

China's population to reach 1.45 bln around 2030

China's population is expected to peak at about 1.45 billion around 2030, according to the national population development plan for 2016-2030 released by the State Council, China's cabinet, Wednesday.

The country will enter a key transitional period between 2021 and 2030 in its population development as it will witness a decrease in the number of people of working age, more elderly people, still active population migration and diversified family patterns, according to the plan, which was signed and approved by Premier Li Keqiang.

"China's basic national condition of a large population will not fundamentally change. The population pressure on economic and social development will not fundamentally change. The tensions between population and resources and environment will not fundamentally change," the plan said.

The country will adhere to the family planning policy as a basic state policy, and fully implement the two-child policy to promote balanced population development, according to the plan.

The government will improve the policy adjustment mechanism for child birth, allocate public service resources rationally, improve development and support systems for families to achieve a suitable fertility rate, it said.

Efforts will also be made to improve the skill set of new workers, make full use of workers' potentials, develop the human resources of the senior population, and make good use of international talent.

Measures will be taken to promote urbanization, improve policies on population movement, address the problem of an aging population, promote women's development, and enhance protection of minors and the disabled.

As of 2015, China's population was 1.375 billion.

China allowed all married couples to have two children in 2016. This follows an earlier easing of the policy in 2013 that allowed couples to have a second child if either parent was an only child.

The latest change ended the one-child policy that was implemented in the late 1970s to rein in the surging population.

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Xi urges continued efforts to build strong military

President Xi Jinping has called for building a strong military by further enhancing the military's political awareness, pushing forward reform, and governing it according to law.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, underscored the importance of improving combat readiness through troop training.

The president made the comments while visiting the 65th Army Group stationed in northern China's Hebei Province on Monday.

Chinese leaders extend festival wishes to predecessors

President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders have visited their predecessors with seasons greetings ahead of the Spring Festival.

Former leaders including Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao got personal visits either from the current leaders or from their representatives, according to a statement from the General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Wednesday.

The visitors wished their hosts a happy Spring Festival, good health and long lives, the statement said.

The leaders of the older generation fully endorsed the outstanding achievements the country has made since the 18th CPC National Congress under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with comrade Xi Jinping as the core, and expressed hope that Chinese people would unite to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Spring Festival, or the Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on Jan. 28 this year.

Shanghai railway police seize over 50 ivory products

Shanghai railway police arrested two men illegally carrying more than 50 ivory products, bought in Zimbabwe, as they were about to board a train.

A thin man, who appeared to have a disproportionately large stomach, raised the suspicions of security staff at Shanghai Railway station Tuesday night.

Inspectors found a long cloth bag, wrapped around his midriff, contained 10 ivory products and a further three strings of ivory products in his backpack.

Meanwhile, police captured the man's companion, who attempted to flee, finding more than 30 ivory products in his suitcase.

The pair, from Taihe County, eastern China's Anhui Province, flew to Shanghai from Zimbabwe where they worked for the last year, and planned to return to their hometown by train.

The thin man, surnamed Li, said he had made the cloth bag to hide the ivory products on his body, hoping to avoid police checks.

Zoologists with the local wildlife conservation association said that the products were made from African elephant ivory.