

## Guizhou offers free training for tea farmers

By YANG JUN in Guiyang and ZHAO YIMENG

Guizhou province launched a free training session for tea farmers in Yanhe county before the spring picking season earlier last month to promote disease prevention techniques and help boost the local industry.

Tea experts and professors from Guizhou University held seminars to demonstrate the growth and disease prevention of tea trees, as well as tea farm management. Thirty-nine trainees, including tea farmers and personnel from tea enterprises, practiced on a tea farm in the county.

Huang Yaquin, an agronomist with the local agriculture bureau, said unlike previous indoor lectures delivered mainly by teachers, this training session moved the class onto the farmland. "With the teachers' guidance, trainees operated by themselves and obtained impressive learning results," she said.

Jin Linhong, a tea expert in the province and a professor at Guizhou University, said most farmers in the county had misunderstandings about growing tea.

"They managed a tea farm and controlled pests using their experience planting other crops, resulting in the misuse of pesticides and posing risks in the tea business," Jin said.

Jin and her team decided to organize a farmland school, with four training sessions, and teach local talent systematically to improve their problem-solving ability instead of helping them with single issues.

Guizhou is the first province in the country to comprehensively prohibit herbicides in tea, and it has forbidden the use of more than 128 pesticides, twice the number the nation requires, which ensures that the tea is clean and of good quality.

The training aims to explain why the tea industry should implement a high standard to achieve a sustainable goal, Jin said.

"Tea leaves and trees are not only what we focus on, but also the ecology of a tea farm including grass, flowers, soil, climate, pests and microorganisms," he said, adding that tea farm owners can make their own management plans after practicing on the farmland.

The field school is trainee-oriented, and the teachers mainly guided farmers and businessmen to conduct surveys, discuss problems and summarize methods.

"The agricultural talent nurtured from the farmland school will be the leading group of tea farm management. They will play an important role in developing the local tea industry, ensuring safety and quality, and creating tea brands," Jin said.

Jin and other experts replied to questions and gave suggestions on tea farm management through a WeChat group. A tea farmer sent a photo of a tree suffering from disease and asked for help in the group chat last month.

"After discussions with some experts, we believe wood rot is occurring in that tree," Jin said in the group chat.

"Proper soil condition is more important than good fertilizer, but we need time and patience to cultivate and protect proper soil," Jin suggested in the group chat the other day.

Tea farm operator Li Hongtao took part in the three-day training session and said he improved his ability to take care of a tea farm.

Li said they gained useful knowledge and experience during the practice on farmland. "Some previous lectures, which cost us a lot of time and money, were actually monotonous and had little effect."

Li started a tea business in 2012 and now has a 53-hectare base, making a profit of 1.6 million yuan (\$251,000) last year.

"Many tea farm owners like me run a large base but lack standardized management, so we actively participate in the training session in search of experience," he said.

So far, three farmland school projects have been launched in three counties. Each school will include 12 classes and finish all curricula in four sessions. Jin said they plan to open more than 10 schools this year.

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## Paying tribute



Albanian and Chinese representatives pay tribute at a tomb where a Chinese specialist is buried in Tirana, Albania, on Saturday. Zhou Ding, the Chinese ambassador to Albania, led people from both countries ahead of China's Tomb Sweeping Day to visit the cemetery, where multiple Chinese engineers and specialists who died during their support missions in the 1970s in Albania were buried. ZHANG LIYUN / XINHUA

## Shanghai maternity hospitals set flexible policies during lockdown

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Maternity hospitals in Shanghai have introduced measures to ensure the safety of mothers-to-be and newborns while the city is in a phased lockdown to fight COVID-19.

The measures include opening green channels for pregnant women without reports of negative nucleic acid tests, receiving those whose due dates are near, and categorizing pregnant women with different health conditions into corresponding WeChat groups to receive timely responses from doctors around the clock.

"The birth of a new life into a family signifies hope. When the city is experiencing a special period, maternal medical teams are also trying their best to help each pregnant woman be safe and sound while obeying strict epidemic prevention protocols," said Wang Yu, president of Shanghai First Maternity and Infant Hospital.

Shanghai entered into a phased lockdown on March 28 while its residents took a new round of nucleic acid tests to curb the virus' spread. Residents all over the city are currently required to stay at home and will take nucleic acid tests on Monday.

