

OPINION: THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM P.32 | EXPAT'S EYE: A TASTE OF GUANGDONG P.48

# BEIJING REVIEW

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## SILK ROAD TO STEEL ROAD

Xinjiang lays down the tracks for future generations



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Cover Photo:

The Horgos land port in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (RYAN PERKINS)

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## Revealing the Real Xinjiang

*Beijing Review* reporters have recently visited Xinjiang, recording what is happening there through photos, videos and stories to share with our readers.

Xinjiang today has been very stable with no violent terrorist incident occurring for more than four years. Tourists all sincerely admire the great improvements in the region's security situation, all the while tasting the various foods and enjoying the wide-ranging landscape. While cracking down on brutal terrorist activities, the local government has been working to nip in the bud the infiltration of extremist religious forces through education.

Xinjiang prospers. In the first quarter of this year, the autonomous region registered a GDP growth of 12.1 percent. Back in 2020, Xinjiang eliminated absolute poverty for the first time in its history, and the region's people entered the stage of a moderately prosperous society in all respects together with the people of the rest of the country.

Xinjiang is open to the outside world. It relates to the world through a dozen border ports. Through the ports of Alataw Pass and Horgos alone pass 9,000 trains of the China-Europe Railway Express, demonstrating Xinjiang's advantages and position as a core area in the Belt and Road Initiative.

The people of Xinjiang have the freedom to choose their occupations, and it depends on their own desires as for where they want to

work and what they want to do. Their personal freedom has never been restricted, nor are they forced to work. Like all Chinese people, they are equally protected by the labor laws.

People in Xinjiang have freedom of religious belief. There are 25,000 mosques or other venues for religious activities throughout the autonomous region, covering both cities and rural areas, where people are free to perform religious activities.

The cotton produced in Xinjiang is white and clean. The region contributes to more than 80 percent of China's cotton output. During cotton-picking season in September and October every year, Xinjiang will face serious shortages of manpower due to its small population. Before machine-based pickup was widely employed, workers from Shanxi, Henan, Gansu and other provinces were hired to come pick cotton in Xinjiang.

The people of Xinjiang also harbor a lot of doubts. They don't understand the Western defamation of their homeland that they have no "human rights" and "democracy," and their cotton is "black." Nor do they understand why Western politicians and media outlets clasp to the notion that a poorly developed Xinjiang is what Xinjiang should be.

We welcome you to come and see the real Xinjiang without bias. This is the true aspiration of all Xinjiang people. **BR**



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## NAP TIME

An aerial photo taken on June 7 shows wild Asian elephants in Jinning District of Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. The herd made a temporary stop there while migrating north. Asian elephants are mostly found in Yunnan, where their wild population has grown to about 300, up from 193 in the 1980s.



## A Flying Leap in Life

Students run out of an exam site after completing their college entrance exam at a middle school in Changsha, Hunan Province, on June 9. The annual college entrance exam, known as the *gaokao*, kicked off on June 7 with a record 10.78 million candidates signing up for the test. This is also the biggest-ever collectively organized event since the coronavirus outbreak, with millions of students gathering in around 7,000 venues across the country.

## Cross-Border E-Commerce

The customs of Alashankou Port, also known as the Alataw Pass, said that more than 57 million cross-border e-commerce packages worth over 1 billion yuan (\$160 million) have been exported via the port since January 2020, Xinhua News Agency reported on June 7.

Toys, digital products, clothing and daily commodities manufactured across the Chinese provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Guangdong have been shipped to Europe by road transport and freight train since the cross-border e-commerce business was launched in the inland port in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in January 2020.

Streamlined customs clearance at the port has helped slash delivery time and costs

and improved customer experience, Yang Ping, an operator with Alashankou international express railway company, said.

Alashankou is China's closest railway port to the European Union.

## Hospital Service

China will make efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of public hospital service, Li Bin, deputy head of the National Health Commission, told a press conference in Beijing on June 7.

Noting the rapid rise in the public's need for medical and health services, Li said the move is necessary to support China's high-quality, sustainable and safe development.

Last week, the General Office of the State Council issued a circular urging the improvement of public hospital service, mapping out six key tasks in the field.

