

CHINA

Illegal gains successfully seized from fugitives

By YANG ZEKUN

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Procuratorial organs nationwide have successfully confiscated illegal gains in 30 cases since 2018 involving corruption and bribery suspects who fled the country or died, said a senior prosecutor from the Supreme People's Procuratorate on Tuesday.

The illegal gains confiscated under the Criminal Procedure Law totaled 556 million yuan (\$79.6 million), said Wang Shouan, head of the third procuratorial division of the SPP that focuses on duty crimes, adding that the confiscation of illegal gains plays an important role in the recovery of illicit overseas assets and punishing fugitive criminals.

Han Xiaofeng, deputy head of the third procuratorial division of the SPP, said confiscating illegal gains is conducive to cutting off the financial sources of criminals who escaped overseas and encourages them to return to China as soon as possible.

For corruption, bribery and other major duty crime cases, if suspects fled and cannot present themselves a year after being wanted, and if there is evidence to prove they committed the crimes, the people's procuratorate can apply to the people's court for the confiscation of their illegal gains, he said.

The procuratorate would also ask relevant countries for judicial cooperation involving the confiscation orders.

In one case, Li Huabo — former head of the economic construction division of Poyang county's Finance Bureau in Shangrao, Jiangxi province — and other public servants defrauded the special capital construction fund of 94 million yuan from 2006 to 2010. He then fled to Singapore in January 2011.

Li was put under investigation in February 2011, and the Ministry of Public Security requested Interpol issue a red notice for Li. He was arrested the following month, and his assets that had been transferred to Singapore were frozen.

Due to his inability to appear a year after the red notice was issued, the Shangrao People's Procuratorate applied to confiscate Li's illegal gains in March 2013. Li took the initiative to write a letter to return to China and surrender himself in February 2015, and he was repatriated three months later. The remaining 26 million yuan in assets that Li and his wife had transferred to Singapore were returned to China.

China's procuratorial organs prosecuted 28,387 people for duty crimes from 2018 to 2019, according to Wang.

Wang said corruption, offering and taking bribes and embezzling public funds account for over 80 percent of the duty crimes handled by the procuratorate. The charges mainly focus on negligence, abusing power and bending the law for personal gain, he said.

More than 80 percent of duty crimes were committed by civil servants below the township level, mainly occurring in construction projects, land expropriation and relocation, funds allocated for benefiting the people, special subsidies and other fields with a large number of funds but weak supervision. The number of duty crimes from grassroots civil servants has increased significantly, he said.

The amount of money involved in some cases is particularly large, resulting in extremely bad social influence, and tarnishing the image of the Party and the government, Wang said. For instance, Zhao Zhengyong, former Party secretary of Shaanxi province, was recently put on trial for taking 717 million yuan in bribes.

Briefly

BEIJING China's lakes becoming clearer, study shows

More than 70 percent of monitored lakes in China witnessed increasing water transparency between 2000 and 2018, which means that lakes in the country became clearer, according to a new study. The research was based on big data from remote sensing and was jointly conducted by experts from Chi-

Survival story



Cui Zhiqiang, 65, waves goodbye to medical staff as he is discharged from Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Tuesday after recovering from a double lung transplant due to a severe novel coronavirus infection. Cui was diagnosed as a terminal COVID-19 case months ago but underwent transplant surgery in April. According to the hospital, he is the first of 10 patients in the world to be discharged after receiving double lung transplants due to the virus.

ZHANG CHANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Urban renovations to aid economic growth

220,000 aging residential areas to be fixed up by end of 2025, guideline says

By HOU LIQIANG

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The central authorities' ambitious plan to complete government-subsidized renovations in all the country's aging urban residential communities by the end of 2025 is expected to play a key role in stabilizing investment growth, officials said.

According to a guideline unveiled by the State Council on Monday, the country will endeavor to renovate all aging urban residential communities, primarily those built before 2000, by the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25).

There are about 220,000 such communities across the country, which are home to 39 million households, Vice-Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development Huang Yan said at a news conference organized by the State Council Information Office on Tuesday.

Since late 2012, government-subsidized housing projects, including shantytown renovations and public rental housing, have played an important role in improving people's livelihood and stabilizing economic growth, said Liu Shihu, an official with the National Development and Reform Commission.

Guided by funds from central and local governments, the total investment in these projects has surpassed 10 trillion yuan (\$1.4 trillion), he added.

"The renovation of the aging residential communities will also play an effective role in driving investment," he said.

Aside from direct investment in the renovations, the project is expected to boost the development of both upstream and downstream industries. With the improvement of the living environment in their communities, residents will be more proactive in increasing their spending on interior decoration and home appliances, he continued.

Per the guideline, the renovation will be subsidized by the central government, and residents and companies involved will also contribute their share.

Following the principle that whoever benefits from the renovation should invest, residents can pay themselves, use the public housing maintenance fund or transfer public income in their residential communities to investors to contribute. Market forces will also be encouraged to participate in renovation projects, it said.

On Friday, China Development Bank and China Construction

Bank signed cooperation agreements on renovating aging residential communities with five provincial regions, including Jilin and Shandong provinces, and nine cities in other regions.

The two banks will provide 436 billion yuan in loans to support market forces in their participation of the renovations in these regions and cities, according to the ministry.

According to the guideline, 39,000 of the communities will be renovated this year, benefiting about 7 million households.

Liu, the NDRC official, said 54.3 billion yuan has been dispatched from the central government's budget fund to local governments for this year's renovations.

