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Zhao Li, a Beijing criminal lawyer

Govts will open further to business

By HU YONGQI
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Facing trade frictions, local governments will continue opening up to make the business environment fair and equal to all — lowering the market access threshold and costs for enterprises — senior officials said on Wednesday.

High-ranking officials from Beijing, Shanghai and Zhejiang province upheld the stance at a policy briefing hosted by the State Council Information Office in Beijing.

Trade frictions in the current global industrial chain have no winners and lead to some challenges for enterprises and the government, said Zhou Bo, executive vice-mayor of Shanghai. Imports and exports are important to Shanghai, and the municipal government is committed to building a more efficient, inviting, fair and equal environment, he said.

Meanwhile, the government is providing better services and encourages enterprises to further invest to increase their competitiveness, Zhou said. Costs should be reduced for enterprises to alleviate their burdens, he added.

Zhejiang's local economy is stable and in good condition, up by 7.6 percent in the first half of this year from the same period last year, said Feng Fei, executive vice-governor of Zhejiang. “Our exports are also stable, but trade frictions have brought increasing uncertainties. We will further open up and promote the development of the pilot free trade zone to attract foreign investment,” he said.

Feng said the business environment will be improved to reduce costs for enterprises, while diversification is another way to attract foreign capital and boost exports.

The regions have introduced multiple measures to cut red tape in administrative approvals, making it easier for residents and enterprises to complete necessary procedures.

In Shanghai, 90 percent of enterprise-related approvals and services can be done in one trip to municipal and district departments this year, while 40 percent of approvals have been abolished.

Zhejiang is a pioneer in building an integrated website for government services since the end of 2013. Now, 16.7 million people and 1.88 million enterprises have registered at the site for diverse online services — one illustration of how the Internet Plus initiative has become vital in facilitating public services and improving the business environment, according to the provincial government.

About 80 percent of procedures can be done on the websites of the provincial and city governments, with corporate investment projects, property registration and business registrations to be done in a single window.

Those measures have brought real benefits. Over the past five years, 69 percent of administrative approvals were streamlined. In 2017, 40 billion yuan (\$5.9 billion) was saved to make it easier to run businesses in the capital, said Wang Hong, vice-mayor of Beijing.

Marching into marriage



Officers from the Armed Police Beijing Corps and their brides attend a group wedding in Beijing's Chaoyang district on Wednesday. Twenty couples married to mark Army Day, which falls on Aug 1. GUO QIAN / LEGAL EVENING NEWS

Teams arrive to check major vaccine producer

Progress to be revealed in timely manner, may help reform system

By WANG XIAODONG
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An investigative team dispatched by the State Council, China's Cabinet, has arrived in Jilin province to investigate possible violations of the law involving a major vaccine producer that falsified records about its production of rabies vaccine.

An inspection by China's State Drug Administration on July 15 found that Changchun Changsheng Bio-tech Co, in Changchun, Jilin province, faked production and inspection records.

The incident aroused public outrage in China because of the virtual 100 percent mortality rate of rabies.

Bi Jingquan, Party chief of the State Administration for Market Regulation and head of the investigation team, vowed on Tuesday to pursue a thorough investigation and severely punish all responsible, including government officials.

He said the progress of the investigation will be revealed to the public in a timely manner,

and authorities will research how to reform and improve the existing vaccine management system to establish one that guarantees the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the World Health Organization said it supports the action of China's State Drug Administration in holding the problematic batches of rabies vaccine to ensure they are not placed on the market.

All of the company's rabies vaccines have been recalled, and no quality problems have been found in vaccines that have already entered the market, the administration said.

“Regulatory oversight of vaccines is critically important. It is the government's primary method of ensuring that the vaccines produced and used in China are safe, of good quality and effective,” said Gauden Galea, the WHO Representative for China. “This incident shows that when regulatory oversight works well, potential risks can be averted.”

While the current incident is clearly regrettable, the detection of this event by an

unannounced inspection shows that the regulatory authority's system of checks and balances to protect the health of the population is working, the WHO said.

Changchun police said on Tuesday that 15 people suspected of criminal violations had been detained, including Gao Junfang, the company's chairwoman.

“The WHO awaits the results of further investigations and stands ready to provide support to national health authorities,” the WHO China Office said in the statement.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the General Administration of Customs said no health centers for international travelers had purchased or used rabies vaccines or problematic DTaP vaccines — a vaccine that can prevent diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough — produced by the Changchun company or by Wuhan Institute of Biological Products Co.

The two companies sold more than 650,000 ineffective DTaP vaccines to buyers in three provincial regions, including Shandong province, China's top drug authority said in November, adding that the vaccines do not pose health risks.

The administration has suspended buying and using vaccines from Changchun Changsheng Bio-tech Co to protect the health of international travelers, it said.

The Shandong provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention said on Wednesday that it had made full preparations following disclosure of the ineffective vaccines, and will give DTaP vaccines again to children who received the substandard vaccines on a voluntary basis.

Children who have had any of the three diseases — diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough — before 5 years of age can claim compensation from the producers if they have received substandard vaccines, the center said.

Health authorities in Chongqing and Hebei also said they would give vaccinations to any children affected.

In its statement, the WHO reiterated that quality-assured vaccines are critical for disease prevention and urged countries to continue using this cost-effective public health intervention.

Inside

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People told to speak out over sexual assault

By CAO YIN
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Legal experts are encouraging people to speak out and call police in a timely manner in cases of sexual assault or harassment, after news of several such cases burned through Chinese social media. Evidence collection and verification has always been a challenge in solving sex-related cases — especially sexual harassment — experts said on Wednesday, after allegations surfaced against another well-known figure.

