

Trains to better support Belt, Road

Measures will improve China Railway Express freight service to Europe

By LUO WANGSHU
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A committee to coordinate freight rail services between China and Europe was launched in Beijing on Friday. The committee, initiated by China Railway Corp, consists of 33 stakeholders of China Railway Express, including a number of companies operating the service as well as research institutes.

"The committee will work to improve quality and efficiency of the service to better serve the Belt and Road Initiative,"

said Li Wenxin, deputy general manager of China Railway Corp.

Measures to be taken include establishing transfer hubs to assemble container cars for a train trip as needed, launching an international information service, and opening hotline number 95306 for clients to check on their cargo.

Also, a cold container information center will be launched, allowing customers to rent cold storage containers and develop a logistics plan.

Trains have traveled more

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than 4,000 times between China and Europe, according to China Railway Corp. This year, more than 1,000 CR Express train trips will link 28 Chinese cities with 29 destinations in 11 countries.

The cross-border freight service was launched by local railway authorities and city governments, and is operated by logistics companies. Originally,

the route’s name usually was comprised of the departure city, the border port and the destination: Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe, for example. Last year, the National Development and Reform Commission rebranded all services as CR Express as part of its development plan.

Li said the new committee could work as “a coordination

platform at the enterprise level” and promote the development of CR Express.

“The committee will stick to the principles of improving communication and sharing and improving logistics, aiming to solve challenges in operating the CR Express such as further reducing logistics costs and improving the service’s quality,” he said.

Although all services are under the same name, the operation remains the same. The committee provides a service for companies to communicate to solve common problems and promote the service’s sustainable development.

“The CR Express service,

guided by government and operated by the market, should prioritize the service’s quality and profit,” said Wang Xiaotao, vice-minister of the NDRC, adding that the service should benefit from scientific guidance.

“The committee will improve the service’s operation, expand overseas markets, provide more convenient policies for customs, and study other measures to guide the service’s healthy and orderly development,” said Zhao Wenming, general manager of Zhengzhou International Railway Co, the logistics business that runs the CR Express in Zhengzhou, Henan province.

Former official executed for 2015 murder

A former senior official in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region was executed on Friday for murder.

Zhao Liping, former vice-chairman of the Inner Mongolia regional committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, was convicted of intentional homicide, taking bribes and possession of firearms, according to a statement from the Supreme People’s Court.

Taiyuan Intermediate People’s Court in Shanxi province sentenced Zhao to death for the homicide on Nov 11, 2016. He was executed on Friday after the death penalty was approved by the Supreme People’s Court.

According to China’s Criminal Procedure Law, any death penalty has to be submitted to the top court for final review.

Zhao was found guilty of having shot dead a 26-year-old woman, identified only by her surname, Li, in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia, on March 20, 2015, according to the verdict.

It said two guns and 49 bullets were found at the crime scene.

Zhao also took advantage of his post to secure business contracts and official positions for associates, and accepted bribes totaling 23.68 million yuan (\$3.45 million) from 2008 to 2010, when he was the police chief of Inner Mongolia, the verdict said.

During the investigation, police located 91 detonators traced back to Zhao, which, together with the guns and bullets, constitute the crime of illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

Zhao committed crimes with serious consequences and vile social effects, according to the top court.

“The death penalty was given on the basis of clear facts and solid and sufficient evidence. In addition, all the procedures were pursuant to laws,” the top court said in the statement. “Therefore, the court approved the death sentence that was decided by the Taiyuan Intermediate People’s Court and upheld by the Shanxi High People’s Court.”

Zhao was allowed to see close family members before being executed on Friday, according to the statement.

CHINA DAILY — XINHUA

Taiwan man arrested on subversion charge

By CHINA DAILY

State security authorities in Hunan province have arrested Taiwan resident Lee Ming-che on suspicion of subversion, a mainland spokesman said on Friday.

An Fengshan, spokesman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said the arrest was approved by prosecutors, which is required by China’s Criminal Procedure Law.

Probes by State security authorities show that Lee had frequently come to the Chinese mainland since 2012, and colluded with certain individuals in the mainland to make plans and establish illegal organiza-

tions aiming to subvert State power, An said.

On March 19, Lee was detained by State security authorities in the mainland. He confessed what he did to harm China’s State security, and judicial authorities will handle the case in line with the law, An said. Lee had been reported missing while in Guangdong province in March, causing a stir in Taiwan.

The State Council Taiwan Affairs Office confirmed on March 29 that Lee had been detained on suspicion of harming national security. In April, the office also accused Taiwan of harming cross-Straits relations by playing up Lee’s case.

Change in yuan rate calculation to ease ‘herd effects’

By XIN ZHIMING
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China is considering introducing a “countercyclical factor” to adjust the way it calculates the yuan’s daily reference rate against the dollar, according to a statement by the country’s foreign exchange trading system on Friday. Analysts said the move will help prevent excessive fluctuation of the currency.

The change in the method of setting the yuan’s daily central parity rate against the dollar will better reflect the market supply and demand, lessen possible “herd effects” in the market and help guide the market to focus more on macroeconomic fundamentals, the China Foreign Exchange Trade System said.

