

TOP NEWS

Oversight: Problematic institutions rectify issues

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"If they are found to have violated laws and regulations, the teachers at the training institutions will be seriously punished according to law, no matter who they are," Lyu said.

Sixteen foreigners — seven teachers from the Xuzhou branch of EF Education First and nine students from nearby schools — were among 19 people detained in Xuzhou this month in an anti-narcotics crackdown, according to the Xuzhou public security bureau.

EF issued a statement saying it absolutely forbids employees to possess or use narcotics or controlled substances, and the contracts of the teachers involved would be terminated if they were proved to be involved in illegal drug use.

The news soon made headlines, and netizens voiced worries about the qualifications of foreign teachers.

Chu Zhaohui, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Education Sciences, was critical of the situation surrounding foreigners applying for English teaching positions at training institutions.

"Often, just submitting a resume is enough, and they often do not require background checks, references or proof of qualifications," Chu said.

Parents and students are more forgiving about the lack of teaching credentials for foreign teachers as they think they have the ability to teach fluently in their mother tongue, he added.

The ministry responded to the issue at a news conference, and five other departments published a guideline to regulate online after-school training institutions, as many brick-and-mortar training institutions are quickly expanding their business online to evade government oversight.

It is the first guideline issued by the ministry targeting online after-school training institutions.

According to the guideline, China will carry out a comprehensive inspection on all online after-school training institutions and keep a record of the institutions, their training content and teacher credentials by the end of this year as part of its oversight of the rapidly expanding industry.

The country has carried out inspections on brick-and-mortar after-school training institutions since early 2018 in a bid to cut the excessive workload on primary and middle school students. The ministry said 269,911 after-school institutions, or 98.9 percent of the 272,842 establishments that were found to be problematic, had completed rectifications by Dec 30.

Teachers at online after-school training institutions should obtain teaching credentials, and training institutions should not hire teachers from public schools. All online tutoring courses should be finished before 9 pm, with each course lasting no longer than 40 minutes, and courses for first- and second-grade students should not require homework, the guideline said.

They should not charge fees for more than three months or 60 classes ahead of training, according to the guideline.

Yu Shengquan, executive director of Beijing Normal University's Advanced Innovation Center for Future Education, said the guideline is the first step to regulate the rapidly growing online training institutions.

Some online institutions are often engaged in exam-oriented training that has increased workloads for students, Yu said.

Due to the lack of government oversight, teacher competence at training institutions cannot be guaranteed and some institutions charge large amounts of advanced course fees that cannot be easily refunded when disputes between parents and institutions arise, he added.

"We should make use of technologies including big data and artificial intelligence in the regulation of online training institutions, establish technical standards for online education and set up independent, transparent and reliable evaluation systems for the institutions," Yu said.

Dance of the pandas



Performers in panda costumes help close the World University Summer Games 2019 during a ceremony at San Paolo Stadium on Sunday in Naples, Italy. Chengdu, famous for pandas and capital of Sichuan province, will host the next games in 2021. ZHENG HUANSONG / XINHUA

Lam says HK has no room for violence

In wake of a violent protest late Sunday in the northern New Territories, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-nger strongly condemned radical protesters on Monday, saying that the city will not tolerate any unlawful or violent acts.

Lam, head of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, spoke the day after a peaceful demonstration in Sha Tin against a now-suspended extradition law amendments turned into violent and bloody clashes between police and protesters in a shopping mall in the densely populated area. Twenty-eight people including over 10 police officers were injured. One officer lost part of his finger, which was later reattached.

Lam, meeting with the media after visiting injured police officers in a hospital, said radical protesters, whom she referred to as "rioters," recklessly attacked officers and damaged the rule of law in Hong Kong.

The rule of law is the cornerstone of Hong Kong's prosperity and should be respected by all people of Hong Kong, Lam said.

"I strongly condemn those who resorted to violence and attacked the police to express their objections. Hong Kong will not tolerate any unlawful or violent acts."

Lam praised police professionalism and reaffirmed her support for the force. The Hong Kong leader said her administration will continue to support police in enforcing the laws and in conducting a thorough investigation.

She also called on the public to express their views in a lawful manner and support the police in safeguarding the city's rule of law.

Lam said the Hong Kong Police Force will investigate and the Department of Justice will prosecute those responsible.

Police arrested 47 people for such charges as unlawful assembly, assaulting police officers, obstructing officers and possession of offensive weapons.

