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Military urged to hone its combat skills

President issues instruction on sticking to principles, remaining on high alert

By ZHAO LEI
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President Xi Jinping ordered the military on Monday to further strengthen its training and exercises this year so as to hone its operational capability and combat preparedness.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, signed the commission's first order for 2021, which listed priorities in the training of the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force.

The order instructed the armed forces to stick to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as their guiding principle and uphold Xi Jinping Thought on Strengthening the Military as well as military strategies in the new era.

It said the Party will enhance its guidance over the military's training, urging the armed forces to focus on improving their combat readiness and continuing to reform their training system.

The military must train their officers and soldiers in realistic combat scenarios, place more attention on research about war and military operations, increase the intensity of exercises, conduct more emergency-response drills, and remain on high alert to ensure the troops are always ready for any possible military engagement, the order said.

Training and exercises for joint operations must be priorities, it said, adding that the military must intensify interservice training to foster integrated joint combat capability.

Commanders are required to introduce more scientific and technological factors into training and boost their units' ability to use high-tech hardware and methods.

The order also stipulated that military authorities must conduct strict evaluation and supervision of training and also improve their management and planning.

All members of the armed forces must strengthen their fighting spirit and hone their skills and capabilities to fulfill the missions given them by the Party and the people and produce new achievements to celebrate the coming 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, according to the order.

The year 2021 is the fourth consecutive year that Xi has issued a training order to the military as the year's first directive from the Central Military Commission.

The first such order was issued in January 2018, when Xi oversaw and addressed a massive training and commencement ceremony at a shooting range in northern China.

Xi has repeatedly stressed the importance of combat readiness training and joint operations to the armed forces since he became commander in chief in late 2012.

Xi calls for closer partnership with Argentina

By CAO DESHENG
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President Xi Jinping and his Argentine counterpart, Alberto Fernandez, have vowed to jointly guide the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries to further develop bilateral ties while advancing the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

In a recent exchange of letters, the two presidents also pledged to strengthen teamwork in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, according to a statement released on Monday.

In his letter to Fernandez, Xi mentioned his phone conversations and multiple exchanges of letters with the Argentine president as well as the important consensus they reached on deepening bilateral relations and strengthening cooperation in areas such as battling COVID-19.

The pandemic is a severe test for the whole world, Xi said, adding that the two nations have stood together and helped each other in the joint fight against the disease, and their traditional friendship has been further strengthened in the process.

He said that China stands ready to strengthen cooperation with Argentina in the research, development and use of COVID-19 vaccines, and

will continue to provide as much support and assistance as possible to the South American country.

Fernandez highly commended the development of bilateral ties and China's achievements in epidemic control, and thanked China for its support for Argentina in the fight against the virus.

In the face of the pandemic, countries should be united, respect and support each other, and stay committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind, Fernandez said.

He said China meeting its poverty reduction target as scheduled as well as its remarkable achievements in science and technology

will benefit the Chinese people and the entire world.

Both Argentina and China uphold multilateralism, support dialogue among nations and remain committed to strengthening regional dialogue for harmonious development, Fernandez said.

Adding that the Belt and Road Initiative is conducive to strengthening countries' connectivity and enhancing mutual understanding, the Argentine president said his country is willing to strengthen cooperation with China in the field of vaccine development and promote the Argentina-China comprehensive strategic partnership for greater progress.

Helping hand



A police officer hands daily necessities to a resident in a community put under lockdown in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Monday. The city has reported a total of 27 locally transmitted, confirmed COVID-19 cases from mid-December to Monday, according to health authorities.

WANG JINGWEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE See story, page 3

Vaccine firms go full steam ahead to meet demand

By WANG XIAOYU
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Production lines for a newly approved COVID-19 vaccine developed by State-owned Sinopharm Group were running at full throttle on Monday as more than a dozen vaccine manufacturers in China gear up to ensure a smooth and sufficient rollout of doses.

At Sinopharm's manufacturing site in Beijing's suburbs, filled vials of the vaccine — which had passed automated checks filtering out faulty doses —

were packaged, labeled and coded, ready to make their way to inoculation sites across the country.

"This production line is able to complete the packaging of more than 300 vials per minute. ... and each dose is assigned an identification code that allows us to examine if the entire production, distribution and immunization procedures are up to standard," said Yang Xiaoming, chairman of China National Biotech Group, a subsidiary of Sinopharm, during a live-streaming session on Monday.

