01

U.S. efforts to isolate China show weakness, not strength

With a flurry of PowerPoint presentations, video calls and media hype, three bilateral diplomatic meetings are taking place this week in a quick succession in pursuit of the U.S. goal to slow China's rise.

On the surface, this might seem like a victory for U.S. President Joe Biden's pledge to use alliances to unite what he calls "democracies" against "autocrats."

However, the limited scope, scale and ambition of these meetings show that the world is not ready to take sides in America's attempt to divide the world with a new Cold War.

In the first such meeting, UK Foreign Secretary Elizabeth Truss and Secretary of State for Defense Ben Wallace met Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne and Minister for Defense Peter Dutton to discuss security cooperation.

Truss has made it explicitly clear that the target of the meetings is China.

Australia is suffering a significant amount of economic pain from choosing an aggressive stance against China. Truss is trying to soothe the injuries by talking up future technology transfers and investment deals for Australia, not only in terms of nuclear submarine technology, but also in the high tech and space fields.

One problem with this approach is that China is already ahead of Britain in these areas. The UK is under the nostalgic illusion that Brexit has somehow made it a great power again, when in fact the opposite is true. In an age of globalization, going against the spirit of the times and abandoning its partnership with the European Union has diminished the middle-sized country.

The UK simply lacks the economic clout and diplomatic heft to fulfill its big promises.

In a second such meeting, Japanese and French foreign and defense ministers held virtual talks Thursday that focused on countering China's rise. These talks are the first since 2019, and could be seen as behind-the-scenes efforts to bring France back into the circle of "Indo-Pacific" warriors after a devastating diplomatic snub by Australia, the U.S. and Britain to France last year over a lucrative submarine contract.

The four ministers danced to America's tune by calling for a "free and open Indo-Pacific," a pet phrase favored by Washington.

Finally, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday will hold their first meeting, virtually, since Kishida took office. They are expected to emphasize the importance of the one-China principle as part of their two-faced approach of discouraging Taiwan independence with words while supporting it with actions.

As an example of this U.S. hypocrisy, politician William Lai of Taiwan's pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party will meet U.S. officials in California as he transits through the country with a diplomatic visa.

While these three meetings might seem impressive at first glance, it is worth noting that they only involve five nations. This is hardly an impressive show of global solidarity.

The European Union, South Korea, Southeast Asian nations, New Zealand, and a slew of other nations have been loathe to take sides in the U.S. efforts to isolate China.

All traditional or historical allies will agree to sit down with the U.S. for a meeting. Many might agree to initiatives or long-term plans, even if they know it's a lot of empty talk.

For example, few people believe that the U.S. will follow through on its Build Back Better World plan to mimic China's Belt and Road initiative. U.S. policies lurch and veer radically every five years. But all countries will diplomatically clap and smile when the U.S. makes such an announcement.

However, talk is cheap. No country will act against its own self-interest just to help the U.S. keep its hegemony. China is the biggest trading partner of all of them, a fact that the United States sees as a threat, but the countries themselves see as a path to prosperity.

The U.S. once wrote the rules of international trade, but China's rise has changed that and is threatening its global hegemony. Biden imagines that the U.S. has allies around the world willing to sacrifice their own economic interests just to help it stay top dog in the world economic order for a few more years.

But so far, few nations have shown real enthusiasm for Biden's ambitious plans to isolate China. The world has changed, and although Biden cannot see it, many nations rightly view the U.S. as a much greater threat to global stability and their own national interests than China.

Biden intended for his diplomatic efforts to isolate China to show strength, but instead, they've reflected weakness.

# 02

# Responsible Washington needed for sound China-U.S. ties

Under an earnest global gaze, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart, Joe Biden, agreed in a productive virtual meeting on Tuesday to steer the world's arguably most important bilateral relationship back on track.

The encouraging consensus, along with other positive outcomes of the first meeting between the two heads of state since Biden took office in January, has delivered a direly needed shot of optimism to China-U.S. ties and the struggling world as well.

With the world having entered a period of new turbulence and transformation, and both China and the United States having reached a critical stage of development, building a sound and steady relationship between the world's top two economies is particularly crucial.

Just as Xi pointed out in a phone call with Biden in September, whether China and the United States can handle their relationship well "is a question of the century to which the two countries must provide a good answer."

China's answer has been clear and consistent. It seeks to foster a healthy and stable relationship with the United States that features mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, and it has been moving responsibly towards this goal.

It is high time that the United States started to act in a truly responsible fashion and join China to build on the hard-won momentum and advance their relations for the benefit of both nations as well as the world at large.

A responsible Washington ought to uphold mutual respect with China with all its heart.

Mutual respect is the foundation of the edifice of China-U.S. relations. It means the two countries should treat each other as equals and respect each other's social system and development path, core interests and major concerns, as well as right to development.

Thus Washington needs to stop slinging mud at China's system, path and institutions, which have been chosen by the Chinese people in line with China's unique conditions and have led the world's largest developing and most populous country to the two miracles of rapid economic growth and enduring social stability.

What is particularly imperative now is that the United States should respect the one-China principle, honor its pledge not to support "Taiwan independence," and cease playing with fire on the Taiwan question, the most important and sensitive issue in China-U.S. relations. No provocation or threat would make China budge an inch.

It is also a far cry from mutual respect if one side just invents some so-called "rules of the road" on its own or through a clique, and then imposes them on the other side. Mutual respect entails genuine consultation.

A responsible Washington ought to seek peaceful coexistence with China in good faith.

With no conflict and no confrontation being the bottom line both sides have to hold, the two countries should adopt a constructive approach to managing their differences and sensitive issues, which naturally exist but should not be allowed to metastasize or even undermine the overall relationship.

In retrospect, the most important development in international relations over the past half century is the reopening and development of China-U.S. relations, which has delivered enormous benefits to both countries and the rest of the world.

Looking ahead, Washington should work with China to increase communication, learn from the ups and downs in the historical trajectory of their ties, and chart the right course for the future development of their consequential relationship.

Given its behavior over recent years, Washington needs to take concrete actions to prove that its call for properly managing U.S.-China ties and proclamation of not seeking to contain China are a strategic choice, instead of a tactical gambit.

A responsible Washington also ought to pursue win-win cooperation with China in real earnest.

Considering their giant economies and complementary strengths, it would amount to a regrettable squandering of great opportunities and resources should China and the United States merely seek to coexist in peace.

Meanwhile, the world has witnessed over the past 50 years that if they cooperate, the two countries can do so much to boost each other's development, improve their people's well-being and make the world a better place.

As Xi pointed out in the Tuesday meeting, China-U.S. cooperation may not solve all problems, but few problems can be solved without China-U.S. cooperation. Pandemic response, climate change and many other common challenges demand their concerted efforts.

Without doubt, competition does exist between China and the United States. However, it is unhelpful and irresponsible to use the ominous term of "strategic competition" to define such an important relationship with such great positive potential for the whole world.

As Xi vividly pointed out, China and the United States are two giant ships sailing in the ocean, which should break waves and forge ahead together without losing direction or speed, let alone colliding with each other.

For that to happen, the United States should join China to act responsibly. The time to start is now.

03

Booster shots are needed to fight Omicron, U.S. studies show

Three studies released Friday offered more evidence that COVID-19 vaccines are standing up to the Omicron variant, at least among people who received booster shots.

They are the first large U.S. studies to look at vaccine protection against Omicron, health officials said.

The papers echo previous research, including studies in Germany, South Africa and the UK, indicating available vaccines are less effective against Omicron than earlier versions of the coronavirus, but also that booster doses rev up virus-fighting antibodies to increase the chance of avoiding symptomatic infection.

The first study looked at hospitalizations and emergency room and urgent care center visits in 10 states in the U.S. from August 2021 to this month.

It found vaccine effectiveness was best after three doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines in preventing COVID-19-associated emergency department and urgent care visits. Protection dropped from 94 percent during the Delta wave to 82 percent during the Omicron wave. Protection from just two doses was lower, especially if six months had passed since the second dose.

Officials have stressed the goal of preventing not just infection but severe disease. On that count, the study also found a third dose was at least 90 percent effective at preventing hospitalizations for COVID-19, both during the Delta and Omicron periods.

The second study focused on COVID-19 cases and death rates in 25 states in the U.S. from the beginning of April through Christmas, 2021. People who were boosted had the highest protection against coronavirus infection, both during the time Delta was dominant and also when Omicron was taking over.

Led by CDC researchers, the Journal of the American Medical Association published the third study that looked at people who tested positive for COVID-19 from December 10 to January 1 at more than 4,600 testing sites across the U.S.

It found that three shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines were about 67 percent effective against Omicron-related symptomatic disease compared with unvaccinated people. Two doses, however, offered no significant protection against Omicron when measured several months after completion of the original series.

"It really shows the importance of getting a booster dose," said the CDC's Emma Accorsi, one of the study's authors.

As of now, millions of Americans who are eligible have not gotten a booster shot.

"If you are eligible for a booster and you haven't gotten it, you are not up to date and you need to get your booster," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said during a White House briefing Friday.

04

# CPC’s major achievements and historical experience over past century

The past century has witnessed an extraordinary and glorious journey of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

In an effort to better push ahead with the cause of the CPC and that of the country, the CPC Central Committee carried out in-depth research into the 100-year journey of the Party, during which it has led the Chinese people in making remarkable achievements in revolution, reconstruction, and reform, comprehensively reviewed the great historic processes of the Party’s winning one victory after another and the historic feats the CPC has achieved, and reviewed and adopted the Resolution on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century at the recently concluded sixth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC.

The adoption of the resolution represents an historic contribution of the sixth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC, which is not only influential for China’s current conditions, but bears far-reaching historical significance.

Since its founding in 1921, the Party has always made seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation its mission, stayed committed to communist ideals and socialist convictions, united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in working tirelessly to achieve national independence and the liberation of the people, and then to make the country prosperous and strong and bring happiness to the people.

Over the past 100 years, the Party led the Chinese people in fighting bloody battles with unyielding determination to achieve great success in the new-democratic revolution, working diligently for a stronger China with a spirit of self-reliance to achieve great success in socialist revolution and construction, freeing their minds and forging ahead to achieve great success in reform, opening-up, and socialist modernization, and bolstering self-confidence and self-reliance and innovating on the basis of what has worked in the past, thereby bringing about great success for socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

The endeavors of the Party and the people over the past century represent the most magnificent chapter in the millennia-long history of the Chinese nation.

History has provided ample evidence that without the CPC, there would be no new China and no national rejuvenation, and that the leadership of the Party is the foundation and lifeblood of the Party and the country, and the crux upon which the interests and wellbeing of all Chinese people depend.

Focusing on summarizing major achievements and historical experience of the CPC over the past century, the resolution is bound to play an important role and exert a major influence on increasing wisdom, promoting unity, boosting confidence, and raising morale among all Party members.

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has implemented the national rejuvenation strategy within a wider context of the once-in-a-century changes taking place in the world, provided unified leadership for advancing a great struggle, a great project, a great cause, and a great dream, and united and led the whole Party and the entire nation in achieving great success for socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, providing the cause of national rejuvenation with more robust institutions, stronger material foundations, and a source of inspiration for taking greater initiative while showing the world that the Chinese nation has achieved the tremendous transformation from standing up and growing prosperous to becoming strong.

The historic achievements and historic shifts in the cause of the Party and the country are attributed to the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi at its core and the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

The CPC has established Xi’s core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and defined the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. This reflects the common will of the Party, the armed forces, and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, and is of decisive significance for advancing the cause of the Party and the country in the new era and for driving forward the historic process of national rejuvenation.

