

OPINION: CHINA'S 'COVID HORROR?' P.25 | FEATURES: *PUTONGHUA* IN XINJIANG P.36

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ONCE AND FUTURE

Xiongan New Area, a prototype of green and urban savviness

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 Xiongan: A Place of Ambition

THIS WEEK COVER STORY

12 A Futuristic City
China's prototype solution to its big city malaise is well underway

16 Sustainable Savviness
The Xiongan markers: innovative and high-quality development

18 A New Take on Urbanization
How Xiongan New Area cures Beijing's municipal woes

Cover Photo: A newly developed area in Xiongan, Hebei Province, on September 1, 2021 (XINHUA)

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OPINION

22 Toxins of Misinformation
In the face of crisis, media should help foster rational discussion

24 Shared Responsibilities for A Better World
China and the EU need to reexamine their partnership amid the Ukraine crisis

25 China Criticism Misses the Mark
There is no "COVID horror show" in China

26 The Thick Red Line
U.S. considers Taiwan the "trump card" to contain China

27 The Nation's Market Unification
Central guideline promotes better flow of goods and resources

FEATURES

30 The Conscious Choice
Dynamic zero-COVID approach protects those most vulnerable

34 Our Destiny: Common, or None

The world needs a dramatic change in the way it organizes its affairs

36 Schooling Hope

Learning *putonghua* can unlock the unbridled potential of Xinjiang's youth

38 Comfort Food

Open kitchen serves up a taste of home for hospital patients

40 The Vocal Bridge

An Australian Beijinger on voice acting and creating a home in China

CULTURE

44 Beijing Bop

China's capital and underground music

46 A Sight for Sore Winter Eyes

As spring makes its entrance, Beijing turns into a floral tableau

EXPAT'S EYE

48 Imitation to Innovation

A Mexican entrepreneur on the "designed in China" label



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Xiongan: A Place of Ambition

Just some 100 km southwest of Beijing, a new economic zone called Xiongan New Area is dynamically developing.

From laying the first brick, this city of the future today enters an important stage of simultaneously taking over non-capital functions from Beijing and advancing its own development.

First announced in April 2017, Xiongan New Area serves the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. President Xi Jinping said its establishment marked a strategic choice—one of profound historic significance.

The combined forces of Beijing and its environs are important drivers of national economic growth. Yet on the north China spectrum, the two poles of Beijing and Tianjin are too “thick,” whereas the neighboring small and medium-sized cities are too “thin” by comparison. Hebei Province, especially, lags far behind Beijing and Tianjin in development, resulting in an imbalanced urban-rural structure.

Xi has outlined the major strategy for the promotion of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region’s coordinated development. Its primary principle is to explore a model of optimized expansion in densely populated areas by relieving Beijing of functions nonessential to its role as the national capital

and find a Chinese way to address the nation’s “urban disease,” referring to a variety of problems existing in social management and public services stemming from the imbalance between a rising population and comparatively limited urban resources.

This also serves as the overall blueprint for China’s concept of coordinated development. China’s economy has shifted from a stage of high-speed growth to one of high-quality development, raising the bar for synchronized regional progress. Different regions should adapt to their respective essential functions and local conditions. It is necessary to create new powerhouses that can drive nationwide change, especially the three major regions of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta.

Coordinated development involves improving and implementing the strategy of functional zoning, formulating different policies for key development areas, eco-fragile areas as well as areas with abundant energy and resources, making the market take on a crucial role in resource allocation, and expanding the regional cooperation mechanism.

Ready to take over Beijing’s non-capital tasks and walking its own path toward success, Xiongan has set its priorities. **BR**



WRITE TO US

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PEOPLE-CENTERED

Chinese President Xi Jinping talks with villagers in Maona, a village of the Li ethnic group in the city of Wuzhishan, Hainan Province, on April 11. Xi carried out an inspection tour of the island province on April 10-13.

During the visit, he called for swifter action in establishing a free trade port (FTP). The development of the Hainan FTP was first proposed by Xi in 2018 at a meeting to mark the 30th anniversary of the Hainan Special Economic Zone.



High Tea Time!

A volunteer shoots a video introducing Yunwu tea, literally meaning cloud and mist tea, to boost online sales at a tea garden on Anding Mountain of Lishan Town in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, on April 8. Local authorities have implemented various measures to improve the added value of the tea and increase local incomes.

