

CHINA

Plan to detail punishments for juveniles

Matching response to crime level will help correct children, prosecutors say

By CAO YIN
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Chinese prosecutors will clarify offense levels in crimes committed by juveniles to properly align punishments with the severity of the criminal acts, the nation's top prosecuting authority said on Tuesday.

The work plan of the Supreme People's Procuratorate for 2018-22, which it posted on its website, also vowed to take innovative steps to prevent such crimes.

“Juvenile offenses are in urgent need of classification. ... The more accurate the punishment is, the easier it is to correct young people.”

Wang Jingyuan, prosecutor

The plan said the levels of offenses by juveniles will be classified, and offenders will be punished in line with the prescribed levels.

It also said consideration is being given to setting up a database of people with a record of harming children.

“Juveniles are our future. Keeping them from harm and offering them a safe environment to grow up in is our duty,” the top procuratorate said.

It said it will continue to dispatch prosecutors to schools to explain the law and help children better understand how minor offenses can become crimes, as well as how to protect themselves against predators.

Wang Jingyuan, a prosecutor responsible for handling juvenile-related cases in Beijing's Dongcheng district procuratorate, welcomed the plan. She said the new measures are necessary and will help prevent crimes by juveniles.

“Juvenile offenses are in urgent need of classification, as the level relates to the punishment an offender should receive,” Wang

said. “The more accurate the punishment is, the easier it is to correct young people.”

She said more attention is often paid to rectifying juveniles' behavior after they commit crimes, “but we often ignore children who commit minor offenses or illegal acts at an early stage, let alone help them through correction.”

In December, the case of a 12-year-old boy who was sent back to school in Hunan province after killing his mother sparked public concern.

“But under the Criminal Law, we couldn't do anything, as it sets 14 as the statutory age for criminal liability,” Wang said.

The boy was eventually placed under the joint guardianship of his family, the public security department and educational authorities, because he is too young to be sent to juvenile disciplinary facilities that hold young offenders between 14 and 17.

“If the levels of juvenile offenses are classified, such problems, I believe, will be solved,” Wang said. “Some new punishments, such as community correction or voluntary labor, can be designed and applied in line with the offense level and age.”

Pi Yijun, director of the Youth Crime and Justice Research Center at China University of Political Science and Law, said: “It is essential to make distinctions between small mistakes, minor offenses and crimes when we are dealing with children's problems. The earlier we clarify the problems and take corrective steps, the more effective it will be for us to prevent children from committing crimes.”

Both experts said the levels of classification will take some time to develop, as the issue needs more study by the authorities.

“So, before that, every juvenile-related department, especially schools, should strictly carry out their own rules,” Pi said.

For instance, when a school finds a student is cutting classes or beating classmates, “it must take urgent steps to punish him or her in a timely manner to prevent such behavior from becoming serious”, he said.

Dancing for prosperity



Members of the Miao ethnic group in traditional dress take part in a *tiaoyue* performance — dance under moonlight — in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Monday to celebrate the Chinese New Year. *Tiaoyue* is customarily performed by the Miao people between the first and the 15th day of the first lunar month to pray for a good harvest and prosperity. QIAO QIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Club Med offers sickened guests compensation after virus outbreak

By TIAN XUEFEI
and ZHOU HUIYING in Harbin

The Club Med Yabuli ski resort in Yabuli, Heilongjiang province, promised on Tuesday to pay guests triple the cost of their stay as compensation if they were affected by an outbreak of norovirus, a common cause of acute gastrointestinal illness.

Transportation and treatment costs will be also covered by the compensation, the company said in a statement posted on social media.

The club has suspended the reception of new guests and a professional health team has been sent to Yabuli to deal with the outbreak.

Eight tourists at the resort tested positive for norovirus, Harbin's Center for Disease Control and Prevention said on Monday.

