

Drugs from overseas to get on fast track

China will continue to intensify international exchanges and cooperation in drug supervision to promote the domestic application of new medicines developed overseas to meet demand, China's top drug regulator said on Thursday.

The drug authorities will also encourage the domestic pharmaceutical industry to improve its capacity and competitiveness to promote the international visibility of Chinese medical and pharmaceutical products, Wu Zhen, vice-minister of the China Food and Drug Administration, said at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Meeting on Drug Regulatory Collaboration in Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

On June 19, the administration announced it joined the International Council on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use, which focuses on guidelines for worldwide pharmaceutical development.

"Joining the council means the Chinese drug regulatory authorities, pharmaceutical industry and research and development institutes will gradually adopt internationally accepted standards and guidelines, actively participate in the formulation of international rules and promote quicker domestic application of new drugs developed in other countries," Wu said.

China is the second-largest market for pharmaceutical products in the world. Annual revenues of the pharmaceutical industry in China exceed 2.5 trillion yuan (\$368.6 billion), and annual exports of pharmaceutical products exceed 13.5 billion yuan, Wu said.

"China has great pharmaceutical production capacity, so it can provide support to the health of the people in BRICS nations and other countries," he said.

BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The administration has adopted a series of reform measures on the review and approval of new drugs to accelerate approvals and meet the needs of domestic patients in recent years, Wu said.

The authorities will encourage medical institutions to give priority to new drugs that have proved effective and are reasonably priced, and support the inclusion of such new drugs in the list of drugs whose cost can be reimbursed by basic medical insurance programs, according to a draft regulation released by the administration in May.

Certain types of drugs and medical equipment already in use in other countries, such as those for curing rare diseases, can also gain priority approval for sale in the domestic market, the draft said.

As of the end of June, the administration had established routine work relations with drug regulatory authorities in 66 countries, and signed 42 agreements for bilateral cooperation with 28 countries and regions, said Yuan Lin, chief of the administration's international cooperation department.

Interview with David Koch, Sunrise – Seven Network

DAVID KOCH:

Prime Minister, welcome.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning.

DAVID KOCH:

Are people going to die this winter because of rising energy costs?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Kochie, I absolutely hope not. I can assure you we are doing everything we can to bring downward pressure on energy prices. My government is taking the unprecedented action of limiting exports of gas from the east coast of Australia to ensure that there is adequate gas supply in the market, because the principal reason for the recent increase in energy prices has been the big increase of the price of gas and that has been driven by a shortage because more of the gas is being exported and there is not a mark now for the domestic market.

DAVID KOCH:

Okay, because the average Australian will be saying we are one of the biggest energy exporters in the world of coal, gas, uranium. So you are saying we got ahead of ourselves and we have actually sold more than we should have-

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes.

DAVID KOCH:

And not keeping enough back here?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, I always say you have got to take a practical approach to energy. You know there has been too much politics, too much ideology, I'm focussed on economics and engineering. Now what has happened is the previous Labor government, both in Queensland and nationally, federally allowed this big export gas operation to commence from the east coast in Queensland, without paying any attention to the amount of gas that was needed to be retained for the domestic market.

Now, I am cleaning up that mess. I'm taking this unprecedented action – it is very heavy-handed – to restrict gas exports to such an extent as to ensure that we have enough gas for our domestic market.

DAVID KOCH:

Okay, so how will that effect prices? Will this measure drop prices 10 per cent or five per cent?

PRIME MINISTER:

I can't predict how much it will impact on residential-

DAVID KOCH:

Will it come down?

PRIME MINISTER:

It will certainly put downward pressure on energy prices because what is happening is that the price of gas is setting the price of electricity, and of course gas of course is a big part of our energy sources directly when we use gas for heating and cooking and so forth.

There has been a real failure of policy and I am cleaning that up, I'm dealing with it. I am taking some tough, strong measures, unprecedented measures so Australians know that I am getting onto that problem and dealing with it.

DAVID KOCH:

That's great news. Craig Kelly though – coming out and saying more people are going to die. The Greens say that's scaremongering and that you should sack him.

PRIME MINISTER:

Look, everyone is entitled to their opinion. Clearly people who cannot afford to keep themselves warm, particularly if they are old, during the winter obviously face real challenges. What I would just say is that I recognise, we understand household energy costs, power bills have doubled over the last 10 years for the average household, that is being driven by a number of factors but the most recent rises have been driven by the price of gas.

Now, I am taking immediate action to deal with gas supply right now.

DAVID KOCH:

Good.

PRIME MINISTER:

And longer term, we are putting in case the big infrastructure like Snowy Hydro 2.0 that is going to provide energy security in the future but that will take five or six years to build.

DAVID KOCH:

Sure.

PRIME MINISTER:

That is not going to be ready in the next month.

DAVID KOCH:

In the meantime cheaper gas hopefully and that will flow through to lower prices.

PRIME MINISTER:

To bringing gas prices down. They are already coming down. They are already coming down but we have got to bring them down to a fair, global price so that we are not – historically, you know, until recently, we were paying more for our gas in Australia than the customers of our gas were paying for it in Japan.

DAVID KOCH:

I know. Ridiculous.

PRIME MINISTER:

That is how bad the market had got and I'm fixing it. I'm dealing with it with tough measures. A lot of people have criticised and said they are too heavy-handed, but I will stop, you know there is nothing that will stand in my way in delivering a fair energy outcome for Australians – whatever it takes. That's what we need to do.

