

# COMMENT

## Editorials

### Western media’s badmouthing of China’s fight with virus unsavory

After China made major adjustments to its prevention and control policy, overseas reports about that have been full of schadenfreude, employing such terms as “failure” or “crisis” to describe the recent surge in infections in the country.

But that is a false assessment of the situation, and simply reveals their animosity toward China.

What they fail to take note of is the fact that life in an increasing number of cities is returning to normal. The number of serious cases has remained manageable, and many of those infected have recovered after a few days.

It is natural that there should be a surge of infections in the country after the lifting of mobility restrictions given the transmissibility of the Omicron strain of the novel coronavirus.

There is no denying that what the country did in its response to COVID-19 over the past three years has been a success. Despite having the world’s largest population, the death toll from the virus is among the lowest, and economic activities had been maintained, albeit to varying extents.

The Chinese government implemented the dynamic zero-COVID policy because it places people’s lives above everything and considers it the top priority to keep people safe from the virus.

It adjusted the policy more than a month ago because the Omicron variant, though much more transmissible, is much less pathogenic than the

previous variants of the virus. It is also because the majority of the population has been vaccinated, which will prevent many infections from developing into serious cases.

The fact that life has begun to return to normal in more and more cities has verified it was the right time to adjust the COVID-19 policy. It is good to see governments at various levels are taking concrete measures to ensure the supply of medicines and health services, and it is clear they were well aware of what would occur after the policy shift and that the focus is still on saving lives.

There are media outlets in the West that have no qualms about speaking ill of whatever the Chinese government does. The dynamic zero-COVID policy, which was meant to save lives and which indeed kept the pandemic at bay for more than three years, was described as prohibiting people’s freedom.

Now amid the surge of infections, a natural result of the scientifically determined adjustment in policy, they are only too happy to describe it as a “crisis” or “failure” of China’s COVID-19 response, belying the facts.

In the eyes of these Western media, nothing China does can be right. It is the bias they harbor against China that pulls the wool over their eyes.

The pandemic has entered a new stage, and it is time to fully fire up the country’s economic engine, but China will continue to focus on a science-based fight against the virus and continue to make saving lives the priority.

### Loopholes for foreign meddling must be plugged

Those claiming that Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, founder of Hong Kong media group Next Digital, who faces charges under the special administrative region’s national security law, has the right to hire any lawyer he likes to defend him, even if he or she has no local qualifications, are the same ones that he colluded with or who supported him in his transforming of a normal debate on a proposed extradition bill into a large-scale protest and then prolonged public disorder.

Considering the sensitivity of Lai’s national security charges, one of which was that he was suspected of “colluding with a foreign country or external elements to endanger national security”, it goes against common sense that his request should be granted as it would open a new channel for foreign powers to intervene in China’s internal affairs.

That’s why the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has submitted a request to the 13th National People’s Congress Standing Committee, which is convening its 38th session in Beijing, to further interpret the national security law in response to Lai’s request.

Lai’s case is by no means the only one of its kind that will go to court in the SAR. It is therefore right that the country’s top legislature should give an explicit interpretation of the national security law

as the SAR government has requested, and thus provide a clear-cut answer to whether it is lawful for defendants to hire foreign lawyers to represent them in court.

Those criticizing the SAR government’s move don’t care about the integrity of the SAR’s legal system or the future of Hong Kong, they are just trying to exploit Lai’s trial for their own ends. They hope to turn Lai’s trial into a soapbox to discredit the national security law, the SAR government and the central authorities.

Just as they did in sponsoring their proxies to run for seats in Hong Kong’s legislature so as to corrode Hong Kong’s governance system, they are hoping to subvert the legal system so it can be used as a tool to serve their own ends.

If the SAR government accedes to Lai’s request that he be allowed to hire a British barrister, it could potentially chisel a hole in the legal and judicial system of the SAR, which has been remarkably strengthened by mending its fences to fend off external interference.

Whether Lai will be allowed to hire a British barrister to defend his national security trial as he has requested hinges upon China’s top legislature’s interpretation of the Nation Security Law of Hong Kong, not the will of any external forces.

### Border reopening will boost recovery

Foreign diplomatic missions and chambers of commerce have welcomed China’s decision to ease the restrictions on cross-border travel, noting that this will clear the way for the resumption of people-to-people exchanges and business travel, rebuild foreign investors’ confidence in the Chinese market and contribute to restoring optimism and reinstating China as a popular investment destination.

The provisional measures announced on Wednesday are based on a comprehensive assessment of the mutation of the virus, the pandemic situation, and ongoing response efforts. It will facilitate the recovery of international exchanges and cooperation and help economic and social activities get back to normal more quickly.

The policy changes, which are in line with the pandemic prevention and control policy, will make cross-border travel safe, orderly and efficient, and give a timely boost to economic development.