Categorized lockdown measures will continue if one resident or more in the particular building, compound or the subdistrict tests positive.

During lockdown, pregnant women showing signs of going into

labor and those experiencing unusual situations are taken to hospitals after obtaining approval from the subdistrict office, which is responsible for calling for an ambulance.

The Gynecology and Obstetrics Hospital at Fudan University, where 6,000 pregnant women are registered, said it screened all the registered pregnant women and sent messages to each, detailing the adjustments in arrangements.

Among the prenatal checkups, the one regarding deformity screening conducted at mid-pregnancy is crucial and cannot be delayed. The hospital contacted each one scheduled for the check-up during the lockdown, reminding them to prepare negative nucleic acid reports within 48 hours when coming to the hospital during the lockdown.

"Also, pregnant women with different health concerns joined six WeChat groups, where they can find an obstetrician in charge immediately. There is a director, deputy director, clinician and head nurse in charge of each health problem in each group," said Gu Weirong, a leading doctor of newborn health at the hospital.

At the International Peace Maternity and Child Health Hospital of China welfare institute, doctors had received in advance dozens of women whose due dates are during the lockdown.

"Most pregnant women give birth around the due date, and if we admit them in advance, it can help avoid unexpected situations,

including the possible difficulty to get an ambulance to hospital if they start to show signs of giving birth," said Zhang Lin, an obstetrician with the hospital.

She said the medical institution has allocated as many beds as possible for such mothers-to-be. Also, none arriving at the hospital to give birth from their homes during the lockdown will ever be rejected by the hospital.

"If they and their accompanying family members cannot provide negative nucleic acid test reports, they'll be sent to quarantined labor rooms," she said.

Shanghai First Maternity and Infant Hospital, which has campuses east and west of the Huangpu River, screened all the registered pregnant women right after the city government on the night of March 27 announced that east regions would be locked down from the following day.

It found more than 3,000 pregnant women who live west of the river and registered with its east campus. They contacted those whose due dates were arriving and that they could go to the hospital's west branch if they encounter any situations.

The hospital also published a 24-hour hotline to answer pregnant women's queries. It received more than 200 phone calls on average daily.

During the lockdown of the regions east of the river from March 28 to 31, an average of over 60 infants were born at the hospital's east campus daily.

## Virus: New subvariant reported in Suzhou

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On Saturday, Suzhou, Jiangsu province, reported a new Omicron subvariant BA.1.1. The city's center for disease control and prevention said that no highly homologous sequence of the novel coronavirus genome was found in multiple databases.

The center said that it will take more time to analyze and compare the subvariant.

It is important to collect samples from current COVID-19 infections, conduct genome sequencing and closely monitor the mutation situation. It is also necessary to detect mainstream virus strains in a time-

ly manner, and develop effective vaccines, antiviral drugs and detection reagents.

Experts said a new subvariant does not always mean a more contagious strain, and only the most adaptable ones survive. However, some subvariants can become the main strain of a virus.

## Listing: Revision to help solve audit disputes

From page 1

The revision comes amid a long-running dispute between China and the US over audit oversight. The US Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act, passed in 2020, allows the US Securities and Exchange Commission to delist Chinese companies from US exchanges if they are found to have not complied with audit requirements of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board for three consecutive years.

Dai Guanchun, a partner at Jingtian & Gongcheng, a law firm based in Beijing, said the SEC has named specific US-listed Chinese stocks that could be removed from US stock markets for failing to adhere to the foreign companies accountability act. This significantly impacts market confidence as well

as the listing of Chinese tech companies in the US.

Dai said while the change in the draft rules may pave the way for solving the audit disputes, more efforts are also needed to guide intermediary agencies such as accounting firms to cooperate with regulatory bodies and update the China-US regulatory cooperation mechanism.

According to the draft rules, overseas regulators' investigations in China should be carried out through the cross-border regulatory cooperation mechanism. The China Securities Regulatory Commission and other related departments should provide necessary assistance in accordance with the bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanism.

The commission said China will continue to support all eligible

enterprises listing overseas and deepen cross-border regulatory cooperation.

US Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman Gary Gensler said in an interview with Bloomberg on Tuesday that there have been "considerate, respectful and productive conversations" between Chinese and US authorities.