Also on Monday, Secretary for Security John Lee Ka-chiu made the "strongest condemnation" against protesters' violent acts, and thanked the police force for performing their duties and safeguarding the city's law and order during a difficult time.

Those violent acts could lead to serious punishment, he said. Possession of offensive weapons during a protest or assembly can lead to up to two years in jail, while deliberately attacking others — including splashing corrosive liquid or toxic powder on police officers — can result in life

imprisonment, he added.

Thirty-nine pro-establishment legislators in Hong Kong strongly deplored the illegal acts of radical protesters.

In a joint statement issued on Monday, the lawmakers said the violence was "well-organized and plotted". They said demonstrators had been incited to charge police cordons in a provocative manner, resulting in casualties and property damage.

The lawmakers severely condemned the "extremely irresponsible" conduct of the protesters. "The police force is at the forefront in safeguarding the city's rule of law. No one should smear or slander the police and dent its morale," the statement said.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong said the violent acts had seriously disrupted public order and threatened the city's law and order as well as public safety.

The Sha Tin clashes crossed all boundaries of acceptable conduct in a civilized society, and challenged the spirit of the rule of law and the freedom of expression, said Jonathan Choi Koon-shum, chamber of commerce chairman.

CHINA DAILY

Canadian held in Yantai drug case

By ZHOU JIN

zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

The Foreign Ministry confirmed on Monday the detention of a Canadian citizen accused of involvement in a drug-related case in Yantai, a coastal city in Shandong province.

Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a daily news conference that a drug-related case involving foreign students is under investigation and one of the people involved in the case is a Canadian citizen.

Geng also said that the case has nothing to do with a recent drug-related case in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, where a police crackdown resulted in the arrest of 19 people, including 16 foreigners.

He said public security authorities had made consular notifications to relevant embassies in a

timely manner and will arrange consular visits.

China will safeguard the legitimate rights of the parties concerned in accordance with law, Geng added.

The new case came as tensions continue in Sino-Canadian relations, sparked last year by the detention of Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, in Vancouver at the request of the United States, which is seeking her extradition.

Agence France-Presse quoted a source familiar with the latest detention as saying that there was no indication that the case was related to the arrests of Canadians Michael Kovrig, an ex-diplomat, and businessman Michael Spavor, who have been arrested in China on spying charges.

Also on Monday, Geng said the Chinese government and its enter-

prises will not cooperate or have business contacts with US companies selling arms to Taiwan.

Geng reiterated that China will impose sanctions on those companies in order to safeguard national interests.

He said while details of sanctions will not be disclosed now, the Chinese people are always "true in words and resolute in deeds".

The planned sale seriously violates international law and basic norms of international relations, as well as the one-China principle and the stipulations of the three China-US joint communiqués, he said. It also harms China's sovereignty and national security, he added.

Last week, the US State Department said it had approved a planned sale of weapons worth \$2.2 billion to Taiwan, including M1A2 Abrams tanks and Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.

UN: Slower global growth hikes hunger

Despite China's gains in food security, 'more than 820 million people' did not have enough to eat worldwide in 2018

By WANG XIAODONG

wangxiaodong@chinadaily.com.cn

More people worldwide have been going hungry in the past several years due to a slowing global economy despite China's achievements in poverty alleviation, according to a report released by the United Nations on Monday.

China has made great progress in improving food security and reducing the prevalence of undernourishment by nearly half in just over a decade, according to a joint report by five UN agencies, including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme.

Between 2016 and last year, 8.5 percent of the population in China was undernourished, compared with 15.2 percent between 2004 and 2006, the report said.

Globally, however, the report said that after more than a decade of steady decline, the number of people going hungry has been increasing slowly since 2015. The prevalence of undernourishment globally has remained slightly below 11 percent over the past three years, suggesting more than 820 million people in the world are going hungry today.

"More than 820 million people did not have enough to eat in 2018, up from 811 million in the previous year, which is the third year of increase in a row. This underscores the immense challenge of achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030," said the annual report titled The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World.

Hunger has been on the rise in many countries where the economy slowed or contracted, including many African countries, and countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Western Asia, the report said.

In China, rapid economic development has led to greater poverty reduction and improvement in food security than in many other countries, the report showed. China's poverty rate decreased from 88 percent in 1981 to 0.7 percent in 2015, the report said.

