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How China eradicated absolute poverty

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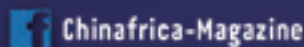
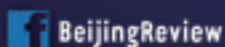
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Cover Design: Wang Yajuan

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A New Starting Point

With President Xi Jinping's statement on December 3 that the goal of absolute poverty elimination has been achieved with all remaining rural poor lifted out of poverty in China, the official seal on the achievement has been put.

The accomplishment lays a solid foundation for China to achieve its first centennial goal, that is, to enter a moderately prosperous society in all respects in 2021, the centenary of the Communist Party of China's establishment.

China has not only achieved the poverty reduction goal of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule, but has also provided experience and set an example for other developing countries to lift themselves out of poverty.

After the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949, due to nearly a century of foreign aggression and civil war, the nation was poor and weak, and the people lived in misery. But after decades of development, indisputable progress has been made, with millions of people lifted out of poverty.

By 2013, most of the remaining poverty-stricken population in China lived in remote rural areas where the inclement natural conditions made it difficult to eradicate poverty.

The government then started a comprehensive poverty alleviation campaign and in the eight years since then, many innovative and unique policies have been implemented.

They range from targeted poverty reduction and poverty alleviation through employment to relocating the poor and incorporating all the poor population in the social security system. The largest poverty alleviation campaign in human history was run in China and achieved victory.

However, the focus on improving people's wellbeing should never be relaxed. As unbalanced and inadequate development still remains a serious problem, the government needs to consolidate its achievements in poverty reduction.

Although absolute poverty has been eliminated, relative poverty remains. Work must continue on the second centennial goal, that is, by 2049, the centenary of the PRC, turning China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful.

Therefore, eradicating absolute poverty doesn't mean the end; it is a new starting point. ■

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ELIMINATING THE THREAT OF COVID-19

People take nucleic acid tests for the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at the Chengdu No.1 People's Hospital in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in southwest China, on December 9.

The city tightened COVID-19 control measures after a domestically transmitted case was reported two days earlier. There had been eight confirmed cases and three asymptomatic cases as of December 11, local authorities said.



Snow Scenery

Terraced fields in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County in Gansu Province in northwest China after snowfall on December 7. It was the period of Major Snow, the 21st of the 24 solar terms based on the traditional Chinese calendar, characterized by plummeting temperature and increased snowfall.

TB Prevention

A new guideline on tuberculosis (TB) prevention and control on campuses has been issued to protect teachers and students, Xinhua News Agency reported on December 7.

Despite a decline in cases in recent years, China bears a heavy burden of TB because of its large population, the guideline released by the National Health Commission and the Ministry of Education (MOE) said.

Students are a key group vulnerable to the disease, with the reported incidence among them accounting for one third of that of the total population. The beginning of each semester is the peak time of reported TB cases among students.

The guideline underlines the responsibilities and tasks of education and health authorities for TB prevention and control on campus, laying down detailed prevention measures.

It calls on schools to strengthen regular prevention and control work, list TB testing as mandatory in the health examination of new arrivals and the teaching staff, and raise self-protection awareness.

The guideline also specifies how to handle sporadic cases and stresses improving emergency response capacities.

Sharing Goodwill

Three medical workers, who received a sheep donated by Mongolia

to show support for China's fight against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), have gifted their share to patients in their hospital in Jiangsu Province in east China, Xinhua News Agency reported on December 7.

The medics from the No.3 People's Hospital in the city of Huaian had provided psychological counseling to COVID-19 patients in Wuhan, the city in Hubei Province in central China that bore the brunt of the disease earlier this year.

Zhang Dongliang, one of the medics, said the patients need nutritious food more than doctors do.

Zhang said they were heartened by Mongolia's gesture. Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga visited China in February during the critical

stage of the country's COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control and promised to send 30,000 sheep as a token of support. The sheep will be delivered in batches to medical workers in Hubei. The first batch of sheep arrived in Wuhan in late November.

More Forests

Shaanxi Province on the Loess Plateau in northwest China has seen its forest cover exceed 45 percent, up by 2 percentage points from the level five years ago, the provincial forestry authorities said on December 7.

