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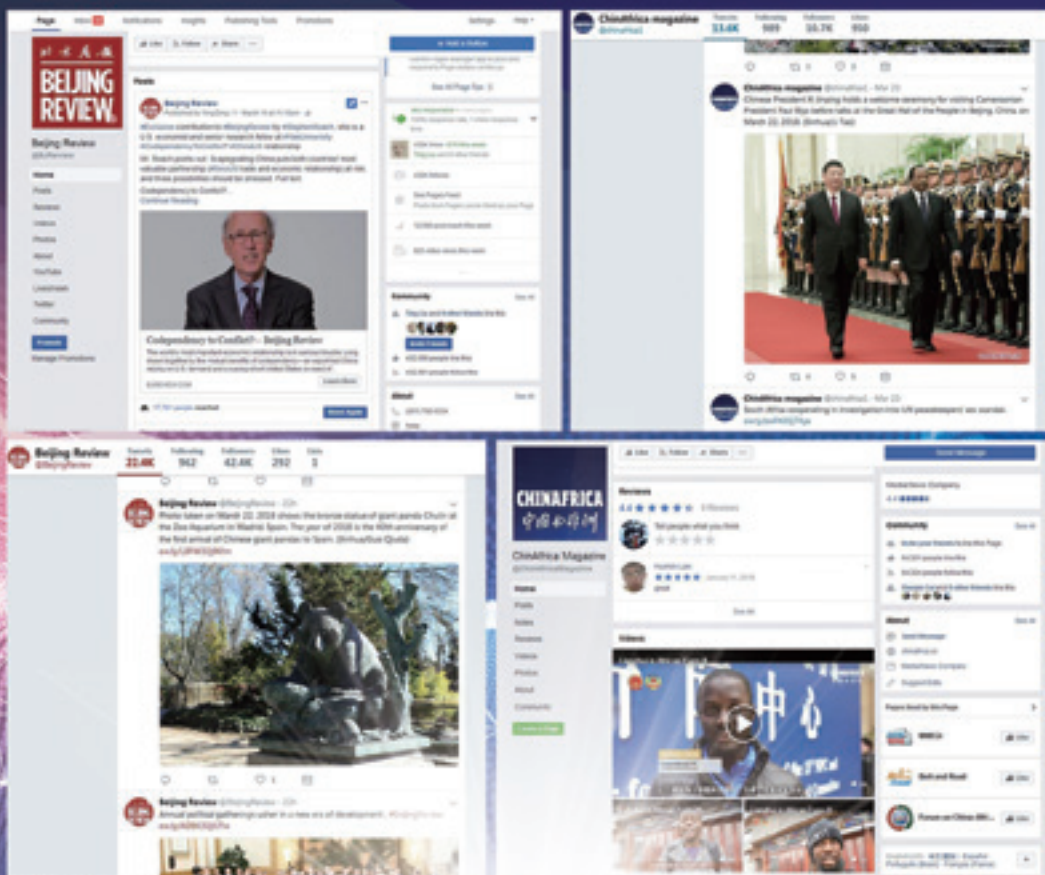
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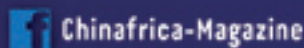
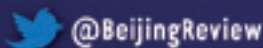
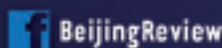
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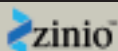
NATION

P.36 | Essence of the Year

The buzzwords of 2020



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Year of Crisis, Courage, Cooperation

The year 2020 started with an unprecedented crisis.

With a novel virus spreading worldwide, human society faced a once-in-a-century pandemic that killed thousands in one day, disrupted life and work, and damaged the global economy.

But it also brought out the best in people. Medical workers fought the disease selflessly and people from all walks of life joined the fight in their own ways, showing solidarity and resilience.

The year 2020 also left the world polarized. Though China was the first country to report the virus, there is now increasing evidence that the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) appeared in other parts of the world much earlier. While the international community should have been united in fighting this common enemy, a few major countries instead used COVID-19 to slander and attack China, and the global response became disunited. It was followed by international disputes on the distribution efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

Besides COVID-19, Brexit polarized Europe as well, with Britain's exit from the European Union. The presidential election in the United States vertically split American society, while the Black Lives Matter protests shook the harmony among races.

