

OPINION: BIDEN'S MIDDLE EAST PIVOT P.24 | CULTURE: CHINESE-STYLE BUILDING BLOCKS P.44

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BUMPY BUT BUMPER

China's summer harvest underpins economic recovery

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On the Rebound

Despite daunting challenges in the second quarter, the Chinese economy registered growth and expanded 2.5 percent year on year in the first half of this year, a testament to its resilience amid headwinds.

Given complex developments on the world stage and Omicron flareups at home, major economic indexes dropped in April. China's effective management of COVID-19 resurgences and the implementation of measures targeting economic bottlenecks, such as ensuring uninterrupted logistics services across the country and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, have both helped reverse the downturn pressure.

Data released by the National Bureau of Statistics in mid-July painted the picture of an economy that has increasingly regained its footing. The value-added industrial output has returned to an upward spiral with year-on-year increases reaching 0.7 percent and 3.9 percent in May and June respectively, following a 2.9-percent decline in April. The purchasing managers' index for the manufacturing sector has also risen above the boom-or-bust threshold of 50 percent, a sign of growing confidence.

Retail sales of consumer goods were up 3.1 percent year on year in June, following

drops in the previous three months. Recovery is expected to continue as China is on a trajectory of consumption expansion and upgrading. Foreign trade has been on the rise since the beginning of the year despite an unfavorable international trading environment and COVID-19's impact on industrial and supply chains. Trade in goods, in particular, jumped 9.4 percent year on year from January to June.

As it aspires to move up the industrial ladder, China is fostering new growth drivers. In the first six months, the value-added output of leading hi-tech manufacturing enterprises grew 9.6 percent year on year, while investment in the hi-tech industry soared by 20.2 percent. Meanwhile, consumer prices grew moderately. Employment has improved, with the surveyed urban unemployment rate standing at 5.5 percent in June, down from 5.9 percent in May.

Last, but not least, China has reaped a bumper summer harvest. The output of wheat, a staple crop, edged up 1 percent over the previous year, guaranteeing the country's food security.

At a time when risks of global economic stagflation mount and COVID-19 lingers, the fundamentals of China's economy remain unchanged. **BR**



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CONSUMER PRODUCTS EXPO

Workers assemble booths on July 19 for the Second China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, Hainan Province.

The event, launched last year as the first national-level expo focusing on consumer products, runs from July 26 to 30. The number of firms attending exceeds last year's figure, and the exhibition area has expanded from 80,000 to 100,000 square meters.



Cargo Hub

A cargo plane taxis to the runway at the Ezhou Huahu Airport in Ezhou, Hubei Province, on July 17. Another cargo plane took off from the airport that same day, marking the official start of operations of Asia's first specialized cargo hub airport. The airport is the fourth of its kind in the world.

Cultural Relic Preservation

Chinese authorities have issued a plan for preserving and using cultural relics along the Yellow River, pledging to establish a database of such resources along the mother river of the Chinese nation by 2025, the National Cultural Heritage Administration said in a statement on July 18.

A special survey on cultural heritage will be carried out, aiming to find out the number, types, distribution and characteristics of cultural relics along the river, the plan read, further noting a list of major cultural relics will be released after the survey.

Cultural relics identified in the survey will be combined with the distinctive culture associated with the Yellow River and exhibited under nine themes, including

the origin of humanity, history of civilization and revolutionary traditions, the plan said.

Public Interest Litigation

Procuratorial organs across China handled 107,000 public interest litigation cases in the first half of this year, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) said on July 20.

Of the cases, 13,000 were civil lawsuits, and 94,000 were administrative cases, according to the SPP.

Altogether 222,000 arrests were approved or decided, down 51.2 percent year on year. A total of 681,000 people were prosecuted, down 14.4 percent year on year.

China began to institute public interest litigation on July 1,

2017, after the country's top legislature incorporated the practice into law by passing amendments to civil and administrative procedure laws.

Agricultural Breeding Center

An international plant breeding center will be built in Hainan Province, with aims of meeting the global challenge of climate change and ensuring food security, according to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS).

