

Classic library restored to its former glory



Restoration of the former Shanghai Library in Yangpu District has been completed. [Shanghai Daily]

Restoration of the former Shanghai Library in Yangpu District has been completed.

Officials said yesterday that expansion work would continue to realize the original vision of its architect Dong Dayou (1899-1973).

The exterior of the 80-year-old library on Heishan Road was damaged by decades of weathering and has now been cleaned and repainted.

The yellow glazed tiles on the roof were restored in Yixing in neighboring Jiangsu Province where they were originally manufactured, an official with the district culture bureau said.

Experts have also renovated the iron gate at the library's main hall, known as "the peacock gate" due to its elegant patterns.

The paintings on the ceiling of the 156-square-meter hall have also been restored, helped by finding details of the works in a hidden cabinet in the library.

The paintings on many 1-square-meter panels have traditional Chinese double happiness and lucky symbols as well as intricate corner designs, said Ma Lili, the lead restorer.

A further expansion work will extend the 3,900-square-meter library to 15,000 square meters, following the original design charts created by Dong, who studied at the University of Minnesota and Cornell University. Dong was also renowned for his works on an earlier Shanghai city hall in 1931 and many Spanish-style houses on Wukang Road.

Upon its completion, the restored and expanded building in the Jiangwan area will serve as the Yangpu District Library with about 650,000 book and seating for 650 people.

“If the expansion goes smoothly, the new library will open to public by the end of the year,” an official with the culture bureau told Shanghai Daily yesterday.

It will serve the 1.24 million residents of the district and include an exhibition hall on the history of the library.

The library was built by the then Kuomintang government in 1930s as part of the “Greater Shanghai Plan” to bring the city government and major facilities to the area. It was expected to form part of a new city center along with government buildings, a museum, a stadium, a hospital and TV and radio stations.

The Jiangwan Stadium is still in use today.

However, construction on the library was suspended in 1935 with the start of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. Although only partially built, it still opened, before closing a year later.

In its heyday, the library had more than 20,000 books, including 1,300 foreign titles. Most were lost during the war.

After the war, the library was used to detain Japanese prisoners of war. It was then converted into a military headquarters by the Kuomintang government in 1946. Traffic police were later based in the building.

It also served as the school library and dormitory of Tongji Middle School until 2000. Then it lay empty until renovation work started three years ago.

[Plans reinforce medicine, food safety](#)



Police officers in Linyi, Shandong province, help migrant workers get payment that had been withheld by their employers last month. [Zhu Wutao/for China Daily]

The State Council, China's Cabinet, approved two important five-year plans on Friday to enhance supervision of food and medicine safety amid the government's efforts to better protect public health.

The two plans, passed at an executive conference presided over by Premier Li Keqiang, outlined the government's blueprint for ensuring food and drug safety during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20).

According to the plans, the government will keep a close eye on key areas such as schools and roadside vendors to ensure that the food they sell is safe. The authorities will enhance supervision guarding against excessive pesticide use and misuse of food additives.

The government will speed up the establishment procedures to make sure that all phases of medicine production and sales are retraceable, and the production and sale of counterfeit medicine will be severely punished.

Sample testing will cover all kinds of food, blood products, vaccines and essential medicines to improve risk surveillance and assessment, according to the plans.

The government will also speed up the amendment to the national standard on food safety and raise the safety standard of food, medicine and cosmetics.

The executive conference announced strict measures to protect the legal interests of migrant workers who were not paid by their employers.

Provincial governments will be held accountable for ensuring the timely payment of migrant workers. Provinces that produce large numbers of migrant workers are urged to help workers get their pay on time.

Companies that fail to pay wages promptly will be put on a blacklist that will be published at regular intervals. Their market access will be limited in the future.

“China has made impressive progress largely thanks to the effort and contribution by our migrant workers,” the State Council said in a statement.

Huang Leping, director of Beijing Yilian Legal Aid and Research Center of Labor, said that Li has paid attention to the legal interests of migrant workers, showing the central government’s concern over the suffering of the grassroots.

Those who refuse to pay the migrant workers should face tougher punishment in keeping with the Criminal Law, which rules that employers can face up to seven years imprisonment if they maliciously delay or refuse to pay workers, said Huang, whose NGO has helped more than 140,000 employees, mostly migrant workers, to protect their rights.

Compared with employees in many other occupations, such as teachers, migrant workers are more vulnerable to the infringement of their rights because they have little knowledge and few channels to safeguard their rights, he added.

