

# Upgrading skills to boost job prospects

Workers get opportunity to broaden expertise as colleges expand courses

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The State Council's decision to upgrade workforce skills and expand enrollment for vocational colleges has been lauded by experts as a move that will beef up employment and speed up economic transformation.

The cabinet decided at an executive meeting on April 30 that the country will use 100 billion yuan (\$14.8 billion) from the balance of the Unemployment Insurance Fund to launch a campaign to improve the skills of workers, according to a statement released after the meeting.

The measures, coupled with a plan to expand vocational college enrollment by 1 million this year, are part of the central government's efforts to implement the employment-first policy and underpin industrial upgrading and high-quality development, the statement said.

Chen Yu, director of the China Institute for Occupation Research at Peking University, said the measure unveiled by the State Council is aimed primarily to solve the problem of structural mismatch in the job market.

"With many people struggling to find jobs, many employers are faced with difficulties in recruiting the right person," he said.

The growth of new business types and industries has given rise to new positions, and a sizable amount of the workforce are struggling to adapt to the new demands in the job market, he noted.

"The only solution to the problem is to offer more training to the workers to enable them to better adapt to the new technologies and new positions," he said.

The State Council meeting rolled out specific training for skilled workers to accommodate the needs of key groups of people for employment and those having difficulty in landing jobs. A total of 15 million training sessions will be conducted this year, with over 50 million such sessions set to be offered in the next three years.

The government will support companies, especially micro and small enterprises, in carrying out vocational training, and help struggling companies through employee upgrading to switch jobs, the statement said.

The government will encourage vocational schools to expand enrollment, and support companies and private actors in providing vocational training. In government procurement of services, private institutions will enjoy the same treatment as their publicly run counterparts, the statement added.

According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, China added 3.24 million new jobs in urban areas in the first quarter, and the registered urban unem-



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ployment rate was kept at 3.67 percent, below the official target of 4.5 percent for this year.

Meanwhile, the meeting on April 30 also came up with concrete measures to boost enrollment of vocational colleges, set out in the Government Work Report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang in March.

The premier said in the report that stepping up the development of modern vocational education is a strategic move that will not only ease current employment pressure, but also help to address the shortage of highly-skilled personnel.

According to the statement, the increased enrollment will tilt in favor of quality vocational colleges, high-demand disciplines and poverty-stricken areas.

The expanded enrollment will primarily cover professions including preschool education, nursing, domestic services, aged care and modern service industries.

The country is set to organize another round of vocational college applications this year targeting high school and secondary vocational school graduates, veterans, laid-off workers, rural migrant workers and

modern professional farmers. Veterans, laid-off workers, rural migrant workers and modern professional farmers are not required to sit exams for academic subjects but for professional adaptability or skills organized by vocational schools, according to the statement.

The meeting also called for intensified work to align academic diplomas and vocational certificates as well as efforts to see that vocational college graduates enjoy the same treatment as university graduates in seeking urban residency, employment and promotion.

Chen Yunchao, vice-president of Chongqing Technology and Business University, said the expanded enrollment of vocational colleges breaks old conventions in that it included groups such as veterans, migrant workers and modern professional farmers as enrollment targets.

"However, it will also bring about challenges to the higher education system, especially in finding the right students," he said. "For the colleges, it is important to offer them effective and targeted training programs tailored to their social and life experiences."

## POLICY RESPONSE

# Family doctors, construction site dust, pets among key issues

By XU WEI

Several ministry-level departments, including those for health, public security, housing and urban-rural development, have responded recently to issues of public concern.

## Doctor service gets boost



The National Health Commission has called for efforts to improve the quality of services for family doctors and expand their coverage in a notice issued on April 30.

The commission said that the coverage of family doctor services must be expanded, and the medical service capacities at the primary level should be improved.

More nursing staff at the primary level will be encouraged to offer services at homes, and more training sessions will be conducted for the

staff to focus on chronic diseases, rehabilitation, and special care.

For poorer areas, authorities must improve their health management capacities of rural doctors for major chronic diseases, the notice said.

For patients with multiple chronic diseases, the notice called for family doctors to meet their requirements for outpatient services in one go to improve the efficiency of services.

The commission also required local authorities to use the internet and mobile applications to provide services including consultations, health management and enquiries.

## Building site dust targeted

The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development has urged more measures to control and prevent dust from construction sites and roads in a notice pub-



lished on Thursday.

The ministry called for proactive steps to reduce and prevent dust at construction sites.