In 2016-20, the province planted about 2.46 million hectares of trees, contributing to the rising forest cover, Dang Shuangren, head of the provincial forestry bureau, said.

Shaanxi returned 190,000 hectares of farmland to forest or grassland in the past five years, with another 350,000 hectares of desertified land treated, Dang said.

The Loess Plateau used to be plagued by chronic soil erosion in the last century, resulting in ecological imbalances. Millions of tons of mud and sand washed into the Yellow River, giving the river its name.

Bioinformation Ban

Tianjin Municipality in north China will prohibit businesses and institutions from collecting personal bioinformation starting next year, amid heightened public concerns over the uncontrolled use of facial recognition, now employed in mobile payment, tests, and even public toilets.

A regulation passed by the city's legislature on December 1 bans market credit information providers from collecting information needed for biorecognition and other personal data, including religion, blood type and medical history.

Personal income, savings and tax records are also protected from information harvesting unless the collectors have obtained the

permission of clients, according to the legislation. It will target credit service agents, industry associations, as well as enterprises and public institutions.

Tianjin is just one of the cities that have moved to regulate the overwhelming applications for facial recognition, which have increasingly sparked controversies in society and raised fears of personal data leaks.

In October, the city of Hangzhou, in Zhejiang Province, east China, issued a regulation stipulating that the gathering of bioinformation, like fingerprints and facial recognition data, should not be required to enter residential communities.

On October 1, a new version of the national standards on personal information protection was released. It says before the collection of personal bioinformation, the individual whose personal information is being collected should be separately notified of the purpose, method, and use as well as the collection scope and storage time.

Winter Relief

To guarantee the basic living needs of people in disaster-hit areas during this winter and spring next year, 6.24 billion yuan (\$955 million) has been allocated, the Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM) said on December 7.

With more provincial-level regions hit hard by floods this year, the ministry said it had worked

together with the Ministry of Finance to plan for winter and spring relief in advance.

MEM has taken into consideration factors including the severity of floods, the impact of COVID-19, as well as poverty-alleviation needs while determining each region's share.

It has also urged authorities to ensure timely distribution of the funds to people hit by disasters before Spring Festival in February 2021.

Roller Skates

Hebei Province in north China has purchased nearly 100,000 pairs of roller skates for rural pupils, according to the local sports bureau.

Over 1,700 rural primary schools received the skates, which cost over 20 million yuan (\$3.06 million), on December 5.

"With the new skates, we can ensure that every child will have them in the gym and enjoy more diverse activities," Xin Xiangyan, head of the Baiji Hope Primary School in Chengnanzhuang Township, said at the distribution ceremony.

Roller skating is seen as a good substitute for ice skating as there are more venues and coaching resources for the sport. It has been promoted in Hebei since Beijing won a joint bid with Zhangjiakou in Hebei to host the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.



Revitalizing Old Compounds

Elevators are installed in old buildings in Xinfangzi Community, Beibei District in Chongqing, southwest China, on December 8. The community has undergone renovation since last year, with public facilities such as parking lots, street lamps and squares revamped and elevators installed. The district has renovated multiple communities since last year to improve residents' living conditions.

Vocational Colleges

China is making progress in expanding enrollment in vocational colleges, aiming for an increase of 2 million over the two years of 2020 and 2021, Xinhua reported on December 8.

Vocational college enrollment went up by 1.16 million in 2019, meeting

the government's target of 1 million for the year, said Chen Zijl, an official with the MOE, at a press conference.

Chen said students pursuing higher vocational education now boast diverse backgrounds, including veterans, laid-off workers and migrant workers, in addition to high school and secondary vocational school graduates.



Museum Reopens

A guide explains the history of a dress to visitors at the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum on December 8. The museum reopened to the public that day after an expansion. Established in 2007, it tells the story of the estimated 20,000 Jewish refugees who sought sanctuary in Shanghai's Hongkou District during World War II.

Digital Integration

HNA Group and Trip.com signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on December 4 for further cooperation on air transport and Internet technology in the service of global travelers.

They will boost cooperation on data sharing, big-data analysis, product marketing, digitalization of the airline industry, and integration of tourism resources.

HNA Group, headquartered in Haikou, capital of Hainan Province in south China, is active across numerous industries, including aviation, real estate and tourism. Trip.com

is one of the largest travel service providers in China.

