

# Thousands sent to fight new forest fire in Inner Mongolia



The fire broke out at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday in the Beidahe forest in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. [Photo/Xinhua]

A second big fire broke out in China's largest forest in the Greater Hinggan Mountains on the same day a cross-border fire from Russia was extinguished.

The fire broke out at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday in the Beidahe forest in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. More than 8,300 firefighters are working to extinguish the blaze, according to regional fire authorities.

By press time, the fire had engulfed about 50 square kilometers of forest. The firefighters – 2,590 of whom are armed police officers – and 12 helicopters have been sent.

Strong winds, mountainous terrain, and dry vegetation made the firefighting "extremely difficult", according to an official statement from the fire authorities.

The blaze was thought to be caused by a stoker employed at a forestry station who improperly disposed of ashes and other residue from a fire. The suspect is in custody, the State Forest Fire Prevention Headquarters said.

Wang Haizhong, deputy director of the general office of the headquarters, warned that over the next 10 days China will face an increasing risk of forest fires due to an expected rise in temperatures across the nation.

Wang was quoted in a Xinhua interview as saying that China still lags behind developed countries in terms of investment in forest fire prevention.

In some poorly prepared western provinces, he said, the expenditure on fire prevention was less than 10 cents per hectare of forest, while in the United States and Canada it can reach \$2 per hectare.

The temperature in Inner Mongolia this spring is higher than in previous years, posing a higher fire risk for the region's forests.

A cross-border fire broke out Sunday in another area. That fire was put out on Tuesday and cleanup is underway.

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## China to further promote diversified healthcare

The Chinese government plans to cultivate a large number of competitive private medical institutions to complete a diversified multi-layered healthcare system by 2020, which is expected to meet growing demands for customized services.

The target was set in a guideline that encourages private businesses to provide diversified medical services, which was approved at a State Council executive meeting presided over by Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday.

Encouraging private medical services is vital to developing a prosperous healthcare industry, unleashing the potential for domestic consumption and promoting economic restructuring and upgrading, the guideline said.

The premier said that the necessity to develop healthcare industries cannot be overestimated. Healthcare has great potential as people's lives are getting better, but is still in short supply. The key is to transform governmental functions and push forward administrative reforms, he said.

As one of the document's seven key tasks, the guideline eyes private businesses to set up and operate high-quality general clinics, which will offer customized services.

Support will be given to the private sector to create strongly competitive institutions with their own branding in subfields such as stomatology. The advantage of traditional Chinese medicines (TCM) should be fully utilized to offer services such as TCM-based healthcare and rehabilitative services.

The guideline encourages private medical institutions to provide services featuring advanced medical technologies. Customized services will be enhanced to offer value-added and ancillary services such as long-distance diagnoses. Business models integrating different sectors, such as medical services and nursing homes for seniors, will be promoted.

The guideline also aims to build industrial clusters for healthcare industries that meet high-end demands in and outside China.

The healthcare market will be further opened up with lower threshold of access as private medical institutions will be supported to introduce strategic investors and partners, and forge cooperation with public hospitals to boost diversified services, the guideline said.

In addition, the document envisages foreign investors as partners to establish high-level medical institutions in China through joint ventures and other forms of cooperation. China is open to overseas professionals, medical technologies, management experiences and operation models.

Premier Li called for making full use of the market dynamics to nurture an environment for different medical institutions to grow, compete and prosper. Private businesses will be encouraged to enhance the supply of healthcare products and services that cater to people's diversified demands, he added.

Since the start of a new round of medical reform in 2009, the State Council has been working to boost enthusiasm and participation of private businesses with a slew of guidelines, including one that encourages private capital to enter the healthcare sector in November 2010.