See Vaccines, page 3

YANGTZE WITNESSES A GREEN RENAISSANCE

Cradle of civilization undergoes major cleanup

By XING YI in Shanghai,
TAN YINGZI in Chongqing,
and CANG WEI in Nanjing

The Yangtze River has fed people living along its banks with a wealth of natural resources for thousands of years. It is regarded as one of the cradles of Chinese civilization.

Hailed as a major economic engine, the Yangtze River Economic Belt, which comprises nine provinces and two municipalities, accounts

for more than 40 percent of the country's population and GDP.

However, economic development has resulted in conflict between progress and conservation. Environmental issues such as overfishing, water pollution and soil erosion have affected the river and residents.

In recent years, however, the Yangtze has begun to witness a green renaissance.

The turning point came at a symposium in Chongqing on Jan 5, 2016, when President Xi Jinping said a key strategy for the country was to boost green growth in the economic belt.

Xi said the river's status meant that the priority for progress made along the waterway must be given to ecological development to respect natural, economic and social rules.

He said restoring the environment

along the Yangtze should be a major long-term priority, adding that protecting the river requires coordination and avoiding over-exploitation.

In November 2020, another symposium chaired by Xi on comprehensively advancing development of the economic belt was held in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. This gathering highlighted high-quality development, green growth, opening-up and self-innovation.

See Waterway, page 2

FAST radio telescope to open for global research

By ZHANG ZHIHAO
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China will open the world's largest single-dish radio telescope to the international scientific community, according to the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

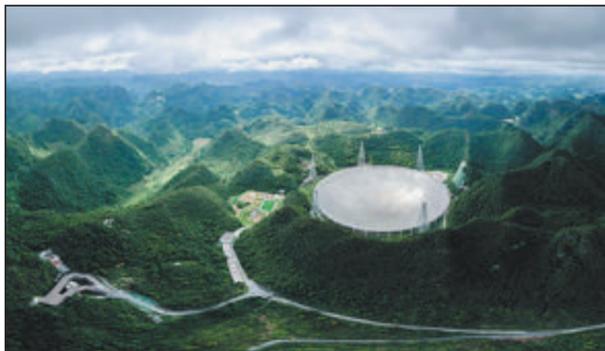
Starting on April 1, scientists from around the world can submit their research proposals online to use the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope in Pingtang county, Guizhou province, and observation periods will be distributed across various research projects starting from Aug 1.

There is currently no restriction on the proposals, but the telescope is prioritized to study topics

including the interstellar medium composed of neutral atomic hydrogen, the polarization of spiral galaxies, and fast radio bursts — transient radio pulses caused by some high-energy astrophysical process not fully understood.

About 10 percent of the telescope's observation time will be allocated to foreign scientists during the first year of making the instrument available to the world, said Jiang Peng, FAST's chief engineer and deputy director of the telescope's operation and development center.

The telescope was launched in September 2016 and became fully operational on Jan 11, 2020 after several upgrades. Since its inception, China has envisioned the tel-



The Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope nestles in the lush landscape of Pingtang county, Guizhou province, in August 2019. OU DONGQU / XINHUA

scope as becoming a platform for international scientific cooperation to deepen humanity's knowledge of the universe, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Since the collapse of the 305-meter-diameter Arecibo telescope in Puerto Rico in December, FAST

has become the world's sole mega-sized single-dish radio telescope.

Kejia Lee, a professor of astronomy at Peking University, said FAST is the world's most sensitive single-dish telescope, which will be crucial for making new discoveries. "It is truly a one-of-a-kind instrument," he said.



Lee and his team used FAST to observe a repeating fast radio burst called FRB 180301 and discovered that the radiation of the source has "very diverse polarization angle swings", meaning that the radiation is affected by the magnetosphere.

This supports the hypothesis that fast radio bursts originate from complex processes from the magnetosphere of a special type of neutron star — super-dense remnants of massive stars —

known as magnetars, which are able to emit powerful magnetic fields, according to a study by Lee that was published in the journal Nature in October. However, there might also be other origins as well, scientists noted.

The origin of fast radio bursts has puzzled scientists for over a decade as they can blink and disappear within thousandths of a second, making them extremely elusive and difficult to study. Therefore, the discovery made by FAST and an international team of scientists was hailed as one of the 10 remarkable discoveries of 2020 by the journals Nature and Science.

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