On Feb 4, Chinese New Year's Eve, some guests at the resort began to exhibit symptoms that looked like food poisoning, including vomiting, diarrhea, stomachache and low fever.

Some tourists staying at the resort said more than 200 guests had fallen ill as of Sunday.

Soon after receiving reports of the symptoms, an investigation team organized by Harbin's Center for Disease Control and Prevention arrived at the club and registered the information of 42 tourists who

said they felt uncomfortable.

Eight people were treated at nearby hospitals, but no one was admitted, the center said.

“I spent 25,400 yuan (\$3,600) on a five-day trip for my husband, son and me at the club, including dining, accommodations and skiing,” a 37-year-old tourist surnamed Liu from Shanghai said. “I am a loyal customer of Club Med and have had wonderful experiences in the past, so even though I felt it was a little expensive, I chose it without hesitation.”

Liu described her subsequent experience.

“In the afternoon on Saturday, I felt uncomfortable and began to have diarrhea and vomiting. I thought I was unaccustomed to the climate of a new place and decided to have some porridge from the club's cafeteria for supper,” she said.

“However, I found several tourists doing the same thing when I arrived at the cafeteria. After a short chat, we found we were suffering from the same condition.”

Liu's husband and two other tourists began to inquire room by room and found that members of more than 20 families had the same symptoms.

“We suspected it was food poisoning and asked the club to deal with the case as soon as possible,” said Liu, who left the resort on Sunday

morning. “So far, the club has given me no explanation or solution.”

Liu told China Daily on Tuesday that she had not received any notification about compensation from Club Med.

Another female tourist, surnamed Wang, said some children had vomited in the public area, and the cleaners had mopped it up in a cursory manner, without using any disinfectant.

The club closed its cafeteria on Monday and offered guests packaged meals and instant noodles.

“We have started an investigation of water and food to try to find out the cause of the virus as soon as possible,” Club Med said on Monday afternoon. “At the same time, strict prevention measures, including thorough disinfection, are underway.”

A male guest surnamed Li said he had received a notice from Club Med on Tuesday morning listing the items eligible for compensation, but he said no details were included about how to apply for it.

“I hope they can settle the case properly and quickly,” he said.

Club Med, a global resort brand, was acquired by Fosun Tourism Group in 2015 and is the company's biggest revenue generator.

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Briefly

Jilin anti-graft official will stand trial

Qiu Daming, a former anti-graft official in Jilin province, has been charged with taking bribes and embezzlement, the Supreme People's Procuratorate said on Tuesday. The case will be heard by the Shijiazhuang Intermediate People's Court in Hebei province, it said.

Qiu, former deputy head of Jilin's Discipline Inspection Commission and Supervisory Commission, was charged with taking advantage of his position and using other officials to benefit others. He is also accused of accepting large amounts of money and property in exchange for favors, and of illegally possessing vast sums of public money and property.

National library gets 120,000 holiday visits

The National Library of China received some 120,000 visitors during the weeklong Spring Festival holiday, People's Daily said on Tuesday, citing the library. The number is an increase of 140 percent over last year's holiday. During the holiday that ended on Sunday, special lectures and exhibitions were arranged to display traditions of the Lunar New Year. This year marks the 110th anniversary of the library.

XINHUA

Feeding frenzy



Swans flock to food provided by Zulaygul Tursun, an urban greening and gardening inspector, and her colleagues on a partially frozen river in Korla, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Monday. She gave the birds flatbread known as *naan*. About 400 swans have migrated to the city this year to spend the winter. ZHAO GE / XINHUA

Executives of TCM company in trouble over honey

By XIN WEN
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The Beijing Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China has condemned and punished executives of Tong Ren Tang, a famous maker of traditional Chinese medicine, after it was found to be selling expired honey, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said on Tuesday.

Jiangsu TV reported in mid-December that a honey provider for Beijing Tong Ren Tang Bee Industry — a subsidiary of the Chinese herbal medicine brand founded in 1669 — had been accused of reusing expired honey in production in Yancheng, Jiangsu province. An investigation was launched by the company.

