

Number of SATs held outside US to be cut

A cut in the number of times students will be able to take the Scholastic Assessment Test—which is used for entry to United States colleges—throughout the year will force many Chinese students to revise their strategies for studying abroad, according to people involved in testing services.

The College Board, based in New York City, announced it will reduce how many SATs are held outside the US from six to four—in January, May, October and December—for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years. Two tests, scheduled for June and November, will be canceled, it said.

The board said that it will also step up security audits of testing centers.

Qi Lianshan, who has worked for several SAT prep services over the past decade and is now a self-employed SAT tutor in Beijing, said the decision could affect those who had planned to take the test in June the most.

June is an ideal time for students to take the SAT because they usually start submitting applications for undergraduate programs in the second half of the year. In May, they are still busy taking Advanced Placement tests, also administered by the College Board.

“Now the students may have to take both AP tests and the SAT in May, which means a lot more pressure and less possibility of achieving a high score,” he said, adding that students who plan to take the SAT next year should modify their preparations to secure a good result.

Si Mingxia, director of the US division at Vision Overseas, an agency under New Oriental Education and Technology Group that helps Chinese study overseas, said the move by the College Board could be a step to thwart rampant cheating and unfair competition.

The College Board did not respond to a request for comment. Its chief administrative officer and general counsel, Peter Schwartz, said in a statement last week, “We are unwavering in our commitment to SAT test security and we will continue to confront any efforts to undermine it.”

In 2015, prosecutors in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia charged 15 Chinese citizens over a conspiracy to have impostors take the SAT and other college entrance exams for other students for payment of up to \$6,000. Most of the defendants pleaded guilty and were deported.

Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region to build one-hour commuting circle

The construction of a rail and road network in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is in full swing, bringing the three neighboring areas closer together. [Photo/Xinhua]

The construction of a rail and road network in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is in full swing, bringing the three neighboring areas closer together.

Rail transit line connects Beijing, Hebei

According to the plan for a 1,000-kilometer-long inter-city railway network across Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region laid down in 2016, the construction will take five years to complete.

The network centers around Beijing, Tianjin and Shijiazhuang, with three major channels, namely Beijing-Tianjin-Tanggu, Beijing-Baoding-Shijiazhuang and Beijing-Tangshan-Qinhuangdao Expressways.

Line Pinggu will be equipped with vehicles running at a maximum speed of 160 kilometers per hour. It will take only 45 minutes to go from Pinggu to downtown Beijing.

Picking up pace in building 7 highways

The Beijing section of Beijing-Taipei Expressway was opened on Dec. 9, 2016. Currently, seven highways are under construction. The next four years will see new highways open to traffic every year.

3 cities share transportation card

A total of 317,000 interconnective cards have been given out for transportation in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. Since Dec. 25, 2016, the card has been viable on all bus lines in Beijing (except for tailored business buses) and 122 suburban lines operated by bus groups.

Six hundred more bus lines in 10 cities in Tianjin and Hebei also use the card.

Xi urges urban planning, preparation

for the Winter Olympics

Chinese President Xi Jinping has identified Beijing's urban planning and development, and preparation for its upcoming Winter Olympic Games as the two major tasks for the city at present and in the near future.

Xi made the remark during his inspection tour in Beijing between Feb. 23 and 24, during which he visited the city's new airport, the Wukesong Sports Center, the Capital Gymnasium, the office of Beijing's sub-center and the Grand Canal Forest Park.

During his visit to the construction site of the new airport, Xi stressed the control of standards and quality of the project and urged proper relocation and settlement of the people living nearby.

As a landmark project in China's capital Beijing, the new international airport will become a driving force for the country's development and it should adopt the strictest standards in its construction and the most advanced technology and expertise in its management, said Xi as he visited the site of the main terminal building.

At the Wukesong Sports Center and the Capital Gymnasium, both venues for the 2022 Winter Olympics, Xi emphasized the importance of learning from foreign experience and technology innovation in stadium planning, design and construction.

At the construction center of Beijing's sub-center in eastern Tongzhou District, Xi stressed good overall planning as well as functional design of its landscape and buildings.

Later, Xi visited the Grand Canal Forest Park and was debriefed on the history, culture, water treatment and ecological protection of Tongzhou District. He highlighted the importance of protecting historical and cultural heritage and the ecological environment along the canal during the construction of the sub-center.

CPC punishes officials for poor leadership

The discipline watchdog of the Communist Party of China (CPC) exposed six cases involving officials who were held accountable for their poor leadership.

The officials were punished for poor fulfillment of their main

responsibilities in strict Party governance and ineffective supervision of disciplinary violation by their subordinates, according to a circular published on the website of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) on Sunday.

The cases involved gambling, poor investigation in handling public complaints, the illegal general election of a village-level Party committee and lavish wedding banquets, in provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Shandong, Shanxi, Guangdong and Liaoning, it said.

In July 2016, the CCDI issued a regulation to hold CPC officials accountable for poor leadership, targeting leaders of Party committees and discipline inspection committees at all levels.

The circular urged Party committees at all levels to comprehensively deepen strict Party governance and make good use of the accountability mechanism in Party building.

Discipline inspection committees at all levels should perform the duties of supervision, and officials who fail to perform their duty should be held accountable.

Judicial efficiency improved through reform: top court

The efficiency of Chinese courts has been improved by 20 percent since 2013, the Supreme People's Court (SPC) announced Monday.

The SPC Monday released two white papers on judicial reform and court transparency from 2013 to 2016, recording progress made in fields including judicial accountability, trial mechanism and adjudicative power operation.

According to the SPC, over 26 million court documents have been posted on China Judgement Online, the court document website, and the site has clocked up six billion hits by users from over 200 countries and regions.

China's courts have improved the way in which they protect human rights, preventing and correcting cases in which people were unjustly, falsely or wrongly charged or sentenced.

From 2013 to 2016, courts nationwide overturned 34 cases, involving 54 people, deemed to be miscarriage of justice, according to the SPC.

To improve litigation, nearly all courts in China have established supporting systems, the SPC said.

The top court also pledged to improve how cases are filed and legal aid

accessed.