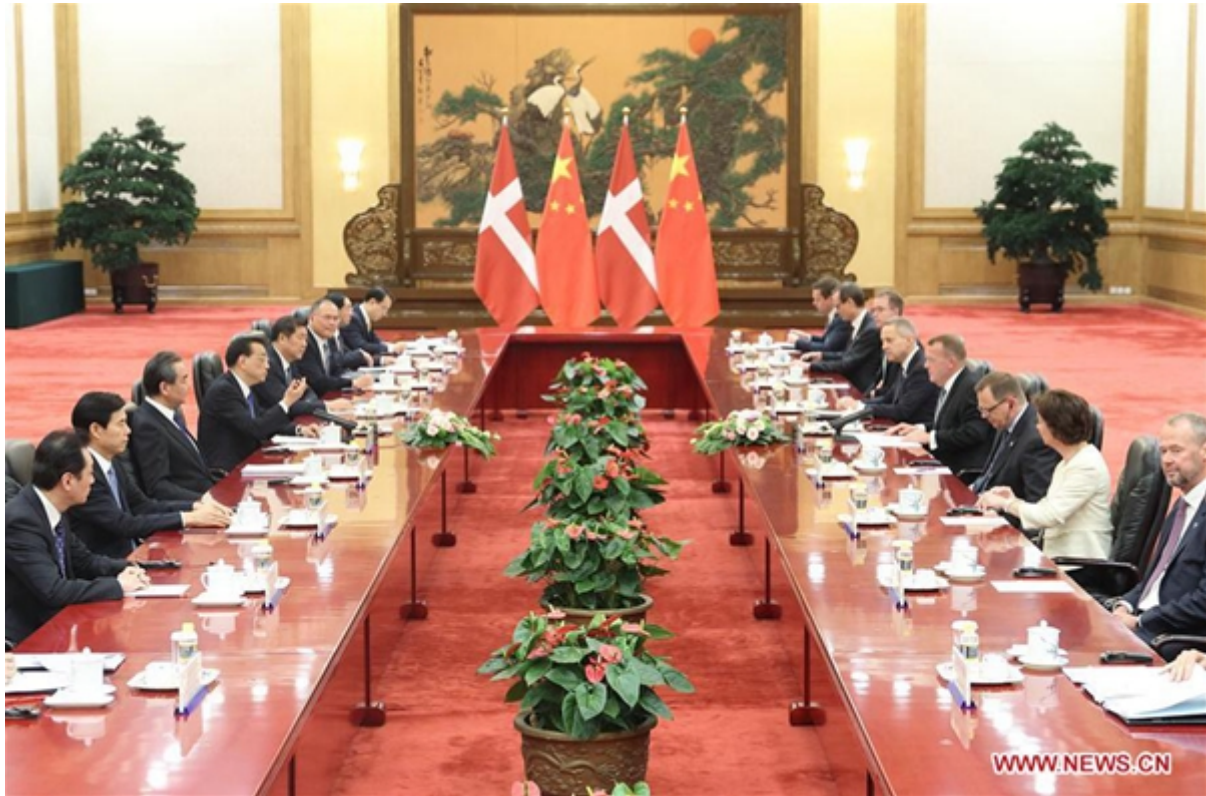
In March, the central government promulgated another guideline to further promote participation of private businesses in areas such as medical services.

The premier said the central government has emphasized equal treatment for state-owned and private capital. He called for pragmatic measures to invigorate the enthusiasm of private businesses to participate in remedying shortcomings in these fields.

Wednesday's meeting also approved another guideline, which aims to develop a system of health and medical tourism by 2030.

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## [China to send two giant pandas to Denmark](#)



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang holds talks with Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen in Beijing, capital of China, May 3, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

China said on Wednesday it would send two giant pandas to Denmark and work on panda protection during Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen's visit.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Rasmussen held talks on Wednesday afternoon and witnessed the signing of cooperation documents on food and drug supervision, quarantine and panda protection, among others.

It will be the first time China has sent pandas to Denmark.

