

Safflower plants come to the desert

By **LUO WANGSHU** in Beijing and **MAO WEIHUA** in Urumqi

As a bulwark against desertification, safflower plants are being cultivated on arid land in the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, according to a regiment of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps.

Workers from the regiment began sowing safflower seeds on May 1, and will complete the task soon. About 53 hectares will be planted in the Gurbantunggut Desert in northern Xinjiang.

Wang Hongjiang, a technician in the regiment, said desert conditions are actually ideal for safflower cultivation.

"The soil and water conditions there are all good for the crop," he said, adding that workers draw water from a nearby reservoir for irrigation.

Wang has been cultivating the thistlelike annual plant in Xinjiang for about six years, mostly in Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture.

"Xinjiang is known for safflower, but it is mostly grown on dedicated agricultural land or along hillsides. This is the

first attempt in China to cultivate safflower in the desert," he said.

Despite Wang's confidence, it's still too early to know whether the plants can survive in the Gurbantunggut. Results will be known in less than three months: Workers will begin harvesting at the end of July.

The flowers and seeds from safflower plants are used in traditional Chinese medicinal products, in vegetable oil and other applications.

Xinjiang is China's biggest safflower production base, mostly in Ili, Tacheng and Jim-sar.

According to Wang, the investment per hectare is 9,000 to 10,500 yuan (\$1,418 to \$1,650).

The regiment decided to plant in the Gurbantunggut late last year in light of suitable soil conditions, weather and a relative lack of pollution, Wang said. More will be planted next year if the crop is successful, he said.

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Artifact facts



A visitor learns about the protection of artifacts at the 14th China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Thursday. The five-day event features exhibitors from 42 countries and regions. XUAN HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Broader vision urged for HK

By **LUIS LIU** in Hong Kong luisliu@chinadailyhk.com

A high-ranking official called on Hong Kong to push forward the development of the "one country, two systems" policy in new ways.

Wang Zhimin, director of the central government's liaison office in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, made the remarks during a meeting to study the spirit of President Xi Jinping's speech commemorating the 200th birthday of German philosopher Karl Marx, a founder of communist ideology.

In his speech, Xi highlighted the openness and epoch-defining character of Marxism — a guiding theory of the Communist Party of China.

Wang urged liaison officials to push forward the development of the "one country, two systems" policy with a more innovative perspective, a broader vision and more open mind.

This is in line with Xi's pledge made during his visit to Hong Kong in July that the country must do well in building up the socialist mainland but also the capitalist Hong Kong, Wang said.

He also said that Marxism is people-centered and practical, and added that liaison officials must step up their efforts to communicate the care and support Xi and the central government offer to the people of Hong Kong.

Moreover, as Marxist theory is scientific and truthful, liaison officials must stand firm politically, Wang said.

Achieving the goal also requires full implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, which is the latest development of Marxism in China, Wang said.

New era thought has enriched the idea of one country with two systems and has offered guidelines to further develop the principle, Wang said.

The office will work hard to ease Hong Kong's integration into the nation's overall development by pushing forward the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area plan and supporting Hong Kong's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative, Wang said.

Chengdu woman nurses 4-legged quake survivors

Guided by empathetic heart, she quit business to open dog shelter

By **HUANG ZHILING** and **CUI JIA** in Chengdu

When Chen Yunlian and a guest opened the door to her apartment in the suburbs of Chengdu, Sichuan province, a dozen dogs barked, wagged their tails and licked their shoes and trousers.

"It is their way of being friendly," said Chen, who seems much younger than her 70 years.

She gently took out a dog lying below a chair to apply medicine to its eyes.

"She is Jing Ling, which means smart in Sichuan dialect. She lost her eyesight in the Wenchuan earthquake when a building fell on her," Chen said.

Jing Ling has lived at Chen's canine center with some 5,000 other abandoned dogs on a hill in the suburbs of Chengdu. As her right eye became inflamed recently, Chen took her home for intensive care.

"She is more than 10 years old. One year for a dog is about 7 years for a human," Chen said.

After the magnitude-8.0 earthquake in 2008, Chen rescued more than 200 dogs from the rubble. Most of them died or were adopted by dog lovers. Jing Ling is

one of around 20 quake survivors.

Chen was an employee at a State-owned thermos plant in Chengdu. In the early 1980s, she quit her job and became wealthy by selling plastic bowls.

Her life took a U-turn in 1996. When she was on her way to sign a business contract, she found a sick, stray dog along the side of the road gazing sadly at her. Feeling empathy, she sought treatment for the dog and took him home.

"Since then, I have just adopted dogs and no longer do business," Chen said.

After the Wenchuan earthquake, she and volunteers rushed to the quake zone because she knew dog owners could not care for their animals, and police would kill strays because of concerns about disease.

"Many dogs hid in the rubble for fear of being killed. It was difficult and dangerous to look for them. Very often the rubble collapsed after we took away a dog," Chen said.

Her love for dogs deepened as she heard stories of their loyalty in the quake zone.

Minutes before the earthquake, a dog in Dujiangyan

“Many dogs hid in the rubble for fear of being killed. It was difficult and dangerous to look for them. Very often the rubble collapsed after we took away a dog.”



Chen Yunlian, who rescued more than 200 dogs from the rubble of the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008

begin biting the trousers of her owner, trying to lead the way out of the building. The family did not understand her strange behavior but complied.

"The dog was the last to leave the building. Falling building materials blinded her. The owner cried and asked me to take care of her because dogs were forbidden in the tent shelters in the quake zone," Chen said.

Chen cared for the dog for two years until the owner got a new house to welcome the savior home.

In another case, in Beichuan county, a dog was seen digging in the rubble after a building buried his owner. But he only managed to pull some clothes out of the rub-

ble. He sat on the clothes and refused to leave.

Chen adopted the dog, which died four years later.

Chen has a 7.3-hectare facility to care for the thousands of dogs she has adopted.

The cost is heavy and Chen must raise the funds herself.

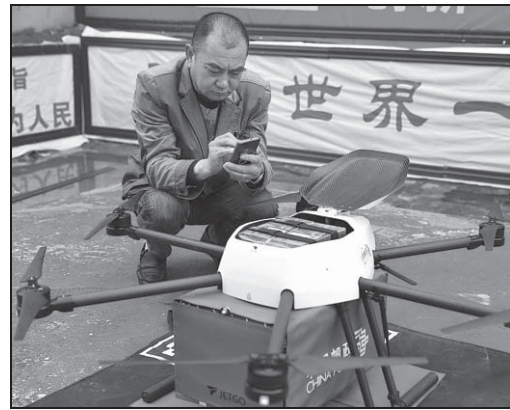
"In preparing a meal, the base requires 500 kilograms of rice," she said.

Despite her difficult financial straits, she offers the rescued dogs chicken breast and giblets in addition to rice and dog food.

"They are old and need special care," she said.

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Special delivery



Postal worker Wang Hua sets a route for an aerial drone in Qingzhen, Guizhou province, on Thursday. The local postal bureau has used the device, which can carry about 4 kilograms, to deliver parcels to five remote communities, covering routes in just 10 minutes that once took 2 hours. LIU XU / XINHUA

Guizhou residents protect cedar forest

For 18 generations, people in Denglu village in Taijiang county, Guizhou province, have kept their ancestor's oath to guard a primeval forest of Chinese cedar trees.

The large, slow-growing evergreens were the precious timber used to build imperial palaces, such as Beijing's Forbidden City, and to furnish imperial houses. However, overcutting has driven the plant species to near extinction in China.

Denglu, secluded in a cedar forest about 11 kilometers from a county-level town, has 140 households, many in wooden houses supported by sturdy trunks.

Zhang Shengyi, Party chief of the village, said the wood is a symbol of longevity, and residents had maintained a tradition of cedar worship. There are more than 20,000 cedar trees in the forest and nearly every big tree blossoms with red prayer ribbons.

During the village's 600-year history, every generation of Zhang clan has pledged to guard the rare trees, swearing an oath and drinking wine with

drops of their own blood in a traditional ritual.