Though this was the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, conflict among

countries continued, the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia being an example, impacting regional peace.

But despite the clouds, the year 2020 also gave us reasons to remain optimistic and even proud.

Conflicts notwithstanding, humankind is still pursuing a better life and the path of peaceful development and continuing to explore new frontiers of science.

In the field of economy, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement signed by 15 economies on November 15 restored faith in multilateralism. In politics and diplomacy, Israel normalized diplomatic relations with four Arab League countries, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

Both China and the United States launched Mars probes, starting a new stage in the exploration of outer space. Also in this year, astronomers found for the first time evidence proving the existence of intermediate-mass black holes, remnants of massive stars, a discovery that will lead to better understanding of the bodies in the Milky Way.

In the coming year, we hope society will absorb the lessons from this year of crisis and cooperation alike and realize which is the right direction for a shared future. We hope there will be less polarity and more harmony, fewer crises and greater consolidation.

We wish our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. ■

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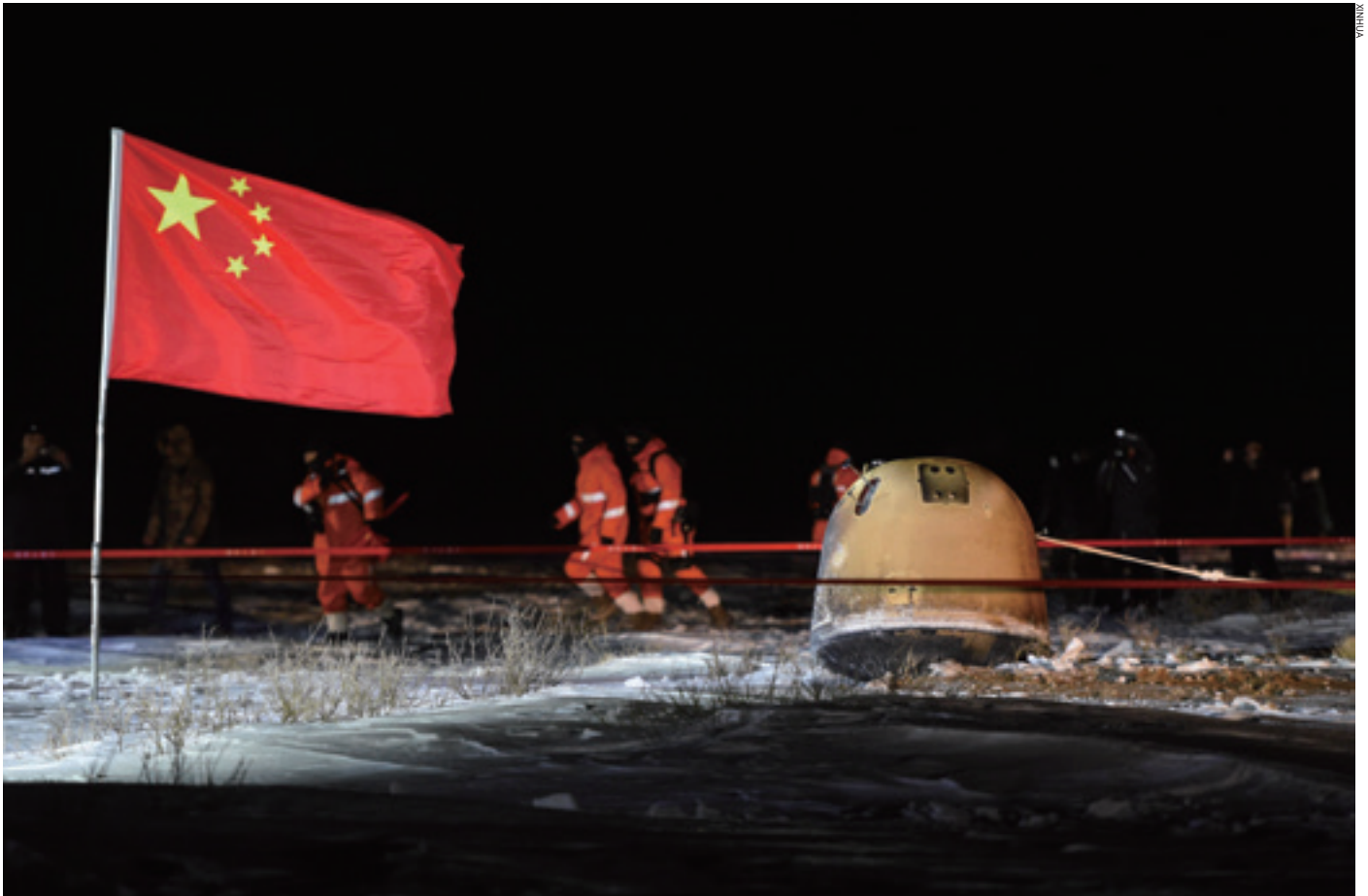
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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Lunar probe *Chang'e-5's* return capsule touches down on Earth on December 17 in Siziwang Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, north China. It brought back China's first samples collected from Moon, as well as the world's most recent lunar samples in over 40 years.