The resolution summarizes the tremendous achievements Chinese people have achieved under the leadership of the CPC in the new era in thirteen fields, including upholding the Party’s overall leadership, exercising full and rigorous self-governance, economic development, comprehensively deepening reform and opening-up, political work, comprehensively advancing law-based governance, cultural advancement, social development, eco-environmental advancement, national defense and the armed forces, safeguarding national security, upholding the policy of “one country, two systems” and promoting national reunification, as well as foreign affairs, with emphasis laid on original thoughts, transformative practices, breakthroughs, and landmark achievements in the past nine years.

Over the past century, the Party secured extraordinary historical achievements on behalf of the people. Today, it is rallying and leading the Chinese people on a new journey toward realizing the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.

The CPC members are like examinees sitting the tests posed by this era, and the Chinese people will review their test results.

Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi at its core, the Party and the Chinese people are fully implementing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and making tireless efforts to realize the second centenary goal and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

It is believed that the CPC and the Chinese people will certainly achieve new glories and new historic feats on their new journey in the new era.

# 05

# China in APEC: A view from New Zealand

China joined APEC in 1991, at the same time as Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong, China. The inclusion of China, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong, China as separate members of APEC, while maintaining adherence to the “One China” principle, has been a learning experience for all APEC members. Recognition of the “One China” principle is reflected in certain protocols that are observed within APEC for this purpose.

China’s membership of APEC played a part in facilitating its entry into the newly-established WTO. As APEC members began to implement their Bogor Goals commitments from the mid-1990s China made some significant tariff reductions that were understood within APEC as a “down payment” on its eventual commitments as a WTO member.

APEC is an economic forum in which the members come together to develop consensus on steps to advance open trade and regional economic integration, drawing on the expertise and experiences of the members. The steps agreed are expressed as voluntary, non-binding commitments in declarations by APEC ministers and economic leaders. The voluntary nature of APEC commitments is viewed by some observers as a weakness, and by others as a strength, in that it allows agreement to develop out of a free exchange of experiences, research findings, and priorities without the need for unproductive adversarial negotiations and legalistic dispute procedures. The commitments nevertheless emerge from processes of rigorous analysis and debate.

In earlier years the commitments were set out by members in Individual Action Plans, and progress toward implementing the Action Plans was regularly reviewed by APEC members. In more recent years the scope of these commitments have expanded to cover a wide range of issues embracing objectives relating to inclusiveness, sustainability and economic reform, addressed within APEC under its structural reform agenda. As with other members, it is likely that APEC work programmes on structural reform influenced processes of economic reform within China, in particular following its entry into the WTO.

The extensive networks developed through participation in APEC among ministers, officials, business leaders and academics are an important contribution toward institutionalising cooperation among APEC members.

China has hosted APEC twice: in 2001 under the theme of “Meeting New Challenges in the New Century: Achieving Common Prosperity through Participation and Cooperation” and in 2014 under the theme of “Shaping the Future Through Asia-Pacific Partnership”.

China’s hosting of APEC in 2014 was particularly important in APEC’s evolution. By this time China was clearly established as one of the world’s two leading economies. It prioritised the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), and secured the commitment of APEC Leaders to the Beijing Roadmap for APEC’s contribution to the realisation of the FTAAP. An important first step along the Roadmap was a Collective Strategic Study jointly chaired by China and the United States, on the issues to be addressed in working toward establishment of the FTAAP. The insistence of APEC members that the study should be jointly chaired by China and the United States clearly reflected an understanding that the coming together of China and the United States in a consensus on how to proceed would be essential to the successful establishment of the FTAAP.

It is clear that the view that cooperation between the China and the United States is vital for APEC’s success remains widespread among APEC members.

# 06

# China takes concrete actions towards tackling climate change

China’s active response towards tackling climate change provides robust evidence to refute US President Biden’s remarks at COP26 that China just "walked away" and it is "a gigantic issue".

China has implemented a national strategy of actively responding to climate change. Compared with developed countries, which generally have set a timeframe of 40 to 70 years before shifting from carbon peaking to carbon neutrality, China, the largest developing country in the world, made a solemn promise to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. This means that China will complete the world’s largest reduction in carbon dioxide emissions intensity in the shortest time ever in global history.  
China has announced a series of targets for nationally determined contributions and concrete policies and measures, setting out timetables, roadmaps and blueprints, issuing master plans, and setting clear objectives for each stage. China has put forward 10 major actions for peaking carbon dioxide emissions and has moved faster to put in place a “1+N” policy framework for carbon peaking and carbon neutrality.

Recently, China has started the construction of a batch of large wind power and photovoltaic bases with a combined installed capacity of 30 million kW, marking the beginning of the first phase of projects with an installed capacity of approximately 100 million kW. This speaks volumes about China’s resolve towards countering climate change.

According to a report from the International Energy Agency, to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, almost 90 percent of global electricity generation needs to come from renewable sources. China has taken the lead in this regard, with the country having constructed the largest volume of solar power and wind power generators in the world. Compared with 2005, the installed capacities in China for photovoltaic solar energy expanded by over 3,000 times and 200 times for wind energy. China's carbon intensity in 2020 was 48.4 percent less than that in 2005, which means that China had more than fulfilled its commitment to the international community – achieving a 40 to 45 percent reduction in carbon intensity by 2020 from 2005 levels. The drop in carbon intensity translates into a total reduction of about 5.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Electricity generated using non-fossil fuel energy represents more than one third of the country’s overall power consumption. China has been taking extra actions to scale up its efforts to tackle climate change. All these achievements give full expression to China’s vigorous measures, winning widespread praise from the international community.

As a common challenge for the world, climate change should be addressed by all of mankind. And coping with this fundamental issue of our times will contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. China has all along undertaken due international responsibilities commensurate with its own national conditions, practiced true multilateralism, and contributed to a fair, reasonable and win-win global climate governance system.

China promoted the signing and entry into force of the Paris Agreement, the third international agreement on climate change following the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate and the Kyoto Protocol. China has also contributed Chinese wisdom to the improvement of the Paris Agreement and has played a critical role in the implementation of the agreement even after the US decided to unilaterally withdraw from it.

China has led innovative forms of multilateral cooperation, stepped up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy, and carried out South-South cooperation on climate change. China has provided assistance and support for developing countries to the best of its capacity under the framework of South-South cooperation on climate change, including donating energy conservation and new energy products and devices to almost 40 countries, helping relevant countries launch meteorological satellites, and training nearly 1,500 officials and technical personnel working in the climate response sector of 120 developing countries.

As the largest developing country, China has overcome its own economic and social difficulties to make tangible contributions to global climate governance and the fight against climate change. In the meantime, it remains crystal clear that the US has done nothing other than having continually “walked away” from stepping up and stepping forward on the issue of climate change.

# 07

# China a major global growth driver, not free rider

In its latest round of China-bashing, the United States has colluded with some of its allies to blast China's economic policies and performance over the past 20 years at a recent closed-door World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting.

The flimsy accusations were nothing new. Ever since China's accession to the WTO, the United States has been relentlessly trying to inflate the fallacy that China has been a "free rider" in the world economy. In recent years, these ill-intentioned allegations seem to be on the rise in tandem with the steady growth of the Chinese economy.

As a matter of fact, the "free rider" myth has unmistakably exposed Washington's self-centrism and double standards in global economic activities.

It is true that China's economic miracle in recent decades has been closely connected with its WTO membership. Inflows of foreign capital, technologies and modern management practices, coupled with the hard-working spirit of the Chinese people, have co-authored China's economic leap. In 20 years, China's economy has grown from the sixth to the second largest in the world, its trade in goods from the sixth to the first, and trade in services from the 11th to the second.

But China is neither the biggest nor the only beneficiary. As a study published in 2019 by German think-tank the Bertelsmann Stiftung concluded, the United States benefits the most worldwide from its own WTO membership, having achieved the largest amount of income gains of some 87 billion U.S. dollars in 2016 alone.

Moreover, the United States, with its superpower status, has all along spared no effort to dominate major global economic institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and dictate the rules of world trade.

While China's integration with the wider world has facilitated its economic takeoff, the country has also given back to the global community. China's own development itself has been a huge contribution, having contributed almost 30 percent on average each year to global economic growth for several consecutive years.

Furthermore, China's advantages in skilled labor, infrastructure and manufacturing systems have enabled the country to make quality goods at relatively low prices. In some sense, the American way of life is made in China.

To further open up and share its development dividends with the wider world, Beijing has over the years continuously improved its domestic business environment, and launched such platforms as the China International Import Expo and the China International Fair for Trade in Services.

Determined to kickstart growth in developing countries, China has proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, which has grown into the world's largest global cooperation platform and the most popular public good over the past eight years.

And China has also in recent years remained the largest export market for the least developed nations, absorbing one fifth of the exports from those countries. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it voiced readiness to lend the new allocation of Special Drawing Rights to low-income countries seriously affected by the outbreak via the IMF.

More fundamentally, with an eye toward the future, China has been playing a constructive role in improving global economic governance.

In the face of rising trade protectionism, economic nationalism as well as unilateralism under the disguise of multilateralism, China has been trying to work with the wider world to promote true multilateralism by defending the rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core, and by championing ever deeper bilateral, multilateral and regional free trade.

Beijing has also supported necessary WTO reforms on topics like trade policy review and e-commerce, as well as an earlier settlement of the WTO's Appellate Body crisis.

Unfortunately, those contributions, in the eyes of Washington, are either ignored or twisted as serious threats to the United States and Beijing's "secret plans" to compete with Washington for global supremacy. They view the global economy as a you-win-I-lose game where the United States should always be on the winning side. No country, not even Washington's allies in Europe, is allowed to challenge America's economic predominance.

In fact, in an age of economic globalization, countries worldwide are already knitted together by increasingly crisscross global industrial and supply chains. They provide one another with goods and services based on their comparative advantages. This nature of reciprocity, though disavowed by those zero-summers in the United States, is how the modern global economy works. In a long-term perspective, all economies win or lose together.

Today, the world economy is still struggling to recover in the throes of a still raging pandemic, surging inflation, chaotic supply chains and a lopsided global economic recovery. Solidarity and win-win cooperation are needed more than ever before.

"The WTO would not be the World Trade Organization without China," said WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. At a time of uncertainty, China bashers in the West should stop peddling irresponsible accusations against China and work with Beijing, because at the end of the day, no one alone can handle the sheer complexity and burden of rescuing the global economy.

08

E-games championship gives a sporting buzz

It is not too late to update your knowledge about EDG. On Saturday night, a five-person team of the Chinese e-sports club, with the full name EDward Gaming, won the 2021 League of Legends (LoL) World Championship in Reykjavik, Iceland.

The hashtag #EDG is champion# had attracted 209 million viewers by Sunday morning, with the number still rising. The livestreaming of the championship had more than 200 million viewers on two major domestic smartphone apps, and the number was boosted by viewers on other channels.

In other words, about one in 30 people on the planet witnessed the success of the Chinese e-sports team.

The team has made very good use of the opportunity to share Chinese culture with the world. At the beginning of the championship in early October, the members of EDG and other staff displayed tai chi martial arts and traditional Chinese costumes in Reykjavik, launching a "Chinese hurricane" in the Icelandic capital. Now the posting of photos and videos on social networks have spread that hurricane to the whole world.

With the popularity of digital technology, new forms of cultural exchanges have been emerging, of which e-sports are of the hottest. Unlike texts and videos, e-sports transcend the barriers of language and are understandable around the world.

Also e-sports appeal most to those in their early 20s, as shown by the carnival of college students on Saturday night. That in turn makes them a good bridge of communication between Chinese youngsters and their counterparts around the world.