CSRC Chairman Yi Huiiman has held three video conferences with Gensler since August last year, aiming to solve problems related to audit and supervision cooperation between China and the US.

The two sides will continue to communicate, but the outcome of their efforts will be determined by the "wisdom and original intentions" of both parties, said the CSRC.

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# US won't agree to Afghanistan joint statement

White House refused draft because of issues of 'somewhere else', sources say

By CHINA DAILY

The Extended Troika Meeting on Afghanistan, attended by special envoys of China, the United States, Russia and Pakistan on Thursday, failed to issue a joint statement, Sputnik News reported on Saturday, quoting unidentified sources.

Sources told Sputnik News that the four sides had agreed on a draft joint statement. However after the meeting the White House wouldn't agree to issue a joint statement because of what has been done by one of the members of the extended Troika "somewhere else other than Afghanistan", the report quoted the sources as saying. All other members of the extended Troika expressed their disappointment and dissatisfaction, the report said.

The Extended Troika Meeting on Afghanistan was held in Tunxi, Anhui province on Thursday. Before the meeting, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a collective meeting with Spe-

cial Envoy for Afghan Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China Yue Xiaoyong, Russian Special Presidential Representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov, the US State Department's Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Afghanistan Affairs of Pakistan Mohammad Sadiq.

At the meeting, the representatives reiterated their firm support for the Afghan people and stressed that more humanitarian assistance will be provided to Afghanistan. The four sides stressed that various terrorist forces entrenched in Afghanistan remain a threat to the security of the region, and called on relevant Afghan parties to take more visible measures to fulfill their counterterrorism commitment and dismantle and eliminate all types of terrorist groups. All sides are encouraged to work together to help Afghanistan improve its capacity for self-reliant development and achieve economic independence.

## High-level debate



Tibetan Buddhist monks debate as part of receiving the Geshe Lharampa degree at a ceremony at Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Tibet autonomous region, on Saturday. Geshe Lharampa, meaning "intellectual" in Tibetan, is the highest academic degree for the Gelugba School — also known as the Yellow Sect — of Tibetan Buddhism. Thirteen monks received the degree on the day. LI ZHOU / TIBET DAILY

## Sewage outlets on major rivers to be supervised

By HOU LIQIANG houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

China will locate and effectively supervise all sewers that empty into the sea and watercourses in its seven major river basins before the end of 2025, according to a recent guideline from the State Council, China's Cabinet.

By that time, violations regarding sewage draining into trunks of the seven rivers, including the Yangtze, Yellow, Pearl and Haihe, will be essentially rectified, the document said.

It said the same progress should be made in their major tributaries, key lakes in their basins and key bays.

A sound and effective supervision system will have been established for all drainage pipe outlets by then, supported by laws, regulations and advanced technologies, it said.

Qiu Qiwen, vice-minister of ecology and environment, said the ministry will classify all drainage pipe outlets and take different measures accordingly.

Those located in key protected areas, such as drinking water source areas and natural reserves, for example, will be removed, he said at a news conference organized by the State Council Information Office on Saturday.

Only one drainage pipe outlet will be left for each industrial park, he said. All wastewater in these parks will be collected for concentrated disposal before being discharged.

Factories outside industrial

parks will have to apply to local environmental authorities if they want to have more than one sewage drain, he continued.

The ministry will also strive to address drainage pipe outlets that directly discharge household wastewater, he said.

In areas covered by urban sewage pipe networks, all household sewage will be diverted for concentrated disposal.

Qiu said the guideline was drafted based on experiences from pilot programs launched in 2019 in the Yangtze and Yellow rivers, the country's longest watercourses, as well as the Bohai Sea, the largest enclosed sea in China.

In the Yangtze, 60,292 outlets have been located, which is 30 times the previously registered number, he said. The number of outlets that empty into Bohai has been updated to 18,886, compared with less than 800 before.

As of the end of 2021, the sources of 80 percent of the outlets in the Yangtze and Bohai had been identified, he said. Over 8,000 violations related to sewage discharge have been addressed.

The work "has vigorously promoted the improvement of the water environment", he stressed.

The Yangtze saw water quality of Grade II, the second-best level in the country's five-tier quality system for surface water, in all sections of its trunk all through last year.

"This is a historic breakthrough," he said.