It marks the successful conclusion of China's current three-step lunar exploration program of orbiting, landing and bringing back samples, which began in 2004.

In a congratulatory message, President Xi Jinping called it a great step forward in China's space industry and another major achievement in overcoming difficulties. He said it will contribute to deepening the understanding of the origin of Moon and the evolution of the solar system.



Ice World

Workers build an ice structure on December 14 for the 22nd Harbin Ice-Snow World, a renowned seasonal theme park opening every winter in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province in northeast China. The park is expected to open soon.

Nanjing Tribute

Thousands of people in dark clothes attended the seventh national memorial ceremony in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province in east China, to mourn the victims of the Nanjing Massacre on December 13.

At 10:01 a.m., sirens began to blare and drivers across the city stopped their cars and sounded their horns. Pedestrians observed a minute of silence.

Despite the winter chill, people attended the ceremony with white flowers pinned to their clothes to convey their condolences. They included survivors of the massacre, students and foreign visitors.

A group of teenagers read out a declaration of peace and citizen representatives rang the Bell of

Peace, a giant bell at the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders. Doves symbolizing the hope for peace were released.

Japanese troops captured Nanjing on December 13, 1937. The invaders massacred about 300,000 Chinese civilians and unarmed soldiers during the six-week carnage, which was one of the most blatant atrocities during World War II.

In 2014, China's top legislature designated December 13 as the National Memorial Day for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre.

Flu Vaccine

Beijing has seen a major rise in the number of people receiving flu vaccine this year, according to a press

briefing on epidemic prevention and control on December 12.

Over 2.4 million flu vaccine doses had been given by December 11, up 38 percent compared with the total number last year, according to the official data released at the press conference.

Among the susceptible population in the city, the number of influenza shots received by primary and secondary school students increased by 27 percent, while the number received by elderly people grew 17 percent, Pang Xinghuo, Deputy Director of the Beijing Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said at the conference.

The city has been offering, since 2007, free flu vaccines to primary and high school students as well as local people aged 60

or above. A total of 480 injection sites, where people can get the flu vaccine at their own expense, have been set up across the city to meet the demand.

Influenza cases have dropped sharply this year in the capital city, thanks to precautions like wearing masks and flu inoculation.

Elderly Friendly

All urban and rural communities nationwide will be made elder-friendly by the end of 2035, according to a circular published by the National Health Commission and the Office of the National Working Commission on Aging, Xinhua News Agency reported on December 14.

By 2025, 5,000 exemplary elder-friendly communities will be created in both urban and rural areas.

The focus is on six areas, including improving the living quality and environment of elders, encouraging their participation in public activities, and enriching their lives.

Home appliances and room layout in senior people's houses will be improved to accommodate their daily needs. Public facilities will also accommodate the needs of elders better.

China had 254 million people aged 60 and above by the end of 2019.

Nature Honor

Chinese epidemiologist Li Lanjuan has been selected in *Nature's* list of 10 people who were part of big stories in science in 2020, as the science journal published the annual list online on December 15.

"In a year when the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic touched all parts of the globe, *Nature* has selected a group of people from around the world who were part of some of the biggest events in science in 2020," Rich Monastersky, chief features editor of the journal, said.

