year after their establishment, the

pilot FTZs have played a key role in stabilizing foreign trade and investment, according to Tang Wenhong, head of the Department of Pilot FTZs and Free Trade Ports at the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), at a press conference on September 2.

Unique advantages

The new FTZs have their unique advantages and tasks.

The Shandong FTZ, inaugurated in coastal east China on August 30, 2019, is developing its marine economy and deepening China-Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) cooperation. For example, in June, it issued a licence to an ROK-funded travel agency, which became the first wholly foreign-owned travel agency in the FTZ due to its preferential policies while such ownership is not allowed in the rest of the province. And the approval process was completed online in just one hour, according to a *China Daily* report.

It also has an important role in the development of the Bohai Economic Rim, the economic zone encompassing Beijing,

Tianjin, Hebei and Shandong Peninsula. From January to May, actual utilized foreign capital in Shandong reached \$4.88 billion, a year-on-year increase of 1 percent, according to official statistics.

The Yunnan FTZ, located in the southwest, is driving innovative economic and social development in the border area and trade ties with South and Southeast Asia. It shares borders with Myanmar, Laos and Viet Nam.

At a press conference held in August on the first anniversary of the FTZ, Zhao Ruijun, head of the Yunnan Provincial Department of Commerce, said the FTZ has initiated a border trade model and realized electronic settlement for border trade. It has also issued guidelines on financial institutional innovation and promoted innovative development of cross-border renminbi business.

According to Zhao, in the past year, the FTZ concluded 37 reforms, which can be duplicated in other parts of the country. After the novel coronavirus outbreak, it has explored an investment promotion model via the Internet. The result has been 27 new contracts with a total investment of 26.3 billion yuan (\$3.85 billion).

The mandate for the Jiangsu FTZ located in the coastal area in the east is to develop an open economy, beef up the real economy with innovation, and transform industries by deepening industrial restructuring and advancing innovation-driven development.

By the end of June, the FTZ had added 29,100 new market entities, including nearly 300 foreign-funded enterprises. In the first half (H1) of this year, it attracted paid-in capital of \$1.47 billion, accounting for 12 percent of the province's total, according to Zhao Jianjun, head of the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Commerce.

He also said in H1, the Port of Lianyungang in the FTZ handled 126 million tons of freight, up by 3.46 percent; international freight trains transported 25,200 twenty-foot equivalent units of containers of goods from the province, surging by 42.3 percent. In the same period, the FTZ clinched 88 major industrial projects with a total investment of 150 billion yuan (\$21.93 billion).



A technician works at the production line of China National Heavy Truck Group's Jinan truck manufacturing unit in the Shandong Free Trade Zone on August 26



Containers are loaded onto a steamship in the Port of Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province in east China, on September 7, to be exported overseas

The Heilongjiang FTZ in the northeast is drumming up trade with Russia, with whom it shares a border. By August it had secured 94 new projects with a total investment of 175 billion yuan (\$24.6 billion), according to the provincial department of commerce.

Differentiated reform

“The previous four batches of FTZs have provided a great deal of experience for the fifth batch for institutional innovation,” Peng Zhiwei, Dean of the Department of International Economics and Trade of Nankai University, told *People’s Daily*. Since the six are significantly different in terms of their development level, industrial structure and geographic location, it means they have to focus on their respective characteristics and advantages.

“Differentiated reform will be the key to the development of the fifth batch of FTZs,” Peng said, adding that it will promote coordinated regional development.

“In the future, the authorities should grant greater autonomy to the FTZs in making reforms and the local governments should carry out differentiated pilot re-

forms,” he said.

“The six FTZs have achieved progress in serving major national strategies,” Pan Helin, Executive Director of the Digital Economy Academy of Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, told *Securities Daily*.

For instance, the Hebei FTZ has been advancing coordinated development in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. It has assumed the non-capital functions of Beijing with the non-essential institutions shifting to Hebei. The Jiangsu FTZ is focusing on the development of high and new technologies; while the Guangxi FTZ is exploring mutual recognition of authorized economic operators (AEOs).

The AEO system was advocated by the World Customs Organization to create uniform standards and develop partnerships between different customs authorities and enterprises to facilitate global trade. Guangxi borders Viet Nam and is a gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Future priorities

Xiao Benhua, deputy head of the Free Trade Zone Research Institute at the Shanghai Lixin

University of Accounting and Finance, told *Securities Daily* that in the current complex international environment, the FTZs are an experimental field to deepen reform and a window for China to open up to the outside world and align with international advanced FTZs. The FTZs also need to contribute to the establishment of a dual circulation development pattern, in which the domestic market plays the leading role while the domestic and foreign markets boost each other.

