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China is the World's Fourth Largest Organic Food Consumer

The ninth China International Organic Food Expo is to be held in Shanghai from May 28 to 30th.

The Expo includes 360 companies with products range from organic food, beverage, textile to natural cosmetics.

By 2013, China had 731 certified organic food companies with 3081 products. The annual sales volume reached 13.48 billion yuan with an export value of $20 million.

The Expo will operate an organic cafeteria, in which visitors can enjoy food cooked with organic ingredient and seasonings. All profits from this cafeteria will be devoted to NGO projects to help the poor. (Source: info.tjkx.com)

China to Deepen Health System Reform

China has unveiled a document on deepening medical and health system reform in 2015, mapping out measures to improve public hospitals and the medical insurance system.

According to the document, issued by the General Office of the State Council, public hospitals should not rely on medicine sales to supplement their income.

Public hospitals should establish a reasonable drug pricing system and retune recruitment and salary policies, said the document.

It said social medical care should be encouraged through

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improved policies and strengthened supervision.

The document urged reform at the grassroots-level and nurturing more capable rural doctors. （Source:Xinhua）

China to Stop Setting Most Medicine Prices From June 1

China will remove price caps for most medicines from June 1 and give the market a larger role in setting prices in the world's second largest pharmaceutical market, the country's economic planning agency said on Tuesday.

The change would encourage "reasonable" pricing of medicines and help control costs in the country's state medical insurance schemes, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said in an online statement .

"We have decided from June 1 to cancel government-set prices on most drugs to improve purchasing mechanisms for drugs, control costs for medical insurance and allow the trade price of medicines to be set by market competition," it said.

China is a magnet for drugmakers, medical device firms and hospital operators with spending on medicines set to hit as much as $185 billion by 2018, according to IMS Health.

Beijing has also been stepping back from caps on consumer drug prices but faces a tough task to ensure steady supplies of vital medicines at the same time as keeping prices low.

Analysts say the impact of the NDRC's move will be muffled because around three-quarters of drugs in China are sold through hospitals rather than through retail channels, where a separate tender process helps keep prices down.

The new move will affect all drugs apart from anesthetics and grade one psychiatric medications, the NDRC statement said.

China removed price caps on a limited number of drugs in April last year after criticism that its controls had caused shortages of a number of critical drugs used by millions of patients to treat hyperthyroidism and other ailments.

President Xi Jinping has made a priority of providing affordable, accessible healthcare in a country struggling with rising healthcare costs, long waits for care and lapses in medicine safety.(Source: Reuters)

Jilin Province Launched Campaign on Food Processing

The provincial food and drug regulator of Jilin launched a special campaign that targets at processing of meat products, wines, and bottled water.

The campaign started from May and would last for six months. It will inspect the related food production and sales companies and the way they control the food processing system in their companies. The inspectors will especially check how the companies add food additives and how they put on labels on their products.

The authority also released documents to call for better regulation on food safety issues province-wide. (Source: CFDA)

China Announces Water Pollution Controls

A plan intensifying the fight against water pollution in China was released Thursday.

The Action Plan for Water Pollution Prevention and Control aims to reduce pollutants, improve drinking water and promote water saving, according to the State Council, China's cabinet.

The aquatic ecosystem has been severely damaged in many parts of China, threatening public health and economic development. Targets for improvements by the end of 2020 include reducing the amount of severely polluted water and containing groundwater contamination.

Specifically, the plan said more than 70 percent of the water in the seven major river valleys, including the Yangtze and Yellow rivers, should be in good condition by 2020. The same target is set for offshore areas.

By the end of 2030, more than 75 percent of the water in the seven major river valleys should be clear and black-odor in urban areas eliminated.

Small factories in sectors including papermaking, insecticides and tanning will be shut down by the end of 2016, as they are weak in environmental protection. Bigger projects of these sectors must update their technology to meet emission requirements.

From 2016, a blacklist will name businesses that exceed their pollutant quota, with severe violators risking the possibility of closure.

The document also calls for preservation of wetlands, mangrove swamps and coral reefs. Aquatic reserves should be better protected.

Pollution checks will be conducted every year and the results will be part of performance reviews of provincial officials. The distribution of the funds will also depend on the results.

