

Ctrip apologizes for child abuse in day care center

The top management of Ctrip, an online provider of travel services, apologized for the child abuse cases in the company's in-house day care center and promised to continue assisting the police in investigating the case.



Video footage shows that the teachers were videotaped putting on or taking off the children's clothes violently. [Screenshot: China Plus]

"On behalf of the company, I extend my sincere apologies to the involved families and children," said Sun Jie, CEO of Ctrip.

"The company will take full responsibility and provide physical examination and psychological intervention for the children and their families," said Sun.

"Ctrip will also further strengthen the supervision of the day care center."

According to Sun, Ctrip has set up an investigation team, which includes representatives of parents and her, and it plans to see all the surveillance footage in the day care center within three months.

A video of the child abuse in the center went viral on Nov 6.

The teachers were videotaped putting on or taking off the children's clothes violently.

Some children even fell down and bumped their head on the corner of a table.

Some children were forced to swallow items which later turned out to be mustard, and they couldn't stop crying.

Ctrip called the police on Nov 7. According to the investigation, the children involved in the case are from 18 to 24 months old.

The staff members involved in the matter includes a cleaner dressed in yellow, a child-care worker and the teacher in charge of the class. The head of the day care center is also accused of dereliction of duty.

These four people involved in the case have been taken to the Beixinjing police station in Shanghai for further investigation and Ctrip has cancelled their contracts.

All classes in the kindergarten have been suspended.

Ctrip is always helping its employees to balance their work and family, the company said. The establishment of the day care center was aimed at solving the babysitting problems for the staff members, which gained support from Shanghai government.

Chinese researchers seek origins of Austronesians

A research center has been set up to determine whether Austronesians originated on the Chinese mainland.

The International Research Center for Austronesian Archaeology in Pingtan, Fujian province, is led by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences institute of archaeology, and Fujian Museum.

The Austronesian language family includes those spoken by hundreds of millions of people in maritime Southeast Asia, New Zealand, the Pacific islands, Madagascar, etc.

Past research support the claim that Austronesian languages have their roots in Taiwan. But a new view has recently surfaced in the academic circle, suggesting that Taiwan was probably a mid-way station and the origins of the languages were on the Chinese mainland.

The research center is near a Neolithic site – the Keqiutou ruins – where archaeologists have found many stone tools including rudimentary hand-axes. The artifacts are similar to those found in Taiwan's Dachakeng ruins, believed to be the home of the ancestors of the Austronesians.

“It is a piece of significant evidence confirming a close link between Fujian and Taiwan in the New Stone Age,” said Zhao Zhijun, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Fan Xuechun from Fujian Museum, said the discoveries suggested that ancient

people might have crossed the Taiwan Strait some 7,000 years ago and the Chinese mainland was indeed the original homeland of the Austronesians.

Researchers said they will first collect and restore the Keqiutou findings and display them at the center. It will then serve as a base for Austronesian archaeological studies.

Flexible working hours on trial in Guizhou

Based on the outcome of a trial in one of its cities, Guizhou province may ask its employees to work on a more flexible timetable, according to a notice released on its website.

The idea, which was brought up and first implemented by the city of Qingzhen, offers employees two options.

Some can work consecutively for 22 days and then rest for eight days, while others follow cycles of 11 days of work and four days of rest. The total monthly working days cannot be lower than 22.

The working patterns will be adopted by civil servants within departments responsible for administrative work relating to people's daily lives, such as the bureau of civil affairs and the family planning office.

These employees account for more than 80 percent of all civil servants in Qingzhen.

The trial run started on Nov 1 and will end on May 31.

"The adjustment aims to benefit the majority of customers, who usually have to work on weekdays. Using this rotating schedule, we can improve efficiency by ensuring our office is open every day except legal holidays," said Li Zhengfei, deputy head of the organization department of Qingzhen's CPC committee.

According to Li, most of the officials in the city often sacrifice their weekends for emergency work and can't get their holidays back.

So the rotation system not only benefits customers but also guarantees that civil servants can enjoy their holidays without being disturbed.

"To see whether this reform of the timetable system will carry on successfully, we should ensure that it has a good purpose and is achieved by reasonable means," said Wang Xixin, a professor of administrative law at Peking University.

“Moreover, the adjustment must comply with existing laws.”

A guideline issued by the State Council said that employees should normally work eight hours per day, 40 hours per week.

However, enterprises or authorities in some industries can adjust working hours as needed in special situations.

“Though there is still no document drafted related to this reform, three towns have put the flexible timetable into practice with encouraging results,” Li said.

[Xiongan New Area to be built as AI city](#)

Xiongan New Area, a new economic zone to be built southwest of Beijing, has teamed up with e-commerce giant Alibaba to build itself into a smart city.

The Xiongan New Area management committee and Alibaba signed a strategic cooperation agreement here Wednesday to jointly build “a city brain” run by artificial intelligence for Xiongan.

The smart city will have “cloud computing” as its most important infrastructure and the Internet of Things will serve its nerves system.

The two sides aim to build Xiongan into a digital city and global icon in the application of “the Internet of Things” technology.

The Internet of Things and big data processing technology will be used to help plan and manage the city’s consumption, production and supply chains, creating secure digital logistics system for the city.

The “city brain” is expected to provide better solutions for the city’s transport, energy and water supply.

Also on Wednesday, Alibaba announced the registration in Xiongan of three subsidiary companies, to provide technological, financial and logistics services, respectively.

China announced plans in April to establish Xiongan New Area, a new economic zone about 100 kilometers southwest of Beijing. It covers Xiongxian, Rongcheng and Anxin counties in Hebei Province.

CPC National Congress inspires foreign officials with Chinese experience

The recent 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has inspired the world with the Chinese experience, said foreign delegates in Beijing to attend a workshop on the congress.

Nearly 200 foreign officials and academics from 35 countries, including Cuba, Macedonia and Peru, took part in a Chinese Academy of Governance workshop on the congress Tuesday.

The vice president of the academy delivered a speech, "New Era, New Idea, New Journey," which summarized the achievements of the past five years and introduced the vision of the future set out during the congress.

Three academicians gave talks on governance of the CPC, a community of shared future for humanity, and the main experiences of China's economic development.

Marin Triana Zamira Maria, Cuban vice-minister of labor and social security, said Cuba could learn from China, combining the Chinese experience with the characteristics of Cuba to develop Cuban socialism.

Uliana Stici, a Moldovan political advisor, said that in the last five years, China had made major achievements in economic development, the digital economy, high-speed rail, highways, bridges and agricultural modernization.

Stici said that the Chinese governance model had become much stronger and more attractive to other countries inspired by China and the Chinese dream.

Nenad Kolev, director-general of the Macedonian Foreign Ministry shared a similar view, saying the 19th National Congress of the CPC had been studied widely in Macedonia.

He believes the unique Chinese development model is applicable to other countries, and can assimilate their characteristics. China's combination of a market economy under the guidance of the socialist theory had greatly benefitted the country and the world, he said.

Most of the foreign visitors are also attending other academy seminars in Beijing. A total of 8,500 officials from 159 countries have participated in Chinese Academy of Governance seminars, according to Liu Hongyi, director-general of the academy training center.