Construction units should list the cost of dust prevention into the cost of projects, and made clear the related responsibilities for project contractors.

Local authorities must step up oversight on construction sites and rectify wrongdoings in a timely manner, the notice said.

The ministry also required more dust prevention measures on roads as it sets a target for 70 percent of city roads to be cleaned by street sweepers before the end of next year.

## Pet custom clearing eased

The General Administration of Customs has streamlined custom clearance procedures for pets entering the country starting this month.

According to a new regulation issued by the authority, dogs or cats from designated countries or regions that carry valid electronic chips and pass on-site inspections will no longer be subject to extended quarantines.

The countries or regions

include New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Hawaii and Guam, Jamaica, Iceland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Cyprus, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan and Singapore, as well as from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

Valid reports showing rabies antibody test results by authorized laboratories are needed for pet dogs or cats entering China from countries or regions that are not on the approved list.

The administration had authorized 62 laboratories in 37 countries to conduct the antibody tests as of last month.

For dogs helping people with disabilities bearing valid electronic chips, quarantine can be waived if they pass on-site checks and their carriers can produce user certificates and professional training certificates.

In other circumstances, pets entering China are subject to a 30-day quarantine in designated areas.

## Holiday tips for travelers

The Ministry of Public Security



acted to ensure travelers safe trips during the May Day holiday, which started on Wednesday.

In a statement on Wednesday, the ministry said it has issued a warning to the public over the risks including peak flows on expressways and around tourist sites, heavy rainfall, and traffic violations.

The railway police have also vowed to conduct more security checks with more personnel and facilities involved, and more frequent controls in densely populated areas. Random inspections of suspicious luggage or items will also be made on trains bound for popular tourist destinations including Beijing and Shanghai, the police said.

More officers will be arranged to watch out for potential safety hazards from natural conditions, such as heavy rainfall and geological disasters, according to the police.

## Policy digest

### Online services improved

China will move forward with a national integrated platform for online government services to better the business environment and make it easier for the public to access administrative services, according to a decree published by the State Council on April 30.

The decree, signed by Premier Li Keqiang, said the country will accelerate the development of a more standardized, centralized and interconnected online platform for administrative services, and see that administrative services offered with the same standard nationwide can be accessed at each stage of services.

The national integrated online platform, comprising of government platforms of the State, central government departments and local governments, will also facilitate information sharing and coordinate services among regions and departments at various levels.

The development of the national platform will be led by the General Office of the State Council, and provincial authorities are in charge of the development and operations of platforms at their own levels, the decree said.

All government services, unless otherwise specified by law and regulation or involving State secrets, shall be processed online in line with the procedures determined by the State Council, the decree noted.

Government service providers must not require enterprises or individuals to submit information that is already accessible through information sharing. Neither are they allowed to put the submitted information to other use.

The decree also confirms the legal validity of electronic signatures, seals, certificates and archives. The decree came into effect the day it was made public.

### State capital reform

China will reform the management mechanism of State-owned capital with measures rolled out to further cut executive interference in State-owned enterprises and prevent the loss of State assets.

According to a plan issued by the State Council on April 28, SOEs will be granted more autonomy to run their businesses, and the boundary of power and responsibilities between representatives of State capital and SOEs will be clarified. The plan is aimed to enable the State-owned capital to become stronger, better and bigger and improve the vitality, control, influence and risk prevention capacities of the State-owned sectors.

A list of State capital representatives' oversight powers and responsibilities should be drafted. State capital representatives' ideas will be embodied through directors, who are appointed according to the equity that State capital holds, the plan said.

The plan also stressed the importance of enhancing the executive capacities of enterprises through improving corporate governance and capital management capacities.

An online real-time oversight platform for State-owned capital will be established to integrate supervision resources and to enable comprehensive oversight over State-owned capital.

### Veterans get extra help

China will make efforts to solve difficulties faced by some retired soldiers in securing social insurance coverage, according to a guideline published on April 28.

The guideline, jointly issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, is aimed to help retired soldiers who had not participated in the social insurance program or had stopped paying for the program because they had no stable jobs and income.

It was issued to ensure retired soldiers enjoy benefits proportional to their contributions and that their interests are fully guaranteed.

A slew of measures will be adopted to help retired soldiers resume their social insurance payments, with those who have not been covered by the social insurance to be allowed to take part in the program.

The guideline also made it clear that organizations in charge of their resettlement will make up the unpaid amount of social insurance jointly with the veterans if their former employers no longer exist.