

CHINA

Greening plan to advance in scientific way

Guidelines urge practical approach, with focus on water use, local plants

By YANG WANLI
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China will make crucial adjustments to its greening plan in the next five years, aiming to achieve high-quality greening nationwide and guide related work more scientifically, authorities revealed on Monday.

The State Council recently released guidelines on scientific greening that said protection and natural restoration will play major roles in the country's greening work between 2021 and 2025.

The guidelines emphasized the importance of making greening plans that give consideration to local climatic conditions and water resources, encouraging arid areas to make low-water-cost afforestation plans to prevent the wasting of water.

They also recommended that local governments choose more local plants, rather than imported species, for greening, as local plants are better acclimated and don't need to be transported as far, which saves money.

The guidelines also urged local governments to strengthen the management of greening projects and make resolute efforts to protect local wild plants, endangered wild species and the habitats of wild animals.

The importance of making greening projects practical was also noted, such as encouraging the use of low-cost greening plants that consume less water.

"We should respect the laws of nature and make a stand against 'good-looking' plants, such as transplanting big trees from the suburbs to the city center," they said, adding that the problem of willow and poplar catkins, which can cause allergies, should be further addressed.

"We will aim to conduct greening more scientifically, which plays a crucial role in improving the country's environment and the state's biosecurity," said Liu Dongsheng, deputy director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

"It will also contribute to our plan of building a beautiful China and

also meeting climate objectives."

Through decades of persistent efforts, China's forest coverage now stands at 23.04 percent of its land area, according to the administration, while its grassland comprehensive vegetation coverage hit 56 percent last year.

The country currently has 220 million hectares of forest with a total forest stock volume of 17.56 billion cubic meters. Total forest stock volume is often used for forest resource management and planning and as a predictor of carbon-related variables.

The per capita green area in China's urban areas averages 14.8 square meters and 441 cities have joined in a campaign to build national forest cities through multiple greening methods.

The country initiated its first pilot program to construct grassland nature parks last year, with 39 pilots launched covering a total of 147,000 hectares of grassland in 11 provinces and autonomous regions.

"In past years we've found some green projects that were poorly designed and went against the laws of nature," Liu said. "Some cities even destroyed their local environment in the name of greening projects. Scientific greening came in time and is very meaningful for guiding future work."

Under the guidelines, greening plans will be listed in the country's new territorial spatial plan, which is expected to be released soon. In the future, the processing of applications for greening land will be stricter, said Zhou Yuanbo, head of the Ministry of Natural Resources' ecological restoration department.

Data on all the country's greening projects will be collected by natural resources departments at all levels, according to the guidelines. Surveillance will be conducted annually to make sure all the projects are conducted properly.

"The strictest regulation will be implemented to prevent farmland from being illegally used for greening projects," Zhou said. "Neither lakes nor oceans will be allowed to be filled in the name of greening, and the illegal exploitation of mountains is also prohibited."



Family reunited

A son (center) reunites with his parents in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Sunday. He was abducted 26 years ago in Guiyang, Guizhou province, when he was 7 years old. More than 4,700 children have been recovered since 2016, when police launched a nationwide system named "Reunion" to search for missing and abducted children.

LI HAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Surge seen in public interest environment lawsuits

By CAO YIN
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Chinese courts witnessed rapid growth of public interest litigation related to environmental and ecological protection last year after the country's team combating pollution became more diverse and powerful.

In 2020, courts nationwide concluded 103 public interest lawsuits on the environment initiated by social organizations, up 77.6 percent year-on-year, and 3,454 brought by prosecutors, up 82.3 percent, according to statistics released by the Supreme People's Court, China's top court, on Friday.

"Prosecuting authorities have become a major force in initiating such cases, playing a bigger supervisory role on environmental and ecological protection," said Lyu Zhongmei, deputy director of the social and legal committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee.

According to the Civil Procedure Law and the Administrative Procedure Law, which were both revised in 2017, procuratorates can initiate public interest lawsuits against

poorly performing government departments and business enterprises.

Such lawsuits should mainly target the areas of environmental and resource protection, food and drug safety, the preservation of State assets and transfer of land rights, and guaranteeing the legacy and reputation of heroes and martyrs, the laws said.

Since then, public interest litigation on the environment has been rolled out nationwide by prosecutors. Last year, divisions specializing in handling such lawsuits were established in 27 provincial people's procuratorates, Lyu said.

In case details released by the top court on Friday, 15 people were punished for illegal sand mining in Dongting Lake in Hunan province after they were sued by local prosecutors in a case that was heard by the Yiyang Intermediate People's Court in July 2019.

They were found to have no mining permission certificates and their behavior was identified as having damaged water quality, the lake bed's structure and aquatic species, the intermediate court said,

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demanding they pay for the repair of the environmental damage and apologize publicly on national-level media platforms.

The maximum payment for environmental restoration demanded of the violators was over 8.73 million yuan (\$1.36 million), it added.

Lyu said prosecutors using such litigation to fight polluters needs to be encouraged and promoted, suggesting the country explore the establishment of special procedures for such lawsuits.

On Friday, courts at all levels were

told to strengthen protection in major areas of concern, including along the Yangtze and Yellow rivers and on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and to stringently punish polluters in those regions.