More importantly, the e-sports industry is sustainable in spreading Chinese culture, as the large audiences mean huge commercial potential. In 2020 alone, the sales revenue of the domestic e-sports industry exceeded 278.69 billion ($43.56 billion), and involved 280,000 enterprises, which in turn created over 10 million jobs.

As early as 2019, Hainan province announced its ambitious plan of building an international e-sports center. On Nov 5, the Organizing Committee of the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou city, East China's Zhejiang province, announced it had listed eight e-sports as events in the Games. Both of these show the strong policy support being given to e-sports.

With more Chinese star gaming clubs and teams emerging, the industry is expected to further prosper and continue spreading Chinese culture to the world.

09

# China's institutional strengths guarantee for fulfilling its carbon commitment

As the Chinese leadership has reiterated the country's carbon emission goals on multiple occasions, some may wonder how the world's largest developing country can fulfill its promise. The answer lies in China's institutional strengths including top-level design, strong leadership and economic incentive.

To begin with, China's political system, which is good at top-level planning and implementation, will ensure its carbon reduction goals can be fulfilled. Once decisions and goals are set, they are incorporated into the overall national development program, turned into feasible action plans and delivered faithfully by local governments and competent departments.

China's carbon-cutting goals are a major strategic decision made after much deliberation. One year after its introduction, they have been frequently appearing in China's national and regional development plans and policies, such as the government work report as well as the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) and the long-range objectives through the year 2035.

The latest example of the country's efforts came at the 26th United Nations Conference of Parties on Climate Change (COP26), as China announced that it would foster a green, low-carbon and circular economic system at a faster pace, press ahead with industrial structure adjustment, and rein in the irrational development of energy-intensive and high-emission projects.

The strong leadership of the country serves as another cornerstone for delivering on its promise. As demonstrated by the widely-acknowledged achievements made in China's fight against the COVID-19 and the die-hard extreme poverty under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Chinese society was highly efficient in pooling resources to concentrate efforts to undertake those tasks.

Guided and coordinated by the central government, good visions and methods that were successful in one region can be swiftly copied, adjusted and promoted in other parts of the vast country, ensuring the experience in development and reform can be used to the maximum.

In addition, China has strong economic incentives to reduce carbon emissions. The massive transition of the Chinese economy to a low carbon one will see new jobs created, relevant technological innovation advanced and the competitiveness of domestic enterprises promoted.

While retiring outdated production facilities and high energy-consuming enterprises to cut emissions at the source might have an immediate impact on some local economies, industrial upgrading and decarbonizing can drive China's economic growth and make it healthier and more sustainable in the longer term.

Anyone who knows China well is sure that the country is serious about reducing carbon emissions and pursuing green development. But the international community should also recognize that for a developing country with a population of over 1.4 billion that has not completed industrialization or urbanization, efforts such as the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the supporting policy measures that China has adopted voluntarily have not been easy.

There are of course challenges for China, which has only 30 years between carbon peak to carbon neutrality, the shortest in the world history, to deliver on its promise. But given the institutional strengths China has, the country will realize its carbon reduction goals and any worries about it failing to do so is unnecessary.

10

# China has made vital contribution to solving global issues

On Oct. 25, 1971, at its 26th session, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758 that decided to restore all lawful rights of the People’s Republic of China in the UN. It marked an important opportunity for the UN, the most universal international organization, to make further progress.

This historic moment came shortly after I started a career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, and this piece of big news impressed me very much. During the 10 years when I served as the UN Secretary-General, I had diverse communication and negotiation with China, which made me quite aware of the important role played by the country in the international society.

Solidarity and partnership are important factors driving the progress of human society, and the UN was founded exactly to promote them. Since the establishment of the UN in 1945, the organization has been committed to the peace and development of the entire human rice and attached high importance to human rights, and thus grown into the most universal international organization in the world today.

To enhance multilateral cooperation is particularly important for the organization to stay true to its founding aspiration and cope with global challenges. China has always been a firm supporter and true follower of multilateralism, and actively conducted multilateral cooperation, which echoes with the spirit of the UN Charter and is of vital importance to solving global issues.

China's economic and social development has made important contributions to achieving the UN’s Millennium Development Goals and implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The vision of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development raised by China exactly resonates with the “5 Ps” that shape the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

China’s poverty alleviation achievements have set an important example for the cause of global poverty reduction. One of the Millennium Development Goals is to reduce the world’s extreme poverty rate by half by 2015, compared to the 1990 level. Since the reform and opening-up of China in 1978, the country has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, which was of vital importance for the UN to have reached the goal five years in advance. The country’s completion of its poverty reduction goal is not only a historic achievement of its own, but also a milestone in the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To enhance the well-being of the entire human race, China, while pursuing its own development achievements, upholds the global governance philosophy of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and is actively advancing South-South Cooperation. It joins hands with developing countries for mutual assistance, and by further expanding its foreign aid and cooperation, enhances its support for them in poverty reduction, education, health and many other areas. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation is a model of South-South Cooperation. Under this framework, China has offered huge assistance for African countries to implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As an initiator of the framework, I very much recognize and appreciate the role played by China.

Climate change is an important challenge facing our humanity and planet. Therefore, the international society needs to act in solidarity and build a sustainable future. In recent years, China has already demonstrated to the international society its resolution to follow a low-carbon and sustainable path of development and build a resource-conserving and environment-friendly society. The Chinese idea that “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets” is quite impressive. Actively joining the multilateral cooperation on climate governance, China has made important and constructive contributions to tackling climate change.

China is working to cope with the common challenges facing the international society, and it deserves high evaluation in this regard. The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder that we humanity can either rise together or fall apart depending upon our strong conviction on the concept of shared future. Therefore, to defeat difficulties, we must take the sharp weapon of solidarity and cooperation. China's role and contribution are obvious to all.

In the past 50 years since China restored its lawful seat in the UN, it has always upheld the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. As a founding member of the UN and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has made important contributions in a wide range of areas such as maintaining world peace and stability and promoting global development. The country will play a bigger role in the UN, and I’m sure about that.

11

# High time to protect biodiversity

As species worldwide continue to become extinct at an alarming rate, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation pose a major risk to human survival and development. It is high time for the international community to join hands to protect their common future.

As was underscored by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday, "Our two-century-long experiment with burning fossil fuels, destroying forests, wilderness and oceans, and degrading the land, has caused a biosphere catastrophe."

A key UN conference kicked off this week in southwest China's Kunming to discuss a blueprint for biodiversity conservation over the next decade. Themed "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth," it is the first global conference convened by the UN to highlight ecological civilization, a philosophy proposed by China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke via video link on Tuesday, announcing a series of new, concrete initiatives based on China's firm determination and long-standing efforts in line with the mantra "Green mountains are gold mountains and silver mountains."

Among the significant actions, China will establish the Kunming Biodiversity Fund to support biodiversity protection in developing countries, taking the lead by investing 1.5 billion yuan (233 million U.S. dollars). China will move faster to establish a protected-areas system with national parks as the mainstay. The country will also put in place a "1+N" policy framework for carbon peak and carbon neutrality.

These measures are encouraging news for the world amid efforts to improve biodiversity and environmental governance. They also reflect China's resolve to continue building an ecological civilization, as the country is now equipped with better resources to maintain the balance between the dual tasks of economic recovery and environmental protection.

China is advancing biodiversity conservation and development in parallel. Biodiversity conservation has been elevated to a national strategy in China and has been incorporated into mid- and long-term plans in all regions and fields. China is also helping developing countries to preserve biodiversity through multilateral channels such as the Belt and Road Initiative and South-South cooperation.

As the latest move in pursuit of green development, China has set ambitious goals on carbon peak and carbon neutrality, accompanied by a series of supporting measures. China will continue to readjust its industrial structure and energy mix, vigorously develop renewable energy, and make faster progress on planning and developing large wind-power and photovoltaic bases in sandy areas, rocky areas and deserts.

China will work together with the international community on a new model of global biodiversity governance that is fairer and more reasonable, with each member contributing its share, so as to realize the worldwide vision of harmonious coexistence between humankind and nature.

Protecting biodiversity helps protect the Earth, our common homeland, and contributes to humanity's sustainable development. The international community should jointly shoulder the responsibility for future generations and build a community of all life on Earth, and a clean and beautiful world for us all.

# 12

# Why bearish takes on China's economy always proven wrong?

For some of the biggest names on Wall Street, China's economic prospects "look rosier than ever," and China is "too big to ignore," The New York Times reported recently.

Indeed, to fully understand and correctly predict China's economy has always been a topic the world pays great attention to.

Over the course of China's economic take-off in recent decades, noises forecasting a collapse of China have hardly been absent. However, the Chinese economy continues to grow and improve, and its development achievements have been indisputably remarkable. Those who often spoke ill of the Chinese market were frequently slapped by reality.

Facts speak louder than words. China has its own way of developing its economy and has amassed valuable experience over the years. If Western economic and political communities still attempt to read the Chinese economy without thinking outside the old box, or give up their prejudices, China's economy will continue to be a myth for them.

To grow its economy effectively, China has been able to keep consistency and adapt to changes.

While the world is undergoing transformations rarely seen in a century and wrestling with the COVID-19 pandemic at the same time, China has not only maintained its macro-economic policies steady, but also geared up to build a new development pattern and promote high-quality development.

As a result, China was the world's only major economy that registered a positive growth last year, and its economy expanded at 12.7 percent in the first half of this year. Those achievements have demonstrated the strong resilience of the Chinese economy and injected both confidence and impetus into the global economic recovery.

Moreover, China has been willing to use policy tools to push forward reforms, stimulate innovation and energize new development momentum.

China has continuously improved its scientific and technological innovation capability, optimized government services and stabilized the industrial supply chains so that the real economy can be better served.

"China focuses on doing its own work. This is not only a right choice, but also the source of strength for China to continue to resist pressure," an opinion-piece published by the Singapore-based Lianhe Zaobao commented earlier this year.

In this highly inter-connected world, China believes playing the "zero-sum game" is not in the fundamental interests of the global community. Beijing has all along been firmly dedicated to opening-up and cooperation, and has always been trying to promote its own development by boosting the world's common development.

Despite that the economic globalization has been under fire, China, with even stronger commitment to opening-up, has continued to join others around the world to build an open global economy.

It has implemented the Foreign Investment Law, further opened up its financial sector in an orderly fashion, and set up platforms like the China International Import Expo and the China International Fair for Trade in Services to share with the wider world its development opportunities.

More importantly, the Belt and Road Initiative has been increasingly viewed around the world as a path to prosperity, innovation, health and green development.

Across the world today, there are more and more people who have begun to deeply recognize that China's vigorous economic development is of positive significance to the global economy, and it is unpopular to play up the "decoupling" and "China threat" theories.

And as long as those in the West who are still obsessed with a bearish take on the future of the Chinese economy base on their old thinking and deep-seated ideological prejudice, they will be proved wrong over and over again.

13

# Plans needed to better manage country's floating population

According to the seventh national census, China's urbanization rate has reached 63.89 percent, with the floating population numbering about 376 million, up nearly 70 percent, in the past 10 years.

Before the launch of reform and opening-up, the floating population was regarded as a "problem". But over the past 40 years, with the continuous advancement of the country's urbanization policy, rural residents have migrated from the countryside to the cities for better paying jobs.

As a result, the policy relating to the floating population has become more inclusive, with local governments shifting from management of the floating population to providing them with services. According to the latest census, population mobility has become a prominent national phenomenon, and people should realize its significance, so as to make good use of the trend, and promote the common prosperity of urban and rural residents.

However, the country also needs a more systematic medium- and long-term plan for the floating population.

The authorities should systematically study major issues such as the distribution of the floating population and productive forces, and public services and fiscal and tax policies.

