

OPINION: LESSONS FROM AFGHANISTAN P.24 | FEATURES: FAIR FOR SERVICES TRADE P.32

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GOT TUTORING?

Double reduction policy changes the after-school landscape

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Study Burden Cut

Primary and junior-high school students and their parents across the country have seen some changes since the new school year started on September 1. Students have less homework, and their parents no longer need to correct the homework of their children. At the same time, the number of after-school tutoring institutions for primary and junior-high school students is reducing. These changes are the consequence of national guidelines to ease the burden of excessive homework and off-campus tutoring for students during the nine years of compulsory education. Known as the “double reduction” policy, the guidelines were issued at the end of July, and took effect this semester.

The policy is an important step in China’s boosting of more well-rounded educational practices. In addition to providing compulsory education, China is also working to develop an education system that enables young people to create a moral, intellectual, physical and mental grounding. China’s education system had become increasingly exam-oriented in recent decades due to the desire of achieving high scores in high school and the college entrance examinations. In addition, the extracurricular tutoring companies,

most of which privately funded, were producing social anxiety in the name of creating a better future for children. Each of these factors contributed to an excessive burden on primary and junior-high school students, and made education a results-oriented tool serving short-term interests, endangering the entire education system and even the mental health of the future generations.

The policy of easing study burden aims to help education resume its essential purpose with schooling as the cornerstone of the system, social education as the supplement and family education as the foundation, so as to better educate high-caliber talents for the country. No new academic course tutoring institutions will be approved; existing ones must register as non-profit organizations and are banned from going public for financing or receiving investments from listed companies.

The policy may bring back well-rounded education; however, the motivation to receive and offer exam-oriented learning will persist as long as exam scores remain the standard for entry to high schools and colleges. There is still a long way to go for China to transit from exam-oriented to well-rounded education. **BR**



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HIGHLAND HARVEST

The farmers of Kere Village in Dagze District, Lhasa, capital of Tibet Autonomous Region, harvest their highland barley on September 6.



Flood Preparedness

A view of the Three Gorges Dam in Hubei Province on September 6. Chinese authorities have called for rigorous anti-flooding measures along the Yangtze River as water levels continue to rise following heavy rainfall, the Ministry of Water Resources said on the same day.

Nurses Awarded

Three Chinese nurses were awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal on September 2 for their outstanding contributions to healthcare.

Wang Qishan, Chinese Vice President and Honorary President of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC), presented the medals to the nurses during a ceremony inside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

The Chinese awardees are Cheng Shouzhen from Guangdong Province, Hu Minhua from Jiangxi Province, and Tuo Yali from Gansu Province.

A total of 25 nurses from 18 countries won the medal this year.

The medal, introduced in 1912, is the highest international honor for nurses. A total of 83 Chinese nurses have won the award since the country first began to recommend candidates back in 1983.

Blacklisting Bribers

Chinese authorities will introduce a blacklist system for bribers to intensify the fight against corruption, according to a guideline.

Research shall be carried out to put in place punishments regarding bribers' market access and qualification restrictions, read the document published on September 8.

The document was jointly formulated by the Central Commission for Discipline

Inspection of the Communist Party of China and the National Supervisory Commission, as well as a series of Party departments and top judicial authorities.

Stressing that punishment shall be given to both those who take bribes and those who offer them, the guideline specifies how the investigation will focus on those committing multiple acts of bribery, large bribery or the bribery of many; Party members and state employees offering bribes; bribery in key areas and fields; and major commercial bribery.

It asks for measures to ensure that illegal assets obtained via bribery shall be confiscated, recovered, or restituted according to the law; and that other improper interests obtained, such as professional titles, political

honors, business qualifications and academic degrees, shall be canceled or revoked.

Fiber Battery

Chinese scientists have realized the scalable production of high-performing woven lithium-ion fiber batteries, bringing wirelessly charging electronics via clothes one step closer to reality.

Researchers from Fudan University have recently published their study in *Nature* journal, suggesting how the internal resistance of such fibers changes with their lengths, providing a theoretical support framework for the development of secure lithium-ion fiber batteries.

The 1-meter-long fiber developed by the research team is proven to be capable of powering wearable electronics including smartphones, smart bracelets and heart rate monitors continuously for an extended period of time.

