

CHINA

Joyous gathering

Miao people in colorful traditional attire prepare to sing and dance during Lusheng Festival in Gulong town, Huangping county, Guizhou province, on Sunday. Celebrated every year from the 27th to 29th day of the ninth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, the festival — listed as a provincial intangible cultural heritage in 2007 — features the *lusheng*, a reed-pipe wind instrument, and is held to pray for good weather and a bountiful harvest.

QIAO QIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY



Exercise of police powers to be monitored to help enforcement

New oversight system, tech will ensure transparency and accountability

By **YANG ZEKUN**
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China's public security authorities are stepping up efforts to build a closed-loop oversight system and accelerate digital transformation to ensure police powers are exercised in a standardized, transparent and accountable manner.

Officials from the Ministry of Public Security said at a news conference on Monday that the goal is to prevent enforcement problems at the source and safeguard citizens' rights.

Hao Yunhong, director of the ministry's Legal Affairs Bureau, said public security agencies are strengthening oversight across the enforcement process — from filing and investigating cases to coordinating with judicial proceedings.

New institutional mechanisms, such as rules on bail pending trial and reviews on whether detention is necessary, have been introduced to set clearer standards for police work. "These measures help officers understand what to do, how to do it and to what extent, ensuring that

every action is carried out in accordance with the law," Hao said.

To improve consistency in case handling, the ministry has pushed reforms to standardize how cases are received, recorded and filed. Case-reporting centers have been set up nationwide to ensure that all legitimate complaints are promptly registered and processed according to law.

Legal affairs departments under public security authorities now review every criminal case and coordinate with procuratorates to ensure proper handling. About 89,000 legal officers have been assigned to grassroots police stations nationwide, Hao said.

As a result, the number of cases supervised by procuratorates for filing fell 71 percent year-on-year in 2024, while the rates of declined arrests and nonprosecution each dropped by about 6 percent.

Under the law, procuratorates oversee the case-registration activities of public security organs to ensure compliance with statutory procedures and address any irregularities.

Hao said all case-related information must now be entered into a unified enforcement information system, allowing every stage of a case to be tracked online. This, he said, has helped shift law enforcement from "post-incident correction" to "pre-incident prevention".

The ministry has also launched targeted operations to address public concerns over enforcement irregularities, including a nationwide initiative to regulate law enforcement involving businesses. These efforts have curbed profit-driven or cross-jurisdictional enforcement and ensured fairer treatment for enterprises, according to the ministry.

China has built 3,266 law enforcement and case-management centers covering all cities, transforming police work from a dispersed model into a more centralized, standardized and efficient system.

Chen Min, deputy director of the Legal Affairs Bureau, said that in principle all criminal cases and major administrative cases should now be handled within these centers. The new model, she said, has significantly improved efficiency and strengthened human rights protections.

The centers also offer one-stop

support services, including medical examinations, postal and courier access, injury assessments, price appraisals and facilities for protecting minors.

Since the centers were put into use, no major enforcement-related incidents have been reported. In Jiangsu province, Chongqing and other regions, case handling efficiency has risen by more than 30 percent, Chen said.

Technology is also reshaping how police work. New digital tools now support electronic evidence collection, remote testimony, electronic signatures and intelligent transcription.

Police officers have been equipped with more than 1.3 million body cameras, ensuring that case filing, on-site operations and interrogations are recorded in real time. "We encourage police officers to become accustomed to enforcing the law under camera surveillance," Hao said.

Intelligent monitoring systems are used to detect unregistered or delayed cases, providing automatic reviews, early warnings and real-time corrective feedback to ensure that legitimate complaints are handled promptly and according to law.

Legal efforts bolstered to protect wild birds

By **CAO YIN**
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The Chinese government and judicial authorities are stepping up efforts to protect wild birds, pledging stronger legal measures to preserve ecosystems.

The Supreme People's Court, working with the Ministry of Public Security and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, recently released five landmark cases that underscore the country's crackdown on illegal hunting and trafficking of wild birds. The cases also aim to dispel public misconceptions on bird conservation.

"Enhancing bird protection is essential for preserving biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance. It is also crucial for ecosystem stability, the well-being of future generations, and the sustainable development of the nation," said Wu Zhaoxiang, chief judge of the SPC's Environment and Resources Division.

One of the released cases involved a man surnamed Dong, who was detained by police in Panshan county, Liaoning province, in September 2021 after bird conservation volunteers reported him for using glue nets and other tools to capture wild birds. Police found he had caught more than 880 birds, including a large number of yellow-breasted buntings, a national first-class protected species.

A Panshan court ruled that Dong's actions constituted the crime of harming precious wildlife. He was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined 30,000 yuan (\$4,221).

The SPC said wild birds are vital to ecosystems and noted that yellow-breasted buntings have suffered severe population declines in

recent years due to excessive hunting. The species is included in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species, and the Chinese Wildlife Protection Law explicitly bans its hunting and consumption.

The court said the strict penalty helps curb the illegal hunting and eating of endangered wild birds and promotes public awareness of conservation.

Li Chunjie, an official with the Ministry of Public Security, said police maintain a "zero tolerance" approach toward those who use nets, snares, modified drones and other tools to harm birds. He urged police nationwide to strengthen information-sharing and make full use of digital tools in enforcement, with a focus on people who sell birds online.

Tian Xinze, deputy chief judge of the SPC's Environment and Resources Division, said the highlighted cases serve as public education. "Some people mistakenly believe that common ornamental birds like the Chinese hwamei can be freely hunted and traded, but as of 2021, it has been classified as a nationally protected wild animal in China, meaning both hunting and trading of this species are prohibited," he said.

He added that online videos showing illegal bird hunting spread harmful misconceptions, leading some viewers to believe that hunting for nourishment or consumption is acceptable.

"However, from a legal standpoint, this notion is completely wrong. Regardless of the purpose, illegal hunting of wildlife can damage the ecosystem, and those involved must be held accountable and face legal consequences," Tian said.

Balloons rise



Hot-air balloons participating in the 2025 National Hot Air Balloon Open Tournament fly over Wuyi county, Zhejiang province, on Sunday. The weeklong event will see 90 ballooning enthusiasts from across the country pilot 30 hot-air balloons and compete for the top six places. ZHANG JIANCHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Ex-Heilongjiang official sentenced for bribery

Li Xiangang, a former deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress, was sentenced to life imprisonment for taking bribes and embezzlement, according to a report by China Central Television on Monday. According to the court, from 2006 to 2024, Li took advantage of his positions as mayor and Party secretary of Shuangyashan city in Heilongjiang, secretary-general of the Heilongjiang Provincial Government, and deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress, to seek benefits for companies and individuals in business operations, work promotions, and case execution. In return, he received money and property totaling 117 million yuan (\$16.46 million).

Potala Palace in Xizang to close on Mondays

The Potala Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site located in Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, will implement a Monday closure policy effective Dec 1, according to an announcement released on its official website on Monday. This measure, aimed at strengthening the protec-

tion of its cultural relics and ancient architecture, enhancing infrastructure maintenance and improving services and tourist experience, aligns with common practices in the museum industry, said its administration office. The closure will apply every Monday, except on national statutory holidays. Built in the 7th century, the Potala Palace attracted over 2 million domestic and international tourists in 2024.

High-speed rail to link Xi'an, Yan'an soon

A high-speed railway line connecting Xi'an, the capital of China's Shaanxi province, with Yan'an in northern Shaanxi has entered its trial operation phase, marking a significant step toward full operation. The trial run commenced on Monday morning when test train 55302 departed from Xi'an toward Yan'an. As the first high-speed railway in northern Shaanxi's old revolutionary base area, this 299.8-kilometer project is designed for speeds of up to 350 km per hour and slashes the journey duration between Xi'an and Yan'an from 2.5 hours to one hour. Yan'an holds profound historical significance — as it served as the base of the Communist Party of China leadership between 1937 and 1947.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Snow leopard being restored to Helan Mountains

YINCHUAN — The silent cliffs of the Helan Mountains, once devoid of a legendary presence, are now being reclaimed. More than half a century after vanishing from northwestern China, the snow leopard is making a cautious comeback.