Family Education Plan

A five-year plan on the guidance and development of family education has been released by 11 relevant agencies, including the Ministry of Education and the All-China Women's Federation, Xinhua News Agency reported on April 12.

By 2025, the number of guidance service providers for family education will be increased substantially, a professional workforce will be formed, and the supply of relevant social resources will be greater, according to the plan.

The plan also calls for efforts to revamp family education policies, explore pathways for

launching guidance institutions, and expand the building of education venues for parents in primary and secondary schools, kindergartens and communities that conduct regular guidance sessions.

Leopard Population Increase

Wildlife experts have discovered that the population of wild leopards in northern China is increasing, with research showing the animals establishing themselves in new mountainous areas, Xinhua reported on April 9.

The discovery results from a decade-long survey courtesy of a team led by Feng Limin, Deputy Director of the Monitoring and

Research Center of Siberian Tigers and Amur Leopards under the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Their research shows there are wild leopards in the main mountain ranges in north China, and sustainable growth populations have been formed in some areas, with wild leopard populations showing a trend of spreading to new areas.

"Our monitoring in the Ziwuling Mountains of Shaanxi Province shows that the population of leopards in this area is around 110, with a population density of 2.4 per 100 square km," Feng said.

It is the largest known local community of wild leopards in China, according to the team.

Leopard numbers in north China dropped drastically in the second half of the 20th century. The animals now enjoy the highest national-level protection in China.

Stadium Renovation

A new steel structure, built as part of the ongoing works at Beijing Workers Stadium, was completed. The historic sports complex is undergoing protective renovation, according to Beijing Major Projects Construction Headquarters Office, as reported by Xinhua on April 10.

Li Xijie from Beijing Construction Engineering Group, Deputy Manager of the renovation project, said that the canopy structure used approximately 16,400 tons of steel.

The canopy will provide shade, lighting, water supply and drainage, snow melting, photovoltaic power generation, sound absorption and noise reduction functions, and will greatly improve the venue's functionality.

A maintenance system composed of multiple structural layers such as rapid drainage, automatic sprinkler irrigation, low-temperature heating and vacuum ventilation is also built under the turf.

The renovation project is scheduled to be fully completed by the end of 2022, and it will host the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as the final, of the AFC Asian Cup in 2023.

Preserving Ancient Books

Chinese central authorities have issued a set of guidelines on stepping up the preservation and publication of ancient books, Xinhua reported on April 11.

Ancient books are vital to China's efforts to carry on its cultural traditions, foster a Chinese

ethos and enhance its cultural strength, said the document jointly issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council.

More resources will go to thorough surveys of ancient books across the country, improved storage facilities and security measures, as well as the restoration of endangered ancient books, including those in ethnic-minority languages, it said.

The document also promised greater efforts to compile and publish ancient books, as well as to digitize them. Libraries and archives are encouraged to open their collections and digital resources to the public.

Efforts will also be made to raise public awareness at home and abroad, and to encourage more people to read ancient books.

Travel Agency Support

China is allowing travel agencies to withdraw their travel service quality sureties or to postpone payments, as part of efforts to cushion the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a government circular said on April 11.

The deadline for contributions has been extended to March 31, 2023, said the circular released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which noted that the policy does not apply to travel agencies contributing the surety in the form of bank guarantees or insurance, or those whose surety has been frozen by court order.

China requires travel agencies to contribute a surety for travel service quality, which is used to compensate tourists who have suffered from substandard services or to pay for emergency aid to members of tour groups whose personal safety is in danger.

Smooth Freight Transport

China has called for all possible efforts to be made to ensure the smooth transportation of medical and COVID-19-prevention materials, daily necessities, and postal and express deliveries, Xinhua reported on April 12.

Local authorities are prohibited from blocking or closing expressways, ordinary roads, waterways or ship locks without authorization, according to a circular issued by the State Council COVID-19 Response Inter-agency Task Force.

The circular noted that



Back to School

Students finish class at a primary school in Qingdao, Shandong Province, on April 11. Primary and middle schools in the city resumed classes that day following a curb of COVID-19 resurgence.

expressway services areas, ports, docks, railway stations and airports must not be shut down without authorization.

It further said that freight vehicles and passengers of these vehicles must not be arbitrarily restricted.

The document urged for the establishment of material transfer stations in hard-hit areas for the transit of emergency supplies.

Traffic permits recognized across the country should be issued to vehicles carrying important supplies, the circular said, urging to ensure the operations of postal and express delivery vehicles.

