

CHINA

Experts note progress in fighting graft

Attitude of 'long-term deterrence' has taken hold to nip corruption in the bud

By ZHANG YAN
zhangyan1@chinadaily.com.cn

China has made great progress in curbing graft among high-ranking officials, and it will attach more attention to uncovering crimes in the fields of poverty relief, pollution control and fighting mafia-like gangs to avoid corruption at the grassroots, according to experts.

Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in Beijing in October 2017, those three sectors have emerged as the country's three biggest battles, said Zhuang Deshui, deputy director at the integrity-building research center of Peking University.

Data released by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection show that the CCDI and National Supervisory Commission jointly handled 44 cases involving corruption in the poverty relief sector last year.

In addition, they publicized six graft examples involving ecological protection that involved 55 county- or bureau-level Party officers, including polluting Dongting Lake in Central China's Hunan province. People involved in five of the corruption cases were found to be serving as "protective umbrellas" for organized gangs.

"Corruption in those areas has seriously violated the people's vital interests and happy life, and is posing a serious threat to public security," Zhuang said. "Disciplinary officers should be cautious and take effective measures to handle them."

Since last year, China's fight against corruption has won an "overwhelming victory and multiple reforms are helping to reduce and prevent graft at its source", said Song Wei, a law professor at University of Science and Technology Beijing.

Last year, 23 ministerial- or provincial-level officials were investigated for alleged graft by both the CCDI and the National Supervisory Commission, a year-on-year increase of 22 percent, the CCDI said.

Of the 23 who were investigated, 15 corrupt officials were referred to prosecuting departments for criminal charges, including Ai Wenli, a former senior political adviser in Hebei province; Zhang Shaochun, former vice-minister of the Ministry of Finance; and Pu Bo, former vice-governor of Guizhou province.

Moreover, 354 senior officials in the provinces were probed for serious violations of Party discipline and laws last year, an increase of 10 percent over 2017, it said.

"From the figure, we can see that central authorities have not loosened their efforts and are maintaining high pressure against corruption," Song said. "They will concentrate resources to target corruption, especially when supervisory commissions are established across the country."

Zhuang added: "We have really adopted long-term deterrence and a zero-tolerance attitude toward corruption, and there is no sign of any relaxation. This not only shows the country's resolute determination to combat corruption but has boosted people's confidence to achieve financial success."

According to the CCDI, more than 80 percent of the investigated high-ranking officials violated Party political and organizational discipline, and they resisted their supervisors and didn't truthfully report their personal matters, such as marriage and property. Some of them were involved with election scandals or resorted to bribery to get promotions, Zhuang said.

They also violated the Party's eight frugality standards in accepting banquets in luxury clubs, games of golf or tourism arrangements. For example, Feng Xinzhu, former vice-governor of Shaanxi province, accepted a private manager's entertainment for a lengthy period.

More than 76 percent of the senior corrupt officials probed were suspected of abusing power and engaging in corrupt activities such as bribery. They used the convenience of their job to gain benefits for their families or other enterprises and individuals, then accepted huge bribes, paid in cash or property, in return. For example, Li Yihuang, former vice-governor of Jiangxi province, abused power to benefit others in business management, then accepted bribes from them.

"Apart from combating corruption, we should place more emphasis on educating Party members to be loyal to the Party and its people, have correct political beliefs and establish a correct outlook on life and values," said Jiang Laiyong, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

With the acceleration of legislation, such as the International Criminal Justice Assistance Act — which opens new channels for nabbing corrupt fugitives and confiscating their assets — and the Party's revised Discipline Punishment Regulation, disciplinary officers will use more standardized methods to cope with corruption, Jiang added.

Crowded start to marathon



Runners wave at the start of the 2019 Xiamen Marathon in Xiamen, Fujian province, on Sunday. More than 30,000 contestants from 38 countries and regions participated. According to the organizers, it is the first international marathon to officially join forces with the Clean Seas Campaign initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme. JIANG KEHONG / XINHUA

Palace Museum halts cosmetic production after complaints

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing's Palace Museum suspended production of cosmetics including lipsticks, eye shadow and rouge on Saturday, citing quality concerns following their release on the Taobao e-marketplace on Dec 11.

The museum's Taobao store said on its micro blog that feedback showed the lipstick was not smooth enough, and the color could be improved. The eye shadow's particles were insufficiently fine, and the light blue rouge was impractical.

The store said it will continue to work on the products and roll out better ones.

But the post added that the production interruption won't affect presales, and deliveries will be made after the Chinese New Year, which falls on Feb 5 this year.

The store, called Palace Museum Cultural Creativity, has offered to exchange faulty lipstick with undamaged stock, with any surplus to be sold online.

The store said the patterns on the cosmetic cases were inspired by furniture, paintings and other cultural relics housed at the museum.

A set of five lipsticks was priced at 199 yuan (\$29) on Taobao, and they sold out within a week.

One micro-blogger, who claimed to have examined the lipstick set at a physical store, said he would describe the products as tourist souvenirs rather than real cosmetics because the quality was quite unsatisfactory.

Another micro-blogger suggest-



A set of crane-themed cosmetics produced by the Palace Museum was sold on Taobao. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

199 yuan

Price of a set of five lipsticks branded by the Palace Museum before production was halted

ed that the museum consider rolling out products in cooperation with major brands, which would help ensure the products' quality.

The museum indicated its intention to step into cosmetics in April 2017.

In an article posted on its social media platform, the museum mentioned the idea of integrating elements of its collections into cosmetics, including eye shadow and rouge.