Officials who fail to handle water pollution incidents effectively and those who fabricate statistics will be held accountable. (Source: Xinhua)

China Launches New Campaign Against Sex-Selective Abortions

China has begun a new campaign against illegal prenatal gender tests and sex-selective abortions to help address the country's gender imbalance, state news agency Xinhua said on Wednesday.

Like most Asian nations, China has a traditional bias for sons, who are seen the only guarantee to pass on the family line.

Many families abort female foetuses and abandon baby girls to ensure their one child is a son, with about 116 boys born for every 100 girls last year, against a global average of 103 to 107.

The new campaign will run under November, and concentrate on health centres and family planning institutions, as well as illegal fertility agencies, clinics and itinerant doctors, the report said.

The government will also tighten controls on medical equipment and medicine used in both ultrasounds and abortions, and blacklist any organisation found to be complicit in either activity, Xinhua added.

Researchers have warned that large sex-ratio imbalances could lead to instability as more men remain unmarried, raising the risks of anti-social and violent behaviour.

The problem has stoked the kidnapping of women to be forced into marriage, and the trafficking of children.

In late 2013, China said it would ease family planning restrictions to allow millions of families to have two children in the most significant liberalisation of the one-child policy - originally introduced to slow population growth - in decades.

Critics say the relaxation of rules was too little and came too late to redress substantial negative effects on the economy and society. Analysts say China faces the prospect of becoming the first country in the world to get old before it gets rich.(Source: Reuters)

China's Health Authorities to Unveil Free Cancer Screening for Women in Key Cities

China's health authorities will start offering free screenings for cervical and breast cancers in 11 provinces and municipalities as part of the expansion of their national program of providingcancer screening services for women, according to an announcement on April 22.

The health officials will also unveil an investigation and research regarding the public's awareness on breast cancer.

While in previous programs, the services centeredon impoverished women in remote and rural regions, the government will now also include laid-off and migrant women with an urban population of over 50 million.

With the expansion of the campaign, the officials are optimistic that they could reach more of this vulnerable group.

Co-organized by the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) and All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), the program has already doled out free tests to around 49 million women in rural areas, 5.86 million of which are for

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breast cancer.

Over the past decade, the cancer has earned the name "female killer."

In recent data, China has seen an alarming growth rate of breast cancer cases. However, medical experts remark that early cancer screening could help decrease and slow down this rate.

Meanwhile, the investigation on breast cancer will be sponsored by an ACWF affiliate, the China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF).

Dong Zhaohui, a Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security official, said: "The investigation will help relevant government sectors learn about the implementation of medical policies in cities of 11 provinces and municipalities in China."

"The survey among urban women about their awareness of breast cancer will also offer data about the situation of breast cancer prevention and medical treatment to relevant government sectors," Dong added.

According to Du Weili, ACWF's survey department director, the survey will focus on cities and will cover laid-off and migrant women. Information about healthcare insurance will also be gathered.

Although China has developed breast cancer treatment, many people still do not fully understand the "female killer," Xu Binghe, chief physician of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences' Cancer Hospital, remarked.

"The five-year survival rate for breast cancer patients at an early stage is 87 percent, 67 percent for patients at metaphase and 35 percent at advanced stage," Xu emphasized, citing the significance of early diagnosis.

The physician encouraged women to be more aware about breast cancer and undergo regular breast tests and examinations. (Source:yibada)

Genesis Opens Health Center in China

Genesis Healthcare Inc., a major nursing home and rehabilitation company based in Kennett Square, said it opened a post-hospital rehabiliation facility in China, its first venture outside the United States.

"With 14.8 percent of the Chinese population over the age of 60 and 70 million people in need of rehabilitation services, there is significant market potential in China," George V. Hager Jr., Genesis's chief executive, said.

The new Genesis facility, called a "Vitality Center," is in Zengcheng, which is in southern China, near Guangzhou.

In the third quarter, Genesis said it plans to open an inpatient rehabilitation center with the potential for 300 beds. The company also has an informal deal with BangEr Orthopedic Hospital Group to open rehab centers in 11 hospitals in China.

Genesis had a net loss of $112.57 million on $1.34 billion in revenue in the first quarter, compared to a net loss of $44.17 million on $1.19 billion in revenue

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in the same period last year.

