

Home from past brings sense of better future



Huang Juan tells the story of *The Little Prince* to the pupils in the village. [Photo by Lin Aihua/ China Daily]

The first time Huang Juan arrived at Sanjia village, in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, her goal was to demolish decrepit buildings and homes, rather than preserve them.

She was working on a tourism development program to boost incomes by improving living conditions and rural tourism.

Just less than 100 km from Nanning, the region's capital, the village is located in Mashan county surrounded by looming karst mountains.

Most of the villagers had moved into their new houses with the help of the government in 2014 when a reconstruction program was launched to promote rural tourism.

"How could people make a sustainable future out of a place with little tourism resources like Sanjia", said Huang, "I began to wonder whether there is a way to inspire the villagers to be more involved to attract visitors".

South yard is a house she decided to renovate. Its cob brick structure was built more than 60 years ago.

"When there are very few old dwellings left, I began to realize the villagers may lose their past and how urgent it is to save the authentic heart of the place," said Huang.

She wanted to restore it as a public space for the villagers and a platform to exchange ideas and introduce resources, or even use it as a place of retreat and contemplation.

Mu Wei, an architect who designed the Norwegian pavilion for the Shanghai Expo, joined her and undertook the design.

The building was designed in two sections, the former main building and a new light house, which stand together in harmony by the river.

The main building, which presents the past, was renovated in its original style with a tilt roof.

The light house is characterized with large area of French casement and a wood framework which makes the space transparent and bright.

Nearby villagers offered their help in the renovation although they didn't understand her concept at first.

South yard was completed in September 2016, after a year's hard work, at a cost of 1.3 million yuan (\$190,000).

[Rain to hit central and south China, smog to hit north China](#)

Parts of central and south China will be swept by heavy rain from Wednesday to Thursday, while parts of north China will be hit by smog, said the country's national observatory Tuesday.

The National Meteorological Center (NMC) forecast heavy rain or rainstorms accompanied by thunder in parts of Hubei, Anhui, Jiangsu, Guizhou and Hunan provinces from Wednesday to Thursday.

Light rain or sleet will continue in northwest China's Xinjiang until Tuesday night, said the NMC.

From Wednesday to Friday, smog will envelop Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Henan, Shandong and Shanxi due to a weak cold front, while heavy fog will hit some of the regions from evening until morning.

Conditions for the air to diffuse will gradually improve in most of these regions starting Friday night, said the NMC.

2,105 police killed on duty since late 2012

A total of 2,105 police officers have died and 22,977 have been injured while on duty since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in late 2012, according to the Ministry of Public Security.

In 2016, 362 police officers died while on duty, the ministry said.

During the three-day holiday for Tomb-Sweeping Day, people across the nation commemorated police officers who have died.

The China Police Daily launched a section on its website for online memorial activities, with millions of visits and more than 6,400 comments.

Tomb-Sweeping Day, or Qingming, falls on Tuesday, when Chinese people honor their deceased loved ones by visiting tombs and making offerings.

China aims high in building landmark Xiongan New Area

China will set a high standard in building the Xiongan New Area, a landmark new economic zone near Beijing designed to integrate the capital with its surrounding areas.

China will speed up the drafting of plans for building the new area, said He Lifeng, head of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), highlighting “international standards,” “Chinese characteristics,” “reform” and “innovation” as key words in making the plan.

Speaking to Xinhua after the country announced it would set up the new area on Saturday, He called for pooling talent from China and other countries and drawing on international experience to build the area.

A circular issued by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council described the move as a “major historic and strategic choice” that would be “crucial for the millennium to come.”

City planning for the Xiongan New Area must reach the standard of a first-class international city, and architecture there should fully embody elements of Chinese culture, He said in the interview.

Located some 100 kilometers southwest of downtown Beijing, the new area is home to Baiyangdian, one of the largest freshwater wetlands in north China.

With more than 140 lakes and covering 360 square kilometers, the wetland is known as the “pearl” of the North China Plain.

A specific plan for pollution control and environmental protection of Baiyangdian will be drafted as part of the blueprint, said He.

The decision to establish the new area is part of a greater strategy, which China initiated in 2014, to jointly develop Beijing, the port city of Tianjin and Hebei to improve the region’s economic structure, environment and public services, and bridge the gap between the capital and the industrial and rural areas surrounding it.

Beijing, home to over 21 million people, is trying to curb population growth and relocate industries and other “non-capital functions” to Hebei in the coming years as part of its efforts to cure severe “urban ills.”

Beijing’s growing population, which is approaching the target of 23 million for 2020, has resulted in traffic congestion, soaring property prices and excessive burden on resources, said the NDRC head.

Establishing the Xiongan New Area is “a very important integral part” of measures to transfer non-capital functions out of Beijing, said He.

Beijing will focus on its “capital functions,” serving as the country’s political center, cultural center, and center for international exchanges and science and technological innovation, according to previous plans.

A number of wholesale markets in the city’s central areas have been shut down or relocated, and some of Beijing’s city administration will be moved out of the city center to the southeastern suburbs in Tongzhou, which is called Beijing’s “subsidiary administrative center.”

Innovation will be the fundamental driver in building and developing the Xiongan New Area, and policies will be put in place to bring innovative elements to the area, said He.

The new area will create a favorable environment for innovation and attract innovative talent and teams to help build it into a “high ground” for innovation and a new science and technology city, the official said.

The NDRC chief pointed to reform as a key to development, saying that new administrative, investment and financing models will be tried in the new area.

A long-term and stable funding mechanism will be put in place, and private funds will be encouraged to participate in building the new area, He added.

The central government is also mulling specific support policies and will provide policy and funding support for the new area’s major projects in transportation, ecology, water conservation, energy and public services, said the NDRC head.

The New Area will span three counties that sit at the center of the

triangular area formed by Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei's provincial capital Shijiazhuang. It will initially occupy 100 square kilometers and eventually cover 2,000 square kilometers.

The new area will be of the same national significance as the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, established in the 1980s, and the Shanghai Pudong New Area, set up in the 1990s, said the circular on Saturday.

Shenzhen has grown from a fishing village into a bustling cosmopolitan city, while Pudong has turned from a wetland into China's financial hub.

In the interview, the NDRC head didn't give a timetable for the building of the new area.

[Pollution check steps up as smog covers areas N. China](#)

China's environmental inspectors intensified pollution checks around Beijing as a new round of smog hit the region.

The new round of air pollution will continue in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region between April 3 and 7, with the cities of Tianjin, Tangshan, Langfang, Puyang and Anyang issuing orange alerts, the second highest in the country's four-tier warning system.

To ensure policies on fighting air pollution, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said on its website that seven teams have been sent to Beijing, Tianjin as well as the cities of Shijiazhuang, Tangshan, Baoding, Xingtai and Anyang in neighboring Hebei and Henan provinces.

Inspectors found several companies in Tianjin and Baoding had failed to meet requirements for cutting pollutants, while some vehicles in Beijing failing to meet emission requirements.

The ministry urged local authorities to address the problem.

China has been under growing pressure to address air pollution as smog frequently smothers the country's cities.

The government aims to cut the density of inhalable particulate matter in major cities by at least 10 percent by 2017.