Pan said besides serving the country’s opening-up policy, the FTZs must also play a role in building competitive industrial clusters in their respective regions to give full play to their comparative advantages and better serve their local economic growth.

“Next, MOFCOM will give FTZs greater autonomy to achieve more targeted, effective and integrated institutional innovation and promote in-depth reform and a higher level of opening up,” Tang said. ■

Copyedited by Sudeshna Sarkar
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Emboldened By Independence

Chinese drone companies rise in global competition **By Li Xiaoyang**

After two years of investigation, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) announced at the end of August that it would not enforce a ban on drones of Da Jiang Innovations (DJI), a Chinese unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) maker, marking a victory for the company in a patent infringement suit. The investigation aimed at preventing intellectual property right infringement of U.S. products and unfair competition in imports.

Based in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province in south China, DJI, established in 2006, has become the world's largest drone maker. Since demand for drones is increasing in multiple fields including light shows for entertainment, agriculture, logistics and infrastructure engineering, DJI has expanded its consumer base from individual users to industrial enterprises. Its products have been used for monitoring the fire at the Notre Dame Cathedral last year, spreading seeds, spraying disinfectants during the novel coronavirus disease and inspecting dykes during the flood season, helping improve efficiency and save costs and labor. During 2013-17, its sales revenue almost doubled every year. Its industrial output exceeded 26 billion yuan (\$3.8 billion) in 2019.

As early as 2017, the U.S. Army announced a ban on DJI drones due to alleged security concerns. Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) grounded its entire fleet of 800 DJI drones for the same reason, although it had validated and approved the DJI government edition in July 2019. After around 15 months of flight tests and technological evaluation since April 2018, a DOI report said there was no indication that data was transmitted outside the high-security system.

Despite this, the lack of alternative products has seen DJI maintain its share in the U.S. market. Data released by Drone Industry Insights, a Germany-based

commercial drone industrial information provider, earlier this year showed that DJI now accounted for about 77 percent of UAV sales in the U.S. No other competitor occupied more than 4 percent of the market. According to the company, it holds around 70 percent share of the global commercial drone market.

Robust growth

As a type of intelligent robot, UAV has an extensive production chain covering technological research and development (R&D), manufacturing of key components, assembly and production, and services for application. Although a late starter in the field, China has seen the UAV industry boom in recent years with the emergence of companies making drones for commercial, industrial and military use.

"The R&D, production and on-site trial of UAV require a lot of hard work. Through consistent efforts, many Chinese private enterprises have entered the field and made notable technological breakthroughs," Liang Xu, a former member of the R&D team of the Institute of Unmanned System, Beihang University, said.

According to a report on China's civilian drone market from the Shenzhen-based Qianzhan Industry Research Institute, the market was small and developed slowly before 2010, as drones were mainly intended for professional use such as rescue in disasters. After 2012, the UAV industry has developed rapidly with the reduction of costs of major components such as sensors and technological progress. Standing at around 9 billion yuan (\$1.3 billion) in 2016, China's drone market expanded steadily in the following years. In 2019, the market reached 23.8 billion yuan (\$3.4 billion), a year-on-year increase of 38.4 percent. The sales of civilian drones reached 13.48 billion yuan (\$1.9 billion), up 53.2 percent year on year.

In May 2017, the Civil Aviation Administration of China launched a registration system for domestic drone users. Data from the administration showed that the number of registered users reached nearly 371,000 in 2019, up 36.9 percent from the previous year. Among the users, around 320,000 are individuals and 50,000 are enterprises and public institutions, both increasing from 2018.

In addition to DJI, more drone makers have emerged in the Chinese market as demands from various fields continue to rise. Beijing TechX Aviation Innovation, a Beijing-based drone startup for military and high-end industrial users, introduced a product named Cygnus in 2018. According to the company, China Earthquake Administration adopted the drone for aerial photography over the Altun Mountains in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China last year, collecting information on local geological structure to better predict earthquakes. During the 11-day work, 27 Cygnus drones flew at an altitude of around 5,100 meters on average, taking over 30,000 high-definition photos.

As a blue ocean, China's UAV market is still expanding. According to a report released by China-based research firm AskCI Corp., China's industrial UAV market is expected to exceed 50 billion yuan (\$7.3 billion) by 2022.