Public services should be further improved to increase the resilience of the cities that are seeing a large influx of migrant workers, while the construction scale and other aspects in cities with population outflows should be adjusted to improve the efficiency of resource utilization.

The population policy should involve efficient transfer and sharing of public services between cities. In recent years, most city governments have realized that the floating population helps better develop cities and try every means to retain them.

As such, cities with huge floating populations should be given reasonable authorization and policy space to provide better infrastructure and public services to the floating populations.

14

# Difficult double duty needs to be done well

At an executive meeting of the State Council, China's Cabinet, chaired by Premier Li Keqiang on Friday, it was stressed that the price mechanism for coal-fueled electricity needs to be improved so it can better reflect market needs.

The meeting has timely responded to the public's concerns about power shortages after some cities limited or even cut off residential electricity supplies at times.

There were two main reasons for this: First, there has been a shortage of coal for electricity generation, which pushed up the price. Second, some local governments limited the electricity supply in order to meet their carbon emissions reduction targets.

To address the first problem, the meeting urged coal enterprises to resume production, prioritize the transportation of coal and allowed coal-fired power plants to delay paying their taxes.

But, more importantly, it has adjusted the electricity pricing mechanism by allowing the price to float within 20 percent rather than 10-15 percent. That has hit the nail on the head, because how to ensure residential use of electricity at acceptable prices while allowing coal-fired power plant operators to make money has long been a challenge. The electricity generating enterprises have long been required to keep their prices stable, but the coal used by power plants was purchased at market prices. When the price of coal rises, the coal electricity enterprises lose money for every kilowatt-hour of electricity they generate.

Also, while the nation is accelerating its carbon-cutting efforts by adjusting its industrial structure and shifting to greener development, some local governments have been going about it the wrong way, by allowing high carbon consumption in the first half of the year, then applying a sudden brake in the second half by limiting residential electricity use when they find it difficult to otherwise achieve their carbon-cutting objectives for the year. That's a big mistake that must be corrected. By highlighting the phenomenon and vowing to correct the wrong, the meeting offers hope that this issue will be resolved.

Winter is coming and the temperatures are dropping. How to keep their homes warm is of key importance to residents. It is the responsibility of local governments to ensure the supply of electricity and to cut carbon emission, which is a challenging task but one they must do well.

# 15

# People-first disaster management better

A guiding document jointly issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, China's Cabinet, says that cities need to strengthen their capability to cope with risks.

In particular, metropolises have large populations around central business districts, making those areas more vulnerable to accidents. The pandemic and increasing extreme weather events have put metropolises' accident and natural disaster-management capabilities to severe test.

While some have coped well with the emergencies, others have not.

But cities can learn from others' successes and failures and better cope with disasters in the future.

For example, city authorities swing into action after a calamity strikes.

However, which department should issue an alert, what different departments should do on receiving an alert, whether subways and schools should be closed, and what penalty departments should pay for failing to properly perform their duty are things that must be clearly defined.

For example, information on novel coronavirus infections and those who had come into close contact with infected people in some cities was leaked online, because of the absence of clearly defined rules and standards.

The guiding document addresses this problem, as one of its aims is to regulate the mechanisms for collecting and using personal information. It will clearly define which information can be collected and made public.

But metropolises' risk-control mechanism cannot be improved without the participation of the public. The guiding document makes it clear that volunteers and social organizations should receive proper training in risk control, and the public should be involved, if necessary, in tackling emergencies.

The experiences of metropolises can be good examples for small and medium-sized cities to emulate. But irrespective of the size of cities, all risk control actions should be guided by the basic principle of "people first".

# 16

# Affordable childcare push a move in right direction

The National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the National Health Commission jointly issued a document, requiring the childcare service system and infrastructure conditions for childcare services to be further improved. The move offers institutional guarantees for the development of affordable childcare services that are accessible to all.

This is a positive measure to deal with the aging society and facilitate the better implementation of the new policy allowing all couples to have three children. The provision of affordable healthcare services for children under 3 has a bearing on not only the healthy growth of children and the happiness of families, but also on whether couples will desire to have more children.

In the past, government agencies, hospitals, schools, and State-owned enterprises built a large number of nurseries, but with the reform of State-owned enterprises and other policies in the 1990s, these affiliated nurseries were shut down; even the rural and neighborhood ones no longer exist. Childcare services across the country are in a nascent stage and in short supply.

In particular, public nurseries and kindergartens are in serious short supply, while private ones charge high fees, imposing a heavy financial burden on ordinary families.

With more women deciding to work, the demand for childcare services is increasing. This too is casting a shadow on women's career development or their willingness to bear children.

Improving the affordable-to-all childcare service system will help create a suitable environment for women wanting to bear children. The document issued by the three departments proposes to build a number of public childcare service institutions, expand the supply of childcare services, and support enterprises, public institutions and other social forces to set up childcare services institutions.

The government should consider providing childcare services as its responsibility and increase financial investment in this area. At the same time, it needs to increase policy input, provide policy support for nongovernmental organizations and other social groups to run childcare services, for example by reducing fees and offering free training for practitioners.

The relevant departments should also speed up the introduction of relevant policies, regulations and standards and norms to ensure the healthy development of the childcare service industry. For example, it is necessary to include childcare talents into the education support training system, promote the training of teachers in the childcare service industry and accelerate the training of professionals to improve the professional level of childcare services.

# 17

# Rising pension levels to ensure senior citizens have no tension

Seventeen provincial-level regions in Chinac, such as Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai, and Shaanxi, Henan, Hebei and Liaoning provinces have issued notices raising local pensions. Other regions are expected to follow suit.

This rise in pensions for the 17th consecutive year is in accordance with the spirit of this year's Government Work Report and a notice issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Finance in April on adjusting basic pensions for retirees in 2021 by raising monthly pensions by 4.5 percent from the year before.

Since 2005, China has been adjusting pensions according to the rise in average wages and prices every year.

Given that there are a large number of insured people in China, a continuous rise in pensions puts more pressure on the fiscal budget. Latest data show that by March 2021, the number of people covered under basic old-age insurance nationwide had reached 1.007 billion.

Thanks to its rapid economic development for years, China's enterprise endowment insurance fund has accumulated a solid "wealth pool". According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, since the end of 2016, the State's pension fund has got a cumulative investment return of 200 billion yuan ($30.93 billion), with an average annual return rate of more than 6.8 percent. In 2020, the entrust investment of the basic pension insurance fund by 25 provincial-level regions reached more than 1.11 trillion yuan, with the investment yield rate exceeding 10 percent for many regions.

In order to ensure steady improvement in retirees' pension benefits, the country has accelerated the reform of the old-age insurance system. In July 2018, China established a central allocation system for old-age insurance funds and promoted the improvement of provincial pooling of old-age insurance.

At the same time, the Ministry of Finance is working with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security to formulate measures to support the development of other sources of old-age insurance, and comprehensively utilize tax incentives and other means to develop a multi-level and multi-source old-age insurance system and improve the old-age care level for insured people. This will help ease the country's pension payment pressures.

The rising pensions show the country wants everyone to share the fruits of economic development. With continuous economic development, pensions will continue to rise and the rights of retirees will be better protected.

18

Green tariffs must not be barriers to trade

In his meeting with Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Costa in Lisbon, the current holder of the European Union's rotating presidency, on Saturday, German Vice Chancellor and Finance Minister Olaf Scholz proposed that the EU should found a "climate club" with other countries to avoid trade frictions related to green tariffs such as the planned carbon border levy.

Scholz said that Europe must engage with other countries to agree on joint rules and common standards on how to reduce carbon emissions, suggesting that the EU should approach the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan and China to discuss these issues.

The German minister has indeed touched upon a pertinent issue as some countries are building trade tariff barriers under the pretense of protecting the environment or tackling climate change.

The green tariffs are taxes levied on products from countries where the climate policies are looser so as to prevent these countries from taking advantage of a lower-price advantage to occupy the market by driving away products from those countries where strict green standards and climate policies of higher standards mean the prices of goods are higher.

This is undoubtedly a good intention. But many factors have to be taken into consideration. Different economies are in different development stages, and it is unrealistic for developing countries to implement green policies of the same standards as those in the developed economies. So the green tariffs are fundamentally in favor of developed economies, as they would be granted with a new channel to levy taxes on imports from less developed countries.

Scholz has not specified whether the objective of setting up such a club is to prompt the countries to reach consensus on green taxes to be levied on imported products or on the transactions of carbon quotas.

If it targets taxes on imported goods, the club will apparently not be a good choice for big goods traders, such as China and Germany. If it is about transactions of carbon emissions, the EU's carbon emissions trading system, the first multilateral one in the world, would undoubtedly serve as a model for the club. However, many problems with the EU carbon emissions trading system, such as insider dealing, that have remained untended for years deserve attention.

No matter what climate mechanisms it takes part in, China should always adhere to its own charted course of carbon emissions reduction, and unswervingly uphold the common but differentiated principle in dealing with other countries in climate talks.

19

# Adapting to digitalization as main value creator

At least 10 members of the European Union, the United Kingdom and some other countries are thinking of levying a digital services tax. The basic trend is evident. Therefore, it is necessary to summarize the possible impact of a digital service tax on China.

In a bid to prevent individual countries from imposing their own digital services taxes on technology companies, and prevent the US government from imposing retaliatory tariffs, the OECD has been working with 137 countries to coordinate the collection of tax around the world.

Its latest report shows that the negotiations have already produced two possibilities, a tax collected in the places where companies do business, rather than where they are registered, or a global minimum corporate tax for the industry, the option the United States is in favor of.

The question is what influences any digital services tax will have on China and Chinese companies.

It should be noted that the OECD's digital services tax mainly targets US companies that have enjoyed preferential tax rates in the developed countries for a long time. As the US companies will have to face a reduction in their profits in European countries, the Chinese technology companies might have more space in the European market.

China has been actively engaged in cooperation with the OECD and there is a possibility that China will take part in the digital services tax project as well so as to reduce the overseas tax burden on relevant Chinese companies and increase its own tax revenue from relevant foreign companies operating in China.

The large tax base provides China with bigger space to further lower its overall added value tax rate.

After the digital services tax is put into place, the Chinese technology companies will have to adopt more transparent accounting practices, and follow relevant rules. To tax digital businesses entails reliable accounting and real cost-profit calculations. That said, the pressure from the digital services tax, and its inherent needs for professional accounting services means Chinese companies will have to meet the international standards on accounting and transparency.

Also, by joining the global digital services tax initiative led by the European Union, China can continue to deepen its cooperation with the EU. So far, the disputes on the digital services tax center around the conflicts between the US companies and the EU. It is predictable that to levy the tax in the EU will take a certain period of time, which, particularly before the EU and the US reach an agreement on the tax, will provide China a window of opportunity to negotiate with the EU on it.

20

# Time to develop 'gray-hair economy'

The seventh population census, whose findings the National Bureau of Statistics announced on Tuesday, says the number of people aged above 60 has reached 264 million, accounting for 18.7 percent of the total population. The sexagenarian population has grown by 5.44 percentage points over the past 10 years.

While aging is a problem in many developed countries, too, it is particularly complicated for China, because its population saw a sharp rise in the early 1980s followed by a sudden drop in the percentage of newborns in the 1990s because of the strict family planning policy.

An aging population brings with it unexpected challenges. For example, a drop in labor force supply will rob China of the demographic dividend that supported its growth story in the past decades. Public services, too, will face greater pressure.

To encourage more births, China eased the family planning policy in 2016 allowing all couples to have two children. But the birthrate didn't increase to the extent expected, because population growth is a complicated process that cannot be influenced by changing the family planning policy alone.

More policies are needed to encourage all couples to have two children.