"The Danish prime minister visited Chengdu to see the two giant pandas to be sent to the Copenhagen Zoo to live there for some time. But The arrival of the pandas in Denmark will depend on when Denmark gets (the Panda House) ready," Liu Weimin, an official with the Chinese Foreign Ministry told reporters after the talks.

"The giant pandas, as messengers of friendship, will play a positive role to our bilateral relations," Liu said.

Copenhagen Zoo revealed in March the design of the panda house. Construction will begin in November and take about a year, according to Copenhagen Zoo director and CEO Steffen Straede.

China and Denmark unveiled a plan to deepen cooperation from 2017 to 2020 and agreed to expand two-way trade and investment. Both sides identified agriculture, fisheries, food security, health and tourism as major areas for cooperation.

"China hopes to work with Denmark to advance bilateral practical cooperation and guide the economic globalization towards more inclusiveness and fairness



and promote liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment,” Li said.

Rasmussen said developing a comprehensive strategic partnership with China is a diplomatic priority for Denmark and invited Chinese investment to Denmark.

As a EU member, Denmark supports progress in the talks of EU-China investment treaty and contribute to the EU-China relations, Rasmussen said.

Before the talks, Li held a welcome ceremony for Rasmussen at the Great Hall of the People.

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## Xi stresses rule of law, cultivating legal talent



Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with teachers and students while inspecting China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, capital of China, May 3, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

President Xi Jinping on Wednesday called for more efforts in promoting rule of law and cultivating talent for the cause.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks on a visit to China University of Political Science and Law ahead of Youth Day on May 4.

Fully implementing the rule of law is essential and an important measure in adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, said Xi, while talking with senior law professors and students.

Implementation of the rule of law is impossible without a high-quality legal work force, said Xi.

Xi called on the country's law schools to enhance their research on basic issues in rule of law and related areas and provide theoretical support for socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

"We should have confidence in developing our own legal disciplines and contribute to global rule of law with Chinese wisdom and practice," Xi said.

China should take successful legal practices worldwide as reference, but not simply copy them, he said.

Xi also called for more exchange between scholars and legal professionals.

In cultivating legal talent, Xi highlighted training of students' virtue in addition to teaching legal knowledge.

He also told the country's officials at all levels to take the lead in studying and observing the law and promoting the respect of virtue and law among society.

On behalf of the CPC Central Committee, Xi extended greetings to young people, education workers, youth workers and those working for the rule of law nationwide.

The future of China and the Chinese nation belongs to the young, Xi said, noting that the younger generation's belief, spirit and quality matter to the country's development, vigor and core competitiveness.

He called on Chinese youth to uphold the belief in the country's "two centenary goals" and the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation and take their responsibilities in the cause.

He also expressed wishes that the youth would study hard and grow healthily.

While talking with the university's students, Xi called on them to follow the Party's leadership and make use of their talent to serve the country and the people after graduation.

"The youth period is a key period to foster one's scientific thinking," Xi said, noting that the students should integrate their thinking with their study, observation and practices.

He also called on young people to fully use their creative spirit and be courageous in exploring and seeking the truth.

“During one’s growth and endeavor, the young may gain success and joy, but may also face difficulties and pressure,” the president said. “One should treat the success and failure at the moment with a correct attitude, not slouch in prosperity and not be frustrated in adversity.”

Xi also ordered Party organizations in colleges and universities to perform their duties in both Party governance and school management and to pay attention to both ideological issues and Party building, urging them to solve practical problems of the teachers and students in their work, research, study and employment.

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## Interview with Daniela Ritorto, SBS

### **DANIELA RITORTO:**

Prime Minister, thank you for your time. Here we are a couple of days before the Budget and you’re about to board a plane to New York. Is this face-to-face meeting with Donald Trump that important you have to go now?

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

Look it is very important. The US Alliance is the absolute bedrock of Australia’s security and we have a lot of big issues to discuss.

