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DEVELOPMENT

Goals set to nurture growth in all parts of the nation

By ZHANG YUE and HU YONGQI

China issued a five-year guideline on invigorating the development of its central region, to build it into a key area for advanced manufacturing, modern agriculture, urbanization and ecological conservation.

The guideline was approved on Wednesday at a State Council executive meeting presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

"Our strategy to boost westward growth has not changed. Yet, recently, there has been a divergence in development between southern and northern China, and each of the six provinces in central China also has its own condition," Li said. "It's necessary to improve development across regions so that the central region can truly play a supporting role in China's economy."

The six provinces in central China — Henan, Shanxi, Hubei, Anhui, Hunan and Jiangxi — have rich land and agriculture resources. The region contributes 20.3 percent of China's GDP, up from 18.8 percent in 2005.

However, amid ongoing restructuring and industrial upgrading, the region faces challenges in further retiring excess industrial capacity and reducing reliance on labor and investment, as well as in technological innovation.

The new guideline sets a goal that the six provinces will account for a considerable proportion of China's production output, while people's livelihoods will be improved significantly.

The goals will be achieved through optimizing the regional economic structure, creating new economic drivers, encouraging industrial upgrading, improving modern transportation infrastructure and strengthening agriculture development.

"While building itself into a key area for advanced manufacturing and urbanization, the region should also spare no efforts in developing modern agriculture and promoting agriculture management of scale," Li said.

Contact the writers at huyongqi@chinadaily.com.cn

In the news

TOP NEWS

Spread the word

Rare volumes by Shakespeare, Dickens and others head for Beijing. > p3

FOCUS

2-child challenge

China's new two-child policy could lead to a rise in the number of fatalities during pregnancy. > p10



The look of love

Chinese veterans in their 80s and 90s, who survived the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-45) during World War II, pose for formal wedding photos for the first time in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, after a local photography studio organized the event for a group of them for free as part of celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of the Long March of the Red Army. LYU XINYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

MARKET REGULATION

US firm fined for unfair practices

By WANG YANFEI wangyanfei@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreign companies should carefully study the antitrust law while operating in China, a senior official with the nation's top antitrust enforcer said after it announced on Wednesday the first penalty for the medical instrument manufacturing industry.

The China unit of US company Medtronic, a leading supplier of high-end medical devices such as an insulin pumping system, was fined 119 million yuan (\$17.3 million), or 4 percent of the company's annual sales in China last year, for eliminating market competition in the medical industry, according to the

National Development and Reform Commission.

Investigations found that the company had fixed resale prices through monopoly agreements with its dealers.

Compared with the record-high 6.088 billion yuan fine imposed on Qualcomm in 2014, the amount is at the medium level of penalties, which range from 1 to 10 percent of the sales of the investigated company in the previous fiscal year.

The company is the first in the medical device industry to get such a fine, which came after the commission investigated several major medical companies before announcing the decision, according to Zhang Handong, director of the commission's Price

\$17.3 million

fine imposed upon Medtronic for eliminating market competition and fixing prices in Chinese medical industry

Supervision Bureau.

The decision was made after almost a year of investigation and after more than 10 visits for on-site evidence collection, according to Zhang.

"Fixing the resale price is among the leading causes that drive up the prices of high-end medical devices to unusually high levels in China," said Zhang. "We hope the case can become a good example as we strive to promote fair market competition."

Zhang said the commis-

sion treats all market players equally, without discrimination toward foreign or domestic companies, while conducting anti-monopoly enforcement action.

Xu Xinyu, a veteran commission official who is in charge of the investigation in the landmark case against Qualcomm in 2014, said foreign companies should study local antitrust laws and comply with rules while operating businesses in China.

"Some foreign companies violate the law willfully," he said, without revealing any company names.

Xu said the commission, in levying the fine, was not motivated by a desire to boost the growth of domestic companies but to uphold the law.

SINO-US TIES

Actions by Taiwan leader called 'petty'

Beijing sees ulterior motive in Tsai's plan to stop in US on way to Central America

By MO JINGXI and ZHAO HUANXIN



Terry Branstad, Iowa governor, has been named US ambassador to China

China's Foreign Ministry said Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen's planned transit stop in the United States carries "ulterior political intentions", while an expert warned her move could be counterproductive.

Asked to comment on Beijing's call for the US to prevent Tsai from passing through the country next month en route to her planned visit to Central America, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said that "transit diplomacy" is among the "petty moves" employed by Taiwan's leader, whose "ulterior political intentions are clear for all to see".

Lu reiterated that it has been commonly recognized by the international community that Taiwan is part of China, and that the one-China principle is the key political precondition for countries to develop relations and cooperate with China.

Meanwhile, Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, an old friend of China, has been asked by president-elect Donald Trump to be ambassador to China, media reported.

Earlier on Wednesday, when asked about the possible appointment of Branstad, Lu said: "We welcome him to play a greater role in advancing the development of China-US relations."

"We are willing to work with whoever receives the position and work together to enhance the Sino-US relationship in a healthy and steady way."

