

Beijing acts on population growth



In 2016, Beijing's population was 21.7 million, and the number of permanent residents in the six urban districts fell by 3 percent year on year.
[Photo/Xinhua]

Beijing has made progress in cooperation with its neighbors and will act to restrict population growth.

Beijing officials met with the press on Friday to review progress made over the last three years in the integration of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei Province.

Liu Bozheng, deputy director of the office overseeing the integration, said Beijing will meet its annual targets of restricting population growth and moving non-capital functions away from the city.

This year, Beijing will continue to relocate wholesale markets, factories, universities and hospitals to suburban areas and Hebei, he said.

In 2016, Beijing's population was 21.7 million, and the number of permanent residents in the six urban districts fell by 3 percent year on year, said Liu.

"The changes are unprecedented. Before, the mode of growth was to congregate resources, but now we must delegate and move out resources to achieve more planned and sustainable development," he said.

From 2013 to 2016, Beijing closed 1,341 general manufacturing and polluting enterprises. This year, 372 manufacturers have already been relocated, 74.4 percent of the annual target.

Manufacturing and agriculture dropped by 72.75 percent and 26.42 percent, while, industries like finance, culture and technology grew as much as 22 percent.

“Industrial restructuring is the key. It is like peeling away the outer layers of a cabbage, and cooking its core, which is of better quality,” said Liu, with Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform.

This year, a total of 255 construction projects will get underway in Tongzhou, the subsidiary administrative center.

“We invited some of the world’s top designers to build Tongzhou, which covers 155 square kilometers,” said Liu.

By the end of this year, several government buildings will be finished and staff be ready to move.

Liu said Beijing will support Xiongan New Area. “Whatever Xiongan needs, Beijing will provide its support. The two wings of Tongzhou and Xiongan will develop in tandem,” said Liu.

China cracks down on vulgar content online

A number of online accounts have been shut down this week for posting vulgar content, according to the Beijing cyberspace administration.

The administration on Wednesday urged major online platforms to enforce the shutdowns to contribute to a healthier online environment. The platforms with closed accounts include the Twitter-like social media service Weibo, and WeChat, an instant messaging app.

Most of the banned accounts posted entertainment industry gossip, while some were owned by famous paparazzi. The administration accused them of vulgarity and invading the privacy of celebrities among other issues.

The shutdowns were enabled by the country’s new cyber security law that was passed in November 2016 at the bimonthly session of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee after a third reading, and went into effect on June 1.

The administration released another statement Thursday, calling on the public to report vulgar content on the Internet to provide a safer online environment for teenagers, with summer vacation approaching.

According to the statement, as of Thursday, a total of 11,798 pieces of vulgar content have been removed by the center for illegal and harmful online

content in Beijing in 2017.

The shutdown has aroused mixed reactions from the Internet users, with some applauding the action.

"I cannot stand the constant invasion of celebrities' privacy, and some of the gossip is completely made up," said "Weierxiaojie" on Weibo. "It's so good to know that it has finally been taken down."

Others were concerned about the potential concealment of misconduct in the entertainment industry. "Now it is 'safer' for celebrities to misbehave," said Weibo user "jilongfei".

Users also pointed out many more accounts posting vulgar content have not yet been shut down, asking for further action to clean up the online environment.

[China explores ways to purge commercialization of Buddhism](#)

China has explored numerous means, including information disclosure and lawmaking, to tackle the increasing commercialization in places of worship across the country.

New forms of infringement of religious rights and interests have sprung up, making it more urgent to protect and promote these rights, said Jiang Jianyong, deputy head of the State Administration for Religious Affairs.

Jiang made the remarks at a meeting of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) held in the city of Changsha in central China's Hunan Province this week, with delegates from 14 provinces and municipalities in attendance.

According to some delegates, companies and individuals in some regions are increasingly exploiting Buddhism for commercial interests under the guise of Buddhist cultural parks or theme parks, and even eliciting donations to support false applications for world heritage status.

Some religious figures have illegally accumulated wealth using Buddhism as a cover to rent out temples for commercial use.

A prominent monk in the Hunan city of Hengyang arbitrarily approved a 5-million-yuan (730,000 U.S. dollars) procurement of 18 pine trees from Japan, said Huai Hui, secretary-general of the provincial Buddhist association

Another monk in the city of Loudi, also in Hunan, raised over 8 million yuan in the name of temple construction, which was actually for personal use, he added.

"Some ancient temples have been encompassed by so-called 'cultural parks', with non-religious buildings constructed around them for commercial use," said Sheng Hui, deputy director of the BAC.

A number of "fake Buddhists" have been carrying out illegal religious activities, extorting money and luring followers, harming the reputation of the religion.

A living-Buddha authentication database was launched last year to confirm the identity of living Buddhas. With roots traceable to the 13th century AD, the reincarnation of Buddhas is a unique inheritance system within Tibetan Buddhism. The BAC has issued certificates to living Buddhas since 2010.

"To protect religious rights and uphold dignity, Buddhist associations across China have been asked to tighten their management of personnel and strictly prohibit any commercial activities," Sheng said.

State Council reshuffles officials

The State Council announced the appointment and removal of several senior officials Friday.

Zheng Fuzhi and Liu Dawei were named Assistant Ministers of Education.

Tang Dengjie was appointed vice minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, director of the China National Space Administration, chairman of the China Atomic Energy Authority, and the director of State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

Shi Jun was named vice minister of the Ministry of Public Security, with Chen Zhimin removed from the post.

Cai Qi was appointed president of the Organizing Committee for the Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, with Guo Jinlong removed from the post.

Chen Jining was appointed as the executive president of the committee.

Bao Xinhe will become president of the University of Science and Technology of China, replacing Wan Lijun.

Tian Hongqi is no longer vice president of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and was appointed president of Central South University, replacing Zhang Yaoxue.

Guo Wenqi was removed as deputy head of the China Food and Drug Administration.

Complete crocodile fossil unearthed

Fossils of a complete crocodile and bones belonging to at least six different dinosaurs from the Cretaceous Period, 145 to 66 million years ago, have been excavated in northeast China's Jilin Province.

After a year of preparation, paleontologists from Chinese Academy of Sciences and a local fossil center began the excavation in late May, following the discovery of dinosaur fossils at Longshan Mountain in the city of Yanji in May 2016.

A 1.5-meter-long crocodile fossil was unearthed on June 1. The fossil was well preserved from head to tail, with clear skin, which is quite rare among Cretaceous strata findings in China.

"Crocodiles and dinosaurs lived together, which means there are probably more fossils buried underneath," said Jin Changzhu, a research fellow at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology.

In addition, archeologists also discovered a large amount of teeth, arm, pelvis and rib bones that belonged to at least six different dinosaurs including camosaurs, iguanodons and ceratopsians, most of which were in good condition. Cretaceous turtle fossils and petrified wood were also unearthed.

According to Sun Ge, curator of Paleontological Museum of Liaoning, Yanji has been identified as the easternmost site of Cretaceous dinosaur fossils in China, and the recent findings have enriched the understanding and research of its fossil resources.