North Korea – you understand the enormous risks that are being brought to bear by the reckless and dangerous conduct of the North Korean Government. There is a lot at stake.

And of course, in the Middle East we have over 1,700 personnel, Australian Defence Force personnel between the Iraq and Afghanistan – working there, side-by-side with the United States.

### **DANIELA RITORTO:**

Are you a little bit worried though it might be awkward – he did give you that ear bashing on the phone. This is the same President who refused to shake the hand of the German Chancellor, an ally. He’s unpredictable. It could all go pear shaped. Surely you’re a bit nervous?

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

I think the reports of that telephone conversation have been greatly exaggerated. I can say that it was, and indeed have been inaccurate – it was a frank, forthright and it was courteous. I look forward to a very valuable discussion and a first meeting in person with the President.

**DANIELA RITORTO:**

I made the point though about the President's unpredictability to make a more serious wider point. How does Australia chart a foreign policy course when you do get mixed messages from the President? Take North Korea – on the one hand we are talking about a military threat from the United States, on the next hand the President is talking about it would be an honour to meet Kim Jong-un.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I think the message is very clear that all parties, all nations should aim to resolve differences diplomatically.

The important thing is that the dangerous, reckless threatening conduct by North Korea comes to an end. Now that is going to require a concerted effort by the nations with the most leverage over North Korea and of course nobody has more leverage than China. That is why I have said and I know the President has echoed this, that the eyes of the world are on Beijing because Beijing has that very, has the overwhelming economic relationship with North Korea.

**DANIELA RITORTO:**

Paul Keating had some free advice for you last week. He said Australia needs to stop bowing down to the United States and chart a proper independent foreign policy course.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I don't accept the premise of his remark. Australia stands up for Australian values and Australian interests. But we always speak our mind. Australian Prime Ministers should always and I always do and I believe every Australian Prime Minister has done is speak up for Australia's interest and act in Australia's national interest. But our interests and those of the United States are very consistent.

**DANIELA RITORTO:**

Do you have a message for President Trump or are you there very much to listen over the next 48-hours?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It will be a discussion and it will be a discussion and a meeting and an engagement and I have had several calls with him already, but we, you know, we have a very strong alliance.

I cannot, and you know, I understand why these relationships get put into the context of personalities but the Alliance between Australia and the United States is not only of more than 60 years longstanding in a formal sense – nearly a century in reality – but it is built on millions of people-to-people links. Family links, business links, shared values, shared cultural values, a



shared history.

And so our national interests have been coinciding, working together in freedom's cause for all that time and Presidents and Prime Ministers have a very important role to play. Of course we do. But this is like a great tide, always, Australia and the United States, shared values and a shared destiny.

**DANIELA RITORTO:**

Okay, you said the relationship is not influenced by personally but surely President Trump is already having an influence on Australian policy. Suddenly we've got crack downs on foreign workers. We are making harder, you've announced it is going to be harder for Australians to become citizens. Is that sort of the Trump-era, the Trump-effect taking hold here?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Not at all.

You know, you've made an assertion that I don't accept. What I said about Australian values and Australian citizenship reflects views that I have held for many years. In fact, I made exactly those points when I was Chairman of the Republican Movement all those years ago. It is not the colour of your skin or your face or your ethnic background – we do not define our national identity by reference to race, religion, ethnicity. It is a truly political commitment of shared values.

And so what we are doing I think is paying greater respect to citizenship and is it unreasonable to say that people should have a competent understanding and ability to read and write and speak English to become an Australian citizen? How can you succeed? How can you progress effectively in Australia without English?

**DANIELA RITORTO:**

It takes time. Do you accept that? Some of the most successful people in this country came to this country without English skills.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, of course. Very successful people did come to Australia without English skills but they acquired them.

This is an empowering decision. It is an empowering policy. It is enabling people to do their best and succeed in Australia as citizens of this remarkable multicultural society. The most successful in the world.

**[ENDS]**