Both sides are set to explore opportunities as Hainan develops its free-trade port.

“We hope to strengthen cooperation to integrate air travel with Internet technology so as to improve travelers’ experience in an all-round way,” said Gu Gang, Executive Chairman of HNA Group.

NEV Boom

China’s new-energy vehicle (NEV) market will see robust growth in the next five years driven by government policies and other factors,

according to an industrial report released on December 3.

The total sales of NEVs in the country will reach 1.16 million at the end of this year and will further expand to around 5.42 million in 2025, according to the global market research firm International Data Corporation (IDC).

China’s NEV market is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 36.1 percent between 2020 and 2025.

The share of pure electric vehicles in the NEV market will soar to 90.9 percent in 2025, up from 80.3 percent this year.

The IDC attributed the surging

expansion of China’s NEV market to government promotion, transformation and investment from vehicle manufacturers, advancements in battery technology, autonomous vehicle development and more open-minded consumers.

BOC Fined

China’s banking regulator said on December 5 it has made administrative punishment decisions and taken regulatory measures following an investigation into a risk incident related to a crude oil futures product sold by the Bank of China (BOC).

The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission stated to take the incident, triggered by the BOC’s Yuanyoubao product, very seriously and has urged the bank to protect investors’ rights and interests.

A total fine of 50.5 million yuan (\$7.7 million) has been imposed on the BOC and its branches, and those BOC senior executives involved have been warned and fined, said the commission.

The commission will continue to tighten oversight and urge banking and insurance institutions to enhance compliance, to safeguard the rights and interests of financial consumers and to defuse systemic financial risks, it said.

The BOC said in a statement that it accepts the punishment and will implement regulatory measures, adding that it will enhance its capability to control risks and maintain prudent and compliant operations.

The BOC will continue to communicate with clients on solutions and try its best to address the issue appropriately, it said.

New Rail Lines

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said on December 4 that the country plans to construct some 10,000 km of new railway lines in three major city



Underground View

The construction site of Suzhou Subway line S1 in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province in east China, on December 7. The line, with a total length of 41.25 km, is expected to be put into trial operation in December 2023.



Flying Industry

An employee prepares to test fly a drone at Tianjin i-Kingtec Co. Ltd. in Tianjin Municipality, north China on December 1. The Binhai New Area of Tianjin has been developing its drone industry by encouraging innovation. The district has a complete industrial chain of drone research, development, production and testing.

clusters over the next five years to facilitate regional connectivity.

Railway networks consisting of inter-city lines, as well as urban and suburban lines, will take shape in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, Yangtze River Delta, and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as of 2025, the NDRC said in the announcement.

Upon completion, inter-city travel within these city clusters will take less than two hours, and the commuting time within the metropolitan areas will be cut to less than one hour.

Some 6,000 km of the planned railways will be built in the next three years, according to the NDRC.

Accelerating the construction of inter-city railways as well as urban and suburban lines will serve as a key pillar for the coordinated development in these regions.

China will continue to advance coordinated regional development and a new type of urbanization, according to the Communist Party of China Central Committee's

proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.

Facilitating RCEP

The State Council has made arrangements to step up the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

More work should be done to uphold free trade and open up new space for win-win cooperation, according to a statement released on December 9 after a State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang.

The meeting, urging domestic work to ensure RCEP implementation, called for coordinated efforts to promote the opening up of trade in goods and services, investment and other fields, along with higher standards and rules for trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, intellectual property

protection, e-commerce, as well as economic and technological cooperation.

As much as 90 percent of intra-regional trade in goods will be tariff-free when the agreement comes into effect. To properly implement the RCEP, the meeting urged measures for tariff reductions, simplified customs procedures, as well as unified and mutual recognition of product standards.

The meeting also demanded efforts to honor China's commitments on the foreign-investment negative list and all-round protection of intellectual property rights.

Yulan Bonds

The Shanghai Clearing House and Brussels-based Euroclear Bank on December 8 jointly launched the Yulan Bond business, named after Shanghai's city flower—the magnolia, and aimed at linking Chinese issuers with global investors.