Among the 10, Chinese epidemiologist Li Lanjuan was selected

for her role in helping to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Safe Tax Payment

More and more taxpayers are choosing to pay their taxes online as contactless tax payment is advocated as part of the efforts to improve the business environment and reduce the risk of virus transmission.

In the first 11 months of the year, nearly 90 percent of tax-related services were handled online, the tax authorities said on December 15.

After the outbreak of COVID-19, 185 tax-related services began to be provided online such as tax declarations and payments, and tax reductions and exemption filings, Han Guorong, an official with the State Taxation Administration, said.

Han said the proportion of tax-related services handled online has continued to increase.

Dinosaur Tracks

A team of scientists announced that they have discovered a group of dinosaur footprints in Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China, Xinhua News Agency reported on December 14.

The team consisting of experts from China, the United States and Germany found about 99 footprints in sandstone in Qamdo, a city in Tibet.

According to their findings, published in the academic journal

Historical Biology earlier this month, these footprints ranging from 22 cm to 99.3 cm in length are believed to have been left by large, medium and small-sized sauropods dating back to the Middle Jurassic period, about 161 to 176 million years ago.

Scientists estimate that these dinosaurs measured 22 meters, 10 meters and 5 meters in length, respectively.

The site of the large footprints is a famous tourist attraction and has become part of a folkloric legend. Locals believe the sauropod footprints were left by the mythological warrior King Gesar.

"This belief helped keep the footprints intact," Xing said. The footprint site has a huge sauropod sculpture nearby to draw dinosaur fans.

From 2017 to 2019, research teams from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China University of Geosciences carried out explorations in the area, finding multiple sets of footprints and collecting detailed data.

Forest Coverage

China's forestry and grassland authority on December 17 vowed to increase the forest coverage rate to 24.1 percent in the next five years.

The forest stock volume would reach 19 billion cubic meters by the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, an increase of 1.4 billion cubic meters from the present level, according to the



Cleaner River

The Fuyang River in Cixian, a county in Handan, Hebei Province in north China, on December 15. Handan has carried out a project to clean up the river and its surroundings in recent years to improve the environment.

National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The comprehensive vegetation coverage rate will grow by 1 percentage point to reach 57 percent, Liu Dongsheng, an official with the administration, said.

The authority also revealed the forest carbon reserve for the first time.

China's forest carbon reserve has reached 9.2 billion tons,

representing an increase of over 200 million tons on average each year, which is equivalent to a carbon sink of 700 million to 800 million tons, according to Liu.

Liu said with the expansion of forest area and the increase of forest stock, forest carbon sinks will gradually increase, helping the country cope with climate change and reach its carbon neutral target.



Maglev Train

A new type of middle-to-low-speed magnetic levitation train developed by Chinese train maker CRRC Changchun Railway Vehicles rolls out in Changchun, Jilin Province in northeast China, on December 15.

The train, with a maximum operational speed of 120 km per hour, will be deployed on a tourist route in Qingyuan, a city in Guangdong Province in south China.

Consumer Spending

Consumer spending continued to gather steam in November, solidifying its role as a key growth engine amid the economic recovery, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on December 15.

Retail sales of consumer goods went up 5 percent year on year to 3.95 trillion yuan (\$603 billion) in the month. The growth picked up from the 4.3-percent gain in October, sustaining the upward momentum since the major consumption gauge posted its first growth this year in August.

Excluding auto consumption,

retail sales went up 4.2 percent.

Consumption in rural areas gained 5.6 percent, outpacing a rise of 4.9 percent in cities and towns.

In the first 11 months, retail sales went down 4.8 percent year on year, with the decline narrowing by 1.1 percentage points from the drop in the January-October period.

Growth of online consumption remained strong, with online retail sales rising 11.5 percent year on year in the January-November period.

A breakdown of the data revealed that upgraded demand has pushed up the consumption growth, led by sales of telecom equipment, cosmetics and jewelry.

“As the economy gradually recovers to normalized growth, consumption will remain a major engine underpinning the economic growth,” NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui said.

Financing Curb

China on December 11 lowered a key parameter in its macro-prudential management to rein in the ability of financial companies to borrow foreign debt.

