

NEW ERA: GREEN IS GOLD P.22 | FEATURES: WEATHERING THE STORM OF COVID-19 P.36

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 Happy Childhood for All

THIS WEEK COVER STORY

12 Scoring Points

Education reform shakes up the status quo

16 Inspiration and Perspiration

Skateboarding or rock climbing, China's youngest are game!

18 Team Home-School

COVID-19's profound impact on education continues

NEW ERA

22 A Greener Decade

Reconciling development and environmental protection

Cover Design: Wang Yajuan

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OPINION

26 Chinese Teachings

New diplomatic philosophy aims to deliver win-win results

29 American Views on the U.S. Economy

How are things getting worse for the average American?

30 Uncle Sam's New Vanguard

U.S. intentions in the Pacific are clear

31 APEC Must Step Up Regional Reconnection

Prioritizing the restoration of sound Asia-Pacific growth

FEATURES

34 Golden Partnership

BRICS cooperation is becoming more open and inclusive

36 Upbeat Expectation

U.S. firms in Shanghai remain committed despite pandemic woes

38 Small but Salient

LAC enterprises are innovating to meet Chinese demand

40 Kiddie Translation

Extending the global reach of Chinese children's literature

CULTURE

44 Sealing in the Flavor

Food documentary serves up mouthwatering images

46 New Frontiers in Rural Art Scene

Urban artists and rural communities bring vitality to one another

EXPAT'S EYE

48 Whimsical Thoughts on Translating Chinese Poetry

An ancient poem continues to resonate and inspire



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Happy Childhood for All

June 1 this year was the first Children's Day after China implemented a policy to further reduce the excessive burden of homework and after-school tutoring for primary and junior high school students.

With this policy in place, June 1 has become a day on which Chinese children can really feel carefree. Now they don't have excessive homework, and don't need to rush about attending tutoring courses carrying heavy schoolbags. Playing is natural for children, and Children's Day should be a happy festival.

In May last year, the central authorities adopted guidelines to ease the academic burden on first to ninth graders. The policy is making a difference. Schools are required to avoid rote learning, and offer individualized quality education for the all-round development of every student.

The way in which children are educated naturally produces different outcomes. Exam-oriented education and aggressive marketing by after-school tutoring institutions caused parents to worry that their children may fall behind, driving them to continually

increase the study burden on their children.

However, high test scores don't necessarily mean a strong ability to solve problems. Only through leaving more time for children to play and to develop their abilities according to their own interests, will they develop in a well-rounded way.

The world is now undergoing a major transformation. The key to China's future development lies in the talents of its people and education is the foundation of building this.

In the face of future opportunities and challenges, we must remain keenly aware that there are still many areas in Chinese education that need to be changed. For instance, some content and teaching methods are outdated, and Chinese children still need to enhance their practical abilities and innovative thinking.

The policy of easing the excessive study burden is in line with the need for children's well-rounded development, but it is not yet enough. It is also important to reform education methods and encourage teachers to tailor lessons to students' aptitudes. **BR**



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FESTIVAL PREPARATIONS

Local women make *zongzi* in Zhangkou Village, Rongan County of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on May 25, to welcome the Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on June 3 this year. A *zongzi* is a traditional Chinese dish made of glutinous rice stuffed with different fillings and wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves.

The festival, also known as the Duanwu Festival, is held on the fifth day of the fifth month on the Chinese calendar. It is typically celebrated by eating *zongzi* and racing dragon boats, which are decorated to resemble dragons and carry teams of paddlers.



Ready to Go

Customs officers inspect a China-Laos cargo train before its departure from Chongqing Municipality on May 21. The train, carrying foodstuffs and agricultural machines, was the first China-Laos cargo train to enjoy a new favorable quick entry and export channel.

Agricultural Heritage

China ranks first in the world in the number of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) designated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on May 24.

Three sites in China—an ancient tea-producing area in Anxi County, Fujian Province, a nomadic livestock-rearing region in Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and a rain-fed stone terrace farming system in Shexian County, Hebei Province, have been recently recognized as GIAHS by the FAO, bringing the country's total number of GIAHS to 18.

The sites were designated for their unique ways of using traditional practices and knowledge while maintaining unique biodiversity and ecosystems, according to the FAO.