A forerunner

According to DJI, its rapid development and the firm footing in the global market can be attributed to the innovation-oriented R&D. It has kept introducing new products since 2009. In 2012, the company launched the first quadcopter DJI Phantom 1, making its drones once exclusive to professional users accessible to more consumers. It later released more quadcopters of the Phantom series and gimbal stabilizers in the following years. The Phantom 3 drone introduced

in 2015 can transmit high-definition images within 2 km. The flight control systems, gimbal stabilizers and cameras of the drones are all independently developed and produced by the company, where R&D staff represents around 25 percent of the total. As of the end of 2019, it had filed applications for over 11,300 patents.

It has also benefited from the strong industrial foundation and government support of Shenzhen, a hub of drone manufacturing in China. Another report on DJI released by the Qianzhan Industry Research Institute showed that the favorable environment and supporting policies for innovation in the UAV industry in the city have strongly backed up the growth of such companies. The local government has established special funding systems to boost emerging UAV enterprises through providing direct assistance and compensation against risks, supporting over 200 drone-related programs every year.

Moreover, related industries including carbon fiber raw material for making drones, lithium batteries and training organizations for operating drones have matured in Shenzhen. By the end of 2019, China had 290 qualified UAV training organizations, among which 31 are based in Guangdong and 17 in Shenzhen.

The data from Shenzhen UAV Industry Association showed that the city had over 700 drone enterprises last year, with the industrial scale totaling 40 billion yuan (\$5.8 billion). While providing preferential policies, it has also introduced rules for regulating the use of drones to ensure public safety.

Further development

While China has made a giant leap on UAV R&D, there is still a large gap between domestic drones and those from countries with advanced technologies on the manufacturing of chips and engines for UAV devices. Also many countries are investing much more on developing technologies to control drone clusters, Liang said.

According to Qianzhan Industry Research Institute, the role of drones in fields including agriculture, logistics, emergency rescue and aerial photography has not yet been brought into full play in China. While drones are used for spraying insecticides on more than half of rice fields in Japan, the proportion stands at just around 6 percent in Heilongjiang Province, a major grain supplier in northeast China. The number of users from enterprises and public institutions also has room for growth.



Villagers of Houyoutan in Tangyin County, Henan Province in central China, operate drones on a farmland on September 4



Staff of an agricultural cooperative in Kaiping, Guangdong Province in south China, put rice seeds in a DJI drone on February 26

With the development of new intelligent technologies including 5G, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing and big data, drone manufacturing technologies will be improved, enhancing durability and reducing risks. Costs for making drones and camera carriers will also decline, expanding UAV

application. The technological progress, coupled with high domestic demand and supporting policies, will drive China's UAV industry, it said. ■

Copyedited by Madhusudan Chaubey
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Chinese Consumer Sentiment Perks Up, Bolsters Economic Recovery

As the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) tapers off in China and pent-up consumption demand gradually unleashes, economic recovery in the second half of the year will gain more momentum.

China's national Consumer Confidence Index led 24 countries surveyed including the U.S., India and Brazil in August by rebounding to 72.9 points, becoming the only economy to show a gain from January, the world's leading market research company Ipsos reported recently.

The Consumer Confidence Index, which reflects customers' outlook of economic situations, income level and purchasing sentiment, is a leading indicator for predicting economic trends and consumption tendency.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics echoed the trends. China's retail sales of consumer goods rose by 0.85 percent month on month in July, a moderate increase from 0.83 percent in June, maintaining a six-month streak of expansion after a contraction of 10.91 percent in January.

After suffering a blow from COVID-19, which temporarily shuttered many stores, restaurants and movie theaters, Chinese consumers are back into a spending spree.

As of the morning of September 7, epic war film *The Eight Hundred* continued to smash records, with the total box office hitting a new high of 2.4 billion yuan (\$350 million). It is the first movie to make over 1 billion yuan (\$146 million) in the world's second-largest box-office market since the COVID-19 outbreak.

Shake Shack, a New York burger brand, opened its first restaurant in Beijing in August. Despite downpours in the city on the opening day of the store, food lovers queued up and waited for hours to take a bite of the popular burgers and snacks, and taste the cold beverages.

Randy Garutti, CEO of Shake Shack, said China is one of the most important markets for Shake Shack in the world, and Beijing, as China's capital and an international metropolis, represents the new frontier of consumption.