There is a major economic interest, as traders covet the precious timber. But the residents say they would rather live in poverty than make a fortune from the wood.

Zhang said a businessman once offered him 2.8 million yuan (\$439,000) for a single tree, in addition to a brokerage fee of 500,000 yuan and property in the county. But he refused.

In 2015, the county government joined residents' efforts to protect the trees after some illegal logging occurred. The government helped identify individual trees that were more than a century old and entrusted the residents to manage the forest.

As part of poverty relief efforts, a paved road to the village was built, 4G mobile services were introduced and a primary school was built. The pristine woods and the legendary village are drawing more artists and tourists, and residents hope that the wood will bring them some fortune in a sustainable way.

XINHUA



Women parade through a cedar forest in Denglu village in Taijiang county, Guizhou province during last year's Spring Festival.

LIU KAIFU / XINHUA

Tibet solar energy park to benefit 2,000 poor families

By **DAQIONG** in Lhasa and **ZHANG YI** in Beijing

Construction of China's largest photovoltaic industrial park has begun in Samdrubze district of Shigatse, Tibet autonomous region, with the project expected to house 2,000 families from poverty-stricken areas, local anti-poverty authorities said on Thursday.

The park, with an investment of 28 billion yuan (\$4.4 billion), will be centered on a 2,000-megawatt solar power plant, with an annual output of 4 billion kWh, and an output value of over 4 billion yuan, said Galsang Nyoidrub, director of the Samdrubze Development and Reform Commission.

He said developing the solar power sector in Shigatse makes sense on many fronts. It is even nicknamed "the city of sunlight" with average annual sunlight of 3,300 hours.

"We plan to officially start building the solar segment at the end of this year. If every-

thing goes well, the plant will be completed in 2025. Five percent of the annual profit will be used for local poverty alleviation," Galsang Nyoidrub said.

He said the electricity will be sold to South Asian countries, including Nepal and India, as well as to East China after transmission lines go up in the future.

"Located close to an expressway which is under construction, and near the city's airport, the industrial park will also develop ecological agriculture and service industry jobs to generate more employment opportunities," he added.

"The power plant alone will not generate enough job vacancies, so we will also develop agriculture suitable to local conditions. Greenhouses will be built under photovoltaic panels to save space."

Two agricultural companies have already started operations in the park, investing 150 million yuan, Galsang Nyoidrub said.

“The government has patiently introduced policies to us many times, and after countless family discussions, we finally made up our minds.”

Lhagchog, Shigatse resident who moved from a remote village to the solar park

Opposite the photovoltaic industrial park, a "photovoltaic town" is under construction, with an investment of 4 billion yuan. The community will accommodate 2,000 households from poverty-stricken areas, representing the largest relocation project in the region.

"We have already finished 75 percent of the project. Some 1,008 people from 234 households have already moved in, and most are satisfied with their living conditions and employment arrangements," Galsang Nyoidrub said. "One task is to persuade those poor households to leave their hometowns and

help them find proper jobs." Lhagchog, 28, one of the beneficiaries of the project, moved from Garzang village to the community in downtown Shigatse last December.

"My family has always lived in Garzang, a remote village," she said, "We have relied on seven acres of land to make a living, but it has low yields due to water shortages and the high altitude."

"Since 2016, the government began encouraging us to move, but we were hesitant at first because of fear of an unknown future. The government has patiently introduced policies to us many times, and after countless family discus-

sions, we finally made up our minds," she said.

Lhagchog said she opened a small restaurant which brought in more revenue than expected, and the local government also helped her father find a job as a custodian, with a monthly salary of 4,500 yuan.

Penpa, the 54-year-old father, said, "We moved from a shabby mud building to a big and bright house. Our life changed totally from farmers to city residents."

Lhagchog said: "With convenient transportation, it is easy to take my 2-year-old daughter to the hospital. Now I am improving my cooking skills to run my restaurant better. I want to raise my daughter to be a grateful, educated person who is useful to society."

"The family is satisfied with our life now, and we believe a brighter future is coming. We are lucky to live in the new era," she said.

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