The CAAS, the International Rice Research Institute, and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center signed a letter of cooperation to establish the breeding center at a science and technology park in Sanya, Hainan, on July 14.

Wu Kongming, President of the CAAS, said that the international cooperation will be conducive to the exploration and utilization of the genetic resources of the research organizations, breeding research, technical training, and the innovation of the global seed industry.

By using the free trade port policy of Hainan, the international breeding center will integrate breeding research resources, create a new breeding system, and promote scientific research innovation to contribute to the sustainable development of the economy, society and ecology, according to the CAAS.

Relocation for Better Life

Tsonyi County in Tibet Autonomous Region began the relocation of its second batch of residents on July 19, as part of the region's plan to improve people's living conditions and protect the fragile local ecosystem.

More than 300 residents left their hometown in Doima Township of Tsonyi, China's highest county, moving nearly 1,000 km southward to their new home Singpori.

Singpori is on the north bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River in the city of Shannan, located at an altitude of 3,600 meters. It is only some 10 km from the Lhasa airport.

Four townships of the county will complete relocation by early August and, by then, all seven townships of Tsonyi, including the three that moved in 2019, will have completed relocation.

Tibet relocated the first batch of 2,900 residents from Tsonyi to Singpori in 2019.

Artificial Heart

China's National Medical Products Administration has

issued its marketing approval for a China-developed artificial heart for severe heart failure, Xinhua News Agency reported on July 15.

The “heart” is an implantable ferrofluids-driven left ventricular assist device, according to the TEDA International Cardiovascular Hospital in Tianjin Municipality.

It was developed by the hospital and the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, which have cooperated to carry out research on the third-generation ventricular assist device in China since 2009.

The Annual Report on Cardiovascular Health and Diseases in China (2021) released in late June estimated that some 8.9 million patients in China suffered from heart failure last year.

Drone Inspection

Nearly 2,000 unmanned drones have been deployed in Jiangsu Province in east China for automatic transmission line inspections, according to State Grid Jiangsu Electric Power Co. Ltd.

With an average of 2.5 drones covering every 100 km of power lines, currently the economic powerhouse has all of its key transmission lines being

inspected by the drones, the company said.

“Based on the holographic power grid statistics, the drones can fulfill functions such as automatic route planning and real-time monitoring,” said Wang Hongxing of the company, noting that Jiangsu’s holographic power grid now includes 32,000 km of transmission lines.

The drones are equipped with centimeter-level high-precision positioning and millimeter-level image recognition capabilities, with efficiency about six times that of traditional manual inspection, Wang added.

Jiangsu has completed the automatic inspection of 250,000 transmission towers in the first half of this year, and the province is planning to carry out more drone inspections.

Wild Elephants

The population of wild Asian elephants in southwest China’s Yunnan Province reached approximately 360 by 2021, an increase of more than 60 from the 293 recorded in 2018, Xinhua reported on July 20.

Asian elephants, an important species in the rainforest ecosystem, are under first-class national protection in China. The elephants are mostly found



Auto Expo

A new-energy vehicle exhibited at the 19th China (Changchun) International Automobile Expo in Changchun, capital of Jilin Province, on July 18. A total of 155 domestic and overseas automobile brands and 128 enterprises have registered for the exhibition.

across Yunnan.

The species’ population in China has shown an increasing trend over the last 30 years, which is strong proof that Yunnan has achieved remarkable results in its ecological civilization construction. It is also a manifestation of China’s continuous improvement of its ecological environment and biodiversity, according to the Yunnan provincial forestry and grassland administration.

Yang Hua, an official with the administration, said Yunnan has been improving the elephants’ habitats and strengthening the construction of various systems, including monitoring, early warning and emergency response systems, to minimize incidences of human-elephant conflict.

The province has also established an expert committee for Asian elephant protection to conduct research on the species.



