

OPINION: XINJIANG COTTON PLOT P.31 | FEATURES: CHINA-EUROPE RAILS P.34

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A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Boao 2021 aims to reshape growth confidence



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Cover Design: Cui Xiaodong

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Return of the Boao Forum

The Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2021, set to take place on April 18-21 in Boao, Hainan Province, will center around the theme A World in Change: Join Hands to Strengthen Global Governance and Advance Belt and Road Cooperation.

This year's BFA annual conference is a special one as it occurs under the as of yet unrelenting influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it is officially the world's first major large-scale international conference to take place mainly offline this year. This conference will see dozens of leaders from countries and international organizations and former dignitaries, as well as a number of prominent figures from the political and business circles, attending both online and offline.

Given the impact of the pandemic on the global economy, the primary task of this year's BFA annual conference is to help countries build a consensus on development and reshape growth confidence for the post-pandemic era.

With the flow of production factors disrupted, the Belt and Road cooperation has promoted economic recovery across Asia and its adjacent regions, demonstrated the determination of Asian countries to promote interna-

tional cooperation, as well as provided an "Asian perspective" for the improvement of global governance. This in turn explains the theme of this year's BFA edition.

China was the only major world economy that realized positive growth in 2020 despite the setbacks brought on by the pandemic, and it will take on a more active role with its contributions to global economic growth. Consequently, this year's BFA annual conference will include a module called Explore China, discussing China's development trends and its impact on the recovery of the world economy.

Furthermore, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the forum. As a non-governmental, non-profit and open international organization convening on a regular basis, at a fixed location, the BFA advocates equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. After 20 years of development, it has become one of the most influential cooperation platforms in all of Asia.

Whereas the current multilateral cooperation mechanism is facing severe challenges, the BFA is bound to play a more crucial role in safeguarding globalization and the multilateral trade system. **BR**



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CITY OF THE FUTURE

An aerial photo taken on April 1 shows the Xiongan Railway Station of the Beijing-Xiongan intercity railway in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province.

Xiongan celebrated its fourth anniversary that day. The new area was constructed with the intention of relieving Beijing of functions non-essential to its role as national capital and to advance the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

Over the past four years, Xiongan has made new breakthroughs in key areas of transportation, ecology and industry, and basic public services have continued to improve.



Unique Landform

A view of the Lanzhou Shuimo Danxia Scenic Spot, soon to be open for tourism in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, on April 5.

Separatist Group

Authorities in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region revealed on April 6 that they had busted a separatist criminal group in the educational sector.

The group's leader was Sattar Sawut, former Director of the Xinjiang education department and former head of the region's leading group on basic-education curriculum reform. They incorporated ethnic separatism, violence, terrorism, and religious extremism content into minority-language textbooks. These books had been in use for 13 years. It had grave consequences, Wang Langtao, Vice President of the Xinjiang regional higher people's court, said at a press conference on April 6.

Sawut was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve

after being found guilty of crimes of separatism, taking bribes and several other crimes.

Sawut, born in November 1947 in Toksun County, Xinjiang, pleaded guilty to the crimes and did not file an appeal against the verdict.

Sawut took advantage of compiling and publishing ethnic language textbooks for primary and secondary schools to split the country, starting in 2002. He then instructed others to pick several people with separatist views to join the textbook compilation team.

Sawut demanded they incorporate content that preached ethnic separatism, violence, terrorism, and religious extremism into the textbooks to split the state.

The investigation also found 84 texts preaching ethnic

separatism, violence, terrorism, and religious extremism in the 2003 and 2009 editions of the textbooks.

Under the influence of the textbooks, several people (already convicted) participated in terrorist attacks in Urumqi on July 5, 2009, and April 30, 2014, respectively, or became key members of a separatist group headed by former college teacher Ilham Tohti, the court found.

Sawut also took advantage of his government posts to accept bribes amounting to a total of 15.05 million yuan (\$2.3 million).

Increased Trips

It is estimated 144.52 million domestic trips were made during the Tomb-Sweeping Day

holiday in China, according to the Ministry of Transport.

Compared with the same period last year, the figure surged 142.4 percent for the three-day holiday, which lasted from April 3 to 5 this year, it said.

Airlines handled nearly 4.33 million passenger trips during the holiday, a jump of 256.4 percent year on year, the ministry estimated.

Meanwhile, the passenger load factor, which measures how much of an airline's available seating capacity is used, was estimated to be 73.4 percent, up 8.1 percentage points from a year ago.

Tomb-Sweeping Day, also known as Qingming Festival, was observed on April 4 this year. It is a traditional Chinese holiday during which people pay tribute to deceased family members. Many also spend the holiday traveling.