The bonds will be issued through the Shanghai Clearing House, a Chinese interbank bond market clearing house. The two clearing houses are interconnected to provide registration, custody, and settlement services for Chinese issuers and overseas investors of the bonds.

Data shows that in 2019, a total of 690 bonds were issued by Chinese institutions overseas, with an issuance scale of about \$217.8 billion, representing a year-on-year increase of 33.29 percent.

Compared with the traditional overseas bond issuance, Yulan bonds, issued with electronic bond registrations, are more convenient in terms of capital security and information acquisition.

The Shanghai Clearing House is one of the three largest bond registration, depository, and settlement institutions in China. Euroclear Bank, under the Euroclear Group, connects nearly 50 international markets.



Robot Show

A vehicle for anti-terror deployment at the China (Foshan) International Intelligent Robot Expo 2020 in Foshan, Guangdong Province in south China, on December 3. The exhibition, sponsored by the Chinese Institute of Electronics, kicked off on that day. Top robot manufacturers from home and abroad showcased their latest products, technologies and solutions.



RUSSIA

A resident receives novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine in Moscow on December 5 as the Russian capital launched its mass vaccination program



MYANMAR

A police officer distributes masks to passengers on a bus in Yangon on December 7. That day, COVID-19 cases in Myanmar surpassed 100,000



ALGERIA

A passenger checks in at an airport in Algiers on December 6. Air Algérie, the country's flagship air carrier, resumed domestic flights after over eight months of suspension of service due to the COVID-19 pandemic





GHANA

Supporters of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo celebrate in capital city Accra on December 9, after he secured a second four-year term in office in popular election



FRANCE

A near-empty bridge in Paris on December 9. The government's plan to relax the coronavirus lockdown by mid-December has come into doubt amid surging infections



SRI LANKA

Naval vessels moor near the Galle Face Green park in Colombo as part of the celebrations for the Sri Lankan Navy's 70th anniversary on December 9



↓ CALL FOR NEW INFLATION MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

Zhou Xiaochuan, former Governor of the People's Bank of China (PBC), the central bank, has proposed to change the way to define and measure inflation.

In a recent article in a magazine affiliated with the PBC, he said the current inflation measurement system is basically useless and could even lead to asset bubbles.

Traditionally, it is believed that if there is excessive monetary supply, the effects will be transmitted to asset prices and lead to inflation, which will in turn prompt decision-makers to adjust monetary policies. But this law is being challenged. Central banks in advanced economies are struggling to cope with ultra-low inflation rates even as benchmark interest rates have been cut to levels near or below zero.

Zhou suggests a broader concept of inflation, with its measure going beyond the existing consumer price index by factoring in asset prices as well as the cost of public services.

Zhou served as PBC governor from December 2012 to 2018, making him China's longest serving central banker since 1949. He is vice chairman of the Boao Forum for Asia.



The Unquenched Marathon Spirit

Beijing Youth Daily December 4

The organizers of the Beijing Marathon announced on December 3 that the 2020 edition was canceled to ensure safety in the aftermath of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In the past, the popular run used to be held between September and November.

Holding marathons has become a way for cities to showcase their comprehensive strength. Each year, the Beijing Marathon attracted nearly 30,000 participants from over 50 countries. Although the capital has achieved significant progress in epidemic control, it is still wise to put off events requiring large gatherings

to ensure continued public safety.

However, to cheer up disappointed marathon lovers, an online edition was launched in September, which ended on December 13. People signed up online and ran in their cities, which provided greater flexibility and cost substantially less. Participants in the online edition were also eligible to take part in a lottery. Winners would be ensured a place in the competition next year.

Other cities that host marathons and had to cancel them this year could borrow Beijing's experience.

A marathon symbolizes the never-say-die spirit, where the participants challenge themselves, persevering to overcome their own limitations. The unavoidable cancellation will not stop people from following the spirit of the marathon, overcoming difficulties in their daily life and achieving more meaningful goals.



A deliveryman picks up medicine at a pharmacy in Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province in central China, on February 22

Monitoring Online Drug Sales

Guancha.gmw.cn December 4

The Levofloxacin eyedrop, which is an antibiotic, can be bought only if prescribed by a doctor. However, it has been reported that people can buy it online without an e-prescription and pharmacist's signature.