Previously, the length of such batteries remained within the centimeter scale, preventing the weaving of the fibers into textiles.

Based on the new discovery, the researchers have managed to manufacture high-performing woven lithium-ion fiber batteries. After being integrated with wireless charging launchers, the textiles can become flexible and stable power solutions for smartphones, the team said.

More Teachers

The number of teachers in China has reached 17.93 million, an increase of 609,400, or 3.52 percent, from the year 2020, statistics from the Ministry of Education showed.

Of all subcategories, the number of special education teachers saw the most notable growth, which is 6.11 percent

higher than in 2020, the ministry said at a press conference on September 8.

The numbers of kindergarten teachers and teachers in higher education institutions grew 5.44 percent and 5.34 percent respectively, according to the ministry.

In 2021, a total of 1.9 million people in the country obtained their teaching certificates.

Airshow Debut

China's independently developed *AG600* large amphibious aircraft will perform its first airshow flight at the upcoming Airshow China, according to its developer, the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC).

Among the various key exhibits of China's homegrown aviation products, the *AG600* will showcase its capacities of aerial water-dropping at Airshow China, or the 13th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, AVIC spokesperson Zhou Guoqiang said.

The water-dropping performance will fully display the firefighting capacities of this large amphibious aircraft model, Zhou said.

Code-named *Kunlong*, the *AG600* is a key piece of aeronautical equipment in China's emergency rescue system. It

meets the needs of firefighting and marine rescue missions, as well as other critical emergency rescue operations.

The *AG600* is designed to operate in complex weather and environmental conditions. It successfully completed its maiden flight taking off from land in 2017, its first takeoff from a water reservoir in 2018, and its first takeoff at sea in 2020.

This year's Airshow China will take place from September 28 to October 3 in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province.

About 700 companies from 40 countries and regions, including the U.S., Britain, Germany, Russia, Canada and Brazil, will participate in the airshow both online and offline.

Digitalized Grottoes

Digitalization of the 1,600-year-old Jinta Temple Grottoes in the city of Zhangye, Gansu Province, has been completed, local authorities announced on September 8.

Launched in June, the digitalization project covers the grottoes' eastern and western caves, as well as the murals and colored sculptures inside.

Located in the Qilian Mountains, the grottoes, built on fragile red sandstone with an



New Release

A collection of the Palace Museum's themed calendars, published in different years, is on display in Beijing on September 6. The Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, released its calendar for 2022 that same day.

altitude of more than 2,800 meters, endure severe cold in winter and heavy humidity in summer. Though the local cultural protection authorities have taken the necessary measures, the grottoes still face several risks, including weathering and efflorescence, according to Yao Guilan, head of the Institute for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Zhangye.

"Digital technology can not

only help permanently preserve the cultural relics, but also provide essential data for future research and online exhibitions," Yao said.

The grottoes, famous for their unique high relief sculptures with the pattern of the flying Apsaras of Buddhist art, include more than 200 colored sculptures as well as murals spanning over 500 square meters.



Underwater Tunnel

The construction site of the Taihu Tunnel, part of the Changzhou-Wuxi Highway, in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, on September 5. The 10.8-km-long, 43.6-meter-wide tunnel is China's longest underwater highway tunnel and runs under Taihu Lake, the country's third largest freshwater lake.

Business Facilitation

The implementation of the Regulation on Improving the Business Environment will be advanced, and a market-oriented, world-class business environment governed by a sound legal framework will be nurtured across the nation, according to a State Council Executive Meeting on September 8.

As part of the efforts, pilot programs on improving the business environment will be launched in Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong Province, which are home to a relatively large number of market entities. The goal is to better meet the needs of market entities and the public and to align local reforms with advanced international standards.

During the first half of this year, 77,000 market entities were added on an average

day in China. "Revitalizing market entities is crucial for anchoring market expectations and maintaining steady economic performance," Premier Li Keqiang said at the meeting.

Pilot Scheme

A pilot trading scheme will be rolled out to encourage the consumption of green energy and accelerate China's low-carbon transition, the National Development and Reform Commission said on September 7.

According to the commission, the scheme will allow users with demand to trade directly with enterprises generating wind and solar power, with other renewable energy generation enterprises to be included in the future.

The commission did not specify a timeline for the scheme, but said it will work with the State Energy Administration

to manage it. The State Grid and the China Southern Power Grid will establish power exchange centers in Beijing and Guangzhou to facilitate the project.

