

Investment surges

Services, pharma, high-tech draw funds from US, EU > P13

Golfers on a roll

Chinese women challenge dominance of South Korea > SPORTS, PAGE 22



Bidding battle

Qing emperor's seal sells for record \$22 million > WORLD, PAGE 12



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MILITARY

CNS *Liaoning* leads live-fire drill

Dozens of ships and planes are involved in first exercise of its kind for carrier battle group

By ZHAO LEI
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China recently carried out the first live-fire exercise for its aircraft carrier battle group in the Bohai Sea, the People's Liberation Army Navy said on Thursday night.

Dozens of ships and aircraft from the CNS *Liaoning* carrier battle group and the North Sea Fleet took part in the massive exercise. They fired more than 10 air-to-air, anti-ship and air defense missiles, the PLA Navy said in a statement. It did not disclose the exact time of the exercise.

The *Liaoning* performed various drills with several destroyers and frigates, involving scenarios such as reconnaissance, aircraft interception, sea strikes as well as missile defense. Multiple groups of J-15 carrier-borne fighter jets used air-to-air and anti-ship missiles to hit targets during the exercise, according to the Navy.

The statement also quoted chiefs of the Navy's training bureau as saying that the event was planned as part of the aircraft carrier's training schedule and aimed at verifying

capabilities of personnel and weapons.

Videos of the *Liaoning's* J-15 fighters firing missiles were broadcast on China Central Television, the first time images of J-15 live-fire exercises have been shown to the public.

Rear Admiral Chen Yueqi, commander of the *Liaoning* carrier battle group, said the exercise is a "milestone" for the unit.

"It enabled us to explore how to organize a carrier battle group exercise and to test the training levels of our sailors and pilots. It can also boost the battle group's efforts to become combat ready as early as possible," he told CCTV.

Commander Xu Ying, chief of a J-15 squadron that participated in the event, was quoted by the State broadcaster as saying that through the exercise, pilots improved their use of tactics and weapons and enhanced confidence in their equipment.

Though the Navy did not disclose components of the carrier battle group, Zhang Junshe, a senior researcher at the PLA Naval Military Studies

SEE "DRILL" PAGE 3



Top: Carrier-based J-15 fighters prepare to take off from aircraft carrier *Liaoning* in a drill in the Bohai Sea. Left: Crew members train as cold winds sweep the carrier deck. Right: Missiles are fired by J-15 fighters. PHOTOS BY MO XIAOLIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY, ZHANG KAI / FOR CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

This village invests in itself to beat destitution, disability

By CHEN MENGWEI
in Liupanshui, Guizhou

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of special reports that China Daily is publishing. The reports focus on efforts to eradicate poverty and raise living standards in the country's rural areas, especially among members of the nation's ethnic minority groups.

When he was elected head of his village six years ago, Hu Jihua vowed to lift every one of the 4,000 residents — many of them disabled — out of poverty, and fulfill a personal dream at the same time.

The 38-year-old, who stopped growing at 1.4 meters tall as a result of a rare, congenital spinal disorder, was desperate to demonstrate that "anything a healthy man can do, I can do better".

He has set about proving his point.

Hu's idea was simple: Gather all available resources and focus on one thing at a time. He established a cooperative for the village and invited every resident to invest land or money.

The cooperative operates like a regular company, but with a twist. It sells farm produce and other local goods, and the villagers take a cut of the profits. But they also receive an annual dividend based on the sum they invested, even if the cooperative loses money.

Although the concept sounds simple, achieving their goal was anything but easy for Hu and his peers. They live in Lequn, a remote settlement tucked away in the mountains surrounding Liupanshui in Guizhou province.

Nearly 400 villagers — 10 percent of the residents — have physical disabilities, almost double the national average. According to official estimates, 85 million people in China have a disability, roughly 6 percent of the population.

SEE "CO-OP" PAGE 6

PUBLISHING

Calendar books gain fans in an online world

By MEI JIA
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The Palace Museum Calendar for 2017 offers a bilingual version. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Calendars turned into luxuriously illustrated books, often with a twist of interactivity, are highlights of China's book scene at the end of the year.

The most popular is the Palace Museum Calendar, which has sold 1.3 million copies since it was first issued in 2010. The first printing of the 2017 version — 300,000 copies — is sold out, and four more printings have been ordered.

For 2017, the Palace Museum Press is offering a bilingual version with English and Chinese. The Beijing museum also is known as the Forbidden City.

"We saw a need abroad for understanding Chinese cultural traditions," said Wang Guanliang, director of the office that plans the calendar datebooks.

"We didn't expect this but the market treats our publications as collectibles," Wang said. The 2010 version is now worth 80 times its original price, according to online sites for book sales.