Poverty Identification

Poverty identification in China has been a dynamic process, which helps ensure its accuracy, Xia Gengsheng, deputy head of the national administration for rural vitalization, said at a press conference on April 6.

In China, identification of the poor is not a once-and-for-all assessment and regular adjustments are being made to make the results more precise, Xia said.

Some 89.62 million people were identified as poor in 2014, while re-examinations were conducted between 2015 and 2016 to exclude those who had been wrongly identified and enlist those not included initially. Starting from 2017, adjustments have been made every year to improve the accuracy of the identification process.

Expounding on the process,

Xia said the identification is carried out in three ways and poor households can either report their difficulties to the authorities themselves or seek help from community-level officials, who are familiar with their situation, for the reporting.

Government departments would also learn about the circumstances of the poor through big data such as sudden changes in their medical expenditure or employment status, Xia said.

Anti-Crime Efforts

Law enforcement targeting illegal fishing and sand mining along the Yangtze River will become more effective as police forces along the river and customs authorities inked a cooperation agreement on April 1.

The effort will see the Yangtze River Shipping Public Security Bureau, which is in charge of law and order along the river's primary stream, joining hands with anti-smuggling forces in customs departments. They will also join police from 11 provincial-level areas along the river, the Ministry of Public Security announced.

China has continued to intensify its crackdowns on illegal fishing, illegal sand mining, and

illegal pollutant emissions along the Yangtze River.

A total of 8,024 suspects were apprehended, and 427 criminal rings were dismantled amid a three-year campaign against illegal fishing on the river, which was launched last June.

Pig Clones

Chinese scientists have completed a somatic cell cloning experiment, successfully facilitating the births of five pigs native to China, which will help reduce the threat of African swine fever to pig breeding, Xinhua News Agency reported on April 2.

The pigs, marked by their black hair and white feet, were cloned by a scientific team in Taicang City, Jiangsu Province. They are currently in good health.

If an outbreak of African swine fever were to occur at a breeding farm, it would pose a risk to genetic porcine resources, therefore the biological breeding technologies are necessary to strengthen the protection of such resources, said Gong Yuqing, who is a team researcher.

African swine fever is believed to infect only pigs, and no human or other species has thus



Practice Makes Perfect

Students from Oymak Boarding School ride horses during an equestrian class in Burqin County, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on March 29. The Oymak Boarding School began to offer equestrian classes at the end of 2019. Most students are from herdsman families.

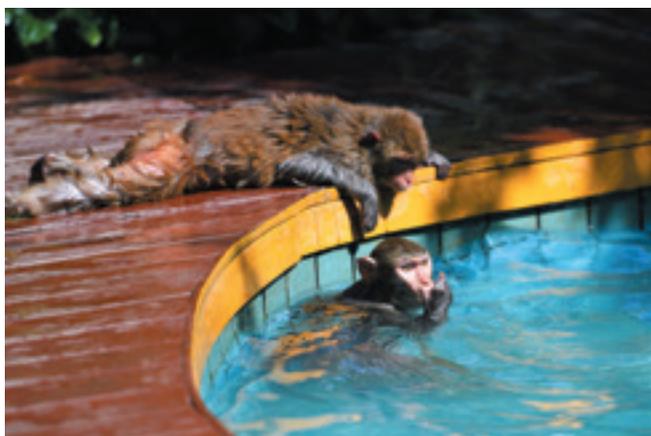
far been infected.

China reported its first case of the disease in August 2018 in Liaoning Province. Later outbreaks were reported across several other provinces.

Gong said that the team has collected ear tissue samples from six types of pigs native to China and cryopreserved 1,217

tubes of somatic cells since last year.

"Using somatic cells to clone pigs can realize the preservation of 100 percent of genetic materials," Wu Shenglong, a team member, said, adding that such cloning technologies can replicate particularly good native pigs in large numbers.



Fun Times

Macaques have fun at the Nanwan Monkey Islet in Lingshui County, Hainan Province, on April 4. Nanwan Monkey Islet is a nature reserve with over 2500 macaques.

Vehicle Ownership

In the first quarter of the year, 9.66 million new motor vehicles, including 7.5 million cars, were registered in China, the Ministry of Public Security said on April 6.

According to the ministry, this brought the total number of motor vehicles in the country to 378 million, including 287 million cars.

Newly registered new-energy cars reached 466,000, accounting for over 6 percent of total registrations. China currently has 5.51 million new-energy cars.

Altogether 8.39 million people obtained the driver's license in the first quarter. The number of licensed motor vehicle drivers reached 463 million, 425 million of whom were car drivers.

Seventy-two cities had more than 1 million cars by the end of March, five more than during the same period last year. Among them, Beijing had over 6 million

cars and Shanghai more than 4 million.

