

# Workplace accidents see decline

While China saw fewer total workplace accidents and deaths this year compared with 2016, the top work safety authority is asking enterprises to take precautions against risks that could grow in the year's final weeks as companies hurry to meet output targets.

According to the State Administration of Work Safety, both the number of accidents and the death toll in the first 10 months this year have decreased.

About 40,000 accidents occurred during the period, a decline of 26.9 percent year-on-year. Workplace accidents killed 29,000 people, down 20.4 percent from 2016.

The country saw 21 major accidents in which more than 10 people died, five fewer than last year. The death toll in those accidents also decreased by 110 to 293.

The declines are the result of tightened site inspections and stricter punishments, the administration said.

January to October saw year-on-year increases in fines collected from coal mines (93.1 percent), other mines (63.4 percent), hazardous chemical enterprises (65.1 percent) and industrial and trade enterprises (102.9 percent) for violations of safety regulations. The administration, however, didn't disclose the amount of the fines.

"The general situation for production safety in most industries and regions is stable, but the situation is not optimal for some industries," the administration said.

Despite the decline in total accidents, major accidents increased in the mining sector. Six major mining accidents occurred in October. Both the death toll and the number of major accidents increased from January to October, compared with last year, the administration said. Specific numbers were not disclosed.

"As the end of the year approaches, many enterprises speed up their production to finish tasks. At the same time, many areas are frequently hit by extreme winter weather. All this increases risks," it said.

While calling for government departments and enterprises to take precautionary measures, the administration said it will carry out both open and secret inspections to prevent accidents.

On Oct 31, the administration held a national conference on coal mine production safety in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, a major coal-producing region in China.

Huang Yuzhi, head of the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety, called on mine operators to use more automated processes to improve safety.

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## 6 fired for bungling response to TB

Six officials in Hunan province have been fired for their handling of two tuberculosis outbreaks in their county.

Zhou Desheng, chief of Taojiang county's health and family planning commission; Huang Zhigang, chief of the bureau of education; and Wen Fuqiang, chief of the center for disease control and prevention, were among the six fired on Tuesday, a statement from the county government said.

Meanwhile, the local government suggested the county's education commission remove the principal of Taojiang No 4 Middle School for failing to effectively cope with the public health incident.

A total of 29 students from the school had been diagnosed with tuberculosis as of Friday.

As of Friday, 37 students from two schools been diagnosed in Taojiang county, the county government said.

The eight additional cases were confirmed at Taojiang Occupational Middle School. The first was discovered in October, the statement said.

The county government will continue its investigation and punish violations such as dereliction of duty, it said.

The county will treat infected students and monitor and test those who had close contact with them, it said.

The outbreak at Taojiang No 4 Middle School, which occurred in August, was confirmed by the Taojiang government on Thursday.

It said the government immediately carried out an emergency response plan after the outbreak and reported the incident to the CDC in Yiyang – which governs the county – and to the Hunan provincial CDC.

On Monday, the Hunan Health and Family Planning Commission said eight students at Taojiang Occupational Middle School in Taojiang had been diagnosed with tuberculosis. The first case at the school was confirmed by the county CDC on Oct 12, the commission said.

Wang Jianguo, deputy head of the county, was quoted by CCTV as saying the initial investigations showed the two outbreaks to be unrelated, as the two schools are nearly 40 kilometers away from each other and their students did not have close contact.

Three male students from a senior class at Taojiang No 4 Middle School were asked to leave school on Aug 6 because of TB. Other students in the class developed coughs over the next few days and asked to be checked, according to

Beijing Youth Daily.

The three males had been taking medications for months, but the other students had no idea what diseases they had, the report said, quoting students in the class.

The school began sterilization measures in its classrooms around Aug 8, and it organized a blood test covering all students in the senior class on Aug 10. Seven more students were diagnosed and asked to leave school, the report said.

Employers must report confirmed or suspected cases of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis to local centers for disease control or to medical institutions in a timely manner, according to China's Law on Infectious Disease Control and Prevention.