Beijing to invest US\$4.85B in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei development

Beijing will invest 33.31 billion yuan (US\$4.85 billion) this year in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei coordinated development, according to the municipal finance bureau.

2017 will see the city rein in administrative operation funds while focusing on major missions planned to promote Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei integrated development.

The main expenditure policies incorporate efforts to guarantee the package policies made for “Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei Joint Development Plan”, speed up sub-center construction, increase support for Hebei Province, and give partner assistance to Xinjiang and Tibet, according to Han Jie, spokesman and deputy director of the bureau.

Details of the investment tell that 11.09 billion yuan will fund the new airport construction in an effort to boost the transport network in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

A total of 11.81 billion yuan will be allocated to ensure trial operation of the new Tiantan Hospital and advance project II in Yizhuang branch of Tongren Hospital as well as new campus construction of Beijing Film Academy, Beijing Technology and Business University, etc.

Moreover, 4.25 billion yuan will be used for facilities establishment in administrative areas in the city's sub-center, and for upgrading of the green landscape along inner ring roads.

Beijing will use 5.7 billion yuan to assist oriented areas including Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia and Badong, support Hebei and advance collaboration work of the South-to-North Water Diversion project.

Another 470 million yuan will be put into ecological forests construction.

Civilians face 'dire' situation amid ongoing hostilities in eastern Ukraine, UN warns

3 February 2017 – An immediate pause in fighting is needed in Ukraine to prevent more people dying and repair essential services, the United Nations human rights office said today following another night of shelling in the east of the country.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres also expressed deep concern about the ongoing tensions and intensification of the fighting in eastern Ukraine, according the UN chief's spokesperson, who said he appealed to all parties to fully observe the ceasefire and allow for immediate humanitarian access.

In the last week, aerial attacks have killed seven people and injured at least 40 more in heavily populated areas, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

"Reports suggest that two hospitals, a polyclinic, a dental clinic, three schools, and a kindergarten were damaged by shelling in Makiivka and Donetsk city, which are controlled by armed groups," OHCHR spokesperson Liz Throssell told reporters at the regular bi-weekly news briefing in Geneva.

She said OHCHR staff in Donetsk heard explosions over five days, from 29 January through the night of 2 February, and on 2 February, "saw a clearly marked ambulance in Donetsk that had been damaged by shrapnel."

Latest data shows that at least 9,800 civilians and members of armed forces have been killed since the conflict began in mid-April 2014 according to the

UN Human Rights Office.

It also warns that sub-zero temperatures have also left civilians even more vulnerable amid the destruction of power lines and disruption to water, electricity and heating networks.

Ms. Throssell explained that critical civilian infrastructure has been damaged, including near Avdiivka, where power lines have been destroyed, disrupting water, electricity and heating supplies. Gas and electricity supplies were also reported to have been affected in Makiivka and other areas under the control of armed groups, including Irmino and parts of Donetsk.

“Both Government forces and armed groups must take all feasible measures to protect the civilian population in the areas under their control, she said, adding: “We remind them that the protection of civilians must be considered the utmost priority and those committing violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law must be held accountable.”

Fresh violence in Central African Republic's western town displaces thousands, UN office says

3 February 2017 – Condemning attacks on civilians and non-governmental organizations in a town in Central African Republic (CAR)'s Ouham-Pendé province, a senior United Nations humanitarian official has called for protecting civilians as well as for unhindered relief access to the affected areas.

According to the office of the Humanitarian Coordinator in CAR, outbreak of violence between two armed groups in the town of Bocaranga reportedly killed and injured civilians as well as displacing some 9,000 people are sheltering in forests about 15-20 kilometres away from the town.

In the clashes, international non-governmental organization compounds were attacked and pillaged and at-least one office was burnt down. Moreover, shops and markets were “systematically pillaged,” as was one church.

“I urge all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure the protection of civilians,” said Michel Yao, the Acting Humanitarian Coordinator in the country.

“Attack against aid workers is a crime against humanity,” he added.

Prior to the latest flare-up of violence there were already 15,000 persons from Kouï (located about 35 kilometres east of Bocaranga) who were displaced

the town due to the violence that occurred there last September.

These displacements come on the back of already more than 400,000 persons displaced due to conflict.

The humanitarian needs in CAR are increasing while financial resources remain scarce.

In January, together with the Government, the humanitarian community in CAR launched a \$400 million response plan for the 2017-2019 period to meet the basic needs of 2.2 million people.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013. Despite significant progress and successful elections, CAR has remained in the grip of instability and sporadic unrest.