DAVID KOCH:

Good. Love the tough talk.

You are also today announcing major tech companies will be forced to hand over encrypted messages of terrorists. Are you expecting a fight to get that through because civil libertarians are saying how do we make sure that there is a line in the sand with just terrorists and not the average Australian?

PRIME MINISTER:

We have the right now to get the cooperation from the telephone companies, from the telcos. What we don't have is the legal right to get that sort of cooperation from the internet companies like Facebook, or WhatsApp or Telegram and so forth, and Google.

So what we've got to do is modernise our laws. We cannot allow the internet to be used as a place for terrorists and child molesters and people who peddle child pornography and drug traffickers to hide in the dark. Those dark places online must be illuminated by the law.

DAVID KOCH:

Yep.

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm not talking about giving intelligence agencies backdoors or anything underhand. This is simply saying the rule of law must prevail online as it does off-line.

DAVID KOCH:

Are you getting push back from the tech companies?

PRIME MINISTER:

In America, Kochie, there is a very strong libertarian sort of anti-government sense. It is quite different to other countries, and they don't – remember that case with the Apple phone, the San Bernardino terrorist, and Apple wouldn't unlock the phone? Now the FBI managed to get it unlocked otherwise.

But you know, really the message we secured from the G20 and Australia took the lead in this, we had a united, unanimous communique on counter-terrorism. And what we had said is the rule of law must prevail online as well as offline and we expect those big internet companies to ensure that their platforms – wonderful and magnificent, ingenious though they are – cannot be used by people to hide their plots to commit acts of terrorism or commit criminal acts of a kind we have discussed.

DAVID KOCH:

Okay. Well you know all about it – you helped to setup the first internet company here in Australia, OzEmail-

PRIME MINISTER:

Well one of the first big ones, yep, that's right.

DAVID KOCH:

Yep, okay.

Big moves in the United States to impeach Donald Trump, the American

President, has found a supporter in John Howard. Take a look.

HON JOHN HOWARD OM AC – RECORDING:

The style of President Trump is unusual, it's different, there's no point in saying otherwise. But that should not blind us to the substance of his Presidency. And he has done a number of things as President that I think are very praiseworthy.

DAVID KOCH:

You have just come back from the G20, spent a bit of time with Donald Trump, rode in the Beast-

PRIME MINISTER:

In the Beast, that's right! Yes.

DAVID KOCH:

I'll ask you about that.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, Lucy and I and Melania and Donald in the Beast.

DAVID KOCH:

What do you think about him? He seems quite awkward and is this threat of impeachment a reality?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I can't comment on the US domestic politics but all of my dealings with him have been very frank, very informal, he is a businessman. We had a very good discussion you know in his SCIF – the Secure Communications Information Facility, which is like a large steel broom cupboard that presidents have there.

DAVID KOCH:

What?

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm serious.

DAVID KOCH:

Really?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah.

DAVID KOCH:

Like Maxwell Smart has a cone of silence – he has this room?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yep. It is like a small room, steel room and we had a meeting with, a very informal meeting with the President, myself, President Macron of France, Theresa May, Mathias Cormann-

DAVID KOCH:

All in the steel room together?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah – Gary Cohn – all in this steel room.

We went through a whole range of issues – some trade issues, some issues about the communique. He is a very practical businessman.

DAVID KOCH:

Right.

PRIME MINISTER:

I find him very easy to deal with. He is very frank, very straightforward. I am a guy that has been in business most of my life, so has he. We may not agree all the time, obviously, but nonetheless I find him easy to deal with.

DAVID KOCH:

Okay.

PRIME MINISTER:

You know easy in the sense of being frank and forthright and practical.

DAVID KOCH:

You know where you stand.

PRIME MINISTER:

You know where you stand. Yeah, that's it.

DAVID KOCH:

Okay. Thanks for joining us, good luck with reducing power prices.

PRIME MINISTER:

That's the goal, that is the goal.

DAVID KOCH:

We need that. We'll keep watching.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you.

[ENDS]

[Joint statement by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk on the passing away of Liu Xiaobo](#)

It is with deep sadness that we have learned of the death of Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and one of the most prominent human rights defenders in China. We send our most sincere condolences and respect to his wife, Ms Liu Xia, his family and friends.

Liu Xiaobo was one of the authors of Charter 08, calling for peaceful democratic reform and rule of law in China. His personal intervention during the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

We consistently expressed our opposition to his conviction and asked for his release. Most recently, we urged the Chinese authorities to respect his wish to receive medical care in Germany. Unfortunately these calls were not heeded.

At this time, we appeal to the Chinese authorities to allow his wife, Ms Liu Xia and his family to bury Liu Xiaobo at a place and in a manner of their choosing, and to allow them to grieve in peace. We call on the authorities to remove all restrictions on the movement and communications of his family members and allow Ms Liu Xia and her brother Mr Liu Hui to leave China, if they wish to do so.

We reiterate the European Union's call for all prisoners of conscience in China to be released.

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Speakers confirmed include:

- An Taoiseach, the Irish Prime Minister
- Ylva Johansson, Swedish Minister for Employment
- Branko Milanovic, Lead Economist in the World Bank research group and visiting Professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, USA
- Luca Visentini, Secretary General, ETUC
- Frank Vandenbroucke, Former Belgian politician and academic
- Rob Scott, Senior Economist, Economic Policy Institute, Washington DC, USA

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