The messages from the embassies and business societies of various countries show that China’s reopening its borders is viewed as being a boon for the global economy. On Wednesday, the French embassy in China posted the message “Chinese friends, France welcomes you with open arms!” The embassies or tourism bureaus of Thailand, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain and Austria all expressed similar sentiments.

The international business community also

welcomed the move. Via its official WeChat public account, the German Chamber of Commerce in China said that “With that, the much-needed confidence in China’s business environment will surely return next year.” The chambers of commerce of the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union conveyed similar views.

The expressions of welcome from tourism bureaus, embassies and chambers of commerce are from the heart, as the move heralds a big boost for the global economy, not least the tourism sector, which has been especially hard hit by the pandemic. In 2019 alone, China had 154 million visitors traveling abroad, who each spent \$800 on average.

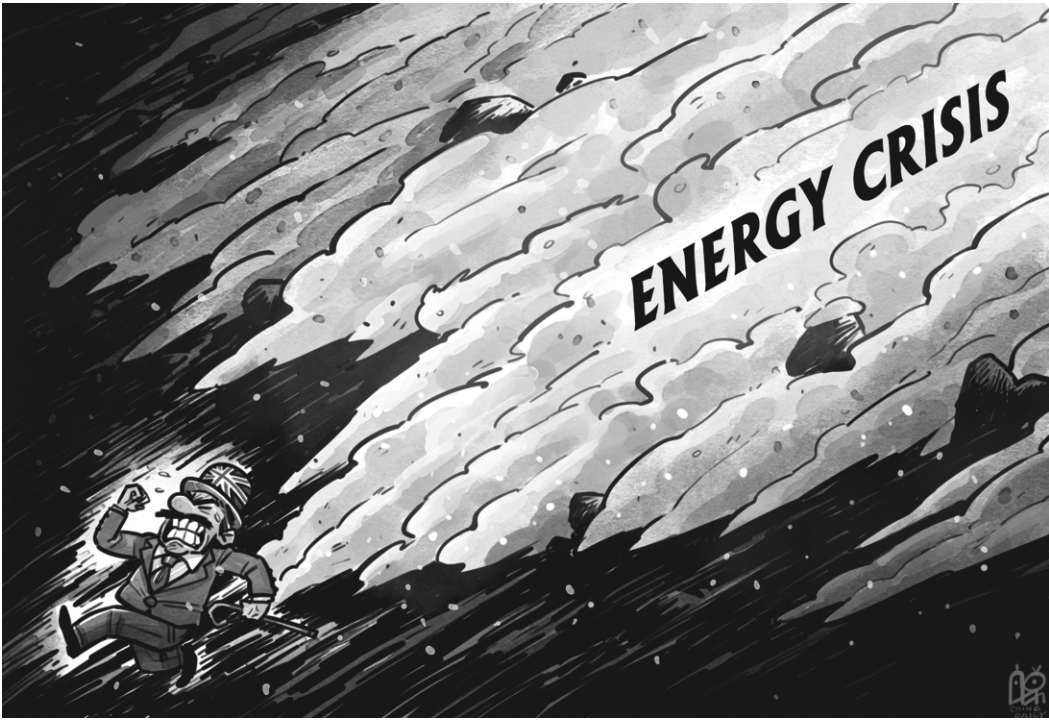
On its official micro blog account, the tourism authority of Thailand said that “Thailand has been waiting for you for three years”.

It has indeed been three years. China and the rest of the world have missed each other.

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a regular news briefing that China will further refine the arrangements in line with the evolving COVID situation and is ready to work with all parties to strengthen international anti-epidemic cooperation, maintain the security and stability of the global industry and supply chains and promote the recovery of world economic growth.

The resumption of cross-border travel signals unequivocally that China is committed to unwaveringly expanding its opening-up.

Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

### Securing job market key to high-quality development

The recent data released by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security show that 11.45 million new urban jobs were created in China in the first 11 months of this year, including 4.76 million jobs for urban unemployed people and 1.63 million jobs for people facing problems finding jobs, achieving the annual goal of creating 11 million jobs ahead of schedule.

Employment not only has a bearing on people’s livelihoods, but also on the overall economy. Because of multiple factors, China’s employment situation has experienced fluctuations since the beginning of this year, but with the introduction of a variety of measures to stabilize the economy, as well as coordinated efforts to promote epidemic prevention and control and economic and social development, the employment situation has remained generally stable.

Given the increasing downward pressure on the economy, the reali-

zation of employment goals ahead of schedule is a hard-won achievement. Stabilizing market players, such as the large number of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, is key to successfully stabilizing employment. Only by helping as many market entities as possible survive the difficulties and maintain jobs can an overall stable employment situation be realized.

Key groups have stepped in to stabilize China’s employment situation. Since March, because of repeated outbreaks of the pandemic and the strained international situation, domestic market players have been facing difficulties, making it difficult for college graduates and migrant workers to find jobs. The authorities have carried out a special online recruitment drive providing more services to unemployed college graduates, and implemented special skills training programs helping young people find jobs. Many local

governments have taken measures to support migrant workers start businesses.

