

## Several detained after child suffocates on school bus

Several people have been detained in connection with the death of a 3-year-old on a school bus in north China, police said Friday.

The accident happened Thursday in Tang'erli Township of Bazhou City, Hebei Province. According to police, the girl was left on the shuttle bus after it reached a local kindergarten on Thursday morning. Kindergarten staff did not find her on the bus until 3:30 p.m. She died after medical efforts failed.

The kindergarten was later found to be operating without a license. It has been closed, and police have detained several people, including the person in charge of the kindergarten, the driver and a teacher. Five local officials have been suspended from their posts and are under investigation.

The Hebei provincial department of education has issued an emergency circular, demanding private kindergartens to strengthen management over school buses.

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## Relics buried beneath blankets of cash



Coins and notes were thrown into a display at the Leifeng relic site by visitors seeking blessings. [Photo/China Daily]

Travelers' misunderstandings about throwing coins and notes onto historical relics for blessings has nearly ruined the 1,000-year-old Leifeng Pagoda in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, according to a local newspaper.

The administrative unit of the Leifeng Pagoda scenic spot has been under pressure to protect the historical and cultural site. Piles of coins and notes virtually buried the relic, Qianjiang Evening News reported.

The reporter wrote that during a half-hour visit, "nearly half of all travelers threw money for wishes—mainly middle-aged women, children and young couples".

The Leifeng Pagoda, located in the West Lake scenic area, was originally built in AD 977. It has fallen and been rebuilt several times. Most recently, it collapsed in 1924 but wasn't rebuilt until 78 years later, in 2002.

The repair project unearthed an underground shrine, and the pagoda was built above it. Relics are now fenced within glass walls.

But the 2-meter-high walls didn't prevent the relics from becoming the objects of visitors' enthusiasm for blessings. People continued throwing money, and coins and paper notes blanketed the relics.

"We clean the site twice a month, and more frequently in peak season, so that visitors can enjoy viewing the relics instead of a money hill," said an administrative staff member, who noted that it all adds to the workload at the site.

According to the administration, more than 20,000 yuan (US\$3,000) is collected every year at the site. The money is used for maintenance of the relics, the newspaper reported.

Zhong Xiangping, vice-president of the Hangzhou Historical and Cultural Association, was quoted as saying some Chinese folklore holds that people throwing coins in specific spots can receive blessings and peace. Believers fear missing any chance at a blessing, so they toss coins or notes just about anywhere after finding that some previous visitors had done the same thing.

Last month, an 80-year-old woman boarding an aircraft at Shanghai Pudong International Airport even threw some coins into the engine as a blessing for a safe flight. The flight was delayed for five hours while the engine was checked.

In Zhong's view, unlike the Trevi Fountain in Italy, Leifeng Pagoda is just a historic relic. "It has no function for blessings," Zhong said.

Throwing money also hinders relic protection efforts.

A staff member at the pagoda told the newspaper that notices posted on the glass wall tell people not to throw money.

“Patrolling staff members have also tried to dissuade people from doing that. People just ignored them. We hope the public will give us ideas to cut down on the problem.”

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## Drugs from overseas to get on fast track

China will continue to intensify international exchanges and cooperation in drug supervision to promote the domestic application of new medicines developed overseas to meet demand, China’s top drug regulator said on Thursday.

The drug authorities will also encourage the domestic pharmaceutical industry to improve its capacity and competitiveness to promote the international visibility of Chinese medical and pharmaceutical products, Wu Zhen, vice-minister of the China Food and Drug Administration, said at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Meeting on Drug Regulatory Collaboration in Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

On June 19, the administration announced it joined the International Council on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use, which focuses on guidelines for worldwide pharmaceutical development.

“Joining the council means the Chinese drug regulatory authorities, pharmaceutical industry and research and development institutes will gradually adopt internationally accepted standards and guidelines, actively participate in the formulation of international rules and promote quicker domestic application of new drugs developed in other countries,” Wu said.

China is the second-largest market for pharmaceutical products in the world. Annual revenues of the pharmaceutical industry in China exceed 2.5 trillion yuan (\$368.6 billion), and annual exports of pharmaceutical products exceed 13.5 billion yuan, Wu said.

“China has great pharmaceutical production capacity, so it can provide support to the health of the people in BRICS nations and other countries,” he said.

BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The administration has adopted a series of reform measures on the review and approval of new drugs to accelerate approvals and meet the needs of domestic patients in recent years, Wu said.

The authorities will encourage medical institutions to give priority to new

drugs that have proved effective and are reasonably priced, and support the inclusion of such new drugs in the list of drugs whose cost can be reimbursed by basic medical insurance programs, according to a draft regulation released by the administration in May.

Certain types of drugs and medical equipment already in use in other countries, such as those for curing rare diseases, can also gain priority approval for sale in the domestic market, the draft said.

As of the end of June, the administration had established routine work relations with drug regulatory authorities in 66 countries, and signed 42 agreements for bilateral cooperation with 28 countries and regions, said Yuan Lin, chief of the administration's international cooperation department.

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## Top health authority urges stronger maternal safety measures



Ma Xiaowei, deputy head of the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) [File photo/Baidu]

The state health authority Thursday urged the strengthening of maternal safety to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

At present, and for the foreseeable future, the number of older women becoming pregnant and higher risk pregnancies will continue to increase,

according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC).

According to the commission, 18.46 million babies were born in China last year, an increase of 11.5 percent from 2015. More than 7.4 million babies were born from January to May, up 7.8 percent year on year.

In response to China's rapidly aging population, the country allowed married couples to have two children from 2016, ending the one-child policy implemented decades ago to rein in a surging population.

The commission said 60 percent of women eligible to have a second child are 35 years old or above. The number of older women becoming pregnant will exceed three million each year from 2017 to 2020.

This will result in an increased risk of complications in pregnancy and pose more challenges to obstetric and paediatric services.

"It is an arduous task to guarantee maternal and infant safety," said Ma Xiaowei, deputy head of the NHFPC.

The commission called for stronger measures to guarantee maternal and infant safety, urged comprehensive screening and assessment of gestation period risks, and enhanced management and treatment of higher risk pregnancies.

The next step for the commission is to release a notice to improve maternal safety and launch an action plan.

"We will do whatever we can to guarantee the birth of healthy babies," said Ma.

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## [Heavy rain kills 2 in Guangxi, strands 9,000 in Sichuan](#)

Two people are dead after rain-triggered floods left rivers swollen, inundating roads, houses and farms in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

One of the casualties drowned while the other was killed by a collapsing house. More than 3,300 people have been relocated, according to the regional government's civil affairs bureau.

The floods have affected 120,000 people and resulted in direct economic losses of 89.8 million yuan (13.2 million U.S. dollars).

In southwest China's Sichuan Province, thunderstorms caused the province's main airport, in the city of Chengdu, to be closed for an hour. About 50 outbound flights were canceled or delayed, while 40 inbound flights detoured

to land at other airports.

The airport said more than 9,000 passengers have been stranded and the number of affected flights is likely to rise throughout the night as the thunderstorm continues.