

# TOP NEWS



Alima Danfakha Gakou, consul general of Mali in Guangzhou, hands a healthcare package to a student of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Saturday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## African officials: Guangdong info flow shows goodwill

By LI WENFANG in Guangzhou  
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Alima Danfakha Gakou, Mali's consul general in Guangzhou, highly appreciates the communication mechanism between the Guangdong provincial government and consulates general of African countries, and the measures taken by the provincial authorities to counter the coronavirus epidemic.

She especially appreciates the current daily meetings among consulates general of African countries and provincial and city governments to address problems concerning Africans in Guangdong during the epidemic.

These measures show the importance the provincial government places on issues concerning African people and consulates general in Guangdong, she told journalists in Guangzhou on Saturday.

The problems some Africans

encountered had to do with insufficient communication between local governments and consulates general before some measures against the epidemic were taken and the consequent failure of consulates general to promptly forward such information to African people, she said.

When the anti-epidemic measures were put in place, some information was not fully communicated to service providers on the ground, said Teferi Melesse Desta, consul general of Ethiopia in Guangzhou.

He called on people to follow the information released by health commissions and governments and cautioned that rumors lead to misunderstanding and confusion.

Gakou said she appreciates the strong steps the Chinese government took to curb the spread of the virus, and African consulates general have advocated that Africans abide by these measures to safeguard their health.

Since the fight against the virus began, Africans have stood side by side with Chinese people in the effort and have expressed their support for China.

African countries have received donations of anti-epidemic supplies from Chinese governments and companies and have embraced Chinese medical expert teams.

This highlights the spirit of Sino-African solidarity and mutual aid, she said, adding only through solidarity and Chinese support can Africa overcome the epidemic.

On Saturday, Zhang Xin, deputy governor of Guangdong, Chen Chunsheng, Party secretary of Sun Yat-sen University, and officials from various African consulates general met at the university with some African students.

Seventy-nine students from Africa are enrolled at Sun Yat-sen University and 36 of them were staying on campus.

Eleven African countries have consulates general in Guangzhou, and more than 117,000 foreigners live in Guangdong province and 6,700 of them are African, according to the provincial government.

Guangdong authorities consider the health and safety of resident expats highly important and have adopted equal health management measures for all residents during the epidemic and firmly oppose any discriminative acts, Zhang said.

Sino-African friendship is deeply rooted and unbreakable in Guangdong. During this special time of countering the novel coronavirus epidemic, China and Africa must stand united to win the fight, he said.

The provincial government issued an open letter in Chinese, English and French on Saturday, urging Chinese and expats to work together to win the fight against the epidemic.

# Wang: Support for WHO aids multilateralism

State Councilor hails Tedros' public health work, proposes cooperation to fight virus

By ZHOU JIN  
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China reiterated its firm support to the World Health Organization on Saturday, saying that standing behind the UN agency and its chief is safeguarding multilateralism.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi made the remark in a telephone conversation with WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus after the international body has come under continued fire.

To support the WHO and its chief is to safeguard multilateralism, secure the role of the United Nations and maintain international solidarity as we confront the disease, Wang said.

The phone call came days after United States President Donald Trump accused the WHO of mismanaging the coronavirus pandemic, called the organization "China centric" and halted US funding to the UN body.

Wang said he believes that people can tell right from wrong.

He said that Tedros was elected as WHO director-general with a big majority of votes and has trust among member states.

Noting that Tedros is the first director-general from a developing country and especially from the African continent, Wang hailed Tedros' work committed to global public health since taking office in 2017.

Smear campaigns and attacks against the organization are groundless and attempts to pressure it are unpopular, he said, and no country with a conscience would support such moves.

As the disease rages through the globe, people in all countries need the WHO, which plays an important role in saving lives and eradicating the virus, Wang said.

China attaches high importance to the status and role of the WHO and is willing to enhance support for the organization through various means, he said.

China is willing to cooperate with countries worldwide to jointly strive for a complete victory over the disease, he said.

Tedros expressed gratitude to China for its firm and lasting support for the WHO, calling for solidarity in the international community to fight the coronavirus.

If the international community is divided, the virus will swoop in and spread fast, he said, warning that the pandemic would then last longer and kill more people.

Despite the various attacks and accusations against the WHO and him personally for months, Tedros said that as long as the WHO upholds the truth and does the right thing, the history will vindicate it and the truth will eventually come to light.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

## So shall they reap



Farmers plant rice seedlings in a terraced field in the village of Jiache, in Jiabang, Congjiang county, Guizhou province, on Saturday. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

## Coronavirus conspiracy claim called 'impossible', 'absurd'

By ZHANG ZHIHAO  
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Scientists around the world rushed to debunk another wave of conspiracy theory recently hyped by some United States media and a French Nobel laureate claiming the novel coronavirus was artificially created.

Yuan Zhiming, a senior virologist and the president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Wuhan Branch, said "it is impossible" to synthesize the novel coronavirus for it would require "extraordinary knowledge and work" that surpasses current technological capabilities.

It is even more ridiculous to claim the virus had escaped from a biosafety lab in Wuhan, the researcher at the Wuhan Institute of Virology said. "We have strict rules and a code of conduct for scientific research and development. We have confidence in our management."

Yuan was speaking in response to recent speculation by politicians and media in the United States that the virus could have leaked from the labs in Wuhan due to poor management.