The macro-prudential adjustment parameter, a multiplier that decides the upper limit of outstanding cross-border financing an

institution can have, has been revised to 1, down from 1.25 previously, according to a joint statement issued by the People's Bank of China and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

The downward revision will further improve the macro-prudential management of cross-border financing and guide financial institutions to adjust their foreign debt structure, the statement said.

Financial institutions should stick to a risk-neutral philosophy and better serve social and economic development, it added.

Anti-Trust Fine

The State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) slapped administrative penalties on three leading companies on December 14 for their failure to notify concentration of undertakings in advance, which violated the anti-monopoly law.

Alibaba Investment Ltd., an affiliate of Alibaba Group, Tencent-owned China Literature Ltd., and Shenzhen Hive Box Technology Co. Ltd., an affiliate of delivery giant SF Express, were fined 500,000 yuan (\$76,450) each for the violations.

They had acquired control of firms in retailing, film and television production, and terminal service in express, without prior notifications to regulatory authorities, the SAMR said.

Failure to notify the concentration of undertakings in advance entails measures to restore the status before the move and a maximum fine of 500,000 yuan.

The administration said the concentration of undertakings did not eliminate or restrict competition and regaining the previous status would have a major impact on the companies' operations and the economy, so the firms had not been asked to implement the restoration.

Still, the market watchdog decided to impose heavy fines as the three heavyweight buyers knowingly flouted the notification system and



Rural Sightseeing

Tourists visit a traditional sunken courtyard, known as *dikengyuan*, in Sanmenxia, Henan Province in central China, on December 10. A national intangible cultural heritage, *dikengyuan* residences have been renovated and become distinctive tourist attractions, helping provide jobs for local people.



Green Fortune

A villager picks cucumber at a farm in Guantao County, Hebei Province in north China, on December 14. The local government has launched several agrotourism projects to improve farmers' income.

caused adverse impact, the SAMR said, hoping that handling of such cases would help boost regulation in the industry.

Although the fine is relatively low, the penalty is expected to send a signal of tougher anti-monopoly supervision in the Internet sector and act as a deterrent.

The SAMR has announced 11 administrative penalty decisions related to similar breaches in concentration of undertaking cases since the beginning of 2020.

Rainwater Deal

China's first transaction of collected rainwater was completed on December 14, the China Water Exchange announced.

The deal was done in the hi-tech industrial development zone of Changsha, Hunan Province in central China.

The Hunan Yuchuang Environmental Protection Engineering Co. Acquired 20,000 cubic meters of rainwater from the

Hunan Gaoxin Property Co. for 14,000 yuan (\$2,140).

The engineering company later sold 12,000 cubic meters of rainwater at a price of 3.85 yuan (\$0.58) per cubic meter, about one fifth of the local tap water price, to the gardening and environmental sanitation company of the hi-tech zone.

The raindrops will be used for landscaping and regular sanitation in place of tap water.

More deals valued at around 1 million yuan (\$152,000) are being considered for the coming three years, according to Liu Bo, Secretary General of Changsha Sponge City Ecological Industry Innovation Strategic Alliance.

Digital Ambition

Beijing's Zhongguancun, better known as China's Silicon Valley, is eyeing new digital economy growth in its roadmap for the next five years.

By 2025, the total income of the digital economy in the Zhongguancun Science Park is

expected to exceed 6 trillion yuan (\$912 billion), with an average annual growth rate of no less than 15 percent, according to its management committee.

From January to October this year, its revenue grew 16.3 percent year on year to reach 2.56 trillion yuan (\$391 billion), with new developments in Internet applications for medical services, education and offices.

The hub aims for breakthroughs in core and applicable technology, fostering strong enterprises in the digital economy and supporting industrial innovation.

It will further boost innovation in and the application of artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain and the Internet of Things, and will advance the integration of the digital and real economy.

Investment Platform

A new online platform has been launched to facilitate foreign investment, according to the

China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) on December 15.

Overseas investors can get a better understanding of China's business environment, investment policies and specific project information via the Investchinaccpit.com website.

The platform has released information on 1,186 projects and 157 policy measures and will continue to update, the CCPIT said.

China has been encouraging the use of the Internet to promote trade and investment as part of its efforts to offset impacts of the novel coronavirus disease. Among the measures, the country has held various online exhibitions and rolled out policies to support cross-border e-commerce.