Boards Merged

The Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE) on April 6 merged its main board with its board of small and medium-sized enterprises amid efforts to unify business rules and supervision modes.

After 16 years of development, listed firms on both boards have converged in terms of market value, performance and trading characteristics, according to the exchange.

The merger conforms to the law of market development and it is also an inherent requirement for building a concise and clear market system, the SZSE said.

Issuance and listing conditions, investor thresholds, trading mechanisms, and stock codes and abbreviations remain unchanged after the merger.

Requiring only adjustments to parts of business rules, market products, technical systems, and issuance and listing arrangements, the merger will have little impact on market operations and investors' transactions in general, the exchange said.

According to the SZSE, fixed income products, futures, and options products would remain mostly unaffected, and the Shenzhen-Hong Kong stock connect program would not be affected either.

Cloud Gaming

The revenue of China's cloud gaming market is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 135 percent from 2020 to 2023, according to a report jointly released by the Tencent Research Institute and Newzoo, a global gaming and e-sports analytics provider.

The report said the estimated

revenue growth will be significantly higher than the global average of 101 percent, making China one of the leading potential markets.

The number of potential cloud game users in China is expected to reach 60.65 million in 2021.

As many educational, entertainment and social functions of televisions have been activated during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing recovery period, interactive entertainment in living rooms may provide additional opportunities for the development of cloud gaming, the report said.

Foreign Investment

China's securities market saw net inflows of overseas funds totaling \$254.7 billion last year, a surge of 73 percent year on year, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE)

Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



said in a report.

A total of \$190.5 billion went to bonds, up 86 percent from a year ago, and \$64.1 billion to equities, up 43 percent.

The report attributed the significant growth in Chinese securities' overseas holdings to China's promising economic development prospects, prudent monetary policy, and high-level opening up of the financial market.

Trade Fair

A total of 2.63 million exhibits had been submitted by 25,000 enterprises registered for the 129th Session of the China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair, according to the China Foreign Trade Center (Group), the organizer of the event, on April 2.

The fair will take place online between April 15 and 24, following two virtual events in

June and October of last year. It is expected to attract purchasers from more than 220 countries and regions, Chu Shijia, an official with the organizer, said.

During the pandemic, the online fair will not only help domestic foreign trade enterprises receive more orders and expand market opportunities, but also inject momentum into the global economic recovery by contributing to the stability of the global industrial and supply chains, Chu added.

Founded in 1957, the Canton Fair is seen as an important barometer of China's foreign trade.

Innovation Support

China Development Bank, one of the country's policy banks, has pledged to beef up its financial support for scientific and technological innovation during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

A total of 300 billion yuan (\$45.75 billion) under a special loan program for innovation and research will be arranged for the next five years, the bank said, adding that 50 billion yuan (\$7.62 billion) will be offered this year.

The special loan program will mainly be used for supporting fundamental research and original innovation to facilitate the implementation of strategic projects on science and technology, according to the bank.

Chongqing FTZ

The pilot free trade zone (FTZ) in Chongqing Municipality has recorded a boom in market entity registrations over the last four years, with emerging industries accounting for the lion's share, according to the municipal commission of commerce.

Over 50,000 enterprises have been established in the

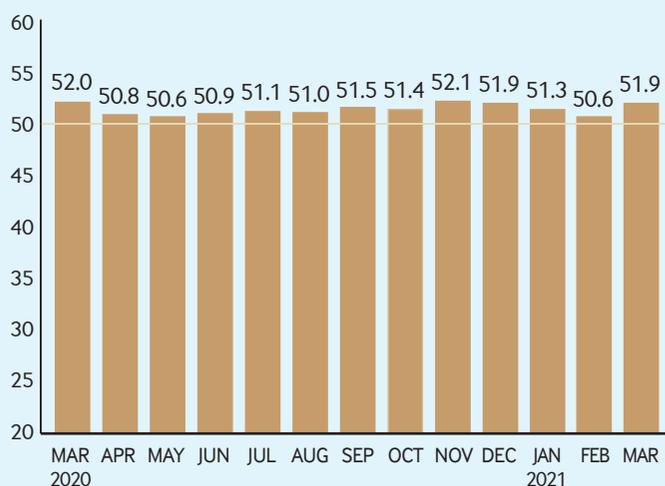
Chongqing FTZ since its creation in 2017, Zhang Zhikui, Director of the commission, said at a press briefing on March 31.

More than 75 percent of the newly registered enterprises are engaged in the transportation, information transmission, software and information technology services, and hi-tech industries, Zhang added.