Yang Linping, vice-president of the top court, said judicial guidelines on biodiversity protection will be issued at the appropriate time and called for courts nationwide to intensify efforts to fight crimes that harm endangered or rare wild animals and plants.

"We'll maintain the ecological balance, serve low-carbon development and beautify rural areas by improving the handling of related cases," she added.

According to statistics from the top court, Chinese courts resolved 253,000 environment-related disputes last year. They included 38,000 criminal cases, up 2.9 percent year-on-year.

To deal with environmental cases more professionally and efficiently, the nation had built 1,993 judicial institutions specializing in handling such lawsuits — including divisions, circuit courts and panels — by last year, it added.

Centers to channel medical resources to hinterland

By WANG XIAOYU
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China will channel more advanced medical resources from developed regions to relatively backward areas this year by establishing more regional medical centers in central and western provinces, an official said on Monday.

The first batch of 10 regional medical centers in a trial program in eight provincial-level regions was announced in November 2019. They are designed to focus on six major disease types including cancer and neurological and cardiovascular diseases, and each of them is closely linked to a major hospital in Beijing, Shanghai or other first-tier cities that provides guidance on construction and operation, the National Development and Reform Commission said.

"The core role of regional medical centers is to expand provision of high-quality healthcare resources and promote their balanced distribution," Sun Zhicheng, a senior

administrator at the commission's department of social development, told a news conference organized by the State Council Information Office. "The first batch has all been put into use, yielding marked outcomes."

The regional center in Xiamen, Fujian province, which is paired with a top hospital in Shanghai, has brought 30 new technologies to local residents that were unavailable before. Very difficult surgeries now account for more than 65 percent of the total performed in the local hospital, Sun said.

"Another significant purpose of regional medical centers is to save people the trouble of traveling far from home to see a doctor and to enable them to access national-level healthcare services near home," he said. "Monitoring data shows that all 10 projects have played a role in retaining local and neighboring residents."

In Zhengzhou, Henan province, a hospital that has partnered up with Beijing Children's Hospital has been welcomed by local people. The num-



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ber of Henan residents who visited outpatient clinics at the hospital in Beijing dropped by 63.1 percent last year, and the number of their hospitalizations went down by 51.3 percent, Sun said.

"The trial program will be expanded to include 12 other provinces coping with tight supplies of advanced medical services in central and west-

ern parts of the country," he said. "By the end of next year, construction of regional medical centers will cover all provincial-level regions."

The expansion of regional medical centers is part of China's efforts to boost the high-quality development of public hospitals, according to a guideline released by the State Council on Friday.

The guideline said that the country aims to refocus public hospitals on quality rather than scale in the next five years. More efforts will also be devoted to pushing forward basic and clinical research, improving the evaluation mechanism for healthcare workers, and deepening reforms of service pricing and insurance payment models.

Sun added that major projects in the public health sector will be launched in the next few years, including setting up a prevention and control base for major contagious diseases, a national-level emergency aid facility and beefing up regional disease prevention and control centers.

Model subject



An artist from the National Art Museum of China works on shaping a bust of veteran Shi Xinyun in Beijing on Monday. The museum has launched a sculpture workshop to portray people such as model workers, soldiers and teachers to promote their qualities and spirit. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Data: China's trade surplus soared dramatically from Jan to May

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Stimulus measures in developed economies also brought sustained demand for products manufactured in China, said Lu Ting, chief China economist at Japanese bank Nomura.

From January to May, China's exports soared 30.1 percent year-on-year to 8.04 trillion yuan, while its imports jumped 25.9 percent to 6.72 trillion yuan. Its trade surplus surged 56.2 percent year-on-year to

1.32 trillion yuan, according to Customs data.

The country's total foreign trade expanded 26.9 percent year-on-year to 3.14 trillion yuan in May, while it imported 1.42 trillion yuan of goods from global markets, up 39.5 percent.

The monthly import growth in May underscores that domestic demand has increased amid the construction and investment revival, even though the surging price of raw materials and a low base effect also count, said Mei Xinyu, a

researcher at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Despite growing trade volumes, Chinese companies face challenges in the foreign trade sector, including rising prices for materials, exchange rate fluctuations and difficult marine logistics, said Chen Zhongda, deputy head of Yinzhou Customs, a branch of Ningbo Customs in East China's Zhejiang province.

To ensure production, Chinese manufacturers have started to build

their stocks, driving the rapid growth of imports of products including energy resources, said Gao Ruidong, chief macroeconomist at Everbright Securities.

Strong ties

China's trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations reached 2.19 trillion yuan in the first five months of the year, an increase of 29.2 percent year-on-year, while trade with the European Union rose 28.7 percent to 2.06 trillion yuan.

The value of goods trade between China and the United States grew 41.3 percent year-on-year to 1.82 trillion yuan.

Liang Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said: "We found that the structure of China's foreign trade is optimizing. For example, the contribution of processing trade is gradually increasing. China's high-tech companies from the private sector, State-owned enterprises and foreign-funded companies have all performed well to date this year."

With many countries setting

goals to further cut carbon emissions, Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer Nio Inc announced last month that it will start exporting vehicles to Norway in September as the first step of its globalization campaign.

William Li, Nio's CEO, said the company will start to take orders in July. The vehicles will be made at its plant in Hefei, Anhui province.

Li said the company's passenger vehicles will be available in five European countries by 2022. The company has also been discussing the possibility of entering the US market, he added.