Paid-in foreign direct investment into the Chinese mainland expanded 5.5 percent year on year to 98.7 billion yuan (\$14.38 billion) in November, the eighth consecutive month of growth, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.



Solar Power Exploitation

Workers install solar panels at the construction site of a 300-megawatt photovoltaic electricity project in Gonghe County, Qinghai Province in northwest China, on December 15. The installed capacity of renewable energy sources in Qinghai has exceeded 15,000 megawatts.

THIS WEEK WORLD



CHILE

Foreign Minister Andres Allamand (right) and a representative of the Chilean postal service display stamps commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Chile and China in Santiago on December 15



UKRAINE

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal (right), Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko (left) and members of Verkhovna Rada, or the parliament, celebrate after the state budget was approved, in Kiev on December 15. The government is expected to have \$39.18 billion in revenues and expenses of \$47.65 billion in 2021.



JORDAN

An archeologist works at a newly unearthed Greco-Roman archeological site in Amman on December 14



ALGERIA

A warship searches for survivors after a military helicopter crashed off Tipaza Bay on December 16. Three crew members were killed in the accident



COTE D'IVOIRE

President Alassane Ouattara speaks during the swearing-in ceremony for his third term in Abidjan on December 14



FRANCE

A Christmas pavilion in front of the Hotel de Ville town hall in Paris on December 15



↓ CAS ACADEMICIAN WINS QUANTUM PRIZE

Ye Jun, professor of the University of Colorado Boulder, won the 2020 Micius Quantum Prize for breakthroughs in quantum precision measurement, particularly the development of the ultra precise optical atomic clocks, a Chinese foundation announced on December 10.

He received the honor jointly with Hidetoshi Katori from the University of Tokyo.

Ye's research focuses on the frontiers of light-matter interactions. In November 2017, he was elected a foreign academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The Micius Quantum Prize invites international experts as judges and awards scientists who have made outstanding research in fields including quantum communication, quantum simulation, quantum computing, and quantum precision measurement. Each winner gets 1.25 million yuan (\$191,100) in prize money and a gold medal.

The foundation was established in 2018 and receives donations from private entrepreneurs in China.



Digital Currency

Beijing Youth Daily

December 14

In October, Shenzhen in south China, in partnership with the People's Bank of China, the central bank, launched a pilot program to promote the digital renminbi by distributing 50,000 "red packets" worth 200 yuan (\$30) each via a random draw.

Two months later, Suzhou in east China rolled out a similar measure on the eve of the online shopping festival Double 12 to bolster consumption.

The next step is to build on the momentum by introducing online payment and offline wallet functions, which allow users to make a direct payment without having to go

through the Internet.

The successful adoption of the digital currency in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area followed by a favorable outcome in the Yangtze River Delta makes it predictable that the next targeted area will be Xiongan, the third major urban cluster identified in 2010 by the State Council.

While payments today hinge on the mobile network, a central bank digital currency (CBDC) can be used by downloading an app which does not require network signals.

Besides, the CBDC can help merchants reduce business transaction costs. Today, they need to pay a percentage of their income to use payment platforms, but the CBDC is different. This can attract more people to participate, laying a good foundation for future promotion.

Travel Goldmine

Economic Daily

December 13

With the upgrading of consumption, China's tourism market is developing and senior tourism, also known as silver tourism, has become a new growth point. Unlike other consumer groups, the elderly have more time to travel, supported by their better consumption capability than young people.

However, problems come with the potential. In the silver travel market, infringement on the legitimate rights and interests of elderly travelers sometimes happens with unreasonable scheduling, creating additional expenses and less protection for seniors. Some travel agencies trick consumers with false information about tourism products. These problems have affected the tourism consumption experience and market, making senior travelers discouraging.

To activate the silver tourism market's potential, travel companies should design tours according to the physical and mental conditions of the elderly. Besides, traveling products should meet their diversified and personalized needs.



"We stand ready to work with other countries to advance vaccine research and development and contribute to vaccine accessibility and affordability in the world, in particular developing countries so the world can vanquish the pandemic at an early date."