China's auto market, which was hit particularly hard by the virus, has been recovering. Total output reached 2.2 million in July, up 21.9 percent year on year, while sales hit 2.1 million, up 16.4 percent year



People watch a film in a cinema in Wuhan, Hubei Province in central China, on July 20

on year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The post-coronavirus retail industry will draw heavily from the online shopping trends already seen in China, analysts from consulting firm Bain said in a report released recently, adding that three Chinese e-commerce giants—Alibaba, JD.com and Pinduoduo—now rank among the top 10 retailers worldwide.

Alibaba Group reported year-on-year revenue growth of 34 percent to 153.8 billion yuan (\$22.4 billion) for the quarter that ended on June 30. The company's net profit attributable to shareholders was 47.59 billion yuan (\$6.9 billion). The profit surge was mainly due to strong performances in online retailing and cloud computing.

"What's happening in China today is going to happen in other markets to a lesser or greater degree depending on the market," Kanaiya Parekh, expert partner at Bain, said in an interview with CNBC. "People need to be looking at China, especially with regards to the future of retail."

Buoyed by the recent boost in consumer sentiment, analysts believe that China's consumption will continue to rebound. Favorable factors such as continued government policy support, new promotion measures by the enterprises and increasing

consumer confidence will pave the way for a stronger recovery in the second half.

The National Consumption Promotion Month, jointly organized by the Ministry of Commerce and the China Media Group, kicked off on September 9 and will continue for the entire month to further bolster market sentiment, boost consumer confidence and promote replenishment of consumption.

During the promotional campaign, over 10,000 key enterprises and major e-commerce platforms in large and medium-sized cities of 31 provincial-level regions across the country have hosted a series of promotion activities, integrating online and offline modes, goods and services marketing, as well as sectors including commodity, travel, culture and entertainment.

Qu Hongbin, chief China economist at HSBC, said in a research note that the key to reviving consumption lies in keeping employment stable and improving residents' income, which will also act as the main policy focus in the second half of the year. ■

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Copyedited by Madhusudan Chaubey
Comments to dengyaqing@bjreview.com

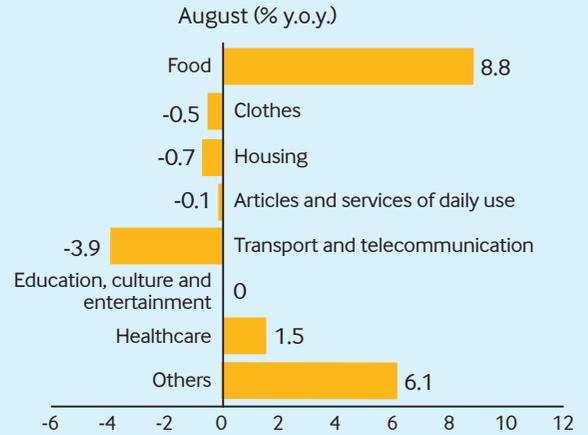
NUMBERS

(\$1=6.9 yuan)

China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth



China's CPI Growth by Type



China's Producer Price Index Growth



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

China's bulk commodity market saw slower growth in August compared with July. The China Bulk Merchandise Index, a gauge of domestic bulk commodity market growth, stood above the boom-or-bust line of 100

at **102.5** in August, but down from 104.8 in July.

Hainan Province in south China saw the establishment of more than **162,000** new market entities in the first eight months of this year, up 19.8 percent year on year. In recent years, it has taken a series of measures to optimize its business environment.

China's box-office sales reached **3.39 billion yuan** (\$495.6 million) in August, bringing the total box office for 2020 to 5.8 billion yuan (\$849 million). Movie theaters started to reopen on July 20 following a months-long hiatus due to the novel coronavirus epidemic.

(Source: Xinhua News Agency)

The background of the advertisement is a vibrant, blue-toned digital cityscape. Several skyscrapers are visible, with the word "Internet" written vertically on their sides. The scene is overlaid with a grid of binary code (0s and 1s) and various data-like text elements, such as "TIME 47.739532%", "CHECKING STAT", "DATA DOCUMENT", "ORIGINAL: 2987", "DATA UNITS COM", "TURN: 092783", "PROGRAM: K2387", and "S: OK -12837". The overall aesthetic is futuristic and tech-oriented.