Government officials who conceal or delay reporting outbreaks of infectious diseases, or who do not take timely measures, face administrative or criminal punishment if serious consequences occur, according to the law.

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## **President hails work of NGOs on Belt, Road**

President Xi Jinping called for nongovernmental organizations along the Silk Road to contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between people of different countries, promoting common development and building a community of shared future for mankind.

He made the remark in a congratulatory message to the First Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network Forum, which started on Tuesday in Beijing and has drawn nearly 200 representatives from more than 50 countries.

Xi said the building of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network is an important step for strengthening exchanges and cooperation among people of the Silk Road countries and facilitating people-to-people connectivity.

Song Tao, head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, read the president's message at the opening ceremony of the two-day forum.

Song called for NGOs in countries along the Silk Road to contribute to promoting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and building a community of shared future for mankind.

Xi announced China would develop the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network in May at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International

Cooperation.

The network aims to become a platform for the NGOs to share information and coordinate.

It encourages the organizations to carry out projects in areas such as education and healthcare to improve people's well-being, as well as projects to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between peoples, according to the China NGO Network for International Exchanges.

More than 300 NGOs from more than 60 countries and regions are in the network.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who also sent a congratulatory message, said that "civil society groups have a crucial role to play" in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative.

Victor-Viorel Ponta, former Romanian prime minister, said he appreciates the idea of cooperation among NGOs to help implement the initiative.

The NGOs should be able to explain to people the advantage of "having such a big vision", Ponta told reporters.

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## **Former senior CPC publicity official under probe**

Lu Wei, former deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, is being investigated for suspected "severe disciplinary violations," according to the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection website.

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## **Get close to transgender people to understand and help them**

A survey report of Chinese transgender population is released on Nov. 20, 2017 in Beijing. [Provided to China.org.cn]

For a long time, Chinese people have known little about the transgender group which is often regarded as weird, mysterious or even abnormal in domestic society. However, the fact is we should get close to transgender people in order to know them, understand them and provide care for them.

In fact, transgender people are only different in regard to their gender identity and gender expression, and are not suffering from mental disorder. Additionally, they should not be confused with homosexuals to whom they are not necessarily related.

The term “transgender” refers to people whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the biological sex assigned to them at birth. It includes the transgender man, being identified as a “female-to-male” (FTM) person, and transgender woman, who refers to “male-to-female” (MTF) people.

Besides, some ambiguous people, who may feel their gender identity is both male and female, or neither male nor female, are also defined as trans people.

The transgender group in China has been facing great pressure and challenges, and their life is filled with worries. According to an online survey released on Monday by the Beijing LGBT Center and Peking University, 61.5 percent of 2,060 polled transgender people were experiencing depression, and 73.2 percent had some level of anxiety; 46.2 percent reported they had considered suicide, with 12.7 percent ultimately attempting to do so.

Reasons for their psychological disorders are the pressure and challenges they are encountering in the country. Their gender expression and appeal for sex reassignment are not accepted by the society.

Transgender people are facing discrimination or even violence at home, in schools and workplace. They also have difficulties in seeking medical treatment.

Nearly 90 percent of the natal families cannot fully accept their transgender children. Of the respondents who indicated they had a partner, spouse, or child, only four of them (3.8 percent) said they had not experienced violence. Among all respondents, 70.8 percent reported being subject to some form of violence at school.

The survey also indicates few transgender people seek mental health treatment, with the most common reason provided that therapists will not be able to understand their difficulties.

However, efforts have been made around the world to provide more care for the transgender group and show respect to their gender identities and gender expressions.

Facebook provides 56 gender options for users who don't identify simply as “male” or “female”. Some European countries and North America cover transgender-related surgery and hormone therapy in their public health care system.

Nowadays, China's policy and attitude towards transgender people is being improved. Its regulations on sex reassignment surgery have become friendlier for people who want to change their sex. Gender-neutral bathrooms have also been promoted.

However, we still have a long way to go to improve the living conditions of the trans population and realize real equality among those people who have different values of gender identity and expression.