First, the authorities need to lower the education and medical costs in metropolises, and social welfare measures must also be strengthened so more couples agree to have two children.

Second, education, medical care, housing, employment and eldercare departments must coordinate their policies to lower the cost of raising a child.

Third, senior citizens should not be treated as a burden, but as people who can still contribute to society. More measures are needed to support the eldercare sector, and infrastructure, public facilities and internet services must be improved to better serve the elderly. Besides, the "gray-hair economy" holds much potential that should be realized for the benefit of society.

That China is an aging society is a reality. It is time to learn how to make everyone in it happy.

# 21

# Key to unlock dual circulation potential promoting brands

China Brand Day 2021 is on in Shanghai from Monday to Wednesday, showcasing a large number of domestic brands. The three-day event is expected to boost China's domestic and international circulations, given that brand development is a strategy to inject vitality into the country's economy and bring prosperity.

Since the State Council, China's Cabinet, declared May 10 as "China Brand Day" in 2017, society has reached a consensus on brand development and creating a conducive atmosphere for brand construction.

Domestic brands have increasingly gained recognition among the Chinese people, and the creation of a large number of Chinese brands with improved scientific and technological content has injected vitality into the Chinese economy.

At a time when China is developing the dual circulation development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other, efforts to promote Chinese brands have acquired added significance. To ensure smooth domestic and international circulation, China must promote technological and industrial innovation on the supply side and upgrade consumption on the demand side. As the "fulcrum" connecting the two ends, brands, driven by scientific and technological innovation, should become the "core driver" of dual circulation.

The key to promoting Chinese brands lies in domestic enterprises and products themselves. To strengthen brand construction, build high-end brands, and advance from "made in China" to "created in China", domestic enterprises need to continuously promote scientific and technological innovation, facilitate the transformation and upgrading of the industrial structure, and improve China's industrial brands to graduate to the middle-and high-end of the global value chain.

Promoting Chinese brands requires domestic enterprises to assume social responsibility, inject social value, and help create a vision for a better life. To promote Chinese brands, domestic enterprises need to build brands that contain Chinese aesthetics and values, as the cultural connotation of a nation is an inexhaustible source of aesthetic creativity for brand construction.

To sharpen the edge of Chinese brands, lead consumption upgrading and share more Chinese brands with the world, domestic enterprises must depend on innovation, quality and responsibility to polish Chinese brands. The establishment of "China Brand Day" is just a starting point.

# 22

# Chinese governance style a viable alternative to West

China's great capacity for governance exemplified by the management of the coronavirus pandemic has proved to be an unprecedented economic and social success, said Xulio Ríosin, director of the Observatory of Chinese Politics, in an opinion piece on May 4.

According to the article, the United States has experienced a significant 37 percentage point drop in trust across its institutions while at the opposite end of the scale, China has recorded a 27-point gain. When it comes to governance, one of the most important trust indicators, China leads the way. Edelman Trust Barometer found that 84 percent of people in China trust their government, the highest level worldwide and an eight percentage point increase on 2017.

Chinese public opinion is based on how government improves people's lives, the article argued. Through poverty alleviation, there has been a substantial improvement in the incomes (per capita income exceeded $10,000 compared to $150 in 1978) and public welfare of its citizens.

"If China has shown anything over the last five decades, it is the ability to evolve by diagnosing its problems, offering its own solutions and establishing rhythms adjusted to its own times," said Ríosin.

Western societies have been declining for years in terms of well-being, the author noted; corruption is rampant, inequality is deepening. Those who really hold power in the background are not those up for election. However, these Western countries are currently determined to demonize China because they believe that by doing this they can better protect themselves, while ignoring the well-being of the population or its indiscriminate repression.

"This 'distraction' could turn back on them if their own structural problems continue to worsen, leading to the loss of democratic quality at the hands of oligarchies with no interest in the common good," said Ríosin.

"In order to recover a purer sense of democracy, major reforms are required that limit the power of big capital and make the people key actors once again. Only when that happens and politics actually begins to improve lives can we regain confidence in politics again."

23

# Wasting food is not entertaining

The Beijing Municipal Radio and Television Bureau has suspended Youth with Joy, an online entertainment program, after audiences complained about it promoting the wastage of food.

The problem lay in the manner in which entertainment platform iqiyi.com and a dairy firm proposed to promote celebrities on the program that began on Wednesday.

Fans of the celebrities were asked to scan a QR code hidden inside the dairy firm's milk bottles. That the QR code was valid for only three days prompted many fans to buy the milk bottles in bulk, open them to access the QR code and then dump the milk.

A video that has been widely circulated on social networking sites shows fans throwing away large quantities of milk after scanning the QR code.

The incident highlights the necessity of regulating the entertainment industry.  
On April 29, the nation's top legislature passed the Law against Wasting Food, which the show's organizers might have violated.

They have set a bad example as wasting food is also against social mores and public ethics.

Besides, they should have realized that milk could be wasted due to the short validity of the bar codes.

A rule, introduced for entertainment programs in February 2020, forbids the purchase of online votes for stars. The entertainment program seems to have violated this rule.

In a nutshell, the entertainment program, its platform, the fan group organizers and the celebrity management teams are all responsible for encouraging people to waste milk, and the program's producers and the platform should bear responsibility for it.

It should, however, be stressed that blaming wastage of milk does not mean we are not asking people to not idolize celebrities. But people should not idolize celebrities at the cost of wasting food.

# 24

# Popularity of delivery jobs highlights skills shortage

According to data recently released by one internet platform, 580,000 new delivery riders were added in two months during the epidemic last year, 40 percent of whom had worked in manufacturing until the onset of the public health crisis.

This is not an isolated phenomenon. In recent years, the number of workers engaged in internet-related jobs such as online ride-hailing drivers and delivery riders has increased year by year.

According to statistics, in 2019, among the 4 million riders for one food delivery platform, riders under the age of 40 accounted for 83.7 percent. In comparison, from 2008 to 2018, the average annual growth rate of migrant workers engaged in manufacturing was minus 2.84 percent.

This has prompted some people to ask whether China's manufacturing is on the decline.

But compared with the fixed wage system in many traditional factories, the transparent incentive model of internet enterprises where people can earn more by working harder is more attractive to young people.

Before the pandemic, manufacturing jobs were seen as more stable than delivery jobs. However, the sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus and its effects on economic activities have changed that perception.

Moreover, the current labor mobility in China is also due to the reshaping of manufacturing. For example, with the further use of mechanization and intelligence-based technologies, the manufacturing industry is gradually transforming from labor-intensive to capital-intensive, thus it has a declining demand for ordinary workers and offers decreasing remuneration for them.

The industrial transfer of labor forces is a normal phenomenon and should not be over-interpreted. The higher payment internet services can offer employees has attracted a large army of workers and also led to certain distortions in the current labor market.

However, the low employment threshold of internet-based services have also possibly increased people's unwillingness to increase professional skills in the short term, thus exacerbating the shortage of skilled workers in society.

At a time when the manufacturing industry is being reshaped, it is necessary to cultivate among people a long-term and overall employment vision to increase their motivation to become professional and skilled workers.

25

# Tokyo must not release radioactive water into sea

After Japan decided to discharge radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean, many people on social networking sites began comparing Japan's nuclear waste disposal with that of other countries. However, such comparisons are absurd because of fundamental differences between the two.

First, the source and scale of nuclear waste are different. According to the International Nuclear Event Scale, the Fukushima nuclear accident－a meltdown after an earthquake-triggered tsunami hit the planet in 2011－is a level seven (highest) nuclear accident in which large quantities of radioactive substances were released. The radioactive water stored in steel tanks is the water that was pumped into the plant to cool the damaged reactor as well as the underground water and rainwater that seeped into it.

In contrast, wastewater at other nuclear power plants comes from drainage and daily activities there.

Second, there are different kinds of radioactive elements. The radioactive water at Fukushima has several kinds of radioactive elements, including some fission nuclides with long half-life periods, and some highly poisonous transuranium elements such as plutonium and americium. In contrast, the waste at functioning nuclear power plants does not directly come in contact with the nuclear reactor core, so it contains few fission nuclides and almost no transuranium.

Third, the difficulty level in dealing with the two types of waste is different. Nuclear power plants can treat ordinarily discharged water with the best available technology and pump them out once they meet standards.

The nuclear wastewater at Fukushima has to be treated by an Advanced Liquid Processing System before discharge. Japan developed an ALPS in 2012 to deal with the radioactive water after filtering out radioactive elements except tritium. According to the ALPS team's Feb 10, 2020, report, however, 73 percent of the processed nuclear wastewater had not met the standards till Dec 31, 2019.

Given the Tokyo Electric Power Company's record in falsifying data, one doubts if their processed water will be safe enough to be discharged into the sea.

It will be better if Japan chooses the best way of dealing with the contaminated water under the supervision of all parties concerned.

26

# Chinese economy in fast lane of recovery despite pandemic

China's gross domestic product increased 18.3 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, the highest since the country started recording its quarterly growth. This is because of the recovery of demand as well as the low base of the first quarter last year due to the dormancy of the economy as a result of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Compared with the first quarter of 2019, GDP has grown 10.3 percent. That is more than 5 percent annually on average over the past two years, proving that the economy is bidding farewell to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That should serve to ease the concerns of structural issues such as overcapacity and the rise of the debt leverage ratio if demand could not recover in time to match the recovery of production.

The increase of investment in manufacturing industries rose 29.8 percent in the first quarter, faster than the growth of investment in infrastructure, which was 29.7 percent, and investment in the real estate market, which grew by 25.6 percent, indicating both government funds and market capital are actively playing their respective roles in the economy as expected.

In the first quarter, the total retail sales of consumer goods surged 33.9 percent year-on-year－the revenue of the catering industry rose 91.6 percent in March－showing the recovering potential of consumption.

Exports increased 38.7 percent in the first quarter. This is better than expected, showing the global recovery is gathering pace. The increasing external demand is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

As such, consumption has contributed 11.6 percentage points of the 18.3 percent GDP growth in the first quarter, with investment and net exports contributing 4.5 percentage points and 2.2 percentage points respectively. It is projected that more than half of the economic growth will come from consumption this year. But although the role of investment will become smaller in boosting growth, it remains crucial as more money is flowing to high-tech industries and the service sector.

China's growth this year is likely to be markedly higher than the "above 6 percent" target. The rising domestic demand will become an important impetus driving growth this year, and industrial upgrading and economic restructuring will continue amid uncertainties, which will be caused mainly by the lingering pandemic, fast-changing geopolitical situations, imported inflation and rising debt leverage ratios.

27

# Helping the middle-income group grow

China's middle-income population is growing and playing an important role in the economy. How to boost the vitality of the middle income group is of key importance for the country to avoid the middle income trap.

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China had listed raising the middle-income group as one of its strategic objectives. China has the largest middle-income group, which plays a vital role in transforming the economy from an investment-driven to a consumption-driven one. Because of the important role the middle-income group plays, it is necessary to enhance its consumption abilities and prevent debt risks.

Several measures need to be taken. First, the incomes of lower income groups need to be raised. Compared with middle income groups, lower income groups are more likely to deposit money in banks. Increasing their numbers will, therefore, boost the total deposit rate. It will also help lower income people become middle incomers soon.

A large portion of lower income people, namely migrant workers, have agricultural land in their hometowns but work in the cities for better incomes. It is necessary to reform the housing registration, or hukou, system, to enable them to enjoy the welfare measures their urban counterparts enjoy.

Next, the tax structure must be adjusted to make redistribution of social wealth fairer. As 60 percent of middle incomers' incomes come from their wages, it is necessary to lower their tax rates so that their dispensable income increases. Redistribution of social wealth also plays a key role in giving a boost to the incomes of those in the lower and middle income groups.