Trade Growth

Trade between China and Africa rose 40.5 percent year on year to \$139.1 billion in the first seven months of the year, Vice Minister of Commerce Qian Keming said on September 3.

China's imports climbed 46.3 percent year on year to \$59.3 billion, with imports of rubber, cotton, coffee and other agricultural products doubling from the same period last year.

"China's direct investment in Africa reached \$2.07 billion in the seven months, outperforming the pre-pandemic level in the same period of 2019," Qian said.

He also noted that Chinese and African enterprises have boosted cooperation on

industrial and supply chains, construction of industrial clusters in manufacturing, agriculture, medicine and health, and exploration in emerging sectors such as clean energy, digital economy and 5G.

The Second China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo will take place in Changsha, Hunan Province, from September 26 to 29. In addition to offline activities, a cloud platform will be established to host online conferences, exhibitions and transactions. A report on China-Africa economic and trade relations is expected to be released at the expo.

Cooperation Plans

On September 6, central authorities issued a new plan for the further development of a zone created in 2010 for service industry cooperation between Shenzhen and the neighboring Hong Kong Special

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.5 yuan)

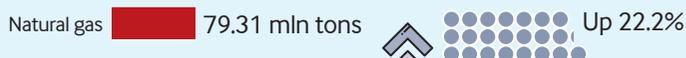
Foreign Trade in January-August

(All growth rates are y.o.y.)

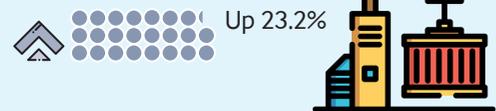
Total



Imports of energy products



Exports



Exports of labor-intensive products



Administrative Region.

The Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone is home to 11,500 Hong Kong-invested companies, with a registered capital of 1.28 trillion yuan (\$198 billion). The plan will see its area expand from 14.92 square km to 120.56 square km.

Qianhai will play an exemplary and leading role in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the plan said. By 2035, it will have a world-class business environment and become an engine for high-quality development with a strong capability in global resource allocation.

On September 5, a plan for establishing a Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin was also unveiled. Hengqin is located in the southern part of Zhuhai in Guangdong, just across the water from Macao Special

Administrative Region.

Covering approximately 106 square km, the zone will serve as a new platform to boost Macao's economic diversification and a new space providing convenience and enjoyment to Macao residents. The plan also defines the zone as a new model to enrich the practice of "one country, two systems," as well as a new high ground for the building of the GBA.

Consumption City

On September 5, the Beijing Municipal Commerce Bureau unveiled a plan to turn the city into an international center of consumption by opening thousands of new stores over the next five years.

Specific projects under the plan include new consumption landmarks, new brands, digital consumption and the development of cultural, tourism, sports, education and medical

consumption, according to the bureau.

Over 3,000 first, innovation and flagship stores of brands from both China and abroad are expected to open by 2025. The capital will also build approximately 10 cluster areas featuring domestic time-honored brands and fostering the development of more than 100 new brands.

"Through five years of effort, Beijing will become an international consumption center with global influence, competitiveness and reputation," Yan Ligang, head of the Beijing Municipal Commerce Bureau, said.

In July, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin and Chongqing were designated to take the lead in building international consumption center cities.

QDLP License

Singaporean company, ICHAM Pte. Ltd., has become the first

fund manager to obtain a license for conducting Qualified Domestic Limited Partner (QDLP) business in Chongqing.

The newly qualified firm has been granted a QDLP quota totaling \$200 million, according to the Administrative Bureau of the China-Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity.

The QDLP outbound investment scheme aims to offer channels for qualified domestic institutions to invest overseas. At the end of 2020, China launched the pilot QDLP program in Chongqing, with an assigned quota of \$5 billion.

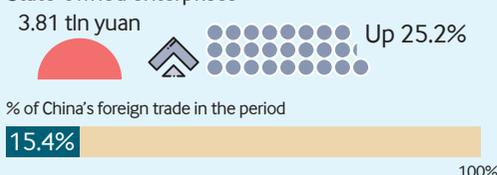
Prior to its launch in Chongqing, the pilot scheme was also launched in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen to promote the two-way opening up of financial markets.

ICHAM Pte. Ltd. will establish a private equity fund management firm and raise funds in China to invest in global projects.