The circular highlighted

innovation in areas including system building, technology and management, as well as the balanced allocation of medical resources.

## Biodiversity Meeting

A subsidiary event of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) kicked off on June 6 in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province.

Co-hosted by the Secretariat Office of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), the two-day event is themed "The business and finance journey to Kunming: We are part of the solution."

It aims to organize the business community and representatives to discuss how enterprises could actively participate in and contribute to biodiversity conservation, as well

as provide a strong guarantee for the global realization of biodiversity goals, Li Yonghong, Deputy Director of Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center of the MEE, said.

China will hold the COP15 from October 11 to 24, the MEE announced in March. The meeting, to take place in Kunming, will review the "post-2020 global biodiversity framework."

Themed "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth," the COP15 is the first global conference convened by the United Nations on the topic of ecological civilization.

## Seawater Desalination

An action plan for seawater desalination utilization development over the next five years has been issued, according to *China Science Daily* on June 4.

The action plan, jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Natural Resources, is expected to promote the large-scale utilization of seawater desalination and ensure the safety of water resources in coastal areas.

China's seawater desalination scale will exceed 2.9 million tons per day by 2025, an increase of more than 1.25 million tons per day, according to the action plan.

Seawater desalination in coastal cities will increase by more than 1.05 million tons per day by 2025, while the island areas will see an increase of more than 200,000 tons per day.

The action plan also called for the enhancement of water supply security for seawater desalination, expanding the scale of seawater desalination across industrial zones, improv-



ing the water supply capacity for islands and ships, and exploring the application of desalination technology.

China has constructed 123 seawater desalination projects with a desalination capacity exceeding 1.6 million cubic meters per day, according to the NDRC.

The action plan called for strengthening technology development for seawater desalination, ensuring the safety of industrial and supply chains, and enhancing service capacity.

## 6G Commercialization

The world is expected to see the commercialization of 6G around 2030, a report released on June 6 said.

The next-generation mobile communication technology will integrate with advanced computing, big data, artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain, according to a white paper issued by the IMT-2030 (6G) Promotion Group that was established in June 2019 under the guidance by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

The report said the 6G network will realize the deep integration of the real physical world and the virtual digital one.

According to the report, the international organization on

telecom technologies 3GPP is expected to initiate the research and development (R&D) of the 6G international technical standards by around 2025, ahead of the expected commercialization around 2030.

China granted 5G licenses for commercial use and started 6G R&D in 2019.

## TCM Development

China has made continuous progress in the preservation, inheritance and innovation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), enabling it to take on a unique role in the safeguarding and promotion of people's health, Xinhua reported on June 8.

From April to mid-May, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) sent inspection teams to check the enforcement of the TCM law, which came into effect on July 1, 2017.

Wang Chen, Vice Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, presented a report on the law's enforcement for deliberation on June 7.

With an annual growth rate of 17.3 percent, the Central Government allocated 8.6 billion yuan (\$1.34 billion) in subsidies for the inheritance and development of TCM during the 13th



## Bumper Harvest

A harvester at work in a wheat field in Xingtai, Hebei Province, on June 6.

Five-Year Plan period (2016-20), read the report.

The report further said the number of TCM medical institutions had reached 66,000 by 2019, up 67.4 percent from 2012.

Accessibility of TCM services has been improved, with 98.3 percent of the country's community health centers and 97.1 percent of its township clinics able to provide such services, said the report.

The report added that China had 767,000 TCM personnel by the end of 2020, and 0.45

TCM practitioners (or assistants) can be ensured for every 1,000 persons.

Highlighting TCM's vital role in China's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, the report said that 90 percent of confirmed cases had received TCM treatment.

China has also been pushing for the open development of TCM, said the report, adding that it has been introduced to 196 countries and regions, with 30 TCM centers established overseas.



## Cleaner Beach

Children and their parents pick up shells in the Binhai New Area of Tianjin on June 5. The city has worked on pollution control and shoreline management to restore its coastal wetlands, while implementing stricter measures on land reclamation.

## Trade Growth

Foreign trade maintained its upward momentum in the first five months of the year amid steady economic operation and external demand.

Total imports and exports expanded 28.2 percent year on year, up to 14.76 trillion yuan (\$2.3 trillion) during the period, the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) said on June 7.

It marked an increase of 21.6 percent from the same period in 2019, data from the GACC showed.

Trade surplus increased 56.2 percent year on year, reaching 1.32 trillion yuan (\$206 billion).

Foreign trade of private enterprises improved 38.1 percent, up to 7.02 trillion yuan (\$1.09 trillion), over the January-May period, making up 47.6 percent of the national total.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations remained China's

largest trading partner, followed by the EU and the U.S., GACC data read. The year-on-year growth rates of its trade value with the three trading partners stood at 29.2 percent, 28.7 percent, and 41.3 percent, respectively.

China's trade with countries along the Belt and Road routes surged 27.4 percent year on year, amounting to 4.36 trillion yuan (\$681 billion).

In May alone, exports reached 1.72 trillion yuan (\$268.8 billion), up 18.1 percent from a year earlier. Imports came to 1.42 trillion yuan (\$221.9 billion), up 39.5 percent.

## Forex Reserves

Foreign exchange reserves expanded in May as the U.S. dollar weakened against other major currencies, driving up the value of China's non-dollar holdings, official data showed on June 7.

China's forex holdings amounted to \$3.2218 trillion at

the end of May, up \$23.6 billion, or 0.74 percent, from a month earlier, according to data from the People's Bank of China.

"The forex market has maintained stable operation, with generally rational and orderly transactions," Wang Chunying, deputy head of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, said.

Although there are still uncertainties in the global economic and financial situation, China's economy has sustained a stable recovery, which will help keep forex reserves stable, according to Wang.

## Bulk Commodity

Growth of the bulk commodity market moderated to a five-month low in May, with industrial data reporting a month-on-month contraction in sales, supply and stocks.

The China Bulk Merchandise Index, a gauge of domestic

market growth, stood above the boom-or-bust line of 100 percent at 100.2 percent in the month, down 3.1 percentage points from April and returning to contraction after three consecutive months of growth, according to the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP).

The sub-indices for bulk commodity sales and supply posted slower month-on-month expansion in May, while the sub-index for stocks continued to decrease from the month before, pointing to an earlier-than-expected slack season and greater operation pressure in the sector.

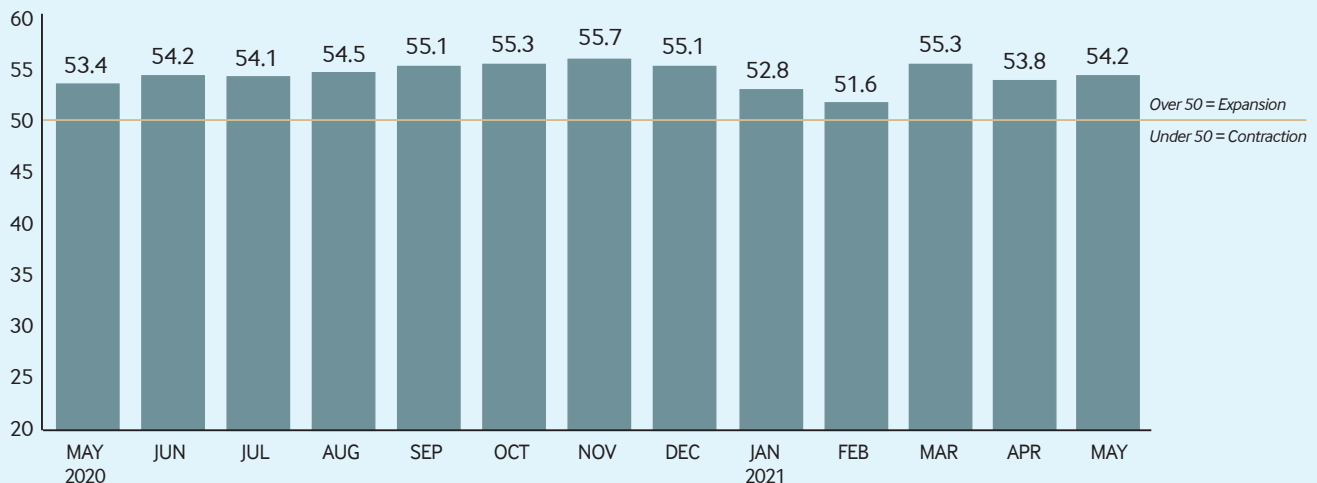
Though June is seen as a traditional off-peak period, the market is expected to be shored up by demand that had been weighed down during the past few months due to surging prices, the CFLP said.

Affected by global price rises and excessive market speculation at home, China's bulk commodities witnessed a

## NUMBERS

(\$1=6.4 yuan)

Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)





price rally in recent months. In response, the country has been intensifying regulatory efforts to fend off rising raw material costs and stabilize the market.

## Car Sales

Sales of passenger cars in May rose from a year earlier amid stable recovery of the domestic economy, data from the China Passenger Car Association showed on June 8.

Retail sales of passenger vehicles, including sedans, sport utility vehicles, and multipurpose vehicles, increased 1 percent year on year, up to over 1.62 million units in the month.

The sales gained 1 percent in May from April, the association said.

Passenger vehicle sales in the first five months reached over 8.36 million units, a 38.1-percent rise year on year and an all-time high for the same period since 2011.

The association attributed

the high growth to the low base effect and the expansion of new-energy vehicle sales.

Luxury car sales rose 13 percent year on year in May. Compared with the same month in 2019, they surged 45 percent, reflecting robust growth amid consumption upgrades, the association added.

## Business Permits

A full-coverage listing-management system will be adopted for enterprise-related business licensing items nationwide starting from July 1, according to a State Council circular released on June 3.

At the same time, more reforms of the examination-and-approval system will be launched in pilot free trade zones (FTZs), the circular said.

A digital license system for businesses will be available nationwide by late 2022, with paper materials no longer

needed if the target information can be obtained via the new channel.

By the end of 2022, a simplified, highly efficient, fair and transparent industry access rule with a low threshold and strict management will be established to make administrative operations more convenient and predictable for market entities.

A total of 68 enterprise-related business licensing items will be annulled nationwide, with another 14 in pilot FTZs, to eliminate operating obstacles in fields such as foreign investment and trade, engineering construction, transport and logistics, and agency services.

Moreover, 15 enterprise-related business licensing items will be transformed into record-filing items, with another 15 in pilot FTZs, to grant market access in fields such as trade and circulation, education and training, medical services, food and finance.

All enterprise-related business licensing items will be included in the listing for management. The listing will be dynamically adjusted and updated, and announced to the public for supervision.

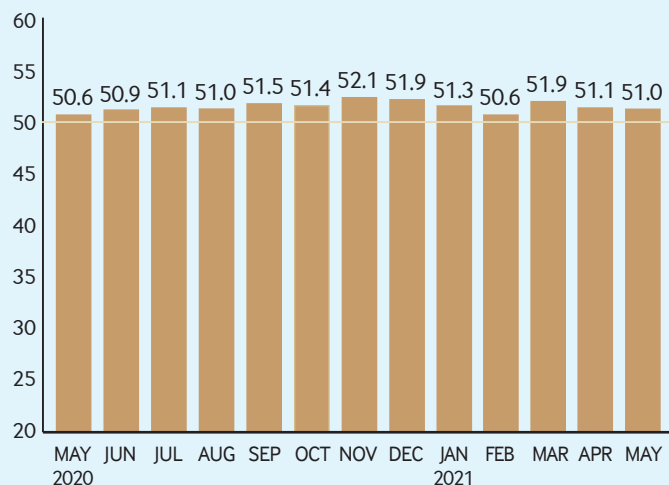
## Internet Business

The business revenues of major Internet companies totaled 467.6 billion yuan (\$73.3 billion) in the January-April period, up 27.8 percent year on year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

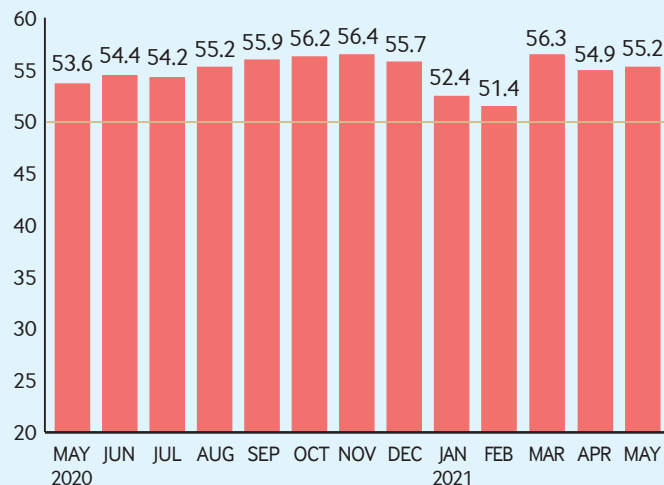
The companies raked in 44.51 billion yuan (\$6.9 billion) in operating profits, climbing 27 percent from the same period a year earlier.

Their investment in research and development maintained rapid growth during the period, up 19.3 percent year on year. The growth rate was 14 percentage points higher than the 2020 level.

Manufacturing PMI



Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



## ITALY

The Italian Frecce Tricolori aerobatic squad puts on a show during a ceremony marking the National Day in Rome on June 2



## THAILAND

A woman gets the jab at a vaccination site in Bangkok on June 7. Thailand has launched a mass vaccination program to contain its worst COVID-19 outbreak to date



## PAKISTAN

Locals gather near a derailed train at the accident site in Ghotki District, Sindh Province, on June 7. A collision between two passenger trains left at least 36 people dead and over 70 injured





## MOROCCO

Students take the college entrance exam in Rabat on June 8



## BELGIUM

A woman relaxes in a Brussels park on June 9. Belgium's summer plan entered into force that day with COVID-19 lockdown measures eased



## GERMANY

Huawei's first flagship store in Germany opens in Berlin on June 8. It is also the company's fifth flagship store in Europe



# THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

## ↓ NEW CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO UK

China's new ambassador to the UK, **Zheng Zeguang**, delivered his first message to British and Chinese citizens residing in the UK on June 7. Closer exchanges and cooperation between China and the UK will serve the interests of both sides, and contribute to world peace, stability and prosperity, according to Zheng.

Zheng, 57, born in Guangdong Province, was appointed ambassador after his predecessor, Liu Xiaoming, concluded his term earlier this year.

Zheng started his diplomatic career in 1986. He has largely concentrated on U.S.-related issues since 1990, when he took up office in the Foreign Ministry's Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs and in China's embassy in the U.S.

He became assistant minister of foreign affairs in 2013 before being promoted to the post of vice minister. He also served as vice mayor of Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province, between 2010 and 2013.



## Commercial Endowment Insurance

**Economic Daily**  
July 7

At a recent meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, members stressed the importance of implementing policy measures that actively address the aging of the population during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

The country's retirement pension system is based on state-run social security programs, commercial pension insurance programs

and private deposit insurance programs. However, the commercial pension insurance program has not been given full play.

Developing insurance products focusing on the elderly has been a key strategy of commercial insurance institutions in recent years. This comes in response to an increasing demand amid increasing social development, encouraging commercial insurance institutions to explore the blue ocean.

Doing so requires institutions to design insurance products from the perspective of economic and social development. Authorities should pay attention to this field with a long-term vision.



## Brilliant Bronze Civilization

**Lifeweek**  
June 7

Archaeologists working at one of China's most historically significant sites recently unearthed a bronze statue that offers further clues about the ancient civilization that created it. The Sanxingdui Ruins in Sichuan Province are believed to have originated during the ancient Kingdom of Shu dating back at least 4,800 years, however features of

"There are a lot of substandard and falsified COVID-19 products being commercialized out there. The advice of the WHO is that countries use vaccines that have received emergency listing."

**Mariangela Batista Galvao Simao**, Assistant Director General for Access to Medicines and Health Products of the World Health Organization, during a press conference on June 7

"The relations [between China and ASEAN] will become stronger as China is playing a bigger role in regional issues and the RCEP would further foster regional cooperation."

**Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan**, former Malaysian ambassador to China, at a meeting on the 30th anniversary of dialogue relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China on June 7



the statue show characteristics of the Shang Dynasty (about 1600-1100 B.C.), which existed in China's central plains during the same period.

With its protruding eyes and enlarged ears, the recently unearthed statue is a typical example of those unearthed at the Sanxingdui Ruins. However, the statue holds a *zun*, an ancient bronze ritual vessel for holding water or wine, on the head. The shape and pattern of the vessel were determined to belong to Shang Dynasty, indicating a degree of connection between the Shang and the ancient Kingdom of Shu.

Based on the discovery of the statue, scholars now believe the Sanxingdui culture to be a branch of the bronze civilization of the Shang Dynasty.

Bronzeware and its features offer important insights to researchers examining this period in China's history and that the influence of central plains culture can be seen in Sanxingdui and other sites demonstrates the strength the culture exerted.

The Sanxingdui Ruins were one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century and were uncovered accidentally by a farmer digging a ditch in the 1920s. Authorities placed the site under state-level protection in 1988.

## Manners in the Digital Era

**People's Daily**  
June 7

The Internet, big data, artificial intelligence and other technologies have together built a digital platform that has revolutionized the way we interact with one another, seek entertainment and how we shop. However, our increasing reliance on this platform presents challenges that must be addressed.

Ethical issues surrounding the Internet and big data have aroused public attention as more and more people begin to consider the regulations and requirements that should be imposed on the development of digital technologies, as well as their utilization and management. Issues for enterprises that arise

from this development include the ways to avoid abusing technology and the improper collection of user data while creating positive social values, and issues for individuals include the prevention of Internet addiction and ensuring users can distinguish reality from the virtual world.

Today, short video addiction has become a problem for many people due to a lack of understanding, ethics and laws amid accelerating technological innovation. Therefore, authorities should strengthen supervision of companies that behave improperly or break relevant laws. Society should also help enterprises and individuals navigate digital ethical issues through measures that highlight values and morals in order to realize collaborative governance in the digital era.



### FINA'S FIRST FEMALE VICE PRESIDENT

China's first Olympic champion diver **Zhou Jihong** was voted to become vice president during the International Swimming Federation (FINA) General Congress 2021 in Doha, Qatar, on June 5. She subsequently became the first female vice president in FINA history.

Zhou, 56, broke the duck for China by clinching the women's 10-meter platform title at the 1984 Olympics. In 2017, she became chairwoman of the Chinese Swimming Association. At present, she is also the leader of the China's National Diving Team.

She was hailed as one of the principal architects of China's formidable diving team, also known as the Dream Team, which collected an unprecedented haul of 40 gold medals from the previous nine Olympic Summer Games.



**"Biden administration's decision to bar U.S. investors from pursuing financial interests in Chinese companies is neglectful and self-defeating. The wasteful strategy cannot maintain the technological dominance of the U.S. in any way."**

**Bobby Naderi**, a London-based journalist, commenting to CGTN on June 8

**"Western theories on multilateralism and its efficacy are based on the cooperation among homogeneous countries. But the rise of emerging countries such as China and India posed challenges to these countries, which began complaining that the world order had been compromised."**

**Zhang Yun**, an associate professor at National Niigata University in Japan, in an article published on *China Daily* on June 7



Views in Tekes County, in the northern part of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

COVER STORY

# THE PEOPLE WHO BUILD XINJIANG

Understanding their efforts and perseverance to transform the border region

By Li Fangfang

**E**ighty-one-year-old Shi Huifang could never forget her life-changing decision to venture out into Xinjiang, a remote and bare land to her in north-west China, some six decades ago. She wanted to escape poverty and create a better life for herself by putting in hard work in a new place.

At the same time, this was also a good chance for her to step away from a relationship with a young man who she was not fully committed to. “His shanty with thatched roofs did hold me back,” Shi said, half jokingly.

However, she didn’t expect her boyfriend to find out about her decision and give up his job as a hydraulic engineer in Jiangsu, a province in east China, only to follow her to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, some 4,000 km away.

Shi’s father, secretly hoping that someone could and would take care of his daughter in the totally