

Former senior legislator sentenced to 14 years

A former senior legislator in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province was sentenced Thursday to 14 years in prison for accepting bribes.

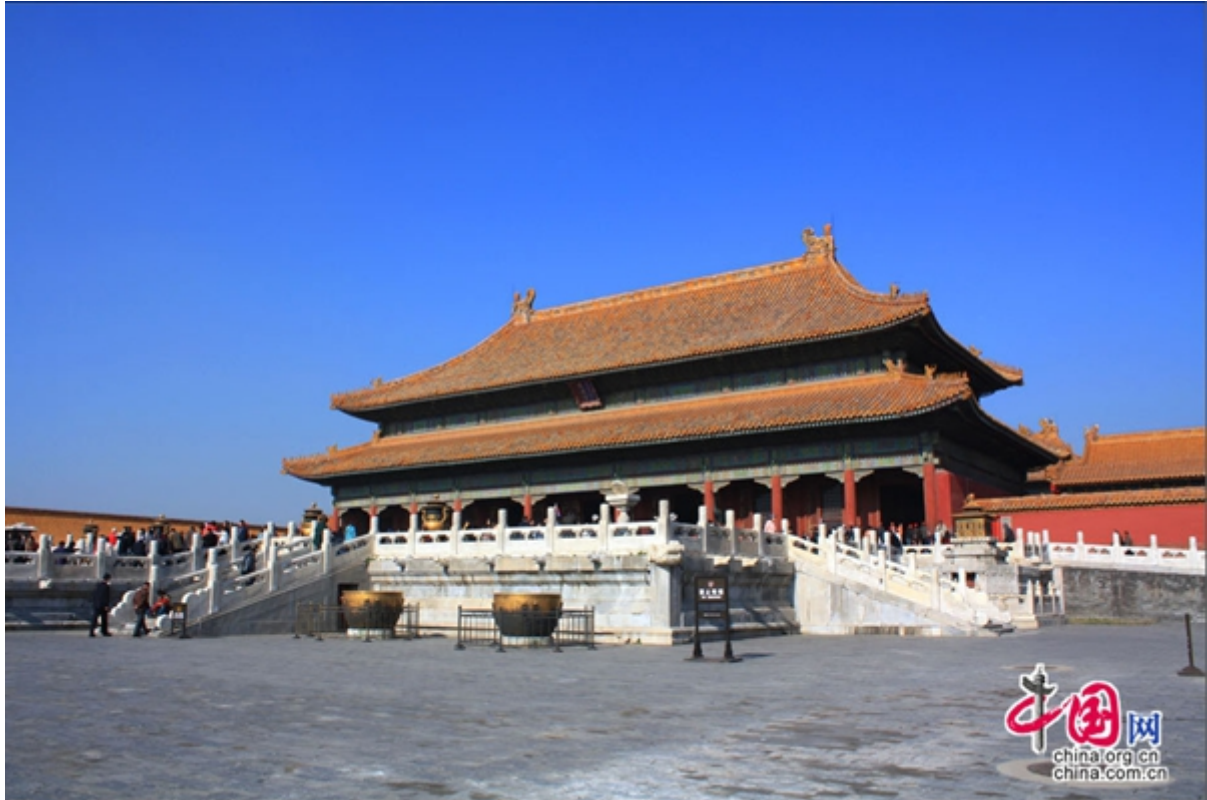
Gai Ruyin, former deputy head of the Standing Committee of Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress, was also fined 2 million yuan (about 291,300 U.S. dollars) and ordered to return all this ill-gotten gains by the First Intermediate People's Court of Tianjin, north China.

The court found Gai guilty of taking advantage of his various positions in Heilongjiang to help others secure projects, business opportunities and promotions from 2003 to 2015, according to a press release.

In return, he accepted money and property amounting to more than 23 million yuan personally or through other people, the court said.

The court decided to be lenient as Gai pleaded guilty, expressed remorse, returned his illegal gains and offered information about other crimes.

Palace Museum to set up emergency center



Palace Museum [Photo/China.org.cn]

A renovation project has started at Beijing's Palace Museum, which will include the establishment of an emergency center, according to a press release from the museum.

