

CHINA

Xinjiang rebuts claims about 'racial genocide'

Growth of region's Uygur population has outpaced that of other groups, official says

By ZHANG YI in Beijing and MAO WEIHUA in Urumqi

The Uygur population in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region has increased under the law-based implementation of the family planning policy, with all rights of ethnic minorities protected, a Xinjiang official told a news conference over the weekend.

The remarks came after German scholar Adrian Zenz recently published a report that claimed Xinjiang was using forced sterilization and coercive family planning against Uygurs and other minorities in Xinjiang in an attempt to limit their populations.

Tursunay Abdurehim, an official from Xinjiang's Statistics Bureau, said the report was biased, used incorrect data and cited fake cases,

and its findings went against academic research methodologies and the realities in Xinjiang.

Between 2010 and 2018, Xinjiang's total population, ethnic minorities population and Uygur population all rose, while its Han population registered just a meager increase, Tursunay told the news conference in Urumqi, Xinjiang's regional capital, on Saturday.

The Uygur population's growth rate — 25.04 percent — during that period was not only higher than the 13.99 percent for Xinjiang as a whole, but also higher than that of other ethnic groups, she said. The region's Han population rose just 2 percent.

Tursunay said that from 2010 to 2018, the birthrate and natural growth rate of Xinjiang's population both declined slightly.

Before 2017, the birthrate in Xin-

jiang was around 15 newborns per 1,000 people.

In 2018, it was around 10.7 newborns per 1,000 people, almost the same as the national level, she said.

But the Uygur population's birthrate and natural growth rate were higher than the overall figures for Xinjiang and for the region's Han population, making allegations of "racial genocide" simply nonsense, Tursunay said.

She said the decline in Xinjiang's population growth in 2018 was the result of the stricter implementation of the family planning policy, and also reflected economic and social development and changing attitudes to reproduction.

Mutalif Roz, director of the region's health commission, said China's family planning policy for ethnic minorities was looser than that for Han, and the country had not formulated any such policy for a single ethnic group.

Implementing the family planning policy in Xinjiang was an objective need for sustainable development that coordinated population and economic, social and environmental resources, Mutalif said.

Xinjiang is an arid region with severe desertification problems. Its average water yield per square kilometer was 48,300 cubic meters in 2018, only 16.7 percent of the national level, according to official data.

In southern Xinjiang, farmland has become a scarce resource due to rapid population increase. In 2018, farmland per capita in the four prefectures in southern Xinjiang was 68 percent of the world average.

To resolve the problems of water and farmland allocation and improve everyday life, Xinjiang needed to implement the policy, Mutalif said.

In 2017, Xinjiang revised its population and family planning regulations, extending the same policy to

all people: urban couples can have two children and rural couples can have three.

After implementing the policy in Xinjiang, pressure from a rapid rise in population was alleviated, and the health of people, particularly women and children, improved, Mutalif said.

Population development trends indicate that higher socioeconomic development levels are accompanied by greater self realization and better prenatal and postnatal care, with corresponding decreases in birthrate and population growth rate, he added.

Mutalif said Xinjiang's birthrate, mortality rate and the population's natural growth rate were all lower in 2018 than in 1978.

As for women mentioned in the report — including Zamira Dawut, Mihrigul Tursun and Tursunay Zinavdin, who allegedly suffered "unlawful detention" and were forced to undergo compulsory steri-

lization by the government — Ilijan Anayt, spokesman for the regional government, said Zenz played tricks by inviting "actresses" to beef up his claims.

"The 'actresses' gave their 'performances' in 80 percent of Xinjiang-related hype and obeyed the orders of the 'backstage directors', making up new 'lines' every time," Ilijan said.

"The reports related to those 'actresses' are all fake news."

Tursunay said: "Adrian Zenz is keen on making up lies on Xinjiang affairs and slandering China. His earlier reports and remarks have been proven to be false."

"This time he repeatedly ignored the truth and facts of Xinjiang's population development and deliberately made up lies by saying 'Xinjiang is suppressing ethnic minorities' population growth."