The GIAHS program, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary

in October, is a flagship program of the FAO. FAO's worldwide agricultural heritage network now consists of 65 systems in 22 countries around the globe, the organization said.

Improved Healthcare

China has expanded medical facilities in rural areas in the past decade to ensure its 509.8 million rural residents have access to basic medical services.

By the end of 2021, China had set up 23,000 county-level medical and healthcare institutions, 35,000 township health facilities and 599,000 village clinics across the country, the National Health Commission told a press conference on May 24.

The establishment of health agencies has remedied the shortfall in medical resources in rural regions and enabled rural residents, or 36.1 percent of the total population, to enjoy medical services on their doorsteps,

the commission said.

Programs have also been initiated to help patients from nearly 10 million families with financial difficulties, the commission added.

Multispecies Planting

Compared with single-species planting, multispecies planting in forests promotes the growth of trees, according to a research paper by Chinese biologists published in the journal *Science*, Xinhua News Agency reported on May 23.

Multispecies tree planting has been long applied in forestry and landscape restoration to provide better ecosystem services such as a richer habitat for animals. But few studies have systematically assessed its effectiveness.

A research team from the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences under Peking University compiled a global dataset of multispecies planting forests with 243 tree species from 255 sites.

They found that the average tree height, diameter at chest height and aboveground biomass in multispecies sites were, respectively, 5.4, 6.8 and 25.5 percent, higher compared with those of monocultures.

The positive effects were mainly the result of interspecific complementarity and were modulated by differences in leaf lifespan, stand age, planting density and temperature, the paper read.

The yield increase of multispecies plantings reached the maximum when the stand age was about 25 years and the planting density was between 2,500 and 4,100 trees per hectare.

The study results have implications for designing afforestation and reforestation strategies and providing references for global forest restorations, said the paper.

Meteorological Technologies

China will accelerate the innovation of meteorological core technologies and fully leverage the technologies to prevent loss from extreme weather, Xinhua reported on May 23.

With the goal of building a modern technology-driven meteorological system, the country needs to make significant breakthroughs in Earth-system numerical model, natural disaster predictions and meteorological observation equipment, said Zhuang Guotai, head of the China Meteorological Administration.

His remarks came after the release of a guideline issued by the State Council on fostering the high-quality development of meteorology between 2022 and 2035.

As per the guideline, China will become independent in meteorological core technologies by 2025, and have major breakthroughs in key meteorological science and technology fields and realize

meteorological modernization featuring smart technologies by 2035.

Some technologies of China's numerical weather forecasting system have already reached the internationally advanced level, Zhuang noted.

National Health Plan

China has pledged to further increase its people's average life expectancy by around one year by the end of the country's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, based on the 2020 level, Xinhua reported on May 20.

It also promised to significantly improve the capabilities of public health services, bring some severe diseases under control and continue to improve the quality of medical services, said a plan for national health during the 14th Five-Year Plan period released by the State Council.

Continuous efforts will be made to enhance capabilities to support medical and health services and develop health industries. The policy system for national health will further improve, said the document.

The focus in developing the medical and health sectors will shift from disease treatment to people's health maintenance, said the document.

Chinese people's average

life expectancy was 77.93 years in 2020, according to official statistics.

Tourism Coupons

Tibet Autonomous Region began issuing coupons worth a total of 30 million yuan (\$4.4 million) on May 19 to spur tourism consumption, according to the regional tourism development department.

The coupons can be used to reduce the prices of tickets for tourist attractions in Tibet, sightseeing buses inside the attractions, transportation and starred hotels, said Huang Yongqing, deputy head of the department.

The coupon issuance is among a host of measures the department has implemented to boost local tourism. Other measures include ticket price deductions, rewards programs for tour agencies, and subsidies for starred hotels and transportation companies.

Tibet has remained largely unscathed by the impacts of COVID-19. By May 18, the plateau region had reported no new confirmed or suspected cases for 840 consecutive days, according to the regional health commission.

Water Recycling

Chinese cities increased their use of recycled water last year



Busy Harvest

A farmer harvests wheat in Nanyang, Henan Province, on May 22.

amid intensified nationwide efforts to build more water-saving cities, official data shows, Xinhua reported on May 19.

A total of 16.1 billion cubic meters of recycled water was used in Chinese cities in 2021, a rise of 18.9 percent compared with the level in 2020, according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

Recycled water refers to wastewater or rainwater that meets certain quality standards and is ready for reuse after treatment.

