

China shuts down 18 illegal live streaming apps

A total of 18 live streaming apps have been closed for disseminating illegal content, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) announced Sunday.

Some app operators were punished for the lack of a mechanism to censor content, and some anchors used the platforms to spread illegal content, dressed in military or police uniforms or were scantily dressed and acted flirtatiously, according to CAC.

Some anchors publicized their WeChat or QQ accounts during live streaming to induce fans to engage in prostitution.

"The online behavior of the anchors violated relevant Internet information service or live streaming laws and regulations, offended socialist core values, and brought negative impact to the healthy growth of the young and teenagers," CAC said.

The administration vowed to step up inspection and law enforcement.

New online library platform gaining in popularity



A file photo of a library [Photo: Baidu]

“Book Borrower,” an online library platform, has become popular with about 2,000 books being borrowed every month only one year after it was officially opened, reported Beijing Youth Daily on Sunday.

Only service fees paid, deposits to be returned

Users can choose the books they like on “Book Borrower” after paying a service fee and a deposit. Deposit will be returned to users after they return the books. Service fees include postage and packaging fees. Users are responsible for sending the books to stipulated places after they are finished reading.

The platform was developed by Chen Dongzan in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, in late 2015. In March 2016, the platform went online on Wechat. On the first day of its operation, Chen gave away bookmarks with QR codes of the shared library outside bookstores and libraries in Harbin, and got his first customer that evening.

After a month, the platform had 38 users, most of whom were locals in Harbin. Currently, the users are mostly office employees and university students with female readers accounting for 64%.

No reading period limit to make it convenient for users

From Chen Dongzan’s perspective, “Book Borrower” is a platform that is in between buying books and borrowing books from public libraries.

“The cost of buying books is relatively high and placing them at home takes up much space, while borrowing books from public libraries is not time efficient,” said Chen.

Chen says avoiding the shortcomings of buying books and borrowing books from public libraries has become the goal the online library is striving for.

Not proper time to talk about making profits

“Free of charge is why many previous book borrowing websites failed,” said Chen Dongzan.

Different from previous platforms, all the funds related to book borrowing on “Book Borrower” are offered by users. Chen said that there is little pressure for capital for the time being. However, it’s still too early to talk about making profits.

Chen says that the key to a lasting operation is to keep books in a mobile situation where no books will be on bookshelves for a long time.

Chen says he’s grateful that many longtime users were borrowing seven to eight books at a time by the end of 2016, which is a much higher number than before. Users who borrow twenty books at a time are also on the increase.

Chen said the platform is planning to set up storage in user intensive areas to make delivery quicker and cheaper in the future. "To make every family have a bookshelf with 300 books" is the vision and ultimate goal for "Book Borrower."

China braces for more rail travelers during holiday



Passengers crowd the Nanchang Railway Station in Nanchang city, Jiangxi province, on Saturday, April 1, 2017. [Photo: Chinanews.com]

China will see a surge of rail travelers during the Tomb-sweeping Day holiday starting Sunday.

China Railway, the national railway operator, expects the number of trips in the country to hit 45.2 million over the four-day travel rush, a 9.5 percent increase year on year.

The travel peak is expected on Sunday when train trips could reach 12.8 million, up 10.1 percent year on year.

The company said it would add more trains to meet demand.

Tomb-sweeping Day, also known as Qingming Festival, is the most important occasion for Chinese to honor their ancestors.

6 dead, 3 missing in north China house blast



CCTV News.

A house explosion on Saturday night killed six people, with another three missing, in north China's Shanxi Province, local authorities said Sunday.

Seven people were pulled out of debris after the blast happened around 10:30 p.m. Saturday at the Nanhuan West Road in Tiantan Town in the city of Linfen, said an official with the city's publicity department.

Six of them died, and rescuers are searching for the other three missing.

Another six people at the blast spot are slightly injured.

Cause of the case is being investigated.

Tibetan communities embrace new funeral customs

Rinchen, 40, works at a crematorium in a Tibetan community in northwest China.

For Tibetans, sky and water burials have traditionally been the most common funerary customs. Cremation has only been used in the modern age.

The Chabcha town funeral management house, where Rinchen and his wife work, was founded in 1982. It was one of the first crematoriums in Qinghai province, home to over 1.37 million ethnic Tibetan people.

"It took a very long process of consulting high monks before establishing the crematorium. The site for the cremation house was chosen by the tenth Panchen Lama," said Duraga, deputy director of the civil affairs bureau of Gonghe County, which administers Chabcha Town. Chabcha is the seat of the government of Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai.

"In less developed Tibetan communities, such as herding areas, people still favor sky burials. But in the city, more Tibetan people now choose cremation," said Duraga.

There are four cremation houses at the crematorium.

"In the 1980s, only a few dozen people were cremated here each year," said Rinchen, whose father-in-law was the first person to run the crematorium.

Last year, 352 people were cremated there, and most of them were Tibetans from Qinghai, Gansu and northwest Sichuan.

Families usually put the ashes in bags made of white cloth and scatter them at sacred mountains and lakes.

"People scatter the ashes at sky burial sites at Qinghai Lake and the Yellow River, which flows through the county," said Rinchen.

"Before each cremation, families of the deceased invite monks from nearby monasteries, such as Khyamru Monastery, to give sermons and preside over the ceremonies," he said.

Rinchen and his wife Tsering make sure the lamps are always lit. Their family now lives at the crematorium.

"When I started living here, I often felt scared. Now I light lamps every day, touching the prayer wheels. It is a job to keep me busy," said Tsering.

"I use my hands to help the deceased finish their last step in the world. I feel it is the natural thing to do," she said.

About a few hundred miles to the southwest, Chindo County, in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is an area where sky burials are more common. Most of the people in the county are herders.

Tashi, who performs sky burials, often has to get up early to prepare for the rituals.

In sky burials, bodies are fed to vultures and other predatory birds. Buddhists believe in a cycle of rebirth and advocate kindness and charity. The spirit of the dead is believed to leave the body the moment a person dies and the dead should be fed to hungry vultures as a last token of charity.

Tashi is a monk at Lab Monastery. He started performing sky burial rituals in 2011. The Serkhang sky burial site, located about 3,800 meters above sea level at the foot of a snow-capped mountain, receives over 30 bodies every year.

"A burial starts at four in the morning and lasts about seven hours. I make sure every detail is right for the ritual," he said.

However, sometimes sky burial rituals do not go so smoothly. Environmental drives to kill rats on grasslands have led to a decline in the number of vultures and eagles.

"Some people may still honor tradition, but others may want the modern methods of burial. The people will choose on their own," said Wang Fayu, director of social affairs office of the Qinghai Provincial Civil Affairs Department.

A crematorium has been set up in every Tibetan autonomous county in Qinghai to provide diverse choices for the people, said Wang.

"The living buddhas said in the end, humans return their bodies to nature. No matter which method chosen, it is to show respect to the deceased and give solace to the living," said Rinchen.