Chinese scientists and authorities have launched a bold conservation initiative to spearhead a groundbreaking reintroduction project. Their goal is not only to restore a local population but also to establish a vital corridor to bridge the fragmented habitats of the northern and southern snow leopard populations.

"A total of seven snow leopards now roam the Helan Mountains in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region," said Zhu Yachao of the Ningxia Helan Mountain National Nature Reserve Administration, while monitoring the movements of the big cats on a screen. "One arrived on its own, while the other six were relocated here since 2021."

Pointing to the overlapping territories on the map, he noted: "The four we've released have staked out their home ranges. This overlap is a promising sign — it means they could encounter each other and, hopefully, breed."

At a snow leopard conservation base, two more candidates are undergoing "adaptation training". Their vast, naturalistic enclosure, complete with man-made rock dens, serves as a classroom for the wild. On a monitor, the two felines can be seen dozing peacefully, conserving energy for the night ahead.

"These six leopards were all healthy individuals from Gansu province, and Xizang and Xinjiang autonomous regions," Zhu explained. Before their release, they must graduate from one of the reserve's four massive training grounds, each span-



A snow leopard undergoes adaptation training at the Ningxia Helan Mountain National Nature Reserve in Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on Oct 24. YANG ZHISEN / XINHUA

ning over 20,000 square meters, where they spend months relearning the skills of a top predator.

The training process is a carefully orchestrated science. Zhang Jingwen, a veterinarian from Beijing, designs individualized "training menus". She has a particular soft spot for "Bachug", a young male snow leopard rescued in Xizang last May.

"He was found alone, raised by herders, and was unable to hunt properly in the wild," Zhang said. "We're reawakening his instincts step by step and hope for a spring release."

The snow leopard serves as a barometer for the health of the entire high-altitude ecosystem. Globally, their populations are under threat due to habitat loss and climate change, which led the International Union for Conservation of Nature to classify them as "vulnerable".

The Helan Mountains, once a key habitat for snow leopards, had not recorded a confirmed sighting of the species since the 1950s. The establishment of the Helan Mountains National Nature Reserve in 1988

marked a turning point. By 2018, the blue sheep population had rebounded to 40,000, signaling the ecosystem's recovery.

"But without a top predator, the booming blue sheep population began overgrazing the vegetation," Zhu noted. "We needed the snow leopard back to restore the ecological balance."

Then, in September 2020, an infrared camera trap captured an image of a snow leopard. "After nearly 70 years, it was unbelievable," Zhu recalled. "That single image confirmed the mountains were ready, and it accelerated our entire reintroduction project."

However, reintroducing an apex predator is a monumental task, with few successful examples globally. For a specialized species like the snow leopard, there is no established playbook.

"This is truly frontier science," said Shi Kun, a snow leopard expert from Beijing Forestry University who is involved in the project. "The Chinese team is writing the manual with each step, validating everything through trial and observation."

After rigorous preparations, the first translocated snow leopard was released in September 2021. Now, each released cat is tracked via satellite collars, and a network of over 500 infrared cameras blankets the range, providing an intimate look into the lives of these elusive felines.

"The data is encouraging, indicating they are adapting well," Zhu said. "Our short-term goal of establishing a founding population has been achieved. Now, we will focus on the medium-term goal of ensuring their natural reproduction and stable growth."

Recent data shows China's snow leopard population has surged from approximately 2,500 in 2013 to about 5,000 to date, with their habitat expanding to over 2 million square kilometers.

The implications of this success reach far beyond these mountains. Shi sees a grander geographical vision.

"The Helan Mountains are a crucial linchpin on a potential corridor connecting the world's two major snow leopard populations," he explained. "By establishing a stable population here, we are creating a vital 'relay station' between these two vast but isolated ecological habitats. This could facilitate migration and genetic exchange, counteracting the habitat fragmentation that threatens their long-term survival."

"Protecting the snow leopard is more than just saving a single species," Shi noted. "It's about safeguarding the integrity and stability of an entire ecosystem. In a profound way, the fate of the snow leopard is intertwined with our own."

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