Since 2015, China has piloted the "sponge city" project in 50 cities to reduce waterlogging, and to collect and recycle rainwater, said the ministry.

As of the end of 2021, some 130 cities had become water-saving cities to serve as models and leading forces in China's urban water-conservation efforts.

To fix weak links in the water-supply network and operation, the ministry has also instructed local authorities to improve water supply facilities and management systems.



Transportation Resumption

Passengers get on a bus in Shanghai on May 22. The city started to resume cross-district public transport on that day.

Asset Plan

China will promote the healthy development of infrastructure real-estate investment trusts (REITs) and establish a multi-level infrastructure REIT market as part of efforts to boost effective investment and reduce government debt risks, according to a guideline released by the State Council on May 25.

The mobilization of existing assets through public-private partnership projects will be encouraged, it said.

Efforts will be made to promote the transformation of idle assets, developing new functions such as senior and child care, leisure tourism and community services.

Policy incentives will help funnel funds raised from mobilizing existing assets to key projects such as integrated transportation and logistics hubs, large clean energy bases and environmental protection infrastructure, the document added.

Software Growth

The software and information technology sector sustained stable growth in the first four months of the year, with revenue from software-related business up 10.8 percent year on year, official data showed on May 23.

The sectoral revenue amounted to 2.77 trillion yuan (\$415 billion), according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Companies in the sector raked in 278.5 billion yuan (\$41.9 billion) in combined profits, down 1.4 percent year on year, shrinking from the 3.9-percent decline registered in the first quarter.

During the January-April period, software exports came in at \$16 billion, up 3.6 percent year on year, the data showed.

Cloud Service

China's public cloud service market will register a compound growth rate of 30.9 percent in the next five years, according to a report

published by the International Data Corp. (IDC).

The IDC estimated that the market value will reach \$105.76 billion by 2026.

The global share of the Chinese market will rise to 9.9 percent from 6.7 percent in 2021, according to the IDC.

The accelerating trend of digital transformation of enterprises and the country's policy incentives will bring new opportunities, the company said.

Solar Power

Nationwide solar power generation expanded 24.9 percent year on year in April, 8.1 percentage points faster than the previous month, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

The country also saw growth in its output of hydro, nuclear and wind power in the month, up 17.4 percent, 0.9 percent and 14.5 percent year on year, respectively.

Thermal power generation fell 11.8 percent from a year ago during the same period.

China's power generation decreased 4.3 percent year on year to 608.6 billion kWh in April. During the first four months of the year, its power generation totaled 2.6 trillion kWh, up 1.3 percent year on year.

Port Throughput

Cargo throughput at Chinese ports neared 4.91 billion tons in the first four months of the year despite COVID-19 disruptions, edging up 0.2 percent year on year, according to the Ministry of Transport.

During the period, the container handling volume at the ports rose 1.7 percent from a year ago to 91.04 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

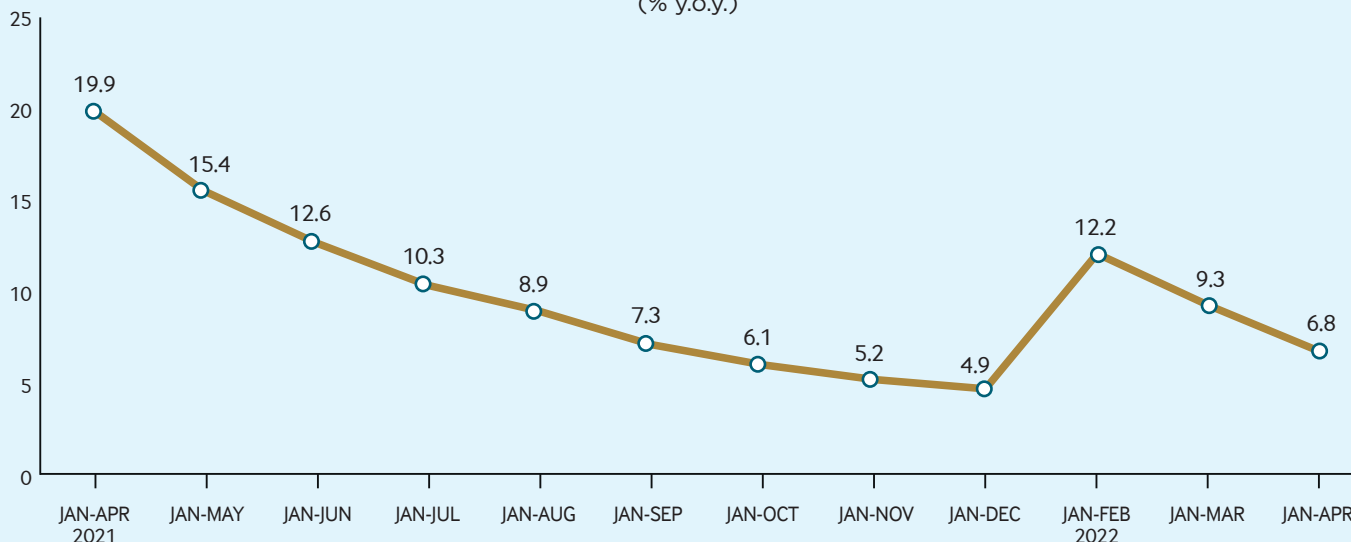
In April alone, the ports handled more than 1.27 billion tons of cargo, while container throughput stood at 23.66 million TEUs, according to the ministry.