The social security system needs to be improved to stabilize people's income expectancy. On the one hand, more investment channels can be opened to guide different groups to better invest for profit; on the other hand, the medical insurance system can be improved so that people don't need to save for medical expenses.

Also, there is the need for greater supervision of the financial and the credit market system. Financial institutions can play a positive role in boosting people's consumption based on loans, which in turn boosts circulation of the whole society and accumulates wealth.

28

# Hukou door opens wider to boost urbanization

The National Development and Reform Commission issued a notice on Tuesday, demanding that cities with a permanent urban population of less than 3 million fully cancel restrictions on household registration and give equal treatment to home renters and buyers while implementing the *hukou* policy.

According to China's current standards, an urban resident population of less than 3 million covers all small and medium-sized cities and the cities with an urban resident population of more than 1 million but less than 3 million. Therefore, the promulgation of the NDRC circular means all these cities will fully suspend restrictions from this year.

The 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) clearly stipulates that China will advance a people-centered, new type of urbanization strategy that the authorities have repeatedly stressed is the key to marching toward higher-quality urbanization. In the first year of the 14th Five-Year Plan, the new household registration policy is testimony to the decision-maker's people-centric approach.

In the past few years many migrant workers and non-urban residents have been floating between the urban and rural areas of China without a hukou. From the replacement of temporary residence permits with residence permits, to the continuous easing of the hukou threshold in most cities, from the point-based *hukou* acquisition in megacities to the latest easing of *hukou* restrictions, it is not difficult to see that the country has, in recent years, been reforming the household registration system in a steady manner.

According to the notice, the new policy should be applied equally to home renters and buyers, a substantial step toward implementing the undifferentiated "people-oriented" concept. This is clearly a milestone in the history of China's *hukou* reform, which means that in the vast majority of Chinese cities, hukou will no longer restrict free movement of people.

With the absorption of a number of new residents, the development potential of many cities, especially small and medium-sized ones, will get a boost and the integrated development of urban and rural areas will be accelerated. Next, it is necessary for these cities to increase their public service capacity, accelerate the construction of education and other facilities to meet the increased demands as a result of expanded city scale.

29

# Challenges remain but Hainan will deliver

A day before the third anniversary of the founding of Hainan Free Trade Port, the State Council Information Office on Tuesday said customs officials had busted 66 smuggling gangs that were handling about 200 million yuan ($30.52 million) of funds during 11 operations launched over the past two years.

As expressed at Tuesday's news briefing, Hainan has been taking measures to optimize its industrial structure for the past three years in order to achieve high-quality development. The idea behind the construction of the port is to make good use of the favorable national policies to realize high-quality development.

What the port has achieved in the past three years is there for all to see. There was a time when Hainan was blamed for relying too much on the realty sector and, not having much to show by way of industry.

However, industrial investment has risen significantly in the past three years. The number of market entities has increased by 763,000; foreign direct investment has doubled for three consecutive years and 233,000 talents have found jobs in Hainan.

In a nutshell, Hainan has optimized its industrial structure and seen higher market vitality, which is helping it attract more business and talents.

However, much more needs to be done. Even when realty was the only thing Hainan could boast of, there was a need for a convenient, world-class business environment based on the rule of law. At Tuesday's news briefing, the spokesperson said there is still a huge gap between the standards set to build a world-class business environment and the practices being followed.

Attracting more enterprises, consumers, and talents is only the first challenge Hainan faces in building its free trade port. How to provide quality services will be the second challenge that it has to meet. However, we are confident that with policy support from the central leadership, Hainan will rise to the occasion and deliver.

Building a free trade port is a new mission entrusted to Hainan by the state and a new expectation for Hainan. As the world's largest free trade port, Hainan should not only be good at learning from advanced experience, but also have the courage to innovate and dare to take the road that others have not taken.

30

# Using big data to consolidate results of poverty alleviation

Stressing the important role of big data in establishing and perfecting the country's long-term mechanism for consolidating antipoverty achievements, the top authorities recently issued a guideline document saying the country will set up a big data platform to strengthen data sharing and docking among relevant departments to facilitate data comparison and information sharing, in order to prevent people from falling back into poverty.

It is fair to say that data have played an increasingly important role in promoting exchanges between urban and rural residents and improving social governance. According to statistics, China had 989 million internet users by December 2020, with the internet penetration rate reaching 70.4 percent.

Fiber optic connections have been offered to 98 percent of poverty-stricken villages, and e-commerce has reached all of the 832 poverty-stricken counties in rural areas.

In the process of China's poverty alleviation endeavor, relevant parties have attached great importance to the use of big data to carry out information registration, data updating and service monitoring, and this has played an important role in helping the country achieve its overall victory in the battle against poverty.

China should now give full play to big data in consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation by solving the "data island" problem.

Many localities and departments have established various data and information platforms, but due to administrative barriers and other problems, most of them are isolated and not used for data sharing. This has not only increased the work for departments at various levels and wasted governance resources, but also intensified the information asymmetry between higher and lower levels of governments and different departments, thus affecting the accuracy and precision of data on the poverty alleviation achievements.

This highlights the need for the country to facilitate the sharing of data to fully realize the potential of big data in consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation. Local governments should collect the relevant data and information from different departments and build large databases of consolidated poverty alleviation data in provincial-level administrative regions.

In this process, the key is unified planning and unified standards so as to enable cross-regional and cross-departmental information exchanges.

31

# People benefit from medical catalog adjustment

The National Healthcare Security Administration and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security on Monday published a new catalog of medicines for basic medical insurance, work-related injury insurance and maternity insurance effective from March 1, lowering the prices of 119 medicines by more than half.

This sets a record in the number of medicines whose prices have been lowered. Another notable feature of the newly adjusted catalog is the significantly shorter time interval between adjustments. Since the formulation of the first list for the country's medical insurance drugs in 2000, adjustments were made in 2004, 2009, 2017 and 2019. The interval between this adjustment and the last one is just one year. The reason for this short interval is a document issued by the National Healthcare Security Administration on July 30 on medicines management for basic medical insurance, which stipulates that the country's administrative department for medical security will in principle establish and improve a dynamic adjustment mechanism, to be adjusted once a year.

In the past, it was difficult for new and essential drugs to be included in the insurance list. But faster adjustment means drug companies do not have to worry about their medicines being shelved so long as they are quality medicines. This will encourage pharmaceutical enterprises to increase investment in R&D, make innovations and strive to achieve a competitive advantage of high quality and low price. However, those pharmaceutical companies that still refuse to give up old practices are bound to be punished and eventually eliminated by the market.

With a faster adjustment pace, the catalog of insured drugs will no longer be a "safe box". In the past, many auxiliary drugs stayed on the list of insured medicines for a long time, making it difficult for many necessary and good clinical drugs urgently needed by patients to enter the list. However, after the dynamic adjustment of the list patients can stop "looking at drugs and feeling frustrated".

The dynamic catalog adjustment will also lead to rapid drug innovation and R&D by pharmaceutical companies, reduce doctors' concerns when prescribing drugs and rapidly improve medical insurance and people's welfare.

With the rapid improvement of medical insurance and people's welfare, improvement in the quality of drugs will become an inevitable trend. Not only that, the price of medicines will dip and the burden of medical treatment on patients will be mitigated.

# 32

# Country's manufacturing industry needs a boost and quality check

The Chinese Academy of Engineering's report on the state of the manufacturing industry says China is far from becoming an advanced manufacturing hub.

The report points out that the United States, Germany and Japan are the most developed countries in this field, and the gap with China remains wide.

The report says China is indispensable to the world's manufacturing supply chains not because of its technological strengths, but the scale of its manufacturing sector. The productivity and per capita output of China's manufacturing industry lag far behind those of the developed countries.

Although the government is committed to promoting innovation-driven development, the shrinking profit margin and mounting operation costs have prompted many Chinese manufacturing enterprises to reduce investment in research and development.

As a result, the competition that should have been driving innovation has been downgraded to a price war. The Chinese manufacturing industry's share in the country's gross domestic product has fallen from 31.5 percent in 2012 to 27.1 percent in 2019.

In contrast, the US manufacturing industry has been expanding in scale and improving in productivity for three consecutive years. A similar trend is observed in many other developed countries, including Japan, as they now pay more attention to bringing investment, technology and production capacity back home to create jobs, boost growth and ensure national security.

As many enterprises are relocating their production units to Southeast Asian countries where the cost of labor is lower, China will find it more difficult to maintain its scale advantage. No wonder, the market share of Chinese bearings, instrument and machine tools and some other basic industrial components has markedly fallen in recent years.

Unlike the internet, financial and real estate industries, the manufacturing industry banks on more long-term investment, particularly in fundamental research, protection of intellectual property rights and fair market competition.

The central authorities have vowed to make a 10-year action plan on strengthening fundamental research for developing the country's manufacturing industry, the backbone of an economy's competitiveness. State support is key to prompting the country's manufacturing industry to focus more on quality than quantity.

33

# Elderly also have right to a digital life

Is modern technology making our daily life more convenient?

Many would say yes. With a smartphone in hand, one can do almost anything: watch a film, attend a meeting, open a bank account, pay utility bills, the list goes on.

Yet for about 249 million senior citizens nationwide, the answer would probably be no. Being unable to operate a smartphone, they can hardly benefit from the convenience. Worse, in many cases they suffer because public service departments have ended their offline services.

For example, in order to fight the novel coronavirus, many public places require a health code via a smartphone app. That makes life difficult for those elderly residents who do not use a smartphone.

That's why the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology's recent plan is praiseworthy.

According to the latest information, the ministry plans to launch a campaign next month that requires some highly popular apps and companies to reform their services and products so that they can be accessed by senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Among the detailed moves, there are three that have attracted the most attention. First, China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom, as the three biggest mobile phone service providers, are required to upgrade their customer services so that seniors can get human assistance via a single click.

Second, WeChat, a popular social media app, and Alipay, a major payment app, are required to reform so that senior residents can more easily use them.

Third, the new versions developed for seniors should not contain any inductive advertisements so as to avoid the elderly wrongly clicking and losing money.

All these moves have hit the nail on the head. When people face trouble, the first reaction is to seek help from the service provider, but the majority of service providers now use automated systems to reduce costs. It might be acceptable for young people to do one click after another, but it can be difficult for seniors.

Some say that WeChat and Alipay are developed by private companies and they have little responsibility for society. That's wrong because they are already so big as to be essential for many aspects of daily life. With their great size comes great responsibility.

The most frequent disputes people have in relation to smartphones involve money. Wrongly clicking on an advertisement might lead to an unintended payment, while wrong operation might result in a loss as well. To solve this, it is necessary to let apps for seniors be without inductive advertisements.

34

# Stop the poison online

The National Office for the Fight Against Pornography and Illegal Publications said on Wednesday that a man surnamed Jiang had been detained by police in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning province, for making and selling obscene cartoons online.

Jiang might face criminal charges. According to a news release, Jiang's cartoons promote not just obscenity, but also inhuman practices such as infanticide. Some micro-bloggers complained that Jiang's cartoon strips showcased sex slaves, similar to the "comfort women" that the Japanese army forced many women to become before and during World War II, and promoted pedophilia and infanticide.

Jiang's cartoons violate the law against obscenity, belittle and offend women, and glorify the inhuman practices of a fascist regime. Jiang has been making and selling such cartoons since 2016 and he told the police that he has earned 1.2 million yuan ($183,734) through his cartoons.

Some micro-bloggers said he had half a million readers online. What is a matter of serious concern is that many of those readers could be youths, even minors, who cannot distinguish right from wrong and might end up committing the crimes Jiang's cartoons seem to promote.