Juicy Sales

Live-streamers promote watermelons during a watermelon festival in Rongjiang County, Guizhou Province, on July 15. Recently, the county has hosted a number of festivals to boost the sales of the fruit during harvest season.

Service Outsourcing

Chinese firms signed service outsourcing contracts worth 987.5 billion yuan (\$146.1 billion) in the first half of the year, up 12.3 percent from the same period of 2021, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed on July 20.

The executed contract value came in at 645.4 billion yuan (\$95.5 billion), with a year-on-year increase of 14.3 percent.

Outsourcing refers to hiring an outside party to carry out services or produce goods typically undertaken by in-house employees.

Of the total, the value of offshore service outsourcing contracts rose 10.7 percent to 547.3 billion yuan (\$81 billion).

In terms of the executed contract value, service outsourcing with the U.S., the EU and members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership expanded 3.6 percent, 17.4 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively.

Computing Infrastructure

At the end of 2021, there were more than 450 large and super-large data centers and more than 20 intelligent computing centers in China, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed.

The country will further promote the building of computing infrastructure and an integrated system of big data centers this year, aiming to foster an efficient and green computing industry that can fuel the growth of the country's digital economy, Xie Cun, a senior official with the ministry, said.

China's digital economy increased from 11 trillion yuan (\$1.62 trillion) in 2012 to over 45 trillion yuan (\$6.67 trillion) in 2021.

SOE Profit

The combined net profit of centrally administered state-owned enterprises (SOEs) totaled

around 1.086 trillion yuan (\$160.9 billion) in the first half of the year, an increase of 6.1 percent over the same period of last year, the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) of the State Council said on July 16.

From January to June, 97 central SOEs raked in 19.2 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion) in combined revenue, up 12 percent year on year.

Operating profit margins of the companies were relatively high and the ratio of liabilities to assets remained stable during the six-month period, according to the SASAC.

Shipbuilding Industry

China remained the world's leading shipbuilder in the first half of the year, as its market share ranked first globally in output, new, and holding orders, official data showed.

The country's shipbuilding output hit 18.5 million dead-weight tons (DWT) in the period, accounting for 45.2 percent

of the world's total, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed.

New shipbuilding orders, another major indicator of the industry, came in at 22.46 million DWT in the first six months, taking up 50.8 percent of the global market share.

By the end of June, China's shipbuilding holding orders rose 18.6 percent year on year to 102.74 million DWT, with a global market share reaching 47.8 percent, the ministry said.

Industrial Capacity

The industrial capacity utilization rate came in at 75.1 percent in the second quarter of 2022, down 3.3 percentage points from the same period of the previous year, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed.

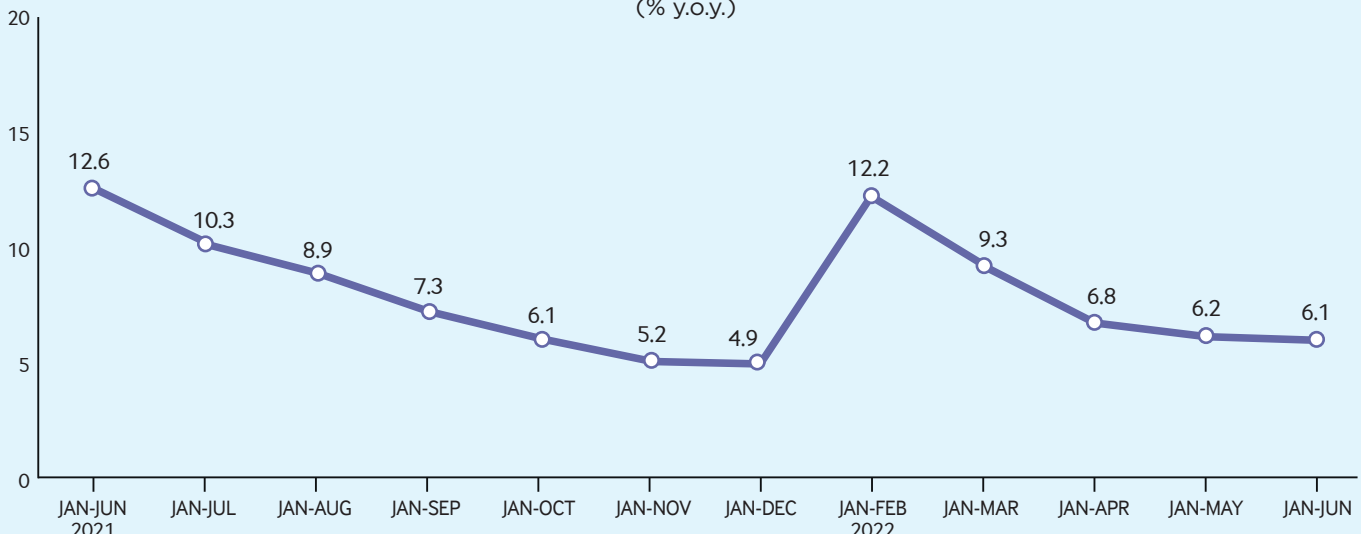
Among the three major sectors, the mining sector's utilization rate stood at 76.7 percent, increasing 0.6 percentage point.