It also said free nucleic acid testing services should be offered to truck drivers and ship crew members, and that they should be provided with basic living services when stranded due to the pandemic.



E-Learning

Students at Lhasa Ali High School attend a class given by a teacher from Gaoxin No. 1 High School in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, via an online education system in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, on April 8. The program provides online teaching and research cooperation between the two schools with the help of the 5G network.

THIS WEEK ECONOMY

FTP Construction

Thirty-six projects worth 13 billion yuan (\$2 billion) were signed on April 11 as part of efforts to develop the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP).

The projects cover fields including modern logistics, biomedicine, high-end manufacturing, the digital economy, offshore trade, business aviation, modern finance, and hi-tech agriculture, Hainan provincial authorities said.

Among all, 21 relate to the biomedicine industry, which is also among the provincial capital Haikou's main economic driving engines. By the end of last year, biomedicine was worth 37.6 billion yuan (\$5.9 billion) in Haikou alone.

The city is building itself into an integrated institutional innovation demonstration base for the FTP's biomedicine sector.

Haikou's biomedicine industry is expected to rake in 100 billion yuan (\$15.7 billion) in

operating revenues by 2025 and this figure will double by 2030, according to Liu Liwu, Deputy Mayor of Haikou.

Yuan Loans

New yuan-denominated loans totaled 3.13 trillion yuan (\$491.8 billion) in March, central bank data showed on April 11.

The figure, higher than the market forecast of 2.8 trillion yuan (\$439.9 billion), marked an increase of 395.1 billion yuan (\$62 billion) over the same period last year.

The M2, a broad measure of money supply that covers cash in circulation and all deposits, increased 9.7 percent year on year to 249.77 trillion yuan (\$39.2 trillion) at the end of the month, according to the People's Bank of China. The growth rate was 0.3 percentage point higher from the same period last year.

The outstanding amount of M1, a narrow measure of money

supply which covers cash in circulation plus demand deposits, stood at 64.51 trillion yuan (\$10.1 trillion) at March end, up 4.7 percent year on year.

At the same time, the outstanding amount of M0, the amount of cash in circulation, went up 9.9 percent from a year ago to 9.51 trillion yuan (\$1.49 trillion).

In the first quarter of 2022, the central bank injected a total of 431.7 billion yuan (\$67.8 billion) of net cash into the market, the data showed.

Foreign Trade

Total imports and exports expanded 10.7 percent year on year to 9.42 trillion yuan (\$1.47 trillion) in the first three months of 2022, data from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) showed on April 13.

In U.S. dollar terms, the volume improved 13 percent year on year, the data showed.

Exports surged 13.4 percent

year on year to 5.23 trillion yuan (\$821.6 billion), while imports rose 7.5 percent to 4.19 trillion yuan (\$658.2 billion), leading to a surplus of 1.04 trillion yuan (\$163.4 billion).

Mechanical and electrical product exports went up 9.8 percent to account for 58.4 percent of the total, while exports of labor-intensive products increased 10.9 percent.

"China's foreign trade has sustained growth momentum and posted positive year-on-year expansion for seven consecutive quarters, demonstrating its great resilience and potential," Li Kuiwen, a GACC spokesperson, said.

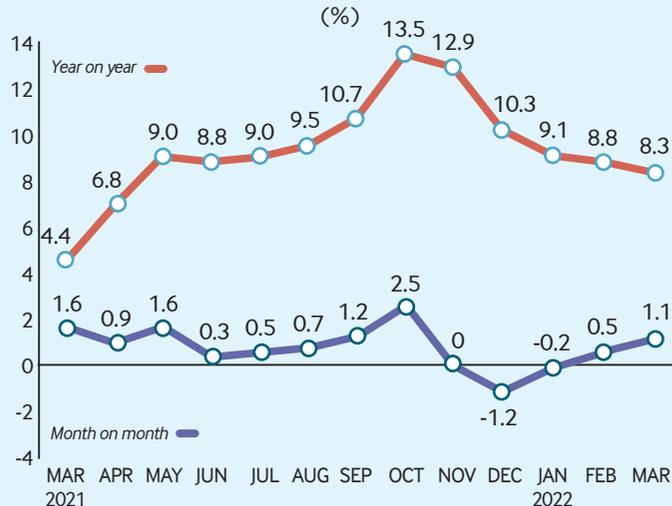
China's trade with its major trading partners—the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the EU and the United States—gained 8.4 percent, 10.2 percent and 9.9 percent from a year ago, respectively.