The emergence of new types of jobs has also helped China expand its employment space. With the implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy and the optimization of the economic structure, new technologies, industries, and business forms and models have emerged, bringing new jobs. Estimates say, by 2025, China’s demand for new professional talents will exceed 30 million, which will include the demand for 5 million artificial intelligence talents and 10 million digital managers.

If the country continues to prioritize employment, give full play to the labor market, and promote better integration of the market and government, it will create multiple channels for employment and inject endless talents into its high-quality development.

— BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

### Efforts to lure workers good for economy

Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province, is reportedly issuing consumption coupons worth 600 yuan (\$86.15) to everyone working in Zhejiang but holding another province’s household registration, or *hukou*, if he or she stays there during the Spring Festival holiday.

With anti-pandemic measures optimized and resources mobilized to support enterprises’ resumption of production, it would be rather good if more migrant workers, or those who work away from home, can stay where they are during the week-long Spring Festival holiday. On the one hand, the manufacturing sector, especially the export-oriented ones, could see more orders with logistic flows between China and foreign countries resuming. That means the industry needs more

workers to work extra hours during the holiday.

On the other hand, with national infrastructure construction projects being put into place, quite a number of key construction programs will progress as normal during the Spring Festival holiday, which also means increased demand for workers during the holiday.

However, one cannot keep workers at their posts with mere words. Migrant workers work thousands of kilometers away from home and the best way of retaining them is to pay them more. While companies must pay them their deserved additional pay for the extra hours they will put in, the consumption coupons are the extra efforts local governments are making to retain workers.

The so-called Spring Festival

effect means that during the holiday, consumption is robust but construction slows down.

By issuing coupons to migrant workers who remain at their workplace during the holiday, there is a possibility of seeing construction getting strengthened, thus enabling the Spring Festival holiday to play a greater role in promoting economic development.

Reports say that some provinces are not only issuing coupons to keep workers there during the holiday, but also trying to attract more migrant workers to work during the holiday by offering subsidies on a daily basis. This effort to retain workers during the holiday is praiseworthy and augurs well for the economy in 2023.

— THEPAPER.CN

## What They Say

### Grassroots work mainstay of policy adjustment

China’s new COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control policies include a variety of concrete measures to coordinate the efforts of different parties in the fields of vaccination, medical care, medicine supplies and neighborhood services for the common purpose of saving lives.

Although all of these parties assume indispensable roles in this campaign, it is the grassroots government departments, neighborhood property management companies, residents’ and villagers’ committees that are in charge of docking the policies with the people’s needs to make sure they can access medical care and obtain medicines in an emergency.

That means, after acting as the front line in the war against the virus for three years, the grassroots

parties must continue to play crucial roles in the new stage of the war. They need to divert attention from curbing infections to saving the lives of the most vulnerable residents. All senior residents, particularly those unvaccinated ones with underlying health conditions, will now become their main service objects.

Most public services and social security work must be carried out efficiently at the grassroots level. The grassroots departments should improve their ability to provide services to vulnerable groups of people, and take the initiative to provide door-to-door services and help them solve their practical difficulties.

For instance, they can work closely with the community medical institutions to provide necessa-

ry medicines and antigen detection kits for local senior residents, making them feel that they are well cared for and protected.

As the base of the hierarchical diagnosis and treatment system in the country, the large numbers of community rehabilitation centers, clinics and village and family doctors will assume a major role in the future pandemic prevention and control work to help ease the burden on the limited number of major hospitals, further enhance the vaccination rate of the population and provide health consultation, psychological counselling, instructions on drug use and health education, as well as help the patients to transfer to hospitals of higher levels.

— BEIJING NEWS

## CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

**China Daily**  
15 Huixin Dongjie Chaoyang District,  
Beijing 100029  
News: +86 (0) 10 6491-8366  
editor@chinadaily.com.cn  
Advertisement: +86 (0) 10 6491-8631  
ads@chinadaily.com.cn  
Subscription: +86-400-699-0203  
subscription.chinadaily.com.cn  
App: www.chinadaily.com.cn/mobile/daily.html

**China Daily UK**  
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK  
+44 (0) 207 398 8270  
editor@chinadailyuk.com

**China Daily Asia Pacific**  
**China Daily Hong Kong**  
Unit 1818, Hing Wai Centre, 7 Tin Wan  
Praya Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong  
+852 2518 5111  
editor@chinadaillyhk.com  
editor@chinadaillyasia.com

**China Daily USA**  
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,  
New York, NY 10036  
+1 212 537 8888  
editor@chinadaillyusa.com

**China Daily Africa**  
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
+254 (0) 20 242 8589 (Nairobi)  
editor@chinadaillyafrica.com  
enquiries@chinadaillyafrica.com  
subscription@chinadaillyafrica.com