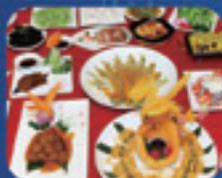
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The Past Is The Future

Book on 40th anniversary of China-U.S. diplomatic normalization presents expert insights By Li Qing

When young American scholar Ezra Vogel wound up his stay in Japan, where he had been studying Japanese and doing post-doctoral research on modern Japanese society, and returned to Harvard University in 1960, he didn't foresee that six decades later, his expanded research would see him become part of a new chapter.

After his return to the U.S., Vogel began to research Chinese history, society and economy, learn Chinese and interact with the Chinese.

His thoughts on China from those days are now part of a project commemorating 40 years

of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. on January 1, 2019. *40 on 40: An Interview Series Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of China-U.S. Diplomatic Normalization* was compiled by Shanghai-based Fudan University's Center for American Studies and Shanghai Institute of American Studies with ThePaper.cn, a digital media. It presents insights from 40 experts on the bilateral relationship, often described as the most important bilateral relationship in the world.

The pool of experts comprises 20 from each country, with such renowned names



The Chinese edition of *40 on 40: Four Decades of Evolving Sino-American Relation*. The English edition is in the pipeline

as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Cui Tiankai. In December 2019, the interviews were published as *40 on 40: Four Decades of Evolving Sino-American Relation* by New World Press, a subsidiary of China International Publishing Group, in Chinese. The English version is in the pipeline.

"Reviewing milestones and crises, the experience gained in the past can become lessons for the development of China-U.S. relations," Li Chunkai, President of New World Press, told *Beijing Review*. "We hope the book can present rational insights to readers in different fields to understand Sino-U.S. relations correctly."

Witnessing history

Vogel, in addition to his research on China, served as a national intelligence officer for East Asia at the National Intelligence Council in Washington and played a positive role in promoting communication between the two countries in academic and diplomatic fields.

When Richard Nixon took office as the U.S. president in 1969, Vogel wrote a letter with other scholars, suggesting the president increase exchanges with China. Besides academic activities, he hoped that the two countries could become friends with mutual understanding for world peace.

Ten years later, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping paid a historic visit to the U.S. and Vogel attended some of his meetings. "We believed this was a very important visit," Vogel says during the interview. "It signaled the normalization of our bilateral relations... We did not have official relations until then," adding that after the establishment of the diplomatic relations, more



Xuzhou Construction Machinery Group, a Chinese construction machinery enterprise, participates in an expo in Las Vegas, Nevada, the U.S., on March 11



A session at the 2020 Shanghai Book Fair on August 12 on *40 on 40: Four Decades of Evolving Sino-American Relation*, a book on China-U.S. diplomacy published by New World Press in December 2019

contacts and exchanges in business, academic and diplomatic fields began to grow.

After retiring in 2000, Vogel started to work on his biography of Deng, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, which would take him 10 years to write. At an event organized by the Sino-American Friendship Association, he met Deng Rong, Deng Xiaoping's daughter, and other high-level figures, and developed connections for his research.

A new bestseller

The New World Press promoted *40 on 40* at the 2020 Shanghai Book Fair last month, and Li said it has become one of his company's bestsellers.

"The personal experiences of the interviewees are undoubtedly the best part of the book," a reader commented on Douban, an information-sharing platform.

"Forty years ago, China and the U.S. broke through obstacles, overcame differences and worked together. That changed not only the world but also the destinies and aspirations of countless Chinese and U.S. people," Wu Xinbo, head of the Fudan University's Center for American Studies and one of the interviewees, wrote in the preface to the book.

Wu has chaired the annual U.S.-China Diplomatic Dialogue, organized by the center

and Manchester China Institute, since 2007. The dialogue, a platform founded in 2007 for informal exchanges between young Chinese and U.S. diplomats, seeks to generate mutual trust and foster Sino-U.S. relations, and is supported by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and United States Department of State. He found the two countries have a lot in common.

However, he has also noted the "rare decline" in the ties in the past 40 years—the U.S. clampdown on Chinese telecom company Huawei, the animosity and allegations in the wake of the novel coronavirus disease and other issues.

But despite the trade tensions, David Dollar, a senior fellow in the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institution, pointed out in his interview that there is fantastic cooperation between China and the U.S. "You have all kinds of scientific cooperation that are rising. And there is a lot of enthusiasm for that kind of cooperation," he said in the interviews. "That is very important for our future relationships, for developing new technologies and approaches to controlling disease."