Smartphone Maker

Xiaomi has joined Samsung and Apple in the global smartphone "elite club" with its total sales

NUMBERS

Fixed Assets Investment Growth
(% y.o.y.)



topping 500 million early in the first quarter of 2022, according to global industry analysis firm Counterpoint Research.

"Xiaomi has been a leading force in going beyond China to seek more growth potential as the home market has become mature," Counterpoint Research stated, adding that the brand's successful global expansion is "especially obvious" in India and Europe.

In the first quarter of the year, Xiaomi ranked first in India, occupying 23.2 percent of the market, while in Europe, it was in the third spot with a 12.6-percent market share, data from the report showed.

Xiaomi's smartphone revenue reached 45.8 billion yuan (\$6.79 billion), and its global smartphone shipments amounted to 38.5 million units in the first quarter, the company said in a filing with the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

Hydropower Station

Construction has been completed on all power-generating units of the Baihetan Hydropower Station in

southwest China, marking a major step toward the full operations of the mega project, according to the project's management.

All units are due to be operational by the end of the year. Baihetan will then be the world's second largest hydroelectricity plant in terms of total installed capacity, second only to the Three Gorges Dam project in Hubei Province.

Baihetan is located on the Jinsha River, the upper section of the Yangtze River. It straddles the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan.

The plant will have a total installed capacity of 16 million kW. It is equipped with 16 hydro-generating units, each with a capacity of 1 million kW, the largest single-unit capacity in the world.

Seven of the units have already been put into operation. Since last June, they have produced over 26.5 billion kWh of electricity.

Once fully operational, Baihetan will generate an average of more than 62.4 billion kWh of electricity every year, sufficient for the annual electricity

consumption of approximately 75 million people.

The hydropower station is expected to reduce coal consumption by 19.68 million tons and carbon emissions by 52 million tons every year, contributing to China's carbon reduction efforts.

Cross-Border E-Commerce

The total volume of China's cross-border e-commerce trade rose nearly tenfold in the past five years, Sheng Qiuping, Vice Minister of Commerce, told a press conference on May 20.

Relying on manufacturing and market advantages, a number of world-leading cross-border e-commerce platforms have emerged in the country, with their imports and exports jumping 18.6 percent year on year to 1.92 trillion yuan (\$284.5 billion) last year, he added.

Since 2015, the State Council has approved the establishment of 132 cross-border e-commerce pilot zones in 30

provincial-level regions.

Service Outsourcing

Chinese firms inked service outsourcing contracts worth 589.9 billion yuan (\$87.4 billion) in the first four months of 2022, up 8.8 percent year on year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed on May 19.

