

Boost set for privacy on internet

A fundamental new cybersecurity law, which will take effect on Thursday and is intended to safeguard sovereignty in cyberspace, national security and the rights of citizens, bans online service providers from inappropriately collecting and selling users' personal information.

China has more than 730 million internet users—more than the population of the European Union—and nearly 700 million mobile phone users, according to government statistics.

President Xi Jinping called in April for better use of the internet to benefit the people and the country. Industry insiders interpreted this as indicating an integrated development of the internet and the economy.

According to a State Council five-year informatization plan, China will expand e-commerce transactions to more than 38 trillion yuan (\$5.5 trillion) by 2020, up by 16 trillion yuan over 2015.

However, internet-related scams and data theft began to abound as internet use made economic headway in China.

The new law, which was passed by the country's top legislature in November, makes it clear that no one can use the internet to conduct fraud or sell prohibited goods.

Those who violate the provisions and infringe on personal information will face hefty fines, it stipulates.

To protect individuals' privacy, internet service providers are forbidden by the new law from collecting user information that is irrelevant to the services provided, and they should handle the information they do collect in line with laws and agreements.

Moreover, users will have the right to ask service providers to delete their personal information if such information is abused, according to the law.

Additionally, the new law says, cybersecurity management staff members must also protect information that is obtained and are banned from leaking or selling the information, including privacy and commercial secrets, it said.

Shen Yi, deputy director of the Cyberspace Governance Study Center at Fudan University, said that the people's sense of benefit should be the evaluation criteria for cybersecurity and informatization, rather than simply technical indexes.

Last year, China conducted several internet-clearing campaigns that included checks on websites, search engines and mobile apps, previous reports said. Some live-broadcast websites were shut down after they were found to be hosting or streaming illegal content, such as pornography.

In March, China issued its first international strategy for cyberspace cooperation to improve such cooperation worldwide.

Several other regulations will also take effect on Thursday. A regulation on online news requires government permission before releasing news on instant messaging apps or social websites. Additionally, civilian drones weighing more than 250 grams must be registered under real names to improve civil aviation safety, and the use of highly toxic pesticides on edible agricultural products is banned.

Over 4,000 officials held accountable for lax environmental efforts

China has held 4,018 officials accountable for poor environmental protection efforts during the latest round of inspections, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said Tuesday.

The central government just wrapped up its month-long third round of inspections to review local government work on environmental protection, the ministry said.

The inspections covered the seven provincial regions of Tianjin, Shanxi, Liaoning, Anhui, Fujian, Hunan and Guizhou.

Inspectors looked into more than 23,000 cases and imposed fines totaling 336 million yuan (49 million U.S. dollars), while 355 people were detained, according to the ministry.

China is fighting pollution and environmental degradation after decades of growth triggered problems such as smog and contaminated soil.

Chinese submersible Jiaolong dives to 6,699 meters in Mariana Trench

China's manned submersible Jiaolong descended to 6,699 meters in the Mariana Trench on Tuesday, recording images of two swimming snailfishes.

Tuesday's mission was Jiaolong's fourth dive in the trench this year.

The dive began at 7:03 a.m. local time and reached the planned depth at 10:21

a.m. where scientists worked for three hours and ten minutes.

Jiaolong collected samples of rock, sediment, deep-sea life and sea water in this dive, and recorded images of two swimming snailfishes.

“Research on snailfish, a typical deep-sea species, deepens our understanding on the evolution of deep-sea fishes and their environmental adaptation mechanism,” said scientist Peng Xiaotong.

Jiaolong’s first dive of this year in the world’s deepest known trench took place on May 23, with Xinhua News Agency journalist Liu Shiping descending inside the submersible along with scientists to a depth of 4,811 meters. The second and third dives on May 25 and 27 reached depths of 6,300 meters and 6,544 meters respectively.

Heavy rain to sweep south, southwest China

Heavy rain will sweep parts of southwest and south China in the coming three days, the National Meteorological Center (NMC) said Tuesday.

Rainstorms will hit parts of Chongqing Municipality and the provinces of Guizhou, Hunan, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong from Wednesday to Friday, with thunderstorms or hailstones in some areas, according to the NMC.

It also forecast downpours in the southeastern part of Tibet Autonomous Region from Tuesday to Wednesday under the influence of cyclone Mora.

The NMC warned of risks of urban waterlogging, mountain torrents and landslides in those regions.

From Saturday to next Wednesday, heavy rain will also be seen in the eastern part of northwest China as well as regions along the lower reaches of the Yellow River, the Huaihe River and the Yangtze River, according to the NMC.

Archaeologists start digging in Xiongan New Area

Cultural relics protection and archaeological work have been launched in the Xiongan New Area, a new economic zone near Beijing, the provincial government

of Hebei said.

The archaeological team consists of several groups from the provincial, city and county levels and archaeologists from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the National Museum, the Palace Museum and the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage.

The three counties of Xiongxian, Rongcheng and Anxin in the area have a long history and are rich in cultural relics. The third national archaeological survey showed a total of 189 immovable cultural relics in the area.

According to the work plan, the archaeologists will complete 200 square kilometers of field investigation by July and produce a report by August for review and deliberation. A final report will be finished by the end of March, 2018.