Online drug channels were opened to make things convenient, fast and more affordable. For some common diseases such as cold and cough, the sufferers themselves can choose their medicines

“The criticism about ‘wolf warrior diplomacy’ is actually another version of the ‘China threat’ theory and another ‘speech trap,’ which aims to make China give up and never fight back. China’s diplomacy has always been free from cowardice or obsequiousness and firmly determined to defend national interests and dignity.”

Le Yucheng, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, addressing a forum of think tank representatives in Beijing on December 5

“Instead of enlisting universities to monitor foreign-born students and visiting scholars, particularly if they are ethnically Chinese, focus again on attracting—and welcoming—the brightest minds in the world, regardless of nationality or country of origin.”

Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University, in an open letter to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden on December 3

and buy them online. The process is faster and costs less. Also, those suffering from chronic diseases, who usually use the same prescriptions, can save time and avoid lengthy procedures this way.

However, the reality is that the low threshold and lack of adequate supervision has made some Internet platforms sell prescription medicines without an e-prescription from any Internet hospital or pharmacist's signature.

This creates a drug abuse risk. Given that some drugs have potential side effects, drug misuse and wrong dosage can result in a severe risk. This was why the authorities did not allow online sale of prescription drugs for a long time. Although this issue aroused debate during the revision of the Drug Administration Law, online sale of prescription drugs was eventually allowed under the premise of strict supervision.

According to the revised law, online trading should adhere to the same standards and principles, including ensuring the online shops have a business license, qualified pharmacists and other pharmaceutical personnel.

A document issued by the National Medical Products Administration asks that enterprises selling prescription drugs online should check electronic prescriptions and ensure their sources' reliability.

An information-sharing mechanism between pharmaceutical retail enterprises and the healthcare information system of hospitals can help improve the situation.

Cloud Hiring *People.com.cn* December 3

Thanks to developing Internet technologies, online hiring has acquired unique advantages such as low cost and serving more people. Amid COVID-19 prevention and control measures, it has grown into the first choice of employers.

However, the model also has its weakness. For instance, given the huge demand for online recruitment, some agencies providing employment services need to strengthen their management abilities to avoid problems in information collection and analysis.

To address these issues and regulate the industry as well as protect employees' interests, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has released a guideline for managing recruitment services. The document asks the service agencies to post their licenses and other relevant information on their websites or apps. It also urges the recruiting companies to take responsibility for the recruitment information they release.

To ensure the healthy development of cloud hiring, the authorities should strengthen the supervision of all links. They also need to reinforce using big data and other technologies to improve supervision capabilities in different scenarios, such as remote supervision, mobile supervision, early warning and prevention.



FORMER ENGINEERING ACADEMIC SENTENCED TO PRISON

Li Ning, a former academic with the Chinese Academy of Engineering, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined 2.5 million yuan (\$383,000) for embezzlement in the second-instance trial by a court in Jilin Province, northeast China, on December 8.

A prominent scientist in the field of cloning, as well as a professor at the Chinese University of Agriculture on genetic breeding and cloning, Li was arrested in June 2016 for funneling state scientific research funds into a transgenic biology project. He was subsequently stripped of his academic title.



Li allegedly used his position as in charge of managing multiple funds for national scientific research projects to embezzle more than 34.1 million yuan (\$5.22 million) from 2008 to 2012, which he consequently channeled into his shareholding and holding companies, according to the verdict.

“Currently, 40 percent of the 3G and 4G infrastructure [in Brazil] is [provided by] Huawei. If Huawei cannot provide this equipment, it is going to be much more expensive.”

Hamilton Mourao, Brazilian Vice President, during a conference held by the Sao Paulo Trade Association in Sao Paulo on December 7

“Despite that kind of national or political level competition, companies are here with longstanding and strong partnerships with their Chinese suppliers, Chinese vendors and customers.”

Matthew Margulies, Vice President of China operations for the U.S.-China Business Council, to *China Daily* on December 8



COVER STORY

READY FOR THE NEXT GOAL

After meeting the target of eradicating absolute poverty, China ready to promote common prosperity By Lu Yan