

Left-behind boy gets stuck in 20-cm-wide gap

A left-behind boy in Shanhuang village of Southwest China's Guangxi was saved by firefighters more than one hour after being trapped in a 20-cm-wide gap between two walls on Saturday.

The 8-year-old boy got stuck in the gap while playing hide-and-seek game at around 4:00 pm. He went into the gap, whose width ranges from 10 cm to 40 cm, from its widest end but got trapped in the middle.

The firefighters arrived at 5:14 pm after receiving an emergency call at 4:37 pm. After comforting the nervous boy, they covered his head and body with quilt to shield him from any possible injury and successfully got him out after 10 minutes by widening the gap around him.

8 arrested for poaching black bears in NE China

Eight people have been arrested for allegedly killing black bears in northeast China's Jilin Province, police said Tuesday.

Using homemade guns and bombs, the gang is believed to have killed at least three black bears since June, said a police officer from the city of Yanbian.

On July 23, police received reports about the sighting of a bear corpse with its paws missing in Xinkai Forest Farm.

Examinations found the bear had been killed by a gunshot to the head around a month earlier.

After a two-month investigation, police arrested seven suspects and another turned himself in earlier this month.

A dozen bear paws and three bear gallbladders were seized.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), bear paws are believed to be very nutritious, while bear gallbladders and bile have been used in TCM treatments to reduce fever, remove toxins and treat liver and eye ailments for thousands of years.

Although black bears are listed as a national second class protected species, poaching is not rare in China.

Last month, a 1.46-million-hectare national park for the protection of Siberian tiger and Amur leopard habitats was inaugurated in Jilin and neighboring Heilongjiang Province, which includes known black bear poaching sites.

The park is aimed at restoring the local ecology which has been damaged by human activity and better protecting wild animals and their habitats.

Political advisory body to hold session next month

The Standing Committee of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's political advisory body, plans to convene its 23rd session from Oct. 30 to Nov. 1.

In preparation for next month's session, a meeting of the CPPCC National Committee chairman and vice chairpersons was held in Beijing on Tuesday.

The meeting passed the schedule and draft agenda for the session, setting the theme as learning and implementing the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which is expected to convene on Oct. 18 in Beijing.

It is a great political task for the CPPCC to advocate the 19th CPC National Congress, and the CPPCC should build consensus, unite people and pool its strength in a bid to push forward the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, according to a statement released after the meeting.

Tuesday's meeting was presided over by Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the CPPCC National Committee.

China opens world's highest road tunnel

The world's highest road tunnel opened to traffic in southwest China's Sichuan Province on Tuesday, 15 years after the project was started.



A minibus runs through the newly opened Chola Mountain tunnel in southwest China's Sichuan Province, Sept. 26, 2017. [Photo: West China City Daily]

The project, which cuts through Chola Mountain on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, consists of a 7-km tunnel and more than 5 km of auxiliary roads.

In Tibetan, the name Chola means mountains so high that eagles cannot fly over them. The peak stands at 6,168 meters above sea level and is covered with snow eight months of the year.

The tunnel is located above 4,000 meters. Its length, the thin air and low temperatures at that altitude all contributed to the complexity of the construction, said Wei Yanqing, chief designer of the tunnel.

A feasibility study started in 2002 and it took eight years for experts to finalize a plan before construction began in 2012.

The project cost about 1.28 billion yuan (196,900 U.S. dollars), according to Wang Qiang, head of the transport bureau in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Garze, which administrates the project area.

He said the two-way tunnel has a speed limit of 40 kph and takes around 10 minutes to pass through.

Previously vehicles spent more than two hours driving around the mountain on a road threatened by landslides, blizzards and slippery ice, he said.

Nationwide network winning battle against HIV

China's central government spent 4.6 billion yuan (US\$694 million) on HIV/AIDS control and treatment in 2016, a health official said yesterday.

The country has established an initial network of preventative services, in which government departments take the lead and the general public also participate, said Wang Guoqiang, deputy chief of the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

The network, covering both urban and rural areas, includes HIV testing, treatment and follow-up observations to prevent infected patients from transmitting the virus, Wang told the 2017 National Conference on HIV/AIDS in Guangzhou, a city in south China's Guangdong Province.

Wang, who is also director of the HIV/AIDS prevention and control commission of the State Council, said China has almost entirely prevented the transmission of HIV through illegal blood transfusions, the sharing of needles and mother-to-child transmissions.

"The rapid spread of the virus in some particular areas has been greatly contained, the quality of life of HIV carriers has been improved, and social discrimination against the group has been reduced," he said.

According to official data, China had nearly 420,000 people infected with HIV and 300,000 AIDS patients at the end of June. More than 221,000 people have died of the virus since records began.

Han Mengjie, with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, estimated up to another 20 to 30 percent of HIV/AIDS patients in China are either not aware of their infection status or have not reported it, warning that the control of HIV/AIDS remains a challenge.

He said unprotected sex has become the main means of transmission, with the virus spreading among the elderly, youth and male homosexual populations.

"Prostitution and sexual activities spurred by drug abuse and social networking apps have posed threats for HIV/AIDS control," he said. "Health departments will ensure implementation of preventive measures, find and treat as many infected as possible, and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS to a low transmission rate."

While the government puts the emphasis on prevention, scientists are seeking breakthroughs in treatment.

Wang Fusheng, an epidemic control specialist with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and his team are studying immune deficiencies after CD4, a glycoprotein found on the surface of immune cells, becomes damaged.

Patients testing the therapy have found their symptoms alleviated or under control within two weeks, their CD4 cell count restored (an indication of the health of immune systems) and their weight significantly increased, he said.