The utilization rate of manufacturing came in at 75.4 percent,

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.76 yuan as of July 21)

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



down 3.4 percentage points, while that of the production and supply of utilities stood at 70.6 percent, down 4.1 percentage points.

China's value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, went up 0.7 percent year on year in the second quarter.

Banking and Insurance

The banking and insurance sectors have operated within a reasonable range so far this year, the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission said on July 14.

From January to June, financial institutions' newly added loans to the manufacturing industry stood at 3.3 trillion yuan (\$491 billion), surging 190 percent from the same period of last year.

The ratio of outstanding non-performing loans came in at 1.77 percent by the end of June, down 0.05 percentage point from the beginning of this year, according to the commission.

The original insurance premium of insurance companies reached 2.8 trillion yuan (\$415 billion) in the January-June period, up 5.1 percent year on year.

The commission also noted that the country's real estate credit has remained stable overall and the ratio of non-performing real estate loans stays at a relatively low level, with risks being generally controllable.

Currency Swap Deal

The People's Bank of China (PBC) said on July 14 that it had renewed a bilateral currency swap agreement with the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

The deal has a size of 300 billion yuan (\$44.6 billion), or 65 billion Singapore dollars. It will be valid for five years, according to the PBC.

The PBC said the renewal would help deepen bilateral financial cooperation, facilitate trade and investment, and maintain the stability of the financial market.

A currency swap sees the

two parties agree to exchange a certain amount of foreign currency at a pre-determined rate, protecting against fluctuations.

Tesla Sales

U.S. electric car maker Tesla's Shanghai Gigafactory exported 97,182 automobiles in the first six months of the year, compared to 41,770 units it recorded during the same period of last year, according to Tesla China.

Tesla has started accepting orders and in June began deliveries of its China-made Model Y in Asia-Pacific markets such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, driving demand for vehicle exports, the company said.

After production resumed in the wake of the COVID-19 resurgence in Shanghai, the production and sales of the Shanghai Gigafactory, an important export center for Tesla, broke records set prior to the resurgence this year.

Tesla delivered a record high of 77,938 vehicles in China

in June, up 177 percent year on year. Its Shanghai Gigafactory produced nearly 300,000 vehicles in the first half of this year.

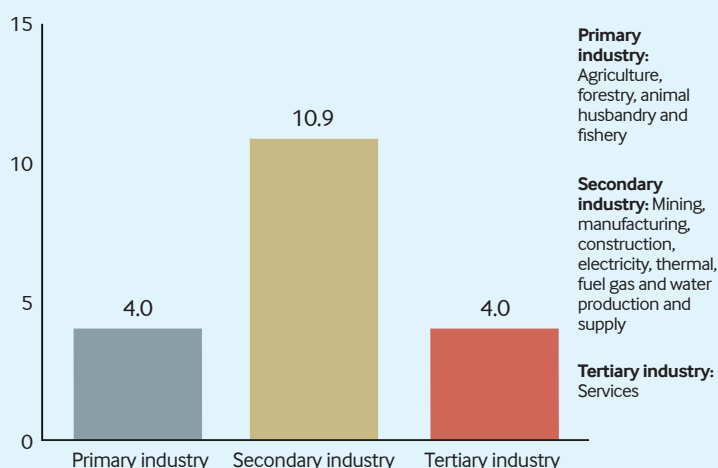
Power Use

The electricity consumption, a key barometer of economic activity, increased 2.9 percent year on year in the January-June period to 4.1 trillion kWh, according to the National Energy Administration.

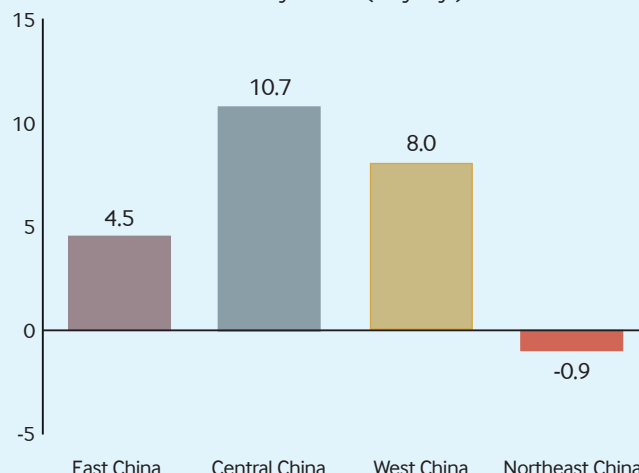
Power consumed by primary industry increased 10.3 percent year on year, and power used by secondary and tertiary industries rose 1.3 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively. Residential power consumption saw a year-on-year increase of 9.6 percent.

In June alone, power consumption was recorded at 745.1 billion kWh, an increase of 4.7 percent from a year ago. Electricity used in the primary sector climbed 12.4 percent, and electricity used in the secondary and tertiary sectors went up 0.8 percent and 10.1 percent, respectively.

Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Sector
January-June (% y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth in China by Region
January-June (% y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



UNITED KINGDOM

A boy interacts with a lion dance performer during the Edinburgh Festival Carnival on July 17. More than 800 people from around the world performed at the multicultural event in Edinburgh after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19



EUROPEAN UNION

North Macedonia's Prime Minister Dimitar Kovachevski, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (left to right) at a joint press conference in Brussels on July 19. The European Union opened accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia after two years of stalemate



AFRICAN UNION

African leaders attend the fourth AU mid-year coordinating meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, on July 17. They agreed to actualize the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area to promote trade and enhance integration



FRANCE

President Emmanuel Macron welcomes President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the Elysée Palace on July 18. Their meeting focused on bilateral energy cooperation



SRI LANKA

Ranil Wickremesinghe visits a Buddhist temple in Colombo on July 20. After his election as the new president of Sri Lanka that same day, Wickremesinghe called on all legislators to work together with him to lead the country out of its current economic crisis



CZECH REPUBLIC

A man gets his second booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in Prague on July 18. The country's second booster shot program is open to all people over the age of 18



↓ LONG JUMP GOLD AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wang Jia'nan stunned onlookers as he grabbed China's first ever long jump gold medal at the World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon, the U.S., on July 16.

Wang rose to victory in his sixth and final attempt with a season-best performance of 8.36 meters, beating the best attempt of Greece's reigning Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou, who eventually took home the silver, by 4 cm. Switzerland's Simon Ehammer claimed the bronze with 8.16 meters.



Born in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, the 25-year-old started training professionally in 2010. At the age of 18, Wang first made a name for himself on the global stage when he won the 2014 world junior title in Beijing and then took the bronze at the world championships in 2015.

In 2018, he graduated from the School of Sports Science and Physical Education at Nanjing Normal University in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province.

Alarm on Food Safety

Workers' Daily
July 21

Two Pizza Hut restaurants have been found breaching food safety rules, with out-of-date ingredients being used after packages had been removed or expiration dates had been altered.

This is by no means an isolated case in the food and beverage industry, but this time it was a well-known brand that was found breaking the rules. The Food Safety Law,

modified in 2015, is said to be the toughest in China's history. However, tough regulations appear insufficient to prevent bad practices.

The recurrences reveal deficiencies in the current food safety regulatory system as a whole. To improve food safety in restaurants, inspection and supervision must also be improved. Punitive measures also require attention as the current small fines embolden restaurateurs to take risks to maximize their profits by risking public health.



Live Longer and Healthier
Outlook Weekly
July 11

China's National Health Commission recently announced the average life expectancy in China has risen to 77.93, up from 76.34 in 2015. This number puts China's major health indexes in line

"We will be able to attract even more tourists and businessmen from China, which will bring China even closer to Serbia."

Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian President, at the welcome ceremony at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport, Serbia, as China launched direct flights to Serbia, on July 16

"All finance leaders are in one voice that this food crisis needs a serious intervention."

Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Finance Minister of Indonesia, at a press conference after a meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the Group of 20 on July 16

with those in middle and high-income countries, a testament to the country's improving healthcare system, standard of living and environmental protection.

The nation's healthcare network continues to expand throughout both rural and urban areas, delivering more resources and improved medical techniques, and making it much easier than before to see a doctor. More importantly, social attitudes toward health are changing. People now pay more attention to disease prevention, and prioritize health and quality of life alongside longevity.

One of the greatest remaining challenges is the provision of healthcare to rural, especially remote, communities, and work must continue to meet the rising public demand for medical services. This work includes public education on healthy lifestyles, occupational health and safety, and disease prevention, and on assisting groups that are particularly vulnerable to certain diseases.

Coral Reef Rehabilitation

People's Daily
July 21

Recent years have seen more than 30,000 artificial reefs installed and planted in the waters off Sanya in China's southernmost province of Hainan, restoring a sea area of around 50,000 square meters, which has greatly improved the local marine ecosystem.

Coral reefs provide crucial habitats for marine life and also enrich tourism resources. However, in the past two decades, climate change, ocean pollution and excessive extraction of these corals have pushed

them onto the ropes.

While planting coral is helping restore Hainan's marine ecosystem, the key to protecting it is minimizing human disruption. China has already issued laws and regulations to preserve the marine environment, with nearly 30 percent of its near-shore waters covered by ecological protection programs.

Coral reefs grow very slowly and it takes decades for transplanted pieces of coral to mature to full size. Thus, the restoration work must be based on long-sighted plans and public education on protecting coral and the marine ecological system as a whole.

↓ HONG KONG FILM AWARDS

Liu Yase, or Cya Liu, won lead actress at the Hong Kong Film Awards on July 17 for her performance in the thriller *Limbo*.

Born in Hengyang, Hunan Province, in 1989, the singer-actress launched her acting career in 2006 with the movie *Thirteen Princess Trees*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the 19th Tokyo International Film Festival.

Limbo is based on the novel *Wisdom Tooth* by Chinese author Lei Mi. The film follows two policemen in their efforts to hunt down a serial killer.



Action-packed police thriller *Raging Fire* won Best Film and three more awards. Eighty-six-year-old Hong Kong actor Xie Xian, or Patrick Tse, took home the award for Best Actor for his performance in the film *Time*, which centers on Hong Kong's neglected senior population.

“Those who are most vocal about defending human rights have turned out to be the deadliest murderers of innocent civilians.”

Wang Wenbin, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, at a press briefing on July 18

“The reckless imposition of unilateral coercive measures is making children and other most vulnerable groups paying the heaviest price. Such practices should be reversed.”

Zhang Jun, China's Permanent Representative to the UN, at a UN Security Council open debate on children and armed conflict on July 19



COVER STORY

HARD-WON HARVEST

China's summer grain output hits new high By Wang Hairong