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China to offer vaccine doses to COVAX

Nation to meet developing countries' needs via initiative at request of WHO

By ZHOU JIN
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China said on Wednesday it will provide 10 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the global vaccine sharing initiative COVAX to meet the urgent needs of developing countries.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a daily news briefing that China is responding to a request from the World Health Organization as developing countries seek to make up for shortages of the vaccines.

The WHO has started to review the authorization for emergency use of the Chinese vaccines, Wang said, adding that Chinese enterprises will continue to cooperate actively and that he hopes the review process will be completed as soon as possible.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the WHO, said in January that there needs to be a "collective commitment" within the next 100 days to get vaccinations underway worldwide for health workers and others who are at high risk of contracting COVID-19.

China attaches great importance to Tedros' appeal and the difficulties facing the practical implementation of the COVAX initiative, in particular the huge vaccine supply gap in February and March, Wang said.

It is another important step taken by China to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines, promote international anti-pandemic cooperation and uphold the concept of a shared community of health for all, he said.

The WHO-led COVAX initiative aims to secure at least 2 billion doses by the end of 2021 and ensure equitable access for 92 low- and middle-income countries that cannot afford to pay for vital supplies on their own. China joined the initiative in October.

"We hope capable countries will swing into action, support COVAX through concrete actions, back the WHO's work, assist developing countries in obtaining vaccines in a timely manner and contribute to the international community overcoming the pandemic at an early date," Wang said.

He noted that Beijing is in close communication and cooperation with the WHO to ensure vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries.

Speaking at the opening of the 73rd session of the World Health Assembly via video link in May, President Xi Jinping announced that China's COVID-19 vaccines would be made a global public good. Ever since then, the country has been making great efforts to fulfill its commitment.

China has exported large amounts of domestically developed vaccines to countries including the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Indonesia, Turkey, Brazil and Chile, where clinical studies of Chinese vaccines have been conducted.

It also supports relevant companies in exporting vaccines to countries in urgent need that have approved Chinese vaccines and authorized their emergency use.

On Monday, the first shipment of China-donated COVID-19 vaccines reached Pakistan. The country formally started the drive to administer the vaccines to its front-line health-care workers on Wednesday, Xinhua News Agency reported.

According to the Foreign Ministry, China is also providing vaccine assistance to another 13 developing countries and will continue to provide such assistance to another 38 developing countries in the next phase.

Presidential greetings



President Xi Jinping extends Chinese New Year greetings to people across the country during an inspection tour of Bijie, Guizhou province, on Wednesday. Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, learned about local environmental protection efforts and interacted with members of the Miao ethnic group during a cultural event celebrating Spring Festival, which falls on Feb 12. XINHUA

Panda cubs make debut to mark start of spring

By HUANG ZHILING in Chengdu
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Ten panda cubs born in 2020 made their debut in Wenchuan county, Sichuan province, on Wednesday, which was *Lichun*, or the beginning of spring, the first solar term in the Chinese lunar calendar.

At 11 am, keepers took the 10

panda cubs to a playground of the Shenshuping base of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda, where they were given treats and played on a toy train and castle.

"They kept smelling and biting the new toys, and it was apparent that they liked the train and castle," said Zhang Guiquan, a panda

expert at the base, which was set up in 1980 under an agreement between the World Wide Fund for Nature, formerly the World Wildlife Fund, and the Chinese government. The average age of the 10 cubs is around 6 months, with the oldest twin sisters being more than 190 days and the youngest being more than 120 days.

"All of the 10 cubs were conceived naturally," Zhang said.

It would have been close to impossible to increase the captive panda population if the center had not resolved the difficulties in panda breeding it encountered in its early days.

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Cultivation of children seen as strategic

By CAO DESHENG
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The Communist Party of China Central Committee has issued a guideline on comprehensively strengthening the work of the Chinese Young Pioneers, a national organization for Chinese children, in the new era, urging all-around efforts to instill a strong belief in Communism and the Party's leadership among the younger generation.

Children are the future of the country, the Chinese nation and the Party, said the document, which was released on Wednesday. It said that the CPC has always made it a "strategic" and "fundamental" task to cultivate the country's children in a good manner.

Since its founding in October 1949, the Chinese Young Pioneers, under the strong leadership of the CPC, has played an irreplaceable role in uniting and

guiding generations of children in following the instructions of the Party and ensuring they grow healthily, the guideline said.

Comprehensively strengthening the work of the national organization for children, shaping children's values and political awareness and guiding them to stay committed to Communism have far-reaching importance in fully building China into a modern socialist country and realizing the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, it added. The document stressed upholding the Party's leadership over the Chinese Young Pioneers' work, and required efforts to enhance the awareness of children in loving the Party and the country and staunchly foster younger generations with Communist beliefs.

The guideline came as the CPC Central Committee, with General Secretary Xi Jinping at the core,

has attached greater importance to children's work since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012. Xi has shown his personal care for the country's children and made a series of instructions about children's work.

In a congratulatory letter to the opening of the Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Young Pioneers in July, Xi stressed efforts to foster a new generation of talent and make children well-prepared for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The national organization plays a role like that of a big school where its members establish lofty aspirations and develop fine characteristics and various skills, and their love for the CPC, the motherland and the people is nurtured, he said, adding that in the new era, it should continue to follow the CPC and pass on the traditions of revolution.

RIGHT TRACK

Innovative SMEs to get policy boost in financing

By MA SI
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China's latest move to support over 1,000 innovative small and medium-sized companies is conducive to enhancing the resilience of the industrial chain and boosting the high-quality development of the nation's sprawling industrial economy, officials and analysts said.

The comments came after the Ministry of Finance said on Wednesday that the central government will allocate more than 10 billion yuan (\$1.55 billion) from 2021 to 2025 to support the growth of more than 1,000 "little giants", or SMEs that focus on a market niche and master key technologies with strong innovation capacity.

Such SMEs are similar to "hidden champions", a term coined by German author Hermann Simon to describe small, highly specialized world-market leaders in Germany.

Qu Xianming, an expert at the National Manufacturing Strategy Advisory Committee, a Beijing-based think tank, said innovative SMEs are a key link in the entire industrial chain and their role is irreplaceable.

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HIGH-QUALITY GROWTH VIEWED AS KEY TO FUTURE

Investment, consumption expected to fuel expansion

By ZHANG YUE
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Effective investment, particularly from the private sector, and stronger consumption are expected to propel high-quality growth in China this year, according to experts.

Zhu Ning, a deputy dean and pro-

indepth
fessor at the Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance, or SAIF, said on Jan 24 that investment and consumption would lead to strong growth momentum during the year

and play vital roles in leading the nation's economic rebound.

As part of the country's new development model, investment and consumption are expected to play new roles.

Investment, particularly in the high-tech and social sectors, will rise notably this year, spurring consumer spending, Zhu said.

Last year, retail sales in China fell by 3.9 percent year-on-year, while investment grew by 2.9 percent, the National Bureau of Statistics, or NBS, said on Jan 18.

"As distortion due to COVID-19 diminishes and average household incomes pick up, consumer spending confidence is likely to rise, while last year's low base for

consumption will add to such growth this year," Zhu said.

"In addition, there is likely to be a notable improvement in the employment situation this year, with a robust resumption of business activities."

Last year, investment in high-tech industries rose by 10.6 percent year-on-year, 7.7 percentage points above the overall level. Investment from the nation's private sector reached 28.93 trillion yuan (\$4.48 trillion), up by 1 percent year-on-year.

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