Because the company is registered in Beijing, the capital's discipline inspection commission began an investigation last month to apportion responsibility.

The investigation found that the Party committee of the company failed to supervise its subsidiaries, resulting in chaotic internal management and severe loss of State-owned assets, the CCDI said.

It also harmed the revered herbal medicine brand, it said.

Fourteen company executives, including Mei Qun, the Party chief and president of Tong Ren Tang Group, were criticized and five were demoted, dismissed or had their labor contracts terminated.

All Party disciplinary actions and government sanctions were com-

14 million yuan

Fine given to Tong Ren Tang Bee Industry for selling expired honey and changing the date on production labels

pleted before Feb 3, local authorities said.

Late on Monday, Tong Ren Tang Group said its bee industry subsidiary had been fined 14 million yuan (\$2.07 million) by Yancheng's market regulation authorities.

The company said some management personnel had processed returned honey and changed the labeled date of production.

It said 2,284 bottles of expired

honey had flowed into the market since October. According to the food and drug bureau in Beijing's Daxing district, where the company is registered, 3,300 bottles of honey have been confiscated.

The food business license of Beijing Tong Ren Tang Bee Industry has been revoked and it will not be able to apply for a new one for five years.

People involved in the case will be prevented from applying for business licenses in the food industry or engaging in food production or management work for five years.

In 2016, a third-party investigation found that a batch of Manuka honey products marketed by Tong Ren Tang and imported from New Zealand had been adulterated with syrup.

Court triggers debate by seizing savings of couple with third child

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
and WANG XIAOYU in Beijing

A local court's announcement that it seized about 23,000 yuan (\$3,400) from a couple who failed to pay a fine for having a third child has sparked heated debate about the ruling's legitimacy.

The couple, residents of a village in Chengwu county, in Heze, Shandong province, welcomed their third child into the world on Jan 5, 2017, but didn't pay the required social maintenance fee of 64,626 yuan, according to a notice released by the Chengwu

County People's Court on Sunday. Provincial regulations require that the fee be paid within 30 days.

Social maintenance fees, which were formerly classified as fines for having more than one child, are collected by local governments from families who have more children than allowed — two in most regions — to compensate the authorities for the child's future use of social resources.

The ruling comes at a time when the country appears to be placing more emphasis on encouraging births, after two years of dwindling birthrates, as seen in the repeal of

the one-child limit in late 2015 and a string of calls from demographers to create an environment that encourages couples to have children.

While some netizens questioned whether the court's decision was lawful, and said it may further dampen the already withering enthusiasm to have more than one child, officials and experts mostly defended the ruling from a legal perspective.

An official in the publicity department of the Heze government who asked not to be named said the local health and legal authorities were simply abiding by the national law.

The official confirmed that levying social administration fees on families with a third child is legally binding and that the court's decision doesn't constitute a breach of any law or regulation.

Yu Jianrong, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Rural Development Institute, said on Monday that he felt “torn” over the court ruling.

“On one hand, the enforcement is appropriate if related regulations are clear. On the other, the normal lives of the children in the family might be disrupted after their sav-

ings were seized,” he said.

A legislator suggested last year that all content about family planning should be removed from existing laws, but the National Health Commission said last month that China should not abolish family planning at the moment.

In a statement posted on its website, it said all laws concerning population and family planning in China were made based on the Constitution, which endorses the implementation of family planning. It was thus inappropriate to immediately remove all articles concerning family

planning from existing laws, it said.

Official figures show that the number of births in China has been declining for two years, even with the implementation of the second-child policy in 2016. The policy allows all couples in China to have two children.

A continuation of low birthrates could cause problems such as a more rapidly aging population and a dwindling workforce. Many experts have called for further relaxation of the family planning policy in recent years.

Wang Xiaodong contributed to this story.

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