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Treatment of trash improved in Beijing

By DU JUAN dujuan@chinadaily.com.cn

In an effort to create a cleaner, prettier city, the Beijing municipal government has upgraded its waste treatment process as well as related construction projects and facilities to improve the local environment.

Ma Jin, who lives near a refuse transfer station in the Zhouzhuang Jiayuan community in the capital's Chaoyang district, said he used to suffer from the noise caused by garbage trucks traveling to and from the station as well as bad smells.

After upgrades were made at the Xiaowuji station in 2017, "the noise and smell both disappeared," he said. "The best thing is that the station has provided cleaning services for all the streets nearby. Thus, we have a much better environment."

Li Zhongxu, who has lived in the community since 2015, said he used to complain to authorities because the terrible odor prevented him from opening his windows.

"I'm glad that the government has heard us and has made a difference, which is even better than our expectations," Li said.

Many people from various departments have played a role in such upgrades.

Cai Huashuai, deputy head of the facility department of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Management, said Beijing has nine refuse transfer stations with a total treatment capacity of 11,200 metric tons a day. Xiaowuji can process 2,000 tons a day.

"From outside, you cannot even tell it's a building related to waste since the construction design helps it to blend in with surrounding buildings," Cai said. "From the inside, there have been many improvements made to effectively avoid creating a bad smell."

The commission said the building was equipped with fast-rolling doors for the trucks to use. All the waste conveyor belts are now covered with sealed cowlings, and the workshops have no windows.

Xu Miao, deputy head of the resource conservation and environmental protection department at Beijing's Development and Reform Commission, said the refuse transfer stations should reduce secondary pollution and traffic congestion.

"In addition, the waste treatment and environmental sanitation work should be conducted in a high-quality manner and offer safety and happiness to the residents," she said. "We should also spread the knowledge and educate the public."

Xiaowuji holds a public open day every Thursday so residents can visit the workshop and learn how it works.

Beijing currently has a designed waste treatment capacity of 32,711 tons a day.

Zhao Ming contributed to this story.

Wastelands turning into community parks in Chongqing

By TAN YINGZI and DENG RUI in Chongqing

Every afternoon, Li Qingfang and Zhou Zukang take their grandson to play at the nearby free community park, which was opened to the public in January last year.

The Sports and Cultural Park of Dashuijing Community in Chongqing's Jiangbei district used to be a large hillside covered with garbage and overgrown weeds lying between residential areas and the main road.

"In the past, this hill was big trouble for us," said Li, who has lived in the community for seven years. "The hill was so dirty, with lots of trash, and we had to make a long detour to reach the bus stop."

Now the wasteland has become a favorite place for residents like Li who live in the low-income, relocation housing projects nearby.

"We finally have a good place to relax and exercise," she said.

It is estimated that about 11,000 families in the surrounding 10 communities can enjoy the park.

It is no longer necessary for people to go around the hill to reach the bus stop. Now people can get there simply by walking through the park, which is accessible through several gates.

At the foot of the hill, people can play basketball and badminton. A winding walking trail leads to the recreational areas on the top, where they can find fitness equipment



Children play in a community park in Chongqing's Liangjiang New Area on July 22. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

92 community parks

will have been built by the end of this year in Chongqing, serving over 2 million people.

and a children's playground.

There are also a 24-hour self-service community library and a book cafe in the park.

A mountainous city, Chongqing has a large amount of unusable, idle land, which forms "bald spots" on

the urban landscape.

In 2018, in order to improve the city's image and people's living environment, Chongqing rolled out a plan to erase those "bald spots" in three years, including 309 pieces of wasteland in the

downtown area. Instead of regular afforestation, such as planting trees or grass, the Chongqing Municipal Commission of Planning and Natural Resources adopted an innovative approach to turn the wastelands into community parks.

The Sports and Cultural Park of Dashuijing Community was one of the first projects to be completed.

"We took into consideration the geographical location, site conditions and the needs of the surrounding residents and introduced the concept of 'mountain sports', so this park can fully meet their need for sports and recreation," said Zhang Yu from the municipal planning and natural resources commission.