While the authorities have put a lid on the kind of poison Jiang had been spreading by detaining him, there might be many others uploading similar content online. In June 2018, the police in Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu province, cracked down on an illegal website containing over 100,000 obscene videos, and detained more than a 100 suspects. Similar cases are reported every year.

Especially, with the advent of short-video and livestreaming apps, obscene material has become more widespread. Reportedly, some livestreaming anchors expose their body parts before viewers online for a price. It is time internet regulatory authorities took legal action against such violations online.

# 35

# Rude behavior does not have a nationality

On Friday, when a Japanese brand launched its new clothing line, there was chaos at one of its branches in Nagoya. As some videos that went viral show, people did not stand in line, some glass panes were broken and shop windows vandalized.

Someone's comment on a social networking site, saying he thought this was happening in China before realizing it was in Japan, got the maximum likes. Others asked if some of those standing in line were foreign dealers buying in order to resell.

In contrast, there was no chaos as Chinese customers stood in line for the same brand's launch in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province.

Mainstream media outlets in Japan, that had a field day some years ago while reporting on Chinese consumers rushing to buy Japanese closet covers and rice cookers in Japan, were conspicuous by their silence this time. Only one local website and television channel in Japan mentioned it in passing.

Most overseas media outlets never tire of finding fault with Chinese people, painting Chinese consumers as a rude, noisy lot that does not honor lines.

Sure, some Chinese tourists overseas might have jumped the line or broken rules, but singling them out in media reports sometimes amounts to discriminating against an entire nation.

However, the Nagoya incident shows that such things happen with consumers in other countries, too. Worse, this happened at a time when Japan is facing the risks of a second wave of the novel coronavirus infections.

Some Japanese users on social networking sites actually asked why people always blame the Chinese, when similar incidents have now taken place in Japan.

Our intention is not to use this incident to demonize the Japanese, but some media outlets should reflect on what they reported in the past.

# 36

# Social factors behind virus' resurgence in Europe

Since the beginning of autumn, COVID-19 has shown signs of resurgence in Europe, with an epidemic weekly report released by the World Health Organization on Nov 3 showing that more than 1.7 million new cases were reported in the week preceding Nov 1, accounting for more than half of the total number of new cases worldwide, proof of a second wave of the outbreak in Europe.

In addition, the number of new confirmed cases in Europe this week rose by more than 20 percent over the previous week and deaths by more than 40 percent. The second wave of infections in Europe is partly attributed to the changed climate. As winter approaches in the northern hemisphere, temperatures and humidity levels continue to drop, providing a dry and cold environment that helps the virus to survive and spread, making containment efforts even more difficult. However, the social factors behind the epidemic's second wave in Europe deserve our attention.

When the epidemic first broke out in Europe, most countries treated its prevention and control as an internal matter. The European Union later adopted a series of measures, such as border controls and material allocation, to promote anti-epidemic cooperation among member states.

However, the EU lacks enough power to frame legally binding regulations to promote such kind of cooperation. So, the epidemic is severely testing the EU's governance ability in the realm of public health.

Given that EU countries have frequent economic and trade exchanges, border closures can effectively control the epidemic's spread, but they also make their economic recovery more difficult. As a result, some countries have vacillated between controlling the epidemic and promoting economic recovery. They opened their borders and consumption places to guests to promote economic recovery, leading to the number of infections surging, setting the stage for a resurgence of COVID-19 across the continent.

Since the spring, EU member states have adopted stricter measures, such as social distancing and the wearing of face masks. However, these measures have not been implemented properly, as some people believe these measures limit their "personal freedom". This, together with the economic contraction caused by the epidemic, has brewed discontent among many people and even sparked demonstrations in some countries.

Europe is facing a difficult choice between implementing lockdowns or not.

37

# More teeth to check internet monopoly

The State Administration for Market Regulation recently introduced a draft guideline document to prevent internet platform-based economies from becoming monopolies, lower administrative law enforcement and compliance costs for market entities, improve antitrust regulations, advance fair market competition, protect consumer interests, and promote the sector's sustainable and healthy development.

The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Communist Party of China Central Committee said that China will build a high-standard market system, improve the fair competition system, and fully implement the negative list system for market access. It particularly emphasized that the country will implement the fair competition review system and enforce the anti-monopoly law.

The Anti-Monopoly Law came into effect in 2008, but in the past decade, leading market players in the internet sector have abused their dominant market positions. In recent years, legislators, experts and the media have called for investigations into such practices and for implementing anti-monopoly regulations.

With China becoming the second largest internet power, after the United States, a variety of new business models have emerged. However, with the continuous expansion of scale, some internet enterprises have gradually lost the internet spirit, giving rise to malpractices such as disorderly competition, false marketing and personal information leakages. All these are damaging to users, thus underlining the need for enforcing anti-monopoly laws.

The State Council, China's Cabinet, released a guideline document on Aug 8, 2019, requiring the market regulator to investigate and punish illegal practices such as abuse of dominant market position to restrict transactions and conduct unfair competition, and prohibit platforms from unilaterally signing exclusive service provision contracts to ensure fair market competition. The latest guideline draft gives more detailed provisions.

The internet sector in China is booming because of an ideal commercial environment. However, following the emergence of giant platform enterprises in various fields, it is important to standardize fair and just competition in the online market.

The draft, if it becomes a regulation, will strengthen anti-monopoly law enforcement, and enable enterprises to better foresee compliance risks, respect and embrace market competition and refrain from abusing their monopolistic position to indulge in unjust competition, thus better protecting the interests of consumers and the public.

# 38

No need to get smart about sorting

Trash cans using a facial recognition system have been launched in some communities in Beijing and Zhejiang province raising concerns that the technology is being overused.

The lids of the trash cans can be opened after the system identifies the users as being registered residents of the communities. The promoters claim that the "smart" trash cans will prompt the people to strictly abide by the domestic waste classification regulations, as their behavior will be monitored. But some argue the "smartness" may be going too far and is an abuse of people's privacy and may pose possible data leak risks.

People are willing to allow bio-data collection to ensure public security, but even so, the public security departments seem to be always on pins and needles whenever the public raises questions over their ability to protect data security after some incidents exposed loopholes in their management of people's data.

As the cases in Beijing and Zhejiang indicate, the "smart" trash cans are operated by the property management companies, rather the public security departments. So people have enough reasons to ask whether the property management companies have gone too far in using the technology to avoid littering, or broadly speaking, whether the use of facial recognition technology should be strictly controlled by the public security and industrial authorities.

The experience of some developed countries where domestic rubbish classification has been successfully implemented for years indicates it is not how smart the trash cans are that matters, but people's willingness to observe the rules.

Even if the advancement of technology can promote good governance, there must be a boundary for the use of the technology in governance as the harmful effects of some technological flaws can also be enlarged in the process.

Ethical reviews have become a must for most medical technologies and operations, and the same should be required when considering using technological therapies to treat some social and governance illnesses.

Technology is not a panacea to all the problems of modernization.

39

# Can't force Huawei to be apple of one's eye

A company in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, reportedly introduced an internal document requiring all employees to stop using iPhones. Those who continue using iPhones could lose their jobs while those who switch to Huawei would get subsidies, the document said.

Asked why, a senior company executive said the move was to ensure the security of information and commercial secrets, and to encourage all to support domestic brands. Some enterprises and agencies might have security concerns, but for the company involved that seems unlikely, and it seems to be more of a publicity ploy.

There have been instances in the past, too, of other private companies forbidding employees from using iPhones and insisting they support Chinese brands.

At a time when the United States government is forcing US companies to stop doing business with Huawei, it is good to see Chinese compatriots supporting Chinese brands. However, it isn't Apple that is stopping supplying chips and other high-tech parts to Huawei. It is US politicians. The president has also issued executive orders to shut down TikTok so as to force it to sell its US businesses to an American company.

The best way to support Chinese companies is to speak out against those US politicians. It is advisable, for example, to create awareness among friends in the US about the ways in which these politicians are harming both Chinese and US interests.

Boycotting US brands such as Apple is not at all advisable. It not only violates an individual's personal right to choose what he or she likes, it also creates a lot of misunderstanding. Of course, organizations that deal with critical information can ask their employees to use domestic brands. But that must be done legally.

Even Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei said that patriotism should not decide whether one wants an iPhone or a Huawei. He said that he had bought Apple computers for his family and his company must learn from its competitors.

# 40

# Blame illegal traders, not locals

Dunhuang is a scenic spot in Northwest China's Gansu province, well-known for its Mogao Grottoes featuring murals and sculptures among other things, some more than 1,000 years old.

However, on Monday the place was in the news for something else, something less savory. Media reports said that some people put up a "public toilet" signboard on the way to Dunhuang, making those wanting to relieve themselves take a detour off the main road, the terrain changed. The motorists hit a pile of sand where their vehicles got trapped. Soon they came face to face with those who had laid the trap, able-bodied men ready to pull their vehicle out of the mess for a price.

On Monday, a microblogger shared a video showing how he tried to help the trapped car in front of his, and several persons emerged to stop him, while offering their services for a price.

On Tuesday, the Dunhuang police said they had arrested five men for suspected fraud and detained two against whom they plan to press charges.

Such frauds usually spell doom for tourist places, with many asking tourists to be on their guard. However, it is hoped that this was a one-off case and will not harm Dunhuang's tourism industry.

Local residents do not benefit from such misdeeds. On the contrary, declining tourist numbers will mean lower income for many.

The law-abiding traders and residents living near tourist spots should not allow such scams to strike root in their midst as once tourists stop coming, they will all be left in the lurch. At the slightest suspicion, they should call the police and alert them about any illegal or suspicious activities, so that fewer tourists are cheated this way. It is time more residents came forward to save the local tourism industry.

41

# Rewarding welcome at gates of independence

As the new academic year begins, freshmen are entering college campuses across the country, many of them accompanied by their parents or well-wishers. Xidian University in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, has introduced a policy that has caught everyone's attention. It will give away a "Freshman Independence Award" to those who come to college alone, not accompanied by parents. Awardees will receive a certificate, a specially designed T-shirt, and a photograph of them entering the campus taken for memory.

That's a very innovative idea and will encourage the young to be bold enough to travel hundreds or thousands of kilometers on their own to reach their new college. After all being independent is an essential part of growing up.

Most college freshmen are just 18 and have had little chance of traveling, as they were busy with studies in high school. Going to college could be their first chance to be on their own.

The policy might actually encourage them to be independent.

However, that does not mean those being accompanied by parents should be scoffed at. Many families look forward to the moment when their child goes to a college and would like to be there to experience the moment. Many families thus travel from one city to another with their college-going members in celebration.

For some students from poor regions, going to college might be a rare occasion and for their parents the only chance to travel anywhere. Not surprisingly, some cities see a spurt in tourist figures in September, thanks to parents of college freshmen. Authorities of some tourist spots try to cash in on the occasion by introducing favorable policies to draw visitors.

Also, for some families, it might be a last reunion of sorts to be cherished, because once their wards graduate they might move to another city to work. So, here's wishing a bright career ahead to every freshman, whether they travel independently, or come accompanied with their family members.

# 42

# It pays to pay teachers well, Jinhua sets an example

On Teacher's Day, observed on Sept 10, the education department in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, announced that the local government has implemented the regulation that mandates the average salary of teachers cannot be less than that of local civil servants. In fact, media reports say some Jinhua teachers earn more than civil servants; in some areas their year-end bonus is higher than 90,000 yuan ($13,175).

The local department is implementing the State Council's 2018 regulation, which advances that teachers' salaries should not be lower than that of the civil servants. The central government had asked local governments to realize the goal in three years.