The company's operating earnings before interest, taxes and certain accounting charges were $138.93 million in the first quarter, up from $115.46 million last year.(Source: philly.com)

'Don't Con Us': China's Smokers Grumble Over Tax Hike

China's smokers are getting choked up about the higher prices they'll soon pay for their cigarettes.

The Chinese government announced Friday a new tobacco tax hike, boosting cigarette taxes to 11% from 5%, beginning May 10.

The government didn't explain why it's increasing taxes. But it's already burning smokers, who've been paying around 6 RMB to 15 RMB, or $0.97 to $2.42, for a pack, including tax.

Smokers took to Sina Weibo WB -0.54% to complain: "This is forcing us to buy cheaper cigarettes, which is even worse for us," one user wrote.

The government raised the tobacco tax in 2009, but it was passed off to cigarette producers, not smokers.

The hike comes as the government aims to generate more tax revenue as the economy is slowing. China's economic growth slowed to 7% year on year in the first quarter, its weakest rate in six years.

Offficials have also been attempting to curb smoking rates in China– the world's largest consumer and producer of tobacco. Last month, they unveiled new restrictions on tobacco advertising, including a ban on ads that target minors and on tobacco ads appearing in mass media and public places. The ban, which is slated to go into effect on Sept. 1, will also prohibit tobacco logos, packages and trademarks from appearing on other products and services.

China is home to more than 300 million smokers and 43% of the world's cigarette production, according to the American Cancer Society and the World Lung Foundation. Tobacco is also a leading cause of death in China, causing 1.2 million deaths annually and expected to cause 3.5 million deaths annually by 2030, the groups said.

But even as medical costs rise, cutting China's tobacco addiction isn't easy. Tobacco has historically had a strong grip on the Chinese government, and not merely because the country's main tobacco companies are state-owned and feed revenue into state coffers. Bureaucrats often hold their meetings while puffing away, offering cigarettes to one another as gifts.

Smokers are already gearing up for increased restrictions. Beijing will implement its indoor smoking ban on June 1. The citywide ban takes aim at restaurants, bars and other indoor spots and officials can fine individual offenders 200 yuan (about $33) or up to 10,000 yuan for organizations and companies who break the rules.

The Beijing municipal government launched in April an account on the social messaging app WeChat, encouraging people to report violators and tattle on smokers by uploading images or videos of those publicly caught in the act.

Advocates for tobacco cessation are cheering the tax. "There is a direct link between the price of

tobacco products and the level of consumption: in other words, the higher the price, the more lives that will be saved," said Bernhard Schwartländer, the World Health Organization's representative in China.

Despite grumbles from smokers, some don't appear to be all that fazed by the tax hike, or persuaded by the idea that the goal was to deter the habit. "A raise from 5-11% is to collect more money," one Weibo user said, adding, "A rise to 50% is serious control on smoking. Don't try to con us.

Another said the price didn't matter: "Let it rise. I'm going to quit." （Source:WSJ）

Yunnan Baiyao admits to buying substandard gingko extract

The manufacturer of the hemostatic powdered medicine Yunnan Baiyao, a well known traditional treatment for stopping bleeding, has released a statement admitting that it had purchased 6.9 tonnes of ginkgo extract from two suppliers that are now under investigation, reports Guangzhou's Southern Daily.

Guilin-based pharmaceutical company Xingda and a Hunan-based natural medicine manufacturer reportedly sold substandard ginkgo extract to 24 downstream pharmaceutical companies, including the state-owned Yunnan Baiyao Group, the manufacturer of Yunnan Baiyao — which enjoys the status of a "miracle drug" in China.

According to reports from China's Food and Drug Administration, one of the two suppliers illegally used hydrochloric acid instead of the legally approved homeopathic alcohol to extract ginkgo and sell the product to pharmaceutical companies. The other used ginkgo extracted through the same method to produce medicine. Both have altered company logs documenting the purchase of materials and production tests.

The authority has ordered a recall of all medicine tainted by the products.

On May 21, Yunnan Baiyao Group publicly stated that one of its subsidiaries in charge of traditional Chinese medicine trading has purchased 6.9 tonnes of the substandard herbal extract but claimed that the product has not been used in the making of any of the company's products, according to the report. (Source: Want China Times)

China Updates is published weekly by the U.S. – China Health Products Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of dietary supplements and nutritional ingredients. The association's major focus is the continued development of China's overall natural health product industry as well as offer business services to its global members.

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