The project will see the museum's heating system fixed, and an emergency response office that will ensure safety at the complex during peak season.

Every year since 2012, more than 15 million people have visited the museum, also known as the Forbidden City. The number of visitors in 2016 hit 16 million.

The museum began to limit visitor numbers to 80,000 daily in June 2015, preventing extreme peaks in number of visitors.

The project will also see several managing offices built to ensure the safety of infrastructure and cultural relics.

The offices will monitor the museum's facilities and its over 1.8 million artifacts.

In the museum's 170,000-square-meter wooden building complex, there are 65 monitors and more than 2,300 surveillance cameras.

The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2019.

In 2020, the former imperial palace will celebrate its 600th anniversary. The museum has been a UNESCO World Heritage Listed site since 1987.

China to step up efforts to ensure campus safety

The State Council, China's cabinet, on Wednesday mapped out measures to ensure safety on campus, stressing that those who engage in violent crimes on campus will be severely punished.

"Ensuring safety in primary and middle schools and kindergartens should be a public security priority," said a statement released after a State Council executive meeting, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

Heads of schools and kindergartens should be held accountable for campus safety, it said, adding that the students should be taught to value life and the rights of others.

In addition to lessons on basic safety, the schools were told to hold earthquake, fire and anti-stampede drills.

Schools must have necessary security personnel, as well as CCTV systems and alarms, should conditions allow, according to the statement.

More police should be deployed around schools and kindergartens, it said.

The central government ordered the establishment of an effective mechanism to prevent and control bullying and violence, vowing to punish violators implicated in serious incidents.

School buildings must be up to national safety and quality standards, it said, adding that builders, designers and supervisors will be held accountable for life.

Education and public security agencies at all levels should designate departments to manage security risks on campus, while supervisory agencies were urged to step up supervision and checks on sanitation, disease prevention and food safety in schools.

Safety incidents on campus should be dealt with immediately and properly, and public concerns should be addressed in a timely manner, it said.

A draft regulation to enforce the Statistics Law was also passed during Wednesday's meeting.

Beijing to build more greenways

Beijing will build 500 kilometers of greenways in 2017, 80% of which will be waterfront greenways, according to a plan formulated by the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Landscape and Forestry.

The overall plan of greenway construction shows that the total length of the greenways in Beijing will reach about 1,240 kilometers. From 2014 to 2016, 710 kilometers of greenways has been built. Among the completed greenways, the waterfront greenways in the central urban area are the most popular.

The plan will give priority to the construction of greenways in the sub-center of Beijing and the waterfront greenways, which will reach 500 kilometers.

The greenways in the sub center will have a length of 150 kilometers, with a focus on the construction of a green belt around the sub-center for recreation.

Jingmi Diversion Canal Greenway covers 5 districts with a total length of about 134kilometers, which is the longest waterfront greenway in Beijing.

The pedestrian road along the water system can be the effective supplement to the municipal pedestrian road. The improved green land will be irrigated by the water in urban areas, which can effectively fulfill the water-saving target.

Beijing finds new way in financing transport system

The municipal government of Beijing has introduced new financing models to develop its metro and intercity transportation system.

The Chinese capital is currently building 20 metro lines across the city and six railways linking Beijing with nearby cities Zhangjiakou and Tangshan. The projects will cost approximately tens of billions of yuan.

The municipal government of Beijing introduced an ABO model (Authorize-Build-Operate) last year to finance the construction of the transport system, the first among Chinese cities to do so. The municipal government authorized Beijing Infrastructure Investment Co., Ltd. (BII) to bear responsibility for building Beijing's rail transit system.

Based on the agreement, the municipal government each year earmarks 29.5

billion yuan—about 40 percent of the total construction funds—to BII, while BII is responsible for the remaining funds.

BII has raised capital by bond financing, equity trusts, insurance funds and financial leasing, according to a company manager Zou Shunhua. The company has channeled social capitals for metro Line 14 and Line 16, which helped reduce 30 billion yuan of government funding.

BII is also responsible for the rail network in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. In late 2014, BII worked along with its counterparts in Tianjin and Hebei to establish the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Intercity Railway Investment Co., Ltd, which will build 24 railways in the region by the end of 2030.