Wang said that the calendar is inspired by Chinese zodiac animals, and is illustrated with photos of relics from the Palace Museum's collection of some 1.82 million antiques — "almost an endless source for us".

Publishing expert Zhang Lei said that the success of the Palace Museum Calendar has inspired more publishing entities to follow suit.

"We have embraced the new types of calendars since the Palace Museum won the hearts of consumers by intro-

ducing arts to people's daily lives," Zhang said. The number of such calendar titles has risen to 51 this year, compared with last year's 16.

"Most of the calendars are like art books. For young readers, they are portable, affordable, and chic to have," he added.

Zhao Mingye, director of the Plants and Animals Calendar team of Guokr.com, told China Daily, "Most of our customers buy more than one copy."

Their calendar for 2017 is full of cute animals, with a QR code for each day offering updated online content.

"Our 2016 version sold 100,000 copies, and 40,000 copies of the 2017 version were sold the night it was launched," Zhao said.

Besides the Plants and Animals Calendar, there is the One Way Street Calendar that resembles an old style Chinese almanac. If scanned using an augmented reality app, it displays videos of celebrities reading poems.

China Book Company, which created a *Dream of the Red Chamber* calendar for 2014, has since developed five more calendars with themes which include Chinese classical literature.

As the popularity of printed books declines, calendars are turning a new page for printed content with innovative designs and themes, reviving interest in categories like traditional culture, popular science and literature.

POLLUTION

Worst smog yet this winter to cover north

By ZHENG JINRAN
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Beijing has issued its first air pollution red alert of the year, with the most severe smog since autumn set to start on Friday night and last for five days.

Another 22 northern cities have been advised to follow the capital and issue the highest emergency response, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said on Thursday.

The red alert, effective from 8 pm Friday, will see tougher restrictions introduced for private car owners, who will be allowed to drive only on alternate days depending on their license plate number, the Beijing

municipal government said. The move also brings a suspension of industrial production and, to reduce dust, work at construction sites. Residents are advised to stay indoors.

The smog, expected to be the worst since autumn in severity, length and size of the area affected, is forecast to cover Beijing and Tianjin as well as the provinces of Hebei, Shanxi, Shandong and Henan from Friday until Dec 21, according to Liu Bingjing, head of air quality management for the ministry.

The worsening air quality is forecast to peak and remain at the most severe level over the weekend.

The red alert is the highest level in the four-tier emergen-

cy response system against air pollution, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

Another nine cities, including Jinan in Shandong province, are advised to issue orange alerts, Liu said, adding it would be the third time this month city governments had jointly issued emergency measures in December, in this case covering 32 cities.

From Dec 2 to 4, 60 northern cities issued alerts and conducted coordinated control efforts, and during the bout of smog from Dec 9 to 12, 24 cities joined in the regional joint efforts, the ministry said.

"It is suggested the affected regions issue the alerts jointly and before smog comes, which has proved effective in

reducing pollution," said Chai Fahe, a senior researcher at the China Research Academy of Environmental Sciences.

During the smog of Dec 2 to 4, the concentration of PM2.5 — tiny particulate matter that can enter the bloodstream — was lowered by 20 micrograms per cubic meter on average in the northern region.

The northern areas have been hit by smog frequently since October, "mainly because of the unfavorable weather for the dispersal of pollutants, large emissions from local pollution sources and pollutants transferred from neighboring areas," said Bai Qiyong, head of the National Environmental Monitoring Center.

In the news



Talks in Japan: Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) arrives in Japan on Thursday for a two-day summit, hosted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (left). See story > p12
ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO / AP

CHINA

Ticket sales start

Sales of train tickets for the annual Spring Festival travel period started on Thursday. > p5

WORLD

Ancient clues

Scientists say footprints left behind 3.7 million years ago were made by a man 1.65 meters tall. > p11

ECONOMY

US rate hikes' effect predicted to be limited

By LI XIANG
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The first of what may be a series of interest rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve is expected to have limited effects on China's economy if the country continues to maintain steady growth and keeps capital outflows and property bubbles under control, economists said on Thursday.

The Fed raised its target for short-term interest rates by 0.25 percentage points on Wednesday, which was only the second increase in a decade. It also indicated it will likely embark on a steeper path of interest rate hikes over the next year, with three or

more rate hikes possible. Earlier, they had indicated rates might go up only once or twice in 2017.

Lian Ping, chief economist at the Bank of Communications, said that the first and foremost task for China is to maintain steady growth of 6.5 to 7 percent next year. "Stable growth will boost investors' confidence, which could slow down the capital outflows and attract more inbound investment," Lian said.

China should also improve

SEE "RATE" PAGE 3

Inside

• Editorial > p8
• See more > p17

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