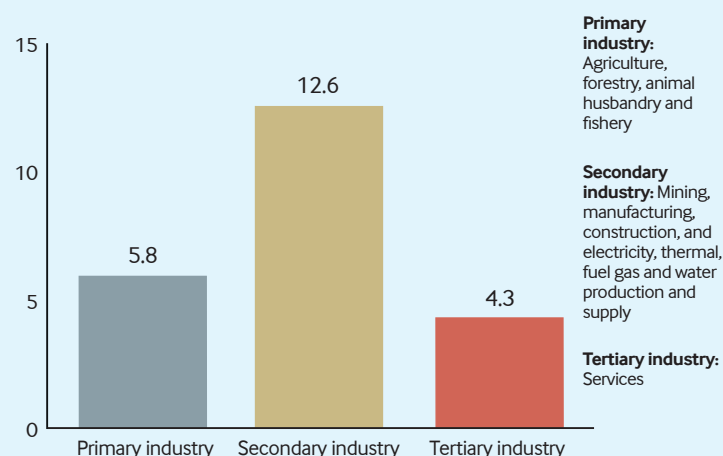
The executed contract value totaled 387.2 billion yuan (\$57.36 billion), representing a year-on-year increase of 15.3 percent.

Of the total, the offshore-service outsourcing contract value rose 7 percent from a year ago to 333.8 billion yuan (\$49.45 billion).

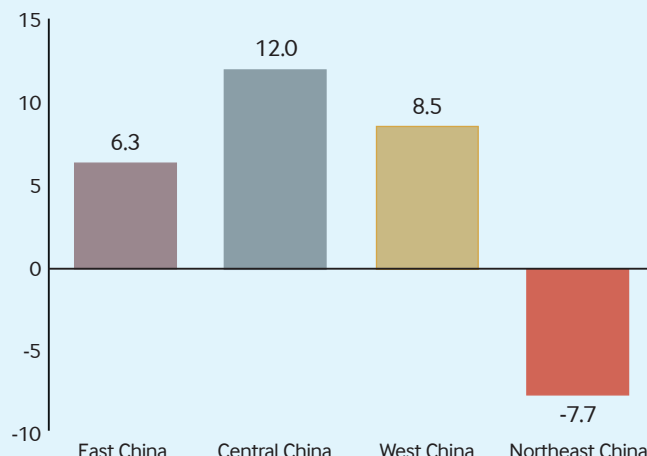
Service outsourcing with members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership saw rapid growth, with the executed contract value rising 6.3 percent from a year earlier to 50.5 billion yuan (\$7.48 billion) in the January-April period.

The number of people employed in the sector came in at 14.26 million as of the end of April, up 8.1 percent year on year.

Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Sector
January-April (% y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Region
January-April (% y.o.y.)





UNITED STATES

The American flag flies at half-staff over the Capitol in Washington, D.C., on May 24, in mourning for victims of a mass shooting in Texas. A gunman killed at least 19 children and two adults at Robb Elementary School in the town of Uvalde earlier that day



TURKEY

Tourists enjoy a Bosphorus cruise in Istanbul on May 24. Foreign arrivals in Turkey surged by 225.6 percent year on year to 2.57 million in April, official figures showed, as the country tries to recover from the impacts of COVID-19



THE PHILIPPINES

President-elect Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos (front, center) is seen on the rostrum during his proclamation at the Philippine House of Representatives in Quezon City on May 25. He will assume office in June



SWITZERLAND

Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Klaus Schwab speaks at the WEF 2022 Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland on May 23. The event focused on four major challenges: geopolitical risks, pandemics, climate change and global economic risks



EGYPT

Artists perform at the opening of the Ninth International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts in Cairo on May 21. Hundreds of drummers from more than 40 countries participated in the weeklong carnival



UNITED KINGDOM

Visitors admire a floral display at the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show in London on May 24. The event opened to the public that same day and will run until May 28



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ CHINESE REFEREES TO OFFICIATE AT QATAR WORLD CUP

Chinese referee **Ma Ning** and two assistant referees, Cao Yi and Shi Xiang, have been recently appointed for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Born in 1979 in Fuxin, Liaoning Province, Ma graduated with a master's degree in football from Beijing Sports University. Since 2009, he has become a referee for major events such as the Chinese Football Association Super League and AFC Asian Cup.

Ma will be the second Chinese referee to officiate at the world's most prestigious football tournament.



The 22nd FIFA World Cup is set to take place from November 21 to December 18 at eight stadiums in Qatar. The world football governing body has named 36 referees, 69 assistant referees and 24 video match officials for its flagship national team competition. Additionally, and for the first time in the men's World Cup history, six female match officials have been appointed.