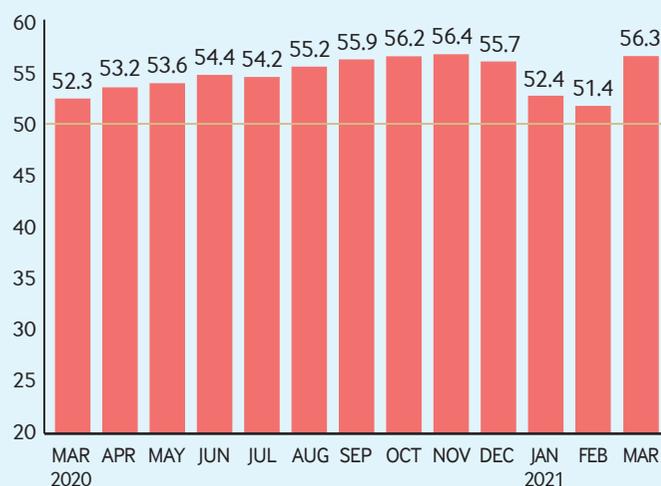
The FTZ is now home to one fourth of Chongqing's foreign trade firms, contributing approximately 70 percent of its import and export volume and attracting over 40 percent of foreign direct investment.

Chongqing was approved as a port of entry for imported pharmaceutical products in February. It is the only such port in west China and the fourth in the Chinese mainland following Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou in Guangdong Province.

Manufacturing PMI



Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



UNITED STATES

People march across New York City's Brooklyn Bridge in protest against anti-Asian hate crimes on April 4



RWANDA

President Paul Kagame and first lady Jeannette Kagame light the Flame of Remembrance for the 27th commemoration of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, at the Kigali Genocide Memorial on April 7



IMF

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Chief Economist Gita Gopinath speaks at a virtual press briefing in Washington, D.C., the U.S., on April 6. The IMF has projected that the global economy will grow by 6 percent in 2021



YEMEN

Local residents pay tribute to the Chinese martyrs who sacrificed their lives promoting the friendship between China and Yemen at a cemetery in Sanaa on April 5



PORTUGAL

People ride their bike past the Belem Tower in Lisbon on April 5, the day when the country's deconfinement program's second phase started



CAMBODIA

Police block National Road 5 to prevent cars from entering and leaving Phnom Penh on April 7. A 14-day ban on cross-province travel was imposed in an attempt to halt the spread of COVID-19



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

CHINESE BASKETBALL ICON MAKES FIBA HALL OF FAME CLASS

Nine players and three coaches featured on the list for the FIBA Hall of Fame Class of 2021, announced by the world basketball governing body on April 1. Former center of the Chinese women's team, **Zheng Haixia**, was one of them. She became the first Chinese player to earn such an accolade.

A long-serving member of the Chinese team, Zheng, born in 1967, led it to win Olympic bronze in 1984 and silver in 1992. She also finished third in 1983 and came in second in 1994 at the World Championships.



The Chinese Basketball Association on April 2 sent Zheng a congratulatory letter. "Zheng's achievements in the national team are not only her personal glory, but also the results of the concerted efforts from all members on the team. Their fighting spirit and determination on the court set a good example for young players," the letter said.

Created in 2007, the FIBA Hall of Fame currently features over 110 exceptional players and coaches from 37 countries and regions.

Customized Tour

Beijing Youth Daily

April 5

Customized tours have been gaining more favor with Chinese people. It has become an alternative option, aside from the traditional group or independent tours. Bearing in mind their consumers' specific needs, travel advisors help them design routes and arrange various affairs within their budgets.

Thanks to more enterprises operating within the business, residents living in third- and fourth-tier cities can also enjoy the services at lower prices. However, the industry still needs to establish a uniform

standard and introduce an evaluation mechanism.

Selling personalized services should not become the cradle of legitimate loopholes. Today, the contracts drafted by each individual company reduce the number of clauses clarifying the liabilities of the companies and advisors and shift some of the responsibilities onto the consumers. Additionally, they fail to highlight the risks which are necessary to remind people of before they pay for the products.

Hence, authorities such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the State Administration for Market Regulation should investigate any problems in this regard and draw up a standard model for tour agencies to follow.



To Have More Children

Oriental Outlook

April 1

China's population policy has been changing with time and demands. Since 2013, having two children is encouraged.

Today, besides the financial burden, how to further your career is a major worry for many, especially women, when coming face to face with the topic of

"As the demand for Chinese vaccines grows, it means that the international community has a positive evaluation of the high level and safety of Chinese vaccines."

Seymur Mammadov, Director of the international expert club EurAsiaAz, in an article on the *China Daily* website on April 3

"Clearly, ASEAN won't involve itself in any geopolitical games and the ASEAN mechanism can't be downplayed. With or without the U.S., China-ASEAN momentum will grow in view of the fast trade volume growth last year in spite of the epidemic."

Xu Liping, Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, in an interview with *Global Times* on April 5