Imports and exports between China and other Belt and Road

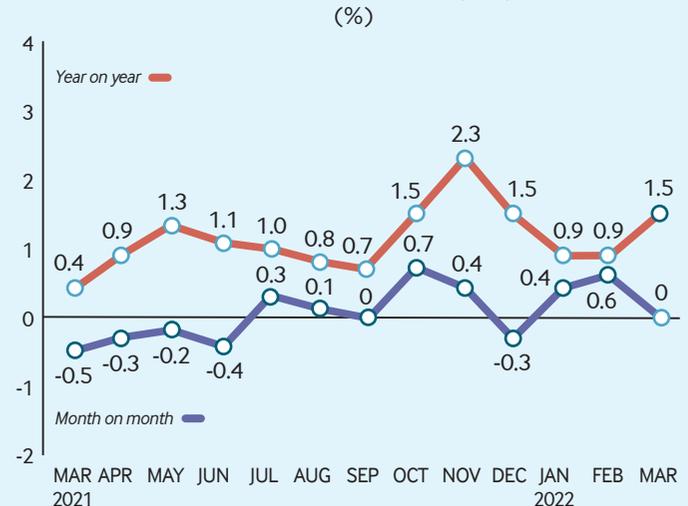
NUMBERS

(\$1=6.35 yuan)

China's Producer Price Index Growth



China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth



Initiative participants saw an impressive jump of 16.7 percent, reaching 2.93 trillion yuan (\$460.3 billion).

The 14 other members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership accounted for 30.4 percent of China's imports and exports, with the volume expanding 6.9 percent year on year to 2.86 trillion yuan (\$449.3 billion).

Logistics Price Index

China's road logistics price index remained basically flat in March from a year ago, industry data showed.

It came in at 100.3, up 2.03 percent on a monthly basis, according to a survey jointly conducted by the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing and Guangdong Lin'an Logistics Group.

The sub-index for full truckload logistics price mainly measuring bulk commodity and

regional transportation stood at 100.8, rising 1.98 percent from February and edging up 0.03 percent year on year.

Demand for road transportation saw a decline, driven by multiple factors including the sporadic resurgence of COVID-19 and geopolitical conflicts, according to the survey.

The index is based on the average price in the last week of December 2012, with the monthly index starting point at 100.

Air Freight Route

A new air freight route was launched linking the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen with Leipzig, Germany, Shenzhen Baoan International Airport said on April 12.

The route is operated by the cargo airline AeroLogic, with six round trips made by Boeing 777 all-cargo aircraft each week.

Shenzhen in Guangdong Province is a research and

development center and manufacturing hub in sectors such as electronic products, hi-tech equipment, auto parts, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology.

The opening of this new route can better meet the strong aviation logistics market demand in Shenzhen and its surrounding areas, and further promote the economic and trade exchanges between south China and Europe, the airport said.

FTA Upgrade

A protocol for upgrading the free trade agreement (FTA) between China and New Zealand took effect on April 7, aiming to further facilitate bilateral trade and investment.

The two sides will further open up their markets for goods, services and investment while optimizing rules to promote trade facilitation, according to the protocol.

Bilateral cooperation will

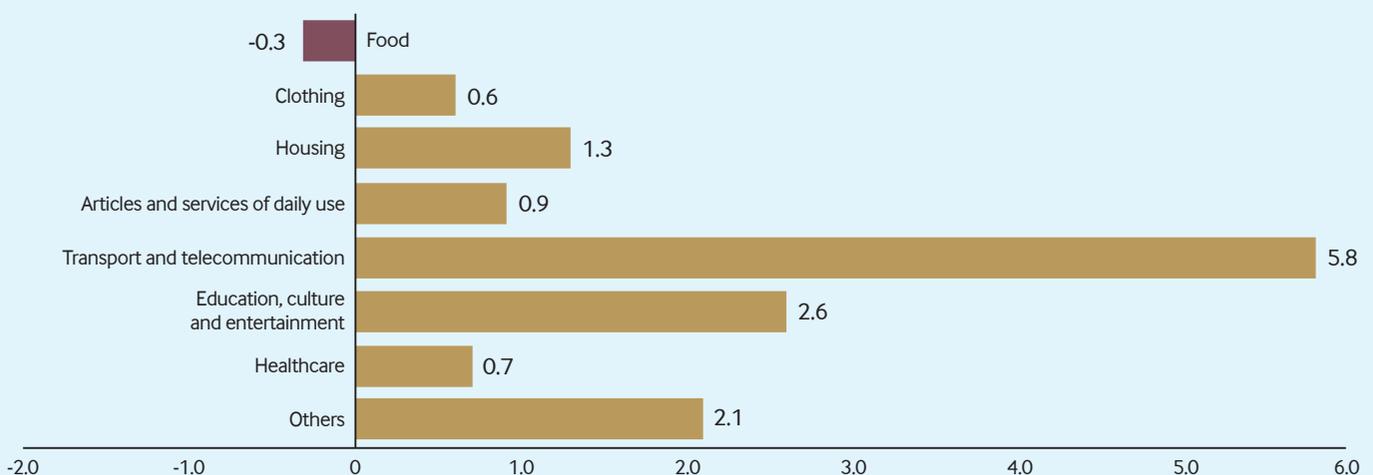
also be strengthened in the fields of e-commerce, competition policy, government procurement, the environment and trade.