For Zhao Qizheng, former Director of the State Council Information Office and also the first interviewee in the project, conflicts are not insurmountable, especially as China always

respects and accommodates others' development interests. "Countries as big as China and the U.S. are bound to have conflicts. These need to be attended to through dialogue and by making compromises and respecting each other's interests. It is a process that cannot be avoided," he said. "China's foreign policy is not meant to be achieved at the expense of other countries. The Chinese dream is not a selfish one."

Cui also acknowledged that there are always diverging opinions in the U.S. on U.S. foreign policy. Especially in recent years, there have been some extreme views that, to a large degree, have affected the policy on China, with some even propagating the idea of a new cold war.

But although people have the right to express their opinions, these opinions may not necessarily be in line with the world's trend, he said. "There are challenges for all of us in the world. Therefore it is more imperative for countries to cooperate. This is what defines today's world and our future." ■

Copyedited by Sudeshna Sarkar
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Can Social Media Help The Young Overcome Their Social Phobia?

According to a recent online survey on socializing by *Guangming Daily*, of the 2,532 people polled, 97 percent reported that they often try to duck socializing in person and are actually afraid of it, claiming that they find it embarrassing to interact with others face-to-face.

This is widely seen as a social phobia, as a growing number of young people are increasingly dependent on social media platforms like WeChat for socializing and are slipping deeper and deeper into a cyberspace life.

On the one hand, some believe social media helps the young connect with others, so that they don't feel lonely, thus messaging apps are spurring them to socialize. On the other hand, others say that overdependence on social media is discouraging young people from seeking face-to-face communication.

Dear Readers,

Forum is a column that provides a space for varying perspectives on contemporary Chinese society. We invite you to submit personal viewpoints on past and current topics (in either English or Chinese).

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Irreplaceable face-to-face communication

Li Danyang (www.gmw.cn): Today, the so-called social phobia among young people is far from reaching the level of a psychological disorder, but it is concerning since it is an aversion to social intercourse.

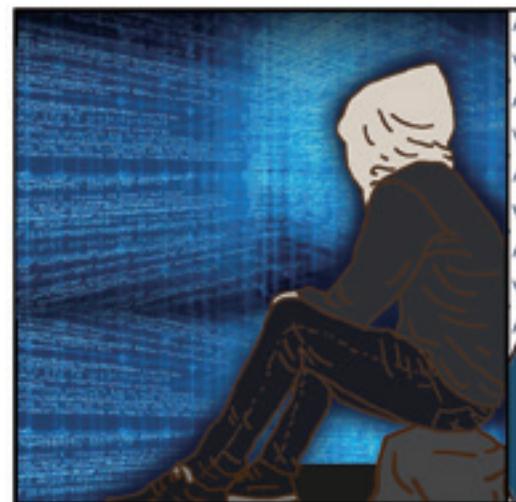
The younger generation grew up amid a rapid evolution of the way to socialize, so their communication with others presents some new features. Those who were born in the 1990s are used to being alone. Most of them are the only child in their family, and their memories of childhood are often rife with loneliness. The rapid pace of urbanization limited most of them to a small circle in society, depriving them of the traditional bonds between relatives or neighbors. Moreover, some of them had to leave their hometowns very young for education or work. Thus their communication with their family and friends is limited.

Meanwhile, fast upgrading communication technologies and social media platforms, like QQ, Weibo, WeChat and Douyin, have made communication more convenient than ever before, which has also shaped the younger generation, as well as the whole netizen population's communication habits.

In real life, it is not easy for friends to meet up. Even if you all live in Beijing, you may have to wait a long time to get together.

In cyberspace, however, the story is totally different. People can talk to each other at any time. Even if they never meet offline, they can frequently contact each other online.

However, the question is, will online social communication help to effectively relieve social phobia? The answer may be no. Let's look at a common image of a family sitting around a room. No one is talking to others, as they are all playing on their phones or tablets. The same can be seen when classmates gather. The incessant use of social media is throwing the young into greater loneliness. To break this vicious cycle, the only way out is for people to get



together face-to-face.

Zhang Yusheng (Beijing Youth Daily):

The progress of social networking tools is followed by a decline in socializing capabilities among the young, whose aversion to socializing is not only reflected by statistics but also the common sight of young people glued to their phones everywhere. Actually, most of them are not really suffering from social phobia, they are just anxious about communicating face-to-face with others.