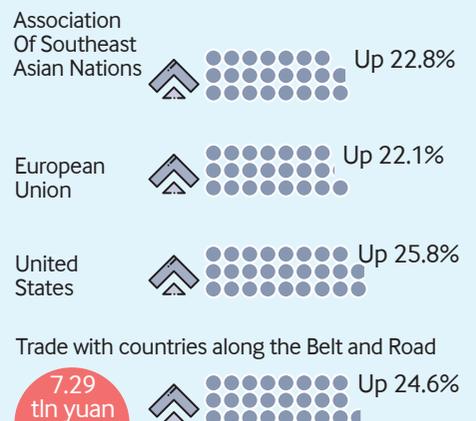
Foreign trade by Private enterprises



State-owned enterprises



Top three trading partners



(Source: General Administration of Customs)



UNITED NATIONS

The multinational peacekeeping exercise, Shared Destiny-2021, begins at a military training base in Henan Province, central China, on September 6. The 10-day-long drill focused on the joint operations conducted by peacekeepers from different nations



SPAIN

A teacher checks the temperature of students in Madrid on September 8. Around 8 million children in Spain started the new school year that day



GERMANY

Visitors take photos of the illuminated Brandenburg Gate during the Festival of Lights in Berlin on September 3. The festival lasted until September 12



AFGHANISTAN

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid announces the formation of Afghanistan's caretaker government during a press conference in Kabul on September 7. The spokesman said the remaining posts would be announced at a later date



SHUTTERSTOCK



SHUTTERSTOCK



SHUTTERSTOCK



FRANCE

A little boy is intrigued by plants at the Seventh World Conservation Congress in Marseille on September 4. Themed One Nature, One Future, the nine-day event ended on September 11



MEXICO

Evacuated residents are seen on the streets of Mexico City on September 7. A 7.1-magnitude earthquake shook the southern city of Acapulco that day, with tremors felt all the way in the capital of Mexico City as buildings rocked and swayed

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

NEW PRESIDENT OF JD.COM

Xu Lei, previously CEO of JD Retail, will take up the role of president of JD.com as the company's founder Richard Liu will stay on as chairman and CEO, but is stepping back from day-to-day operations.

Xu joined the company in 2009. In the past three years, while acting as retail head of the company, Xu has led JD.com's retail business to achieve high-quality growth.

In the second quarter of 2021, JD Retail accounted for 90 percent of JD.com's net revenue of 253.8 billion yuan (\$39.3 billion), according to company statistics.

In his new role, Xu is expected to take over the company's day-to-day workings and lead the collaborative development of the various business units of JD.com. These changes will allow Liu to switch his focus to formulating the Chinese e-commerce giant's long-term strategy.



Student Loan Aid

Guangming Daily
September 6

A State Council executive meeting on September 1 decided to improve loan aid for students from families in financial difficulty.

Since the onset of this fall semester, the government has raised the annual maximum amount to 12,000 yuan (\$1,857) for an undergraduate and a junior college student from 8,000 yuan (\$1,238). That of a post-graduate increases to 16,000 yuan (\$2,476) from a previous 12,000 yuan. The loan interests accumulated during their studies will be subsidized by national finance.

Generally, students from schools included in the Double First Class Universities initiative, which will participate in the country's construction plan of world-class universities and first-class disciplines, can obtain more access to the aid. Others, especially those private ones charging higher tuition fees, will receive less financial allocation from the government. The policy ensures that students from poorer families will get more support, which pushing forward more equality in the field of higher education.

In addition, the meeting also asked schools to increase efforts to provide more part-time jobs for students, thus creating more channels to relieve their financial burden.



A Positive Change

Lifeweek
August 30

After capital enters the film and TV series industry, the amount of Internet traffic generated becomes the index to evaluate any work. To up viewer numbers, investors, including video platforms, always ask for the participation of stars with huge fan bases.

Sun Wenji, a senior producer, started to work in the online drama market in 2017. During talks with various video-sharing platforms, she found the overall market

“China and the U.S. cannot strengthen green and low-carbon cooperation without sound and stable bilateral economic and trade ties... Unilateralism and trade protectionism harm the interests of both sides and undermine global economic recovery.”