China’s foreign exchange market is prone to the “habitual influences of irrational expectations” and one-way market expectations can sometimes be exaggerated, failing to reflect the real relationship between market supply and demand, the statement said.

Although the US dollar index value has dropped sharply in recent weeks and China’s economic fundamentals have improved significantly, the yuan’s central parity rate, based on the existing rate-setting mechanism, has shown trends of depreciation that do not reflect the real economic fundamentals, the system said.

It did not elaborate on the technical details of how the “countercyclical factor” will be determined.

“The move is understandable since China has adopted a managed floating exchange rate system.”

Liu Dongliang, an analyst at China Merchants Securities

“The main role of the factor will be redressing the abnormal changes in the foreign exchange rate of the yuan due to irrational market sentiment,” said Chen Jianheng, an analyst at China International Capital Corp.

As seen in the yuan’s rate against the dollar since April, the deviation between the yuan’s closing rate and its central parity rate has been widening, with the closing rate most of the time weaker, said Chen. “The introduction of the ‘countercyclical factor’ will help reduce that deviation.”

Analysts also said China is entitled to make adjustments to the methodology of setting the yuan’s reference rate.

“The move is understandable since China has adopted a managed floating exchange rate system,” said Liu Dongliang, an analyst at China Merchants Securities. “Against that backdrop, any technical adjustment is normal.”

A crowning achievement



Builders install a dome on a fifth unit at the Hualong One Nuclear Power Station construction site in Fuqing, Fujian province, on Thursday. The next step is installing the unit’s equipment. The Hualong One uses third-generation nuclear power technology, which is developed and owned by China. JINAG KEHONG / XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

Manufacturing gets intelligent boost

By OUYANG SHIJIA and YANG JUN in Guiyang
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Artificial intelligence and big data technologies will provide strong support to China’s efforts to upgrade manufacturing, according to the industrial regulator and technology tycoons.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology will produce a white paper to promote the development of AI and its application in industries, a senior official said on the sideline of the Big Data Expo in Guiyang, capital of Guizhou province. The conference runs through Sunday.

MIIT will ramp up efforts to integrate AI with the Made in China 2025 strategy, enhancing efficiency and sharpening the competitive edge of the country’s manufacturing capability, said Li Guanyu, deputy director of the information and software service division at MIIT. He did not provide details.

As AI theoretical research and innovative applications blossom in China, the country hopes to leverage cutting-edge technology to help manufacturers restructure.

Terry Gou, founder and chairman of Foxconn Technology Group, said, “Though machines are not as flexible as human hands right now, total-

ly automated factories are likely to become a reality when the industrial data pool becomes big enough,” Gou said.

Foxconn, a contract manufacturer for Apple, employees 50,000 robots at assembly lines in five factories.

Robin Li, CEO of Baidu, said China has accumulated a huge amount of data, providing a sound foundation for the growth of AI.

“Without data, it is impossible for AI to make big leaps in voice and speech recognition. But more efforts are needed to train AI-savvy talent,” Li said.

The total amount of data in China is growing at above 50

percent a year and it is forecast to account for 21 percent of global data by 2020, according to MIIT.

Hangzhou Robam Appliances, a kitchen appliance maker based in Zhejiang province, shows where things are heading. Its factory, powered by industrial robots, big data and the internet of things — devices connected by the internet — cost 750 million yuan (\$109 million) but saves 35 million yuan annually in labor and improves productivity by 30 percent, said Wang Gang, vice-president of the company.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

True heroes step up



Volunteers and doctors dress up as cartoon characters like Superman and Spider-Man to bring cheer to patients and parents at the Capital Institute of Pediatrics in Beijing on Friday.

ZHANG YUWEI / XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

Agriculture: Food security faces variety of challenges

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CAAS has generated more than 6,000 scientific achievements, and it has built the world’s second-largest agricultural seed bank and the largest library on agricultural studies in Asia, said Tang Huajun, the academy’s president.

From 2006 to 2016, the academy earned more than 2.2 billion yuan (\$321 million) in revenue from scientific research alone — double the amount from the previous 10 years, according to the academy’s data book.

By the end of last year, the academy had established cooperation with institutions from 83 countries and 38 interna-

tional organizations, and it participated in more than 1,700 overseas science projects.

China’s population will reach its peak by 2030, and it will need to grow about 600 million metric tons of food per year, Tang said.

China’s food security is also facing various challenges, from climate change to pollution, but “in the end, science and technology will be the primary solution”, he added.

Xie Jinfang, vice-president of the Jiangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said it is encouraging to know that China’s top leaders are thinking the same way.

“Both President Xi and Pre-

mier Li highlighted the importance of innovation in agriculture in their remarks. This renewed our confidence and pointed out the direction and future goals for us to tackle,” he said.

Zhong Mingming, Party chief of the Hainan Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said that to fully implement the instructions from the leaders, more structural reforms and incentives are necessary to unleash the full creative potential of scientists.

Thomas Lumpkin, a US researcher who has worked with the CAAS for more than 40 years, said more emphasis on tackling climate change would be welcome.