The upgraded agreement has improved the quality and efficiency of bilateral trade relations on the basis of the China-New Zealand FTA and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said.

It is expected to help deepen pragmatic cooperation in multiple fields between the two sides, release the dividends of high-level opening up, promote bilateral trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and constantly enrich the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

China signed an FTA with New Zealand in April 2008, which came into force in October the same year. They concluded the three-year negotiations on the upgrade in November 2019 and signed a protocol in January 2021.

China's CPI Growth by Type
March (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



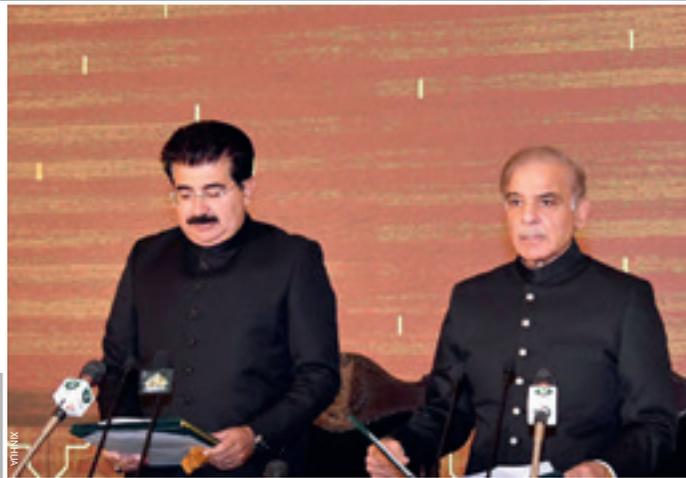
UNITED STATES

Police and investigators at work on a nearby street following a shooting inside a subway station in Brooklyn, New York City, on April 12. At least five people were shot and over 20 were injured, according to local media reports



MALTA

A woman receives a second COVID-19 booster shot at a retirement home in Marsa on April 13. Malta has begun administering the second booster shot to around 4,000 retirement home residents



PAKISTAN

Shahbaz Sharif (right) takes the oath as prime minister of Pakistan during a ceremony at the President House in Islamabad on April 11





FRANCE

A voter casts her ballot at a polling station in Clichy near Paris on April 10. Incumbent President Emmanuel Macron and far-right wing candidate Marine Le Pen are leading in the first round of the presidential election



BELGIUM

A man in costume attends the 20th Festival of Ouffet in Liege Province on April 10. The two-day event featured performances, markets and various activities centering on medieval culture



RWANDA

President Paul Kagame (center) and first lady Jeannette Kagame light the flame of remembrance at the Kigali Genocide Memorial in Kigali on April 7, as Rwandans marked the 28th anniversary of the country's 1994 killings



↓ OLYMPIC CHAMPION MAKES MASCOT DONATION

Wu Dajing, a winter Olympic champion, announced in a post on social media he had donated all the money from auctioning off the mascot for Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 medalists to charity. He'd received the golden roly-poly panda Bing Dwen Dwen during the games as a souvenir.

At an online auction in early April, the mascot, bearing Wu's signature, was sold to the highest bidder at a cool 920,000 yuan (\$144,532).

A further eight posters signed by the athlete were auctioned off, bringing the total amount to 969,500 yuan (\$152,308). All auction proceeds went to the China Youth Development Foundation.

Wu won China the gold in the short track speed skating 2000m mixed relay event at the 2022 Winter Olympics in February.