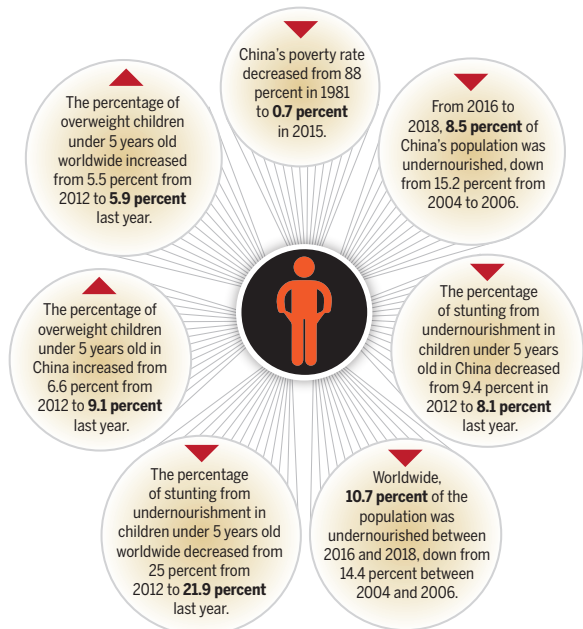
The poverty rate in India, which also has had significant economic growth in recent years, stood at 13.4 percent in 2015, and the stunting of growth in children under 5 years old was 38.4 percent in 2015 despite decreasing, according to the report.

"China has made great progress over the past few decades in improving food security, ... and one of the important reasons for the progress is the great importance China has attached to rural and agricultural development and innovation in agricultural technologies," the World Food Programme China Representative Qu Sixi said.

"China's experience in hunger reduction is very valuable to other developing countries, and the WFP is willing to bring China's experience to those countries in need to help them achieve zero hunger," it said.

The report also noted that the incidence of overweight and obese people has been rising in most countries, affecting children and adults, requiring intensified efforts such as promoting healthy diets and more physical activity. The percentage of overweight children under age 5 worldwide rose from 5.5 percent in 2012 to 5.9 percent last year. China saw a bigger increase — from 6.6 percent to 9.1 percent.

"Our actions to tackle these troubling trends will have to be bolder, not only in scale but also in terms of multisectoral collaboration," heads of the UN agencies said in their joint foreword to the report.



Source: United Nations agencies

CHINA DAILY

Peak: Climbers to benefit from project

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at the summit for more than an hour since they had to set up equipment and collect data.

He said staying at the summit for extended periods is not advisable, and most mountaineers prefer to descend as soon as possible.

Many climbers suffer from lack of oxygen, or hypoxia, if they stay on the summit too long.

Gautam said the team also had to work at night so they would not be disturbed by other climbers. This

posed an additional problem since it was colder at night.

"The whole mission was fraught with challenges. Fortunately we managed them all," he said.

Mahar Lagmay, a professor at the University of the Philippines' National Institute of Geological Sciences, said that the 2015 earthquake would definitely have changed Qomolangma's elevation because the tumbler forced the underlying tectonic plates to collide.

Qomolangma is in the Himalayan range, which was formed millions of

years ago after the Indo-Australian plate collided with the Eurasian plate. The collision pushed Earth's crust up and formed mountains. These tectonic plates continue to move, and geologists estimate that Qomolangma is growing by a few centimeters each year.

However, that conventional knowledge was challenged after the 2015 earthquake.

In April 2015, four days after the deadly earthquake in Nepal, data from Europe's Sentinel-1A satellite showed that a broad swath of

ground near Kathmandu, the Nepali capital, had been lifted vertically by about a meter, according to a report by online news site Live Science.

However, UNAVCO, a geoscience research consortium based in Colorado in the United States, interpreted these images and estimated that Qomolangma's height had actually dropped by about 2.5 centimeters because Earth's crust relaxed after the earthquake, releasing pent-up strain.

Kul Bahadur Gurung, general secretary of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, said the association lobbied for the Nepali government to remeasure Qomolangma to clear any confusion.

Gurung said mountaineers need to be updated on the latest developments in Qomolangma's measurements, since this will affect the logistics of mountain climbing.

Nepal started its project to measure the peak in December 2017 when the Department of Survey conducted a workshop on the methods to be used in remeasuring Qomolangma.

In 2018, a technical team from the department went to the eastern Nepali district of Solukhumbu to do precise leveling work, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Contact the writers at prime@chinadailyapac.com