The museum first rolled out a

set of lipstick with six colors and two masks on Dec 9, just ahead of the "double twelve" online shopping festival on Dec 12. Each tube of the lipstick sold for 199 yuan.

Two days later the museum's Taobao store released a much cheaper version. But some reviewers said the Taobao version was of low quality.

Products sold by the museum used to be pricy, high-end cultural items, but it has changed over the last few years and has been increasingly applying the elements from cultural relics to articles for daily use, such as aprons and pens.

Housing 1.86 million cultural relics, the Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, was China's imperial palace from 1420 to 1911.

Festival travelers warned to behave



By WANG KEJU
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

Nine government agencies have issued a notice calling for punishment of people who misbehave on transportation during the Spring Festival travel rush.

The notice, issued by agencies including the National Development and Reform Commission and Ministry of Transport, said bad behavior includes a range of actions on roads, railways, urban transportation, passenger vessels and in civil aviation — from interfering with safe driving on buses to taking others' seats on high-speed trains or disrupting social order on an aircraft.

Offenders will be banned from rail or air travel for a period of time. According to the national credit information sharing platform, creditchina.gov.cn, 5,099 people have been banned from purchasing air tickets since June, with 1,604 banned from buying train tickets.

The notice said all misbehavior should be included in offenders' credit records. For example, violations on trains, which include smoking, traveling without tickets, failing to pay surcharges upon arrival, reselling tickets, using a fake ID or disrupting public order or railway safety, should all be recorded.

It said transport authorities should strengthen education and training of personnel to better deal with misbehavior, encourage passengers to participate in stopping criminal behavior that interferes with safe driving and cooperate with public security departments to punish bad behavior.

The campaign focusing on the transport sector is part of a broader move to improve behavior, toughen sanctions on wrongdoers and enhance public security and order amid an ongoing national campaign promoting Chinese credibility.

"A social credit system is indispensable for any modern government," said Zhu Lijia, professor of public management at the Chinese Academy of Governance. "Instead of giving fines or other light penalties, putting severe offenders on a public blacklist will be more effective in constraining their behavior."

This year's seven-day Spring Festival holiday runs from Feb 4 to 10, starting with Lunar New Year's Eve. More than 2.99 billion trips are expected to be made during the 40-day Spring Festival travel rush beginning on Jan 21, including 2.46 billion by car, 413 million by rail, 73 million by plane and 43 million by ship.

Xinjiang hip-hop lovers have designs on success

By ZHANG YI and
AYBEK ASKHAR in Urumqi

Two friends who started a clothing and accessories brand in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region have hit it big by giving traditional patterns a modern twist.

Hip-hop lovers Wei Xiaojiang and Muradil Muhtar teamed up in 2015, and their Rameyda line of products, including T-shirts, hoodies, caps and bags, is helping preserve ethnic culture by promoting it among young people.

One of their earliest and most iconic designs is a modern take on the *kanway*, a traditional short-sleeved shirt worn by Uygur men and women featuring colorful embroidery on the neck, chest and arms.

"We want to make it a cool thing to wear *kanway*," Wei said. "People only tend to wear it during traditional festivals, so we designed a T-shirt that mixes classic patterns with modern style, hoping young people will be more willing to wear it in their daily lives."

Written on the sleeve of the black T-shirt is "Dopeway", a combination of the word "dope" (slang for good or fashionable) and "*kanway*". The design also features a goat's head, a common food eaten by Uygur people.

"Xinjiang has many interesting and cool things in terms of ethnic culture — music, clothes and nature," Muradil said. "It's our pride, and we want to promote Xinjiang culture in our designs."

Another popular product is a cap emblazoned with "65", the two digits at the start of Xinjiang residents' ID numbers.

"Behind each design, there is a story," Wei said. "The design inspiration is mainly from our life experience."

Wei, a high school dropout, was working as a gym manager in Urumqi, the regional capital, when he and graphic designer Muradil decided to branch out on their own in May 2015.

At first they provided design services to companies, creating logos, posters and uniforms, which

helped them build contacts, particularly in the textiles industry.

The duo produced their first self-branded product in August that year after the demolition of the city's Nanmen Square to make way for a subway station. An underground mall below the square had been a popular hangout for young people.

"The square was a landmark and an important place in our childhood memory," Wei said, adding that to commemorate the event they printed 50 black T-shirts with the word Nanmen and a white triangle, representing the pyramid that once stood on the square. The shirts quickly sold out, which inspired them to do more.

Over the next year, Wei and Muradil released 10 designs — in addition to producing work for other companies — and asked local hip-hop artists to wear them at concerts.

After making a name for themselves, they registered their Rameyda brand as a company in August 2016.

They sold their products, priced from 50 to 150 yuan (\$7.28 to \$21.84), through WeChat and the Taobao online marketplace, and opened a store in Urumqi last year. Most customers are age 18 to 30, mainly college students, they said.

Muradil said young people in Xinjiang like hip-hop culture, and the design style has a good market in the region.

"I'm happy to know that many people in other provinces across China like our designs, too," said Wei, who added that their T-shirts flew off the shelves during an exhibition in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

The Rameyda team now includes 20 people, allowing the company to focus on organizing events for fans, such as rock climbing and motorbike riding, and activities that promote the protection of wildlife.

"It's difficult for small brands like us to survive in the market, and many have come along and produced some items and then quit," Wei said. "But we're happy



A Rameyda shirt features a Kazak musical instrument, the *dombra*, being played by a figure in a diver's helmet. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

that we've kept our business going, although we never seem to make ends meet.

"It's because we always try new ideas and expand. We're getting used to new challenges. The bigger they are, the more excited we feel."

Contact the writers at
zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn