

## CHINA

## Tasty display



Visitors look at animal sculptures made of chocolate at a museum in Shanghai on Sunday. The museum, still in trial operation, has exhibits including animals, shoes and bouquets made from various kinds of chocolate. YAN DAMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

# No letup in environmental protection, pledges ministry

For second straight year, PM2.5 and ozone levels fell across country in 2021

By HOU LIQIANG  
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China's top environmental watchdog has pledged to vigorously promote the development of the environmental protection industry as it strives to ensure continuous environmental improvement and help boost the economy.

The Ministry of Ecology and Environment also stressed that it will not relent in environmental protection work amid downward economic pressure, vowing to strictly curb haphazard development of smokestack industries and resolutely crack down on environmental violations.

Despite marked progress last year, the country's environmental protection work is confronted with a series of challenges caused by a "grim" and "complicated" economic situation, Ecology and Environment Minister Huang Runqiu told the ministry's annual work conference on Jan 7. The full text of his address was made public over the weekend.

Huang said last year was the second straight year to witness simultaneous declines in the average density of PM2.5 particulate matter and ozone across the country. The average PM2.5 concentration, for example, decreased by 9.1 percent year-on-year to 30 micrograms per cubic meter.

Improvement was also seen in surface water quality, with the proportion of water suitable for drinking continuing to rise and that rated heavily polluted going down, Huang said.

He warned, however, that pressure on the country's environmental protection work had built up in the second half of last year due to increasing economic difficulties.

"Some regions have attached less importance to environmental protection work, and their willingness to enhance the work has declined," Huang said, adding there is an impulse to introduce projects with high energy consumption and emissions in some areas.

The number of environmental violations, including the abnormal

operation of environmental facilities and illegal discharging of pollutants, has increased, he added.

Huang said the country cracked down unswervingly on environmental violations last year.

Joining hands with the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security, he said his ministry rolled out campaigns dedicated to violations related to hazardous waste and fraud in automatic environmental monitoring.

A total of 7,020 cases were unearthed in the campaigns and roughly 900 million yuan (\$142 million) in penalties were meted out, Huang said.

He said promoting green, low-carbon development is one of the ministry's priorities this year.

Aside from giving full play to the role of environmental work in promoting the "comprehensive green transition of economic and social development", the ministry will take a series of measures to help maintain stable economic performance.

It will draft a dedicated regulation to enhance the management of environmental impact assessments for smokestack industries, Huang said.

Haphazard development of such industries will be a key focus of the central environmental inspection, and inspectors will pay close attention to lax examination and approval, weak supervision and slack law enforcement.

Staffed by civil servants from the ministry and led by ministerial-level officials, teams with the inspection report to a central group headed by Vice-Premier Han Zheng.

"The ministry will make environmental protection investment play its role in driving economic development by comprehensively promoting clean production and proactively cultivating environmental protection industries to boost their development," Huang said.

Emphasizing the importance of fully and faithfully implementing the new development philosophy on all fronts, Sun Jinlong, the ministry's Party chief, called for the integration of environmental protection work in China's overall development.

He also called for proactive innovations in the ministry's governance approach as it "endeavors to synergize economic development and environmental protection".

# Senior adviser gets death sentence with reprieve

By YANG ZEKUN and CUI JIA

Wang Fuyu, a former top political adviser in Guizhou province, was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve by a court in Tianjin on Monday for accepting more than 434 million yuan (\$68.4 million) in bribes.

The Tianjin First Intermediate People's Court handed down the sentence after public hearings of Wang's case in November. Wang, 69, former chairman of the Guizhou Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, told the court he would not appeal.

The court also deprived Wang of his political rights for life and confiscated all his personal property.

From 1995 to last year, Wang took advantage of his positions, including being Party chief of the cities of Sanya and Haikou in Hainan province and the top political adviser in Guizhou, to seek benefits for related companies and individuals in business operations, planning approvals and career advancement. In return, he received money and property totaling 434 million yuan.

Even after he retired in 2018, Wang still took advantage of his influence to accept property worth 17.3 million yuan from others in 2019 and 2020.

Wang's behavior constituted the crime of taking bribes and using his influence to take bribes, the court said, adding that the amount of bribery involved was extremely huge and the criminal circumstances were particularly serious, causing a bad social impact and heavy losses to the interests of the country and the people.

Given that Wang voluntarily surrendered, confessed to the bribery, actively returned the property he received and had all of his illegal gains recovered by investigators, the court gave him a reprieve from the death penalty.

Wang Heng, deputy director of an inspection office of the Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, said in a new five-part documentary series on China's anti-graft efforts that Wang Fuyu didn't show any sign of stopping even after the CPC's 18th National Congress in 2012, during which the Party vowed to beef up its anti-graft efforts.



Wang Fuyu

"About 70 percent of the bribes Wang took were after 2012 while more than 30 percent were taken after the CPC's 19th National Congress in 2017, when more measures were established to fight and prevent corruption," Wang Heng said in the second episode of the documentary series *Zero Tolerance*, which aired on China Central Television on Sunday night.

"He always believed that he could get away with it."

Wang Fuyu had been taking bribes since the 1990s. He was still taking money from private business owners days before he was put under investigation in February, Wang Heng said.

"Although Wang Fuyu covered his tracks well and had retired, the probe into his case has shown there is no 'no-go zone' when it comes to fighting corruption," he said.

Wang Fuyu was quoted in the documentary as saying: "I don't know why I want to have so much money when I am already living a prosperous life. The money can only bury me. I have realized how greedy I have been but I still don't know what my money is for."

Wang Fuyu became even more obsessed with taking bribes after 2012, when he started working at the CPPCC Guizhou provincial committee, because he knew it would be the last chance to make more money before his retirement.

Wang Fu, his brother, asked him to pack it in after seeing so many corrupt provincial-level officials being caught.

Wang Fuyu also became obsessed with playing golf, and found that courses were the perfect places for him to arrange deals. He even asked businessmen to fly him to golf courses around China in private jets, according to the investigation.

A pair of couplets hanging in the living room of a golf course villa that Wang Fuyu took as a bribe ironically read "Officials should never forget that they come from the people and they should never deceive the public", the documentary revealed.

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## Seasonal decoration



A pair of Spring Festival couplets is displayed on a gate of the ancient city wall in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Sunday. Both scrolls are 15 meters long and 2 meters wide. Similar couplets will be put on the city wall's 12 other gates. SHAO DAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Prosecutors urged to adapt to information age

By YANG ZEKUN  
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Procuratorial work should adapt to the trend of informatization and the use of big data in protecting national and social public interests and promoting national governance, Zhang Jun, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, said on Monday.

Addressing a national meeting of procurators in Beijing, Zhang called for procuratorial organs to actively explore the use of big data to punish and prevent crimes, supervise and correct illegal activities and improve the overall quality and efficiency of legal supervision in the new era.

Since the full implementation of public interest litigation procuratorial work in July 2017, the number of cases handled has increased each year. Prosecutors nationwide registered and handled about 170,000 cases last year, according to the SPP.

With the enactment and revision of related laws, the scope of procuratorial public interest litigation has increased from four to nine fields in recent years. They are ecological environment and resources protection, food and drug safety, protection of State-owned property, the transfer of rights to use State-owned

“We should actively and steadily focus on handling cases ... so as to lay a practical foundation for the improvement of related legislation.”

Zhang Jun, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate

land, the protection of the rights and interests of heroes and martyrs, the safety of production, protection of minors, protection of soldiers' honor and reputation, and protection of personal information.

Most public interest litigation cases concerning State-owned property protection and the transfer of land use rights for State-owned land involved the loss of State-owned assets, and procuratorates at the city level should make such cases their main focus, actively search for clues, and make full use of public interest litigation to promote supervision and recover losses, Zhang said.

In one case related to information technology last year, the procurator-

ate in Pishan county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, filed a public interest lawsuit in November against a travel blogger on suspicion of infringing the reputation and honor of heroes and martyrs after he triggered intense online criticism.

One photo posted by the blogger, surnamed Li, that was taken at the Kangxiwa Martyrs Cemetery in Pishan in July last year showed him leaning against a gravestone with his feet on the pedestal. In another, he leaned with one hand against the tombstone of Chen Xiangrong — who was killed in a border clash with Indian troops — while making what looked like a shooting gesture with the other.

Li's behavior was strongly condemned by netizens, with the viral online response attracting the attention of prosecutors. He was sentenced to seven months in prison this month and ordered to apologize in national media for infringing the reputation and honor of heroes and martyrs and causing a bad social impact.

"In addition to the statutory fields of public interest litigation procuratorial work, we should actively and steadily focus on handling cases in areas such as cyberspace governance, finance and securities, intel-

lectual property rights, protection of cultural relics and heritage, and protection of women's rights and interests, so as to lay a practical foundation for the improvement of related legislation," Zhang said.

Prosecutors should also pay close attention to the quality of case-handling and make full use of "procuratorial think tanks" such as the consultation network of civil and administrative experts and the consultation platform of public interest litigation experts to improve supervision, Zhang said.

Zhang also urged procuratorial organs at all levels to strengthen cooperation with other enforcement and judicial departments in the fight against telecom and network fraud, which has occurred frequently in recent years, seriously jeopardizing network security and economic order.

The crackdown should focus on the whole criminal chain, both inside and outside the country, and thoroughly investigate and recover fraudulently acquired funds, he said.

The SPP formulated 65 rules last year on prosecuting cybercrimes. More than 280,000 people were prosecuted for crimes committed through telecom networks, up 98.5 percent year-on-year.

# Freight train services with DPRK resume

By ZHAO JIA  
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China has resumed railway freight services to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to facilitate normal bilateral trade interactions, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a news briefing on Monday.

He said the work will be conducted on the basis of ensuring COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control measures.

A freight train from the DPRK

that arrived at the Chinese border city of Dandong, Liaoning province, on Sunday was the first since the border was closed to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Zhao said railway shipments between the two countries had been suspended for some time due to the impact of the pandemic, but freight train services carrying goods between Dandong and Sinuiju in the DPRK had now resumed operation after friendly bilateral consultations.