Meeting up, communicating and connecting are normal social activities in the world as old as human history itself. In this era of rapid scientific and technological progress, the younger generation's desire to communicate has not been dampened. On the contrary, their passion is now seen on various social media platforms. Strangers are easily added to friend lists, WeChat messaging has replaced phone calls and red envelopes are sent on WeChat in lieu of attending someone's wedding or birthday party. But at the same time, this overdependence on social media apps has increasingly narrowed the space for the young to conduct in-person communication with others.

There is more than one factor contributing to the young's resistance to face-to-face socializing. One is that they are already used to a simple and monotonous life



thanks to their experiences in childhood and adolescence. In addition, as usually the only child at home, they are the focus of their family's attention and care, and thus they don't know how to interact with others outside of their family, even neighbors and other relatives. However, the core reason for their hesitation is that they lack self-confidence and socializing capabilities and skills.

The young must face up to the reality that they have to learn to interact well with others face-to-face or miss a lot of valuable experiences in life. They need to develop a correct assessment of themselves. They can help those in need, which may reveal their value, while bringing them a sense of achievement. The key is that they must attempt to do something in the real world, instead of limiting themselves to cyberspace.

Be aware of overdependence

Hanyelubai (Baijiahao.baidu.com): Virtual social intercourse is very different from real life communication. For example, video communication seems to offer the opportunity to interact similar to face-to-face communication, but the screen prevents people from getting to know the real person on the other side. People can use filters while talking via video, so if they were to come across each other on the street,

they may not even recognize each other even though they talk online every day.

Many people have a lot of online friends, but virtual networking is not the same as real-life socializing, since people can still feel lonely. Therefore, those who are struggling with social phobia must go out and meet more people instead of choosing to search for friends online. Cyberspace is virtual; it is quite different from the real world.

Those who resist socializing in person share something in common: They are afraid they may be disliked by others for what they say or do. They fear that every time they are criticized by someone, they will feel they are useless and gradually, they isolate themselves from others.

For this group, the key to surmounting social phobia is to try their best to ignore others' negative assessments of them. They should learn to understand that sometimes those who dislike others actually envy them. This is why it is important for those suffering from social phobia to believe more in themselves instead of in others.

Zhang Xiliu (Baijiahao.baidu.com): To some extent, the popularity of social media platforms reflects widespread loneliness among people. The more the young rely on WeChat groups or similar platforms, the lonelier they may feel in real life. For

them, WeChat groups are already alternatives to person-to-person communication. In this sense, although social networking can help to relieve loneliness, addiction to it is dangerous. Some people spend a lot of time on social networking groups, which eats away the time that should be spent on working or taking care of their family. The result is that real-life difficulties and problems begin to mount.

Social networking is a mixed blessing. When it goes hand in hand with real life in a harmonious way, it can help people's daily life, but if people use it as an escape from reality and in-person communication, it can disrupt life and drive users into a narrow corner.

Those who are shy about socializing must return to the real world. Real happiness comes from real life, where people talk to each other and mingle face-to-face and achievements take place in their family life and career. A balance between real life and virtual life is the precondition to achieve most of what one desires. Particularly, the young who work in an office should spend more time outside in nature or with their family and friends, instead of always focusing on the screen. ■

Life With Health Code

By Milton Chitataris

As China has gradually contained the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), things are almost back to normal. In Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in south China, the use of a mini-program, known as Suikang Code, has made it easier to move around through public transport, go shopping, or enter public places including hospitals. Just with a simple scan of the Suikang QR code, I had already opened another door for myself making my movement around Guangzhou extremely convenient.

As a foreigner living in Guangzhou, I was caught off guard when I returned from my travels late February. I was trying to enter my residential neighborhood, but I was stopped by the guards at the gate and was referred to a different office where I had to get registered. Then I was notified that I had to have Suikang Code to be granted access to my building. Since I had just returned and had no idea what Suikang Code was or how it worked, I had several questions for the property management department. Thankfully, not only did I get answers to my questions, they also helped me to obtain the Suikang Code.

I thought this process would take long, hence the number of questions, but to my surprise I was done in a matter of minutes making my moving around in Guangzhou safer and more convenient. Later I also learnt that on the Suikang mini-program people can check their nucleic acid test results.

When I first came back, I was afraid of even using the metro. But once I understood how this amazing mini-program works, I use the metro pretty often as it brings some sense of safety knowing that everyone on the metro has to show a health code to access it. Because of these initiatives, the spread of COVID-19 has been minimized, making Guangzhou one of the safest cities in China, if not in the world.