Wang Wenbin, Foreign Ministry spokesperson, addressing a daily news briefing on December 16

"What we're going to have to see is more negotiations as to what types of rules are acceptable and will be broadly observed or not. There are areas where the U.S. and China can cooperate on developing rules for challenges we face like the nuclear non-proliferation area."

Joseph Nye, University Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus and former Dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, to *Global Times* on December 14

Education Dilemma

Guangming Daily

December 11

Higher vocational education enrollment expanded by 1.16 million in 2019, exceeding expectations and this year too, expansion is underway. China has established the world's most extensive vocational education system. According to the government work report of 2020, recruitment will be expanded by 2 million jobs this year and the next.

In addition, the enrollment of postgraduates and undergraduates upgrading from junior colleges is also increasing. According to the Ministry of Education, about 1 million people had access to postgraduate studies, increasing 189,000 year on year.

The move is a boon for the graduates. It indicates a growing opportunity for employment and is conducive to ease their burden as well as improve their education background, laying a solid foundation for higher quality employment in the future.

However, some also doubt its effectiveness, claiming that it's hard to guarantee the quality of education after expansion. It is not sustainable but a short-term method to relieve the pressure of finding jobs. Therefore it will lead to an imbalance between the educational structure and social demand, causing waste of resources and depreciation of education.



Seniors visit a photo exhibition of more than 30 golden wedding couples at a park in Minhang District in Shanghai on October 7, 2019

At the same time, the regulators need to address the market's problems. They need to clarify accommodation, catering, shopping and medical service details in silver tourism, and the traveling market standards must be regulated to provide a healthy consumption environment for senior travelers so that they can enjoy their old age better.

↓ GROUNDWATER APP FOUNDER WINS UN AWARD

Ren Xiaoyuan, founder of MyH2O, a data platform that charts groundwater quality across rural China, is among the seven recipients of the Young Champions of the Earth 2020, UN's highest environmental award.

The app tells residents where to find clean water and connects communities with private companies and non-profit organizations that provide potable water solutions. Since its launch in 2015, MyH2O has helped provide clean water to about 1,000 villages.

The 29-year-old became interested in environmental advocacy as a teen. She went on to earn dual master's degrees in environmental engineering and technology and policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"The MyH2O network and platform that Ren Xiaoyuan has pioneered addresses the root causes of deteriorating water quality whilst safeguarding water resources in underprivileged communities. UN Environment Programme (UNEP) encourages such bottom-up approaches and through this award, we hope that MyH2O can inspire many others," Joakim Harlin, head of UNEP's freshwater unit, said.



"The U.S. Government's bans leave Huawei no choice but to accelerate research and development to build an open tech ecosystem of its own, from hardware to software for smartphones. It is a tough journey but Huawei must go through it to survive and thrive."

Charlie Dai, principal analyst at market research company Forrester, commenting that Huawei plans to expand its in-house operating system HarmonyOS to all of its self-developed products, in *China Daily*, on December 16

"A new modern infrastructure has appeared, the living conditions of people have improved significantly. This success demonstrates the unity of the Communist Party of China and the state power with the people."

Uzbek journalist and political observer **Sharofitdin Tulaganov**, commenting on China's eradication of absolute poverty in an interview with Xinhua News Agency on December 15

2020's Top 10 Nation News Stories



Medical workers transfer a patient to the intensive care unit in a hospital in Wuhan, Hubei Province in central China, on February 17

1 All-Out War on COVID-19

The year 2020 will go down in history as the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) year, with the first case reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province in central China.

Outbound traffic from Wuhan was shut down on January 23 and top-level public health emergency responses were activated across the country. Resources, including more than 42,000 medical workers, were mobilized from other areas to assist Hubei.

In about three months, a decisive victory had been secured and on

April 8, Wuhan lifted its outbound traffic restrictions after 76 days. On April 26, the last hospitalized COVID-19 patient in the city was discharged. Social and economic activities across the country steadily resumed.

As of December 17, according to National Health Commission data, 86,789 confirmed cases had been reported on the Chinese mainland. In all, 81,851 patients had been cured and discharged from hospital, 4,634 persons died, and the rest were still under treatment.

Measures have been continued to prevent inbound cases and local transmission.