Tsai is scheduled to visit Guatemala on Jan 11 and 12, Reuters reported on Tuesday. Donald Trump, who was named Time magazine's Person of the Year on Wednesday, will be inaugurated on Jan 20.

An adviser to Trump's transition team said he considered it "very unlikely" there would be a meeting between Tsai and Trump if she were to go through New York, according to Reuters.

However, Li Haidong, a professor of US studies at China Foreign Affairs University, said Trump is unpredictable.

"The Obama government will continue to send the signal that Washington will not change its one-China policy," Li said. "On the contrary, Trump is highly unpredictable."

It is unlikely that Tsai will meet with senior Obama administration officials, Li said.

SEE "TIES" PAGE 3

GLOBALIZATION

Moutai sets sights on Europe's drinkers

By ANGUS McNEICE in Hamburg angus@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Iconic liquor brand Moutai, for decades the toast of choice during visits to China of foreign leaders and dignitaries, chose the northern German port city of Hamburg to launch its bid to bring the fiery spirit to mainstream Europe.

Tuesday's gala launch in the city famed for its entertainment culture was part of a global effort to bring Moutai to the masses.

Company Chairman Yuan Renguo said it made strategic sense to launch Moutai's European ambitions from Hamburg, given Germany's strong brewing culture and the city's status as a major port through which about half of German foreign trade with China moves.

"Today, if you mention Germany to Chinese people they often think of beer," he said. "In time, Germans will see Moutai as one of the symbols of Chinese culture."

While Moutai is a mainstay at formal celebrations in China, its exposure among Westerners is largely limited to business people who have made trips to China. Its status was secured

when Richard Nixon and Premier Zhou Enlai enjoyed a glass during the former US president's visit to Beijing in 1972.

Moutai ramped up its international operations in 2014 when it held a banquet in San Francisco and promotional efforts saw hip bars in New York add Moutai cocktails to their menus. Export revenue increased by nearly 70 percent in the first half of this year, Yuan said, with annual sales on course for \$6.4 billion across 60 countries. The company is taking out ads in major publications and plans another gala for early 2017 in Paris.

At the Grand Elysee hotel in Hamburg, 300 guests were served the sorghum-derived baijiu drink in three cocktails designed by a German bar's catering service.

"We had a lot of fun, but it was the most difficult time we've had making a new cocktail because it's such a different taste," said Alexander Brittnacher, founder of Next Level Cocktails. "It's really complex and really strong."

At 53 percent alcohol content by volume, Moutai is more potent than most liquors and Brittnacher said its distinct flavor made it challenging to balance in a standard lime and



A bartender mixes cocktails using Moutai at a launch event in Hamburg.

ANGUS McNEICE / CHINA DAILY

sugar-based cocktails.

Moutai is in talks with a Paris-based cocktail manufacturer to sell pre-mixed drinks on the international market, and the company is scouting a location in Frankfurt for its own cocktail bar.

Moutai's European strategy will also focus on Chinese restaurants, according to An Huailun, managing director of Moutai's imports and exports.

"Drinking culture and eating culture are very much related and we are going to enter the market partly through Chinese food," he said. "We are cooperating with many Chinese restaurants in Europe - mainly the leading ones."

The liquor will sell in stores for around 149 euros (\$160) per 500ml bottle. In the UK, a good 750 ml bottle of single malt Scotch whisky costs around 30 pounds (\$38).

SPACE

Astronauts describe the fun, adventure of 33 days in space

By ZHAO LEI zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Staying inside for a whole week might seem unbearable to most people, but for astronauts Jing Haipeng and Chen Dong who lived in a space station for a month, their time was not enough.

"We hoped that the mission could last longer because we had so much fun in space," said Jing, commander of the Shenzhou XI mission. "We had a very memorable journey."

Jing, 50, who is now China's most experienced astronaut, and Chen, 37, a first-time space visitor, met with reporters on Wednesday at the Astronaut Center of China in Beijing's northwestern suburbs.

Appearing in public for the first time since returning to Earth on Nov 18, following a monthlong mission in orbit, the two were kept at a safe distance from reporters because they were still in quarantine.

The astronauts embarked on the space trip aboard the Shenzhou XI spacecraft from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Oct 17. They entered the Tiangong II space laboratory, which was launched in



Astronauts Jing Haipeng (left) and Chen Dong greet reporters in Beijing on Wednesday. CHEN JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

mid-September from the same center, on Oct 19.

Their 33-day journey was the longest space stay by Chinese astronauts. The longest previous space trip by Chinese astronauts was the 15-day Shenzhou X mission in June 2013.

"Though our schedules were tight, we very much enjoyed the work and life in space," Jing said. "We watched TV programs or listened to music while having dinner. We tossed food toward each other and saw it float in the air, and we just opened our mouth to wait for it."

Chen said they had contests to see who could perform the most somersaults in the weightless Tiangong II.

"There were a lot of things in the mission that I will never forget. I observed the sprouting of seeds and watched silkworms spin a cocoon. I was often shocked by the magnificence of the universe when I looked out the windows," he recalled.

Huang Weifen, deputy research head of the Astronaut Center of China, said Jing and Chen are in good health and will finish a three-week medical quarantine on Friday.

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