"The director of the Galveston National Laboratory in the United States made it clear that our labora-

"We have strict rules and a code of conduct for scientific research and development. We have confidence in our management."

Yuan Zhiming, senior virologist and the president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Wuhan Branch

tory is just as well managed as labs in Europe and the US," Yuan said in an interview with China Global Television Network.

Luc Montagnier, who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2008, said in a recent interview that the novel coronavirus was "manipulated and accidentally released from a laboratory in Wuhan" in late 2019 because its genome contained sequences from the HIV virus.

He was immediately panned by scientists around the world, including French virologist Simon Wain Hobson, who said Montagnier based his misinformed accusation on the research by French mathematician Jean Claude Perez, who claimed to find evidence of the virus is partially synthetic but was later proved to be false.

Virologist Etienne Simon Lorieere of the Institut Pasteur in Paris, told AFP that Montagnier's claim was "absurd"

because it is common for organisms to share pieces of their genome with other bacteria and viruses.

"If we take a word from a book and it looks like another word, can we say that one has copied from the other? This is absurd!" he said.

Yuan said people tend to "connect the dots" and associate the virus with labs because the Institute of Virology and the P4 laboratory, one of Asia's most advanced biosafety labs, just so happened to exist in the same city.

"I think it is understandable for people to make that association," Yuan said. "But it is a malicious move to purposefully mislead the people" to think that the virus escaped from labs.

"They have no evidence or logic to support their accusations. They are basing it completely on their own speculations," he said. The purpose of these accusations, Yuan believed, is to

throw off China's effort against the epidemic and interfere with its research.

There has been an ample amount of academic literature proving the novel coronavirus originated in nature. Scientists have also not found any trace of artificial tampering in the virus' genome, he said.

Some scientists believe perfectly synthesizing a virus of this complexity without leaving any evidence requires technological wizardry beyond current human knowledge and capability, Yuan said.

"I have never believed we humans have the know-how to create such virus," he said.

"I have been in managing laboratory biosafety and scientific research projects for years, I know it is impossible," he said. "But I also believe that so long as the pandemic continues, this kind of speculations and disharmony will not fade away."

At the same time, Yuan said the global scientific community has a basic consensus on where the pathogen comes from.

"Scientists around the world are joining forces to publish in academic journals. I hope these conspiracy theories will not harm the cooperation of scientists and affect their fight against the pandemic."

## 2 districts set up in southern island city

By ZHAO LEI  
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Sansha, China's southernmost island city, which administers vast island groups and their surrounding waters in the South China Sea, has set up two districts, the Ministry of Civil Affairs announced on its website on Saturday.

The Xisha district administers the islands, reefs and their surrounding waters in the Xisha and Zhongsha islands and has its government on

Yongxing Island, and the Nansha district manages lands and waters of the Nansha Islands, with its government on Yongshu Reef, according to the ministry.

The move was approved by the State Council, said the ministry, which oversees the establishment of administrative regions and their boundaries.

Sansha was established in July 2012 to administer more than 200 islets, sandbanks and reefs of the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha

islands and the 2 million square kilometers of surrounding waters. It is under the jurisdiction of Hainan, China's southernmost province.

The city has the largest water area and the least land of any Chinese prefecture-level city.

The city government, located on Yongxing Island, manages 10 communities. There are about 1,800 residents and an unknown number of military personnel.

Since its establishment, the city

has been investing heavily in building infrastructure. This includes a large number of public service facilities, including a primary school, a kindergarten, a vocational education center, an emergency-response materials warehouse, desalination plants and wastewater and garbage disposal stations.

Two multifunctional lighthouses have been built and are in operation on the Nansha Islands' Huayang and Chigua reefs, aiding the navigation of passing vessels.

Sansha is currently building a multipurpose complex to host cultural and sport events, the city government said.

## Exports: Firms ramp up efforts to meet demand

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While adopting new measures to ensure the quality of products, China has not restricted medical supply exports, according to businesses.

Yuan Zhen, deputy general manager of Jiangsu Yuyue Medical Equipment & Supply Co, said that since the start of the outbreak, the company's exports of medical equipment have never been restricted.

The company said that by Friday it had received orders for more than 30,000 ventilators and nearly 1 million forehead thermometers from over 70 countries and regions. Thirteen thousand ventilators and 500,000 forehead thermometers have already been delivered.

Other domestic medical companies also said that their overseas medical supply orders were not blocked.

Global demand for major medical supplies has skyrocketed as a result of the outbreak. To meet the demand, many Chinese manufacturers have been working overtime.

Recognized as a global manufacturing powerhouse, China accounts for about one-fifth of the global production of multifunction

ventilators and for about 50 percent of global face mask output.

"As the domestic situation has been controlled, China has pledged to step up efforts to offer daily necessities and medical supplies to the overseas market," said Zhang Yansheng, a researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges. "The stance shows that China is a very responsible country," Zhang said.

At a news conference on Thursday, Gao Feng, a spokesman for the Ministry of Commerce, said China has not and would never restrict the export of medical supplies. Chinese customs authorities have taken measures to expedite the customs clearance of exported anti-epidemic materials, Gao said.

According to the ministry, 58 economies and four international organizations had signed medical procurement contracts with Chinese enterprises as of April 8.

From April 1 to 12, China exported 16.6 billion yuan (\$2.4 billion) worth of inspected medical supplies, according to the General Administration of Customs.

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