The move to increase teachers' salaries was received well by society, which agrees that teaching is a noble profession. Their service in molding young minds through education is indispensable.

To a great extent, an area's development hinges on the quality of education people receive and the talents that are thus created. Guaranteeing teachers a decent pay will go a long way in equipping them to do a good job.

But the State Council's regulation on guaranteeing teachers' good income has not been implemented nationwide. In many places, teachers remain underpaid, their salaries not commensurate with the hard work they put in to create talent pools.

What's worse, in some regions such as Dafang county, Guizhou province, teachers were not getting salaries on time for five years until recently.

Jinhua has set a good example by raising teachers' salaries, something which other regions across the nation should learn from. It is hoped that local authorities take action to make teaching an attractive profession, which will eventually benefit the development of local areas.

43

# Blinkered bias behind attack on TikTok

Tuesday marks the deadline the US government set for ByteDance to divest itself of its TikTok operations in the United States. If it has not been sold to any US company by then, TikTok will have to be shut down in the US.

There have been some comparing the move to the US actions targeting the Japanese enterprise Toshiba Machine Corp and the French enterprise Alstom. The comparison is interesting.

Their biggest similarity lies in US politicians' plot to curb the development of a country. The US government hyped up Toshiba selling submarine technology to the Soviet Union in the 1980s as a national security threat in order to put Japan at a disadvantage in their trade war during that period. In 2013, the US Department of Justice arrested an Alstom executive in New York on bribery charges relating to a deal in Indonesia, pressuring the French company to agree to General Electric acquiring its energy business rather than Siemens.

Now it seeks to cause trouble for TikTok for the same reason: To contain China and minimize its influences.

But TikTok has done nothing wrong, it is innocent. The only wrong that TikTok has done, is that it is owned by a Chinese company.

The US politicians have ensured that ByteDance has no choice other than to divest itself of TikTok's US operations. Yet even when some US companies showed an interest in purchasing it, there were oppositions from US politicians and the talks ceased.

To put it simply, some US politicians want to kill TikTok.

But by killing TikTok in the US a lot of Americans will lose their jobs. If TikTok is closed, 1,500 US jobs will be lost. Not to mention those who use the short video app to make a living.

US politicians should rethink their greedy appetite that hurts all, including US citizens.

44

# E-companies wake up to stress issues, provide help online

Media reports say that online entertainment video platform Bilibili has set up a center to chat with users who are going through a bad phase or have emotional issues. The Bilibili staff will try to cheer them up and talk those with suicidal tendencies out of it.

In recent years, Bilibili has attracted many youngsters. According to its financial report, Bilibili had 172 million active monthly users in the second quarter this year. Their average age, according to Bilibili CEO Chen Rui, is 20.

Intervening to help those with suicidal tendencies is an important social responsibility that online platforms and internet service providers nowadays bear. Some search engines are programmed to redirect those looking for suicide-related content to suicide intervention and psychological consultation support pages to help them cope with their problems and thus prevent tragedy.

Bilibili is also trying to establish new communication channels for young users. It works with Shanghai's online juvenile public service center to encourage users to get help from public interest psychology and legal aid organizations.

In June 2019, the platform established a staff service center called "energy station" to talk to users with emotional issues.

The center conducts 1,400 psychological counseling every month; during the summer vacation this year, it provided counseling for 7,500 individuals.

Thanks to the internet, people now have more online communication channels. But it has also reduced face-to-face interactions, because of which it is harder to notice people's emotional issues, if any.

However, it is good that society is finally waking up to the emotional problems people face and the need to address them instead of calling those who are depressed or contemplating suicide weak, and ignoring them. Internet enterprises can become an important social force for counseling and helping those with emotional issues.

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# Draft of housing rental ordinance protects both leaser and tenant

The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development published a draft of the housing rental ordinance on Monday to solicit public opinion. The ordinance enhances protection of tenants' legal rights and interests.

In recent years, housing rental enterprises that rent houses from their owners and sublease them to tenants have developed rapidly. But without rules regulating this industry, the tenants often find it difficult to protect their legal rights and interests. Regulating long-term rentals is a focus of this ordinance.

The ordinance draft prohibits housing rental enterprises from forcing tenants to take housing rent loans, thus protecting them from financial frauds.

The media have frequently exposed how houses being leased out are not always fit for living in. Often some chemicals used in renovation endangers tenants' health.

Notably, to protect tenants, the draft prohibits companies from leasing out houses whose indoor environment fails to meet national standards

The draft also stipulates that nonresidential spaces such as basement, kitchen, balcony and toilet cannot be leased out as residential spaces. House owners or enterprises that violate this regulation will be punished, according to the draft.

The draft also tries to balance the rights and interests of leasers and tenants. It stipulates that during the period of leasing, the leaser or tenant cannot unilaterally terminate the deal or raise/decrease rent, unless otherwise stated in the contract. Also, the leaser should not force a tenant to vacate the leased house.

The housing rental market's healthy and stable development is good for not only leasers and tenants but also the stability of society. All relevant parties should take the opportunity to submit their suggestion on the draft to the ministry to enable it to better play its intended roles.

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# Data advantages can boost country's competitiveness

The more the United States strives to enforce a "digital hegemony" in cyberspace－with its smash-and-grab of ByteDance's TikTok US operations as a case in point－the more China should try to accelerate the development of its digital economy. Not only to entrench its status as a growth engine, but also to enable the country to better protect its "digital sovereignty".

Like it or not, data is becoming a core production element and fundamental resource in human society, making it a strategic property that all countries struggle for. That's why cyberspace and data are now regarded as new focuses of international geopolitical competition.

Although the European Union encourages the free flow of information among its members, its emphases on data security and supervision are no less stringent than those of the US when it comes to dealing with parties outside of the bloc.

That being said, China needs to strengthen its regulation and expedite its legislation on data security in order to prevent its data and IT enterprises from being snatched by foreign countries.

Since the country has laws on the protection of other kinds of production elements out of national security concerns, such as energy resources, technology, capital and food, it is only a matter of time before digital elements, in the forms of data and algorithms, are subject to protection under the law.

The adjustment of the country's catalog for technologies subject to bans or restrictions on exports, through which the State tightened up its protection of algorithms and some cutting-edge data-related technologies, can be seen as its latest efforts to enhance its national digital security and a step toward bringing them under the protective umbrella of the law.

China needs to make full use of its advantages in the digital economy and technology to actively take part in the rulemaking for cyberspace and the data market to promote healthy competition and let the advancement of information technology better serve the people.

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# Delivery workers for online orders take big slice of job pie

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security now recognizes the courier service for online orders, something that came into existence in recent years, as a profession.

The new profession has not only been growing rapidly in employment scale, but is also providing people bigger and better development opportunities, says a report issued by the ministry.

The profession is different from traditional deliverymen in that they provide spot-to-spot delivery for orders placed online.

Because of rising demand, especially after the novel coronavirus outbreak at the beginning of this year, the sector absorbed a huge number of laborers in a very short time. According to the ministry, there are several million delivery workers in the online e-commerce service sector in China.

In the first half of this year, around 3 million registered delivery workers received orders from meituan.com, a major online food delivery and ticketing services platform. The report estimated that the new sector will altogether employ 30 million people in the next five years.

About 30 percent of delivery workers based on online orders earn more than 5,000 yuan ($732.3) a week. It is also evolving as a flexible employment model.

Although delivery work is regarded as a labor-intensive occupation, delivery based on online e-commerce service is supported by advanced technologies such as big data, cloud computing, internet of things and artificial intelligence. The new profession represents the transformation and upgrading of new economic driving forces in the era of digital economy. The report calls it "new infrastructure" that is promoting the modern service industry.

People's attitude toward this new profession is gradually changing as more people are getting employed. According to meituan.com's report on its delivery workers in 2018, about 15 percent of them hold a college diploma. The profession is likely to attract more talents and develop faster in the future.

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# Need for awareness about another economic hardship, period poverty

A recent online campaign drew public attention to a poverty unique to women－period poverty. Sanitary products, which every woman needs during her period, actually pose great economic hardships on quite a few women in China.

Some people argue that a sanitary pad costs 2 yuan ($0.291) at most, and the total monthly expenditure could come to a dozen yuan, which is not a lot. However, for those who say so the price of sanitary products every month is equivalent to what they spend on a cup of coffee. And they overlook the actual income situation of a large number of people in China.

The average per capita disposable income of residents in some regions in Central and West China is still markedly lower than the national average, even if almost all the people there have been lifted above the poverty line. That means their spending power has not improved as much as the change in their economic condition indicates. For such impoverished women, sanitary products pose an additional economic burden.

Period poverty has figured in online discussions, with many suggesting reduction in prices of sanitary products. Some people called for reduction in taxes on sanitary products to ease the financial burden on women, while others suggested that the government provide them for free to poor women.

Although menstruation is a biological phenomenon every woman experiences every month, it is seldom discussed openly because of our mindset. In the absence of necessary public attention and support, women have been silently suffering period poverty for long.

Making note of and admitting to a problem is the first step toward solving it. Similarly, eliminating period poverty will require comprehensive discussion and investigation, but it is good to see that the issue is finally being addressed and drawing public attention. Society should pay greater attention to the needs of impoverished women, particularly make basic sanitary products available to them.

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# Bidding goodbye to white pollution

The National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and seven other ministries jointly introduced a guiding document, according to which non-degradable plastic bags will be banned in a majority of cities from Jan 1, 2021.

All supermarkets and stores are required to charge customers for plastic bags, but the latest move shows the authorities' determination to reduce white pollution by putting an end to the use of plastic bags altogether.

The move found widespread support on social networking sites, as more people are waking up to the importance of getting rid of plastic garbage.  
People who are accustomed to getting a plastic bag after buying goods in the supermarket will now have to look for degradable ones, if they are available.

Enterprises that produce non-degradable, disposable plastic bags will have to start producing degradable ones or go out of business. With less than half a year's time remaining before the non-degradable plastic bags are banned, local governments might need to help enterprises make the switch.

However, even degradable plastic bags are plastic bags and therefore an environmental hazard, they are just less polluting than non-degradable plastic bags. The long-term goal should be to totally do away with plastic bags.

Some cities are already doing away with plastic bags altogether, but for the idea to gain currency, there needs to be greater awareness among consumers about the harm they do to the environment. Only when people stop using them will plastic bags disappear.

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# Brand owners must keep tabs on franchises

The China Consumers Association held its annual meeting on Thursday, collectively reporting on the improper or illegal deeds of some enterprises. Burger King was among the enterprises reported this year.

According to news reports, a China Central Television reporter interviewed some employees at Burger King restaurants in Nanchang, capital city of Jiangxi province. In one of them, when the bread expired, the manager just ordered them to tear off the old data tags and put on new ones instead. The next day, the bread that had expired was sold to consumers.

In others, the same happened with chicken legs, and a staff member was even quoted as saying that he saw the bread becoming mildewed once. Another staff member claimed that their headquarters knew what was happening.

In a statement issued via their official micro blog account, Burger King said that the involved restaurants are franchises and their business has been suspended. They also said they had sent a working team to probe the case. It also apologized for the wrongdoing.

It is good that the company has quickly apologized and is conducting an investigation. We hope there will be a quick result of their probe.

Actually, what has happened to Burger King has happened to other brands before. Although it is the misconduct of franchise operators, it is brand whose reputation and image are damaged.

For a company, the moment it allows a franchise to use its brand, it has entrusted the franchise with its credit and the two are linked together. When a franchise fails to meet quality standards or has any misdeeds, it is the brand that suffers.

For consumers, there is no way and no need to distinguish the business relations between a chain store and its parent enterprise. They only recognize the brand and they will vote by foot if a brand is ruined by the misdeeds of any of its chain stores.