Wang Shouwen, Vice Minister of Commerce, at a seminar during the 21st China International Fair for Investment and Trade, on September 8

“When it comes to an issue of global health, the first priority has to be science and facts... However, given the opaque nature of the evaluations used in the decision-making of the U.S. intelligence community, the amount of consideration given to science is questionable.”

Mohamed Waheed Hassan, former President of the Maldives, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency on September 3

philosophy to be that including certain “top-tier traffic Internet stars” in the cast will guarantee a hit show. So Sun and her team have to attract those influencers by offering them a wide range of good conditions, meaning more investment, higher profits and nicer interaction data. “This way, platforms, the market and the audience jointly push up the pay of stars with huge fan bases,” she said.

Nevertheless, a slew of recent scandals forced them to rethink the issue. For instance, Chinese-Canadian star Kris Wu was accused of rape and consequently arrested. As a result, one drama starring him, with an investment of 300 million yuan (\$46.4 million), cannot be released.

“The market finally saw that using those stars comes with uncertainties,” Chen Ziyang, an investor in the film and television industry, said. His team has not dabbled in the realm of online drama—dominated by stars with huge followings on social media.

Sun said they are increasingly detailing the terms of contract with celebrities, such as including how the companies will (or will not) be compensated during the production period if things go awry due to stars’ moral misbehavior.

“When the market stops focusing on Internet traffic and imposes stricter requirements on celebrities, we have more money and energy to create works of high quality,” she concluded.

Domestic Sports Brand

Economic Daily

September 5

The curtain has closed on the Olympic Summer Games Tokyo 2020, but domestic sports brands are still riding the wave of the Olympic season to usher in a surge in sales. According to the e-commerce section of TikTok, sales of sporting goods rose over 360 percent year on year during the season, and domestic brands will continue to perform well.

For instance, Li-Ning achieved a net profit of over 1.9 billion yuan (\$294 million) in the first six months of 2021, a year-

on-year increase of more than 180 percent. Chinese consumers are more supportive of their local brands, compared to global ones, a recent report released by Adidas read.

Along with an enhanced fitness consciousness, many Chinese today have cultivated exercising habits and are more willing to spend money on their new healthy hobbies.

With improved quality, domestic brands provide increasingly cost-effective products to the market, establishing their influence among consumers. At the same time, Chinese shoppers have formed a more mature attitude toward consumption, especially the younger generations who no longer blindly pursue foreign brands.

↓ ARMLESS SWIMMER BAGS FOUR GOLD MEDALS

Chinese para-swimmer **Zheng Tao** won four gold medals and broke his own 50-meter backstroke S5 world record by recording a time of 30.31 seconds at the Paralympic Summer Games Tokyo 2020.



Zheng, born in 1990, lost both his arms after getting electrocuted when he was a child. He took up swimming at the age of 13 and made his debut at the World Championships in the Netherlands six years later. Zheng has put a total of nine Paralympic medals to his name thus far, six of which are gold. His final medal also marked China’s 500th summer Paralympic gold since first participating in the games in New York City back in 1984.

His story has gone viral on the Internet, and social media users are impressed by his body strength, calling him a true inspiration.

“BRICS countries need to develop their roles as regional leaders, aid neighboring nations and boost cooperation with regions like Europe to inject BRICS momentum into global economic development.”

Jin Xin, Secretary General of the China Council for the BRICS Think Tank Cooperation, at the 2021 BRICS Forum on Partnership on New Industrial Revolution on September 7

“Following the signing of the RCEP pact, China needs to identify new zero-tariff items and service trade opening-up sectors of ASEAN, explore ASEAN’s diversified market and make good use of the RCEP cumulative rules of origin.”

Wang Qin, a professor with Xiamen University, commenting on China-ASEAN cooperation in an article published on *China Daily*, on September 8



A primary school workout in Hai'an, Jiangsu Province, on September 3

COVER STORY

RESHAPING EDUCATION

New policy relieves student burden and changes the landscape of the tutoring industry By Ji Jing

As the new semester started on September 1, Liu Jing, mother of a primary school pupil in Beijing, heaved a sigh of relief since her kid can now arrive at school at 8:20 a.m. on a weekday, about half an hour later than before.

“Although it’s only half an hour later, it allows us to have breakfast and get ready for school in a more leisurely manner,” Liu told *Beijing Review*.

The change comes courtesy of a new guideline issued by the central