Too Heavy a Price to Pay

Workers' Daily
April 12

Some Chinese cities have been hit hard by the most recent COVID-19 resurgence. To sever the chain of virus transmission, several of the measures taken have been so tough they might not necessarily help with virus containment, but will somewhat backfire.

The transport industry, considered vulnerable to virus transmission, easily gets in the crossfire. In some areas, expressways, major motorways, even country roads, are blocked; in some extreme cases, other places are denying truckers access to

various expressway service areas.

These trucks are carrying goods and groceries urgently needed by residents in lockdown, as well as materials and parts crucial for businesses to sustain normal operations. Many sectors are depending on these logistics for their income—and survival.

In response to this plight, the Ministry of Transport has required that road infrastructure must remain uninterrupted, as any disruptions will severely affect daily life and economic activity in locked-down areas. The nation must curb the virus at the lowest possible cost, instead of having people pay the heaviest of prices: their lives.



Safety First

Outlook Weekly
April 11

In the new era, China has to deal with complicated internal and external situations. Accompanied by a wide range of challenges and risks, the country must do the utmost to

“In times of crisis, more trade is needed to ensure stable, equitable access to necessities. Restricting trade will threaten the wellbeing of families and businesses and make more fraught the task of establishing a durable economic recovery from COVID-19.”

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organization, in a remark as the organization published its annual trade statistics and outlook report on April 12

“We call on parties involved in the Ukraine situation to strictly abide by international humanitarian laws, effectively protect women and children, respect and guarantee civilian nature and the safety of facilities such as schools and hospitals, and provide evacuation and medical assistance to women and children in need.”

Dai Bing, China's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a Security Council meeting on Ukraine on April 11

maintain political and social stability and ensure a safe and peaceful environment for development.

The concept of safety is no longer limited to life and property, but covers various aspects like political, economic, cultural, social and ecological security.

A peaceful life and a prosperous society are the most basic wishes of the population, and national security therefore features at the top of the country's agenda. For example, the past five years have seen no new terrorist attacks courtesy of a series of domestic counter-terrorism efforts. China always stands ready to promptly deal with subversive and secessionist actions. The country's political security is well protected in a complicated international framework and rapidly changing domestic situation.

Public security is linked to daily life. Currently, China has one of the world's lowest murder and general criminal offence rates. Thanks to comprehensive social safety management and a crackdown on cybercrime, transnational crime and various illegal activities posing a threat to social safety, China has managed to establish a safe environment, a real feat in a country of 1.4 billion people.

Focus on the Fake

Economic Daily

April 12

The safety of agricultural materials is directly linked to the quality and safety of products. And so this year, seven ministries have joined hands in the fight against counterfeit agricultural materials.

The 2021 statistics showed that sampling qualification rates for seeds, agrochemicals, veterinary drugs as well as feeds were all above 95 percent. But the focus should home in on the online

marketing of fake agricultural materials. Given these products are sold on e-commerce platforms, they are circulated nationwide, allowing them to cause extensive damage.

Unqualified agricultural materials can inflict huge damage on farmer undertakings and incomes. If they procure fake seeds, plant output will decline; if they acquire fake veterinary drugs, they'll stand to lose their livestock. It's crucial for watchdogs to prevent these counterfeits from entering the market.

↓ JD'S NEW CEO

Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com announced that **Xu Lei**, President of JD, will succeed Liu Qiangdong as CEO of the company. Xu will also join JD's board of directors as executive director.

In September 2021, Xu was appointed president of JD, in charge of the operation and collaborative development of several company business units. Since joining JD in 2009, Xu has held various senior roles, including CEO of JD Retail, chief marketing officer of JD, head of JD Wireless, and head of marketing.

Liu will stay on as chairperson of the board and focus on guiding the company's long-term strategies, mentoring younger management, and contributing to the revitalization of rural areas.



“The two civilizations (China and Africa) embraced the trinity of mutual cooperation, equal partnership and solidarity to undergird their relations in our turbulent post-liberal international order.”

Peter Kagwanja, Chief Executive of the Nairobi-headquartered Africa Policy Institute, in a commentary published in daily newspaper *The Nation*, on April 10

“The black sites are... typical examples of the U.S. trampling the rule of law and violating human rights.”

Zhao Lijian, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, at a regular press briefing on April 8, commenting on U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's "black sites" established in many countries, where alleged terrorists are secretly placed in arbitrary detention and confessions are obtained through torture



COVER STORY

A FUTURISTIC CITY

Blueprint to execution, Xiongan construction upholds the highest quality standards

By Ji Jing