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Cover photo. Photograph of dunes in the hyperarid (50 mm/yr) Taklimakan, a desert in the Tarim Basin of Central Asia. The sands are derived from the surrounding Tianshan, Kunlun and Pamir mountains. Finer sediments are transported east by winds and probably contribute to the Chinese Loess Plateau. The trees are *Populus euphratica* (Euphrates Poplar) and occupy abandoned river channels. (See article by Lü and Sun, p. 181–189 of this issue). Photographer: Jimin Sun.