An anonymous letter circulated online on Wednesday accusing Zhang Wen, who worked for several high-profile Chinese magazines, of rape.

Zhang denied the accusation, issuing a statement through his lawyer that said a

person should call police instead of posting information on social media after a sexual assault. He said he would defend his reputation through legal channels if necessary, Beijing News reported.

The allegations came after two charity founders confessed this week to sexually abusing women — also following accusations posted online.

“It's good to see women stand up against sexual assault,” said Zhao Li, a Beijing criminal lawyer. “They need more encouragement. The louder they speak out, the more of a threat they pose to offenders.”

He added, however, that it is difficult for authorities to handle sexual assault cases in practice “because not all people like to go to the police or

even know how to collect evidence to prove such abuse.”

He suggested that legislators should revise the Criminal Procedure Law to extend the time of reporting or prosecution in sexual assault cases.

“Currently, it's not possible to bring a case against someone 10 years after an alleged incident if they face 10 years in prison following conviction,” he added.

But Wu Ming'an, a professor of criminal law at Chinese University of Political Science and Law, said a quick report is the best protection for those claiming to have been sexually abused, because “whether a case can be filed or not depends on evidence.”

“Photos or voice recordings may not be powerful evidence in sex-related crimes, but they may bring administrative

punishments, such as detention, to offenders,” he added.

On Monday, Lei Chuang, founder of Yi You Charity, which combats discrimination against people with hepatitis B, confessed to sexual assault on social media after an anonymous woman said Lei sexually abused her after a charity hike three years ago.

Later, Feng Yongfeng, the founder of the Beijing Fengtai Origin Enthusiast Environment Research Center, also admitted after a report that he had harassed three women in charity circles since October while “under the influence of alcohol.”

The statement was released via the WeChat account of Environmental Activists, another NGO founded by Feng, but it was deleted shortly after it appeared.

GRASSROOTS

For China, rising tides lift all boats

In China, when you look out on a seemingly unspoiled vista, it can be easy to forget that the landscape you're admiring may in fact have been inhabited for centuries.

These are places that haven't seen the breakneck growth of other provinces for one reason or another. Maybe their geographic features weren't conducive to urbanization or rapid industrialization. Maybe there were cultural factors at play.

Whatever the explanation, now is the time for these regions to catch up to their forebears and attain a comparable standard of living. This is easier said than done, however. Many villages and counties have maintained their lifestyles for generations. A similar phenomenon exists elsewhere — and gives us an idea of what not to do.

In the United States, there were “company towns”, whole towns that were literally owned and built by a company in a particular industry — coal mining, for example.

When the company went out of business, the population lost its primary source of employment. There were no public programs to absorb the

resulting shocks to local economies; governments left the people to the whims of the market. Left in the lurch, workers in these areas scrounged for whatever jobs they could find — or exited the labor force entirely.

China, it seems, is writing a different story. Rather than pulling the rug out from under people who have known one way of life for eons, the government is easing rural populations toward a more advanced economy.

Ian Goodrum
Reporter's log

The principle of coordinated development is in full effect here. Some places are building on pre-existing trades or cultural practices, while others are retraining for new industries with new skills. Methods may vary, but the results are the same: Villages and counties are discovering their strengths, leveraging them into growth and productivity.

Everywhere you look, you can find examples — in Guizhou province alone, there are several. Meitan county's renowned teas have buyers all over China. Maotai town has turned its trademark *baijiu* liquor into one of the world's biggest alcohol brands. Villages are finding new markets for their local crafts. Many are boosting their tourism potential, attracting swaths of visitors both foreign and domestic. All this happens with assistance from the government, through subsidies, incentives or official recognition via intangible cultural heritage lists.

Higher growth numbers are welcome, of course, but all this would mean little if the people themselves weren't benefiting. Happily, I can say they are. These popular, specialized trades are distributing gains downward and lifting impoverished groups into economic stability and safety.

Seeing this firsthand makes me think the US could use a little of this sort of know-how in its Rust Belt.

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A man lies on bamboo poles in a river in Chishui, Guizhou province, on Tuesday. Local people began to use bamboo poles as a means of transport about 1,000 years ago. The technique was added to the provincial intangible cultural heritage list in 2009. YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

Briefly

BEIJING Crackdown targets publications, sites

As part of its fight against pornography and illegal publications, China confiscated more than 9.8 million publications and dealt with 5,500 cases in the first half of this year. According to a statement on Tuesday by the Office of the Fight Against Pornography and Illegal Publications, authorities also deleted more than 27 million harmful or pornographic online posts, and shut down more than 62,000 websites and applications for publishing vulgar content. It said 565 of the cases were criminal ones.

SICHUAN Police bust major pyramid scheme

Police have busted an online pyramid scheme involving 10.2 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) and more than 220,000 investors, local authorities said on Wednesday. Police in Meishan caught 82 suspects, who are suspected of establishing hundreds of shell companies and

28 fake industrial chains in the fields of construction materials, agriculture, mining and media to woo investors with promises of high returns. The suspects swindled 220,000 investors from across the Chinese mainland as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan, under the guise of being national platforms and part of the sharing economy.

SHANDONG 136 ancient tombs unearthed

A total of 136 tombs have been unearthed at a burial site dating to the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC), local archaeological authorities said on Tuesday. The cemetery is located in Tengzhou's Dahan village, the provincial cultural heritage and archaeology institute said. Liu Yanchang, a researcher at the institute, said the excavation started in October. So far, 100 small tombs, 36 large and medium-sized tombs and more than 800 pieces of ceramics, jade, bone and bronze have been found.