The fund from the central government will prioritize infrastructure including roads, water supply and drainage facilities and services for the aged and children, he said.

In communities where conditions permit, elevators will be installed, according to the guideline.

In March last year, Premier Li Keqiang said in the Government Work Report that authorities would support the renovation of old urban residential communities across the country.

On June 19 of the same year, Li presided over an executive meeting of the State Council, China's Cabinet, that called for the work to be accelerated.

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Guizhou road projects a boon for villagers

By WANG QINGYUN

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Every day before 7 am, Yao Wenqian, a 33-year-old native of Bijie city, Guizhou province, leaves home with his pickup truck loaded with fruit and vegetables to peddle in local villages.

After selling out of his produce by about 6 pm, he then drives to wholesale markets in town to refill his stock. Yao said he makes 7,000 to 8,000 yuan (\$1,000 to \$1,143) a month from the trade.

Compared to the years he spent as a migrant in other provinces, the father of four said his current job is "much better" as he doesn't have to make a living far from his family.

According to Deng Fen, Yao's wife, he is one of the many locals who took advantage of improved road conditions and started peddling vegetables over the past two years. Their professions were made possible by a project Guizhou initiated in August 2017 to build more roads with hard surfaces inside villages to facilitate traffic.

The project, completed in June 2019, saw 78,700 kilometers of road constructed, benefiting 11.6 million villagers.

Guizhou has an area of about 176,000 square kilometers, most of it mountains and valleys that once posed a prominent challenge for locals, separating people even living in the same village.

As a result, the province has made great efforts to create a web of roads and connect settlements scattered in the hilly terrain.

According to Zhang Jie, head of the department overseeing construction and maintenance of highways in rural areas under Guizhou's highway bureau, the province completed work to extend tar or concrete roads to every town in 2012.

Further, Guizhou managed to

cover all its counties with expressways by 2015 and link all villages with tar or concrete roads by 2017, Zhang said.

The province then proceeded with the 2017 project so that as many villagers as possible could enjoy smooth roads at their doorsteps, which in turn encouraged more of them to start or expand their own businesses.

Yao and Deng remember the days when there were not enough roads to drive on in their hometown. Cars would get stuck on the bumpy and steep trails, which turned muddy and slippery when it rained, making it difficult to control the vehicles.

Now, Yao's vegetable truck travels more than 100 km a day, able to reach most local households, according to the couple.

For Zhang, road construction plays an indispensable role in poverty eradication by allowing villagers to make better use of the rich natural tourism resources of Guizhou and transport their agricultural produce to markets more quickly, thus furthering the development of tourism and farming industries.

In short, sound road infrastructure helps "turn resources into cash in the shortest time possible", Zhang said.

Guizhou's efforts to improve its road infrastructure continues. By the end of 2019, its expressway mileage exceeded 7,000 km. In a notice issued in July 2018, it set a goal of expanding it to more than 10,000 km by 2022.



Winding roads lead to a village in Bijie, Guizhou province. The roads were renovated in April. QU HONGLUN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Dribble drill

Students hone their basketball dribbling skills in Xuan'en county, Hubei province, on Monday. Many students selected sports as a way to do something meaningful during the summer holidays.

SONG WEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Nuclear scientists' group resignations under probe

By ZHANG ZHIHAO

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The State Council, China's Cabinet, has sent an investigative team with other government agencies to look into the recent resignation of over 90 nuclear security scientists at an institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the academy said on Tuesday.

The team consists of officials from the State Council's general office, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the CAS and other departments. It will head to Hefei, Anhui province, to thoroughly investigate the situation, the academy said.

The recent resignation of over 90 nuclear security scientists at the academy's Institute of Nuclear Energy Safety Technology has ignited public speculation on institutional bureaucracy, employee poaching and inadequate financial support for young scientific talent.

The institute recently told China Daily that the resignation was due to personal reasons and was completely voluntary. Most of them have gone to work at private firms that are investing in products

related to nuclear safety technologies, it said, adding that previous media reports have blown the issue out of proportion and that the findings of the investigation would be published in due time.

CAS said in a statement on Monday that it was aware of the group resignation, and a separate investigation team led by the academy's secretary general Wang Keqiang had arrived in Hefei on Monday. INEST is under the Hefei Institutes of Physical Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Given the strategic importance and sensitivity of the institute, the investigation quickly became the most searched item on Chinese search engine Baidu on Monday. On Tuesday, Sina Weibo, China's micro-blogging platform, recorded over 180 million reads for the hashtag on the topic.

INEST was established in September 2011 as a research facility dedicated to advanced nuclear energy and safety technology, according to its website. It also acts as an independent nuclear safety assessment agency with goals of promoting the safe and sustainable development of nuclear science and technology.

na, Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom. Researchers obtained a large number of satellite images from 2000 to 2018. Combined with field measurements, they developed a new algorithm to calculate the water transparency of China's lakes. The research analyzed monitoring results of 412 lakes, covering most lakes with a water area of more than 20 square kilometers in China, according to Duan Hongtao, a scientist from the

Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

CHONGQING City to bolster its nighttime economy

Chongqing municipality issued an action plan on Tuesday to bolster its nighttime economy and consumption over the next five years. The plan covers six aspects such as creat-

ing diversified sites where people can spend their evenings, developing nighttime consumption brands, promoting the innovation and upgrading of the nighttime economy and improving related supporting facilities. By 2025, Chongqing is expected to build a core zone and 10 high-quality demonstration areas for the nighttime economy across the city.

XINHUA