When I first got my Suikang Code, I got a little worried noticing that the color on my code was different from my friend's code. I again went around asking why my code was different and ended up



The health code helps contain the COVID-19 epidemic

actually learning more about how this mini-program works.

The different colors shown by the Suikang Code are: red which shows possible infection, green being in most cases for elderly people who have been helped by those they stay with to obtain the mini-program, and blue for those that obtain this Suikang Code by themselves. Those visiting Guangzhou from other cities or provinces will have to use what's known as the Yuekang Code.

If anyone is taken in sick with COVID-19, or from places of higher risk, they can take a nucleic acid test to make sure they are COVID-19 free. After getting tested, the results are automatically posted on their

Suikang Code, making this system not only efficient but exceptionally reliable.

Although Suikang Code is both reliable and efficient, sometimes I must wait in queues as the code loads. In some cases, if I activate the mini-program too often it might take a minute to refresh, meaning that I have to wait patiently. If you're in a hurry, that might be an obstacle. But of course, what is better, being a few minutes late and ensuring safety or being in a rush and possibly infecting or being infected by others? ■

The writer is a Zimbabwean studying in China
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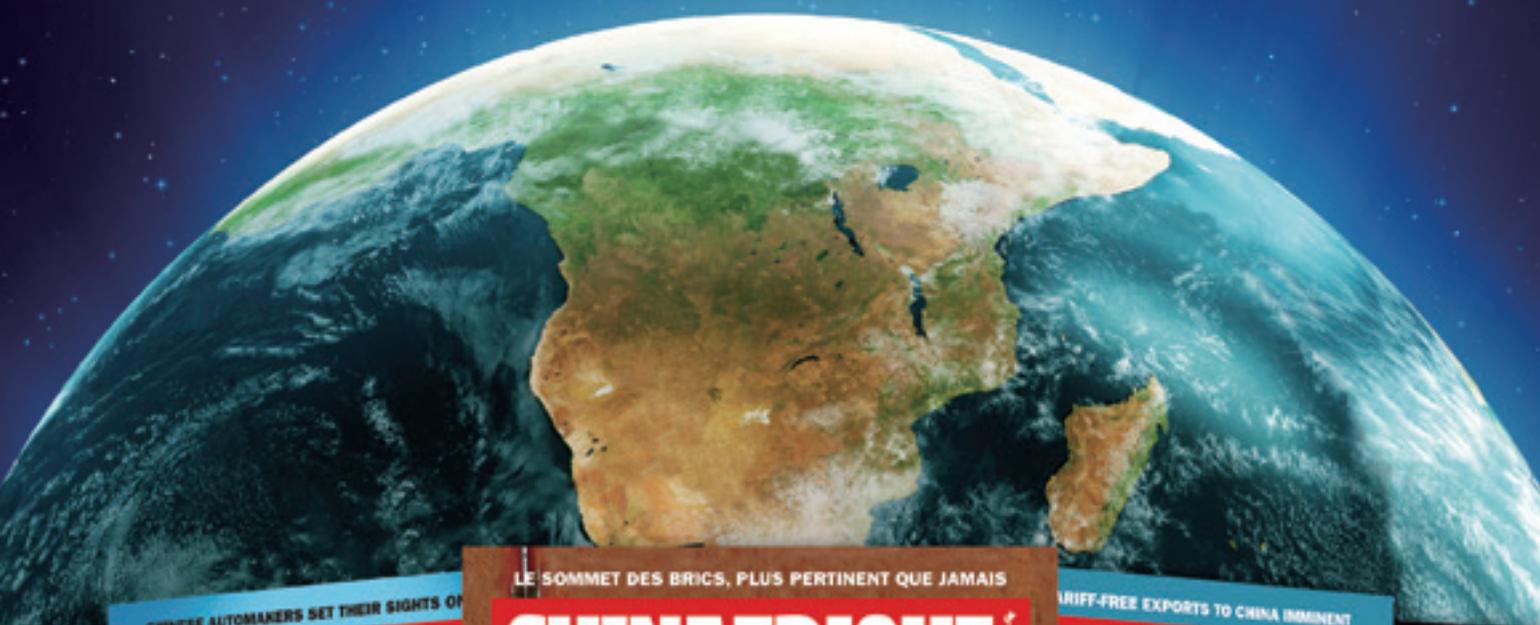
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