The parks also combine elements of local culture and district traditions.

"Those parks are the common areas for people to communicate, to learn, to relax and to exercise," Zhang said. "These projects can not only improve land utilization, but also enhance the quality of our public space."

The sports and cultural park project has become an example of efforts to redevelop inefficient land by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

By the end of this year, Chongqing will have built 92 sports and cultural community parks serving over 2 million people.

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Upgrades making municipality's Liangjiang New Area 'smarter'

By TAN YINGZI and DENG RUI in Chongqing

In 1988, Huang Zhonglu got a job as a welder for Chang'an Auto, the Chinese carmaker that had employed his father and grandfather.

To prevent being burned by flying sparks, welders must wear thick clothes that cover the arms and ankles, even in the hottest weather. Collars and cuffs must be tightly closed, and goggles, protective masks and airtight headgear must be worn.

"Despite the protective measures, I still got several burn scars on my legs and arms from welding," Huang said.

But the company began developing "smart" factories in recent years, and the technology has greatly improved working conditions.

In 2016, Chang'an installed more than 400 robots on the welding production line at its new smart factory in Chongqing's Liangjiang New Area. The robots not only weld but can perform automated tasks that once needed to be done by a person, from laser examinations to the movement of parts along the assembly line.

Huang no longer works on the production line. He is now a robot welding technician, supervising the work and adjusting the machines.

His story is an example of the

Liangjiang smart city plan to upgrade traditional manufacturing through big data and smart technology.

A smart city is defined as an urban area that uses advanced information technology to promote sustainable development. As the gateway to Southwest China and a major industrial base, Chongqing — located on the upper Yangtze River — has played important roles in the country's development, including as a national defense manufacturing area in the 1960s.

Now, it has established one of the world's largest IT industrial clusters and has become one of China's biggest auto manufacturing bases.

In 2010, the Liangjiang New Area became the third national development zone to be established after the Shanghai Pudong and Tianjin Binhai new areas. Since then, it has explored new approaches for inland reform and opening-up.

President Xi Jinping said in a congratulatory letter to the 2019 Smart China Expo that China attaches great importance to the development of smart technology and digitalization, and encourages forward-looking, in-depth integration of the digital economy and industries.

The annual expo has been hosted in Liangjiang since 2018 to showcase new products, technologies, business formats and modes of

smart technology through conferences, exhibitions, summits and competitions.

Last year's expo attracted more than 1,800 participants and 843 companies from 28 countries and regions. Participants included 13 Nobel Prize laureates, four Turing Award winners, a number of Fortune 500 business leaders and tech giants including Intel, Tencent, Baidu, Alibaba and Xiaomi.

A pioneer in smart city development, the new area established its digital economy industrial park by 2017. The park has attracted more than 4,500 companies worth a combined 146.7 billion yuan (\$20.96 billion) and its output value has grown by an average of 17.7 percent a year.

Liangjiang International Cloud Computing Industrial Park is one of the largest data center clusters in western China.

A traditional manufacturer, Chang'an Auto, which boasts a 158-year history, is also upping its game in many areas, including self-driving technology. It will invest more than 20 billion yuan to develop smart cars over the next 10 years. By 2025 all car functions will be able to be controlled by voice and vehicles using the latest autopilot systems will be mass produced, the company said.

In addition to smart manufacturing, Liangjiang has introduced



A staff member demonstrates a 5G bicycle racing game at a high-tech park featuring 5G technology in Liangjiang New Area in Chongqing on July 22. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

information technology to people's

daily lives in 42 smart communities.

At Longhu Yunding community, residents can enter after having their faces scanned by a facial recognition device, phones can connect to Bluetooth in public areas to play music, and a smart security system safeguards homes while the owners are away.

A mobile phone application developed by community management is very popular with residents.

"You can do almost everything through the app — shopping,

reserving community services, paying fees and chatting with neighbors," said Wu Lin, who moved to the community in January. "It's so useful, we cannot live without it."

The new area is planning to expand its smart community project to every home and build a smart society by integrating data and services related to healthcare, education, transportation, business, public security and social services.

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