The Long Road Ahead

People's Daily
May 25

Rural retail sales and per-capita consumer spending remain on the up. The consumption of durable goods like cars, electrical appliances, digital products and even cosmetics, is steadily rising.

China has over 2,800 county-level administrative areas. With the continuous upgrading of infrastructure, consumers in towns can also easily purchase goods of the same quality as those sold in bigger cities. Meanwhile, rising incomes also make it possible for them to make big purchases like cars.

But even to this day, obstacles like

underdeveloped commercial facilities and a limited variety of commodities and services are curbing consumption in rural areas. Especially in China's most remote areas, the "last kilometer" remains a big hurdle in express delivery: Customers prefer couriers to deliver and pick up parcels at their doors, but couriers, who handle a large number of parcels in the vast areas every day, simply cannot make it to the customer's doorstep. Another issue is that some county and town markets are inundated with low-quality products sold at relatively high prices. All these factors have put a dent in consumer confidence.

To fully tap into the vast rural market, towns and counties still have many kilometers to go.



Will This Model Stay or Go?

Guangzhou Daily
May 26

Amid pandemic resurgences across China, a growing number of companies are allowing their staff to work from home. Is this just a practicality or is it a would-be regular model? Even without COVID-19, over 90 percent of employees still hope they can work from home at least one day a week.

This new model has its merits. Companies can scale down on office space and cut operating costs, while employees

"On issues that bear on China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and other core interests, no one shall expect China to make any compromises or trade-offs."

Wang Wenbin, spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at a daily press briefing on May 23

"At present, the widening technology divide between developed and developing countries, the digital divide in particular, is exacerbating a new layer of inequality."

Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN, at a UN Security Council briefing on technology and security on May 23

don't have to commute, which in turn helps ease traffic strains and save energy. Behind these visible merits, lies the people's eagerness for the right to strike a balance between work and life.

Many companies have adopted this flexible model in recent years, not just because of pandemic disruptions, but because the Internet technologies supporting this model are rapidly evolving.

But even these companies allowing staff to work from home still demand their employees send in regular screenshots to prove they're not just sitting around at home. This isn't a baseless request, as some employees do loaf around when there is no monitoring system in place.

It's a two-way street. Companies that feel like continuing this work-from-home concept need to upgrade their overall procedures so that they won't have to worry about employee "dishonesty."

Employees, on their part, must respect, and not abuse, their company's leniency in the matter.

The County Rush

China Youth Daily

May 25

Many counties in several of China's southern provinces have recently seen their graduates rushing to apply for lower-level government positions.

On the one hand, this shows just how the overall education level is rising thanks to the popularization of higher education among younger generations. On the other, it implies fierce competition in the job market. Landing a stable job in the government system, even at its most basic level, seems the best way to go.

At the same time, the arrival of these fresh graduates in county-level cities bears good news for these small towns, as it will push up the overall efficiency levels of civil servant teams and improve governing capacity.

Currently, apart from a small number of county towns adjacent to metropolises, most such towns are underperforming, suffering from both a resident exodus and a shrinking economy. When funds are limited, they tend to focus on bringing in teachers and doctors, who are more urgently needed than lower-level officials.

↓ HEALTH OFFICIAL REMOVED FROM POSITION

Yu Luming was removed from his position as director of the Beijing Health Commission, the Standing Committee of the 15th Beijing Municipal People's Congress announced on May 25.

That same day, the 13th Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference's Standing Committee decided to remove Yu from the post of committee vice chairperson and revoke his membership, due to violations of Party discipline as well as the law of the state.

Born in 1961, Yu is a psychiatrist. From 1983 onward, he served in multiple positions, such as deputy mayor of Daxing District of Beijing and head of the Beijing Municipal Medical Insurance Bureau.

Yu came under investigation by the Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Commission of Supervision in April.



"COVID-19 vaccines from China are used in many developing countries. China has made very good contributions."

Shyam Bishen, head of the Platform for Shaping the Future of Health and Healthcare at the World Economic Forum, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency on May 25

"It will increase the vitality of the logistics industry in Frankfurt and bring more business opportunities."

Kawus Khederzadeh, General Manager of the industrial park in Hoechst Frankfurt, referring to the China-Europe freight train in a recent interview with Xinhua



COVER STORY

SCORING POINTS

Education overhaul offers children more well-rounded development By Lu Yan