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United Front for Conservation A cause without borders



Historic BreakthroughMainland and Taiwan enhance ties

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Setting the Tone

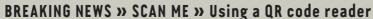
Policy stance made clear

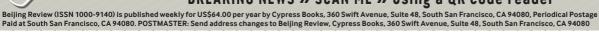


Domestic Market Has 'Spring in Its Step'

Holiday unleashes consumption potential









THE DESK



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EDITOR

The Fight Against Poachers

"No buying, no killing." The slogan raises awareness of an international poaching crisis, but the truth is that endangered wildlife species face a variety of grave threats.

Aside from publicizing the importance of protecting wildlife, tougher penalties need to be implemented to prohibit poaching and smuggling, From December 30, 2013 to lanuary 26, 2014, China led a campaign against transnational wildlife crimes, in cooperation with 27 other countries and international organizations, The operation, code-named Cobra II, inflicted a stunning blow on poachers and smugglers. It cracked over 350 cases involving more than 400 suspects, and captured more than 3 tons of ivory and ivory products, including over 1,000 hides and a number of other wildlife products.

Wildlife poaching and smuggling has become a serious global issue. As early as September 2012, the Chinese Government called for a multinational crackdown on the crimes, initiating the first Operation Cobra, involving 22 countries, in early 2013.

The two Cobra operations show that the international community is highly united and strongly determined in cracking down on crimes of wildlife poaching and smuggling. Furthermore, Cobra operations have provided a strong example of joint law enforcement and offer international cooperation experience in each participating country.

Wildlife smuggling cannot be resolved by only one country or even several international operations. All countries involved should prepare to make enduring efforts to control wildlife crimes. During the Operation Cobra II, joint law enforcement activities encountered difficulties.

Nature is an integrated whole. Once a biological chain is destroyed, the rest of nature will fall into irretrievable chaos. Thus, protecting wildlife and endangered species is a measure of protecting the human race. Following the Operation Cobra II, people shall call for more international campaigns to fight against wildlife poaching and smuggling.



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EARTHQUAKE HITS XINJIANG

People seek safety outdoors after a 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck Yutian County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on February 12. As the epicenter did not happen in a densely populated area, there were not yet reports of casualties as of 11 p.m. that day. An emergency rescue team is already operating in the area.

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New Base

China completed its fourth Antarctic research station called Taishan on February 8.

Construction of the traditional Chinese lantern-shaped station began in December 2013. A 28-strong team braved snowstorms, temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius, and high-altitude conditions to build the station.

It can house as many as 20 people and will be used as a scientific research station during the Antarctic summers, lasting from December to March



Yutu's Return

China's moon rover Yutu has awoken up from its concerningly abnormal dormant period, while experts are still trying to figure out the cause of the abnormality, a spokesman with the country's lunar probe program revealed on February 13.

The abnormality was discovered just before *Yutu* entered its second period of inactivity as the lunar night closed in on January 25. Due to extreme temperatures, *Yutu* must lie dormant during lunar nights or otherwise risk damage to its systems.

Pei Zhaoyu, the spokesperson, said that the moon rover's normal

signal-receiving function had been restored to normal, but the causes of the mechanical control fault are still being verified.

"Yutu went into sleep while reporting an abnormal status," Pei said, adding that experts were initially concerned that it might not be able to survive the extremely low temperatures during the lunar night as a result.

"The rover stands a chance of being saved now that it is still alive," he said.

Nutrition Guarantee

On February 10, China's Central Government issued a guideline for

the development of the nation's food industry, vowing to establish systems to improve people's nutritional intake.

The guideline said that, although China's food production capacity has been expanded and people's diets and health has improved, current supplies cannot meet the nutritional demand for everyone.

The government vowed to establish mechanisms to monitor people's diets, strengthen supervision and information analysis, and intervene in areas or among groups where people are suffering from bad nutrition.

Rural Schooling

The Chinese Government has spent nearly 40 billion yuan (\$6.6 billion) on renovating rural schoolhouses

in less-developed regions over the past three years, according to figures released on February 10.

Students' living conditions have improved since 2010, when ministries of education and finance launched a program of renovating primary and junior schools in rural areas, according to the ministries.

Nearly 69,000 schoolhouse renovation projects started from 2010 to 2013, of which more than 51,000 have been completed.

The dormitory area for each primary and junior school pupil reached 3.1 and 4.2 square meters respectively, which made for increases of 24 percent and 40 percent compared to 2009.

Nearly 700 counties in impoverished areas built school canteens, facilitating the government's efforts to improve students' nutrition, according to the ministries.

Water Management

The Ministry of Water Resources said on February 6 that it has established a new performance appraisal system to evaluate local governments on their management of water resources.

Chen Mingzhong, Director of the Department of Water Resources





National Outdoor Sports Camp for Juveniles kicks off in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province, on February 11



NEW YEAR'S SHOW

Chinese Dancer Tang Shiyi performs in Marseile, France, on February 8 for a show titled Cultures of China, Festival of Spring. The event has been an important annual cultural event to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year all around the world since its debut in 2009

under the ministry, said that China is committed to more efforts to ensure effective implementation of its water resources management system, which was put into place in 2012 and is the strictest-ever standard on water conservation and waste water treatment in the country.

Major indicators on limiting the exploitation of water resources, improving efficiency of its use, and curbing pollution of water sources will be incorporated into the assessment system for local governments' work, Chen added.

According to Chen, local government heads will be held accountable for failing to perform their responsibilities.

China faces a national water shortage of over 50 billion cubic meters on average every year, the ministry's figures showed. Two thirds of its cities reportedly don't



have enough water and nearly 300 million rural residents lack access to safe drinking water.

Family Aid

China will increase financial aid to elderly citizens whose only child has died or become disabled, an official with the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) said on February 10.

Effective from the beginning of 2014, parents in urban areas who have lost their only son or daughter will be provided with 340 yuan (\$56) each month while families living in rural regions will receive 170 yuan (\$28), said NHFPC spokesman Yao Hongwen at a news conference.

Parents in urban and rural areas whose only children have become disabled will receive monthly allowances of 270 yuan (\$44) and 150 yuan (\$24), respectively, Yao said.

Improving Xinjiang

The government of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region will continue to allocate large sums of money in 2014 toward enhancing locals' livelihoods, authorities announced.

A total of 61.66 billion yuan (\$10.17 billion) will be handed out this year to help fund 150 projects covering employment, housing, healthcare, agriculture, and other fields, said Huang Wei, vice chairman of the regional government, on February 11.

More than 484 billion yuan (\$80 billion) has been mobilized in similar programs over the past four years, according to official figures.

Excavated Remains

Remains of a 4,200-square-meter building on a hilltop in northwest China's Shaanxi Province are the largest ritual site from the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.) yet discovered on the Loess Plateau.

Located in Xinzhuang, Qingjian County on the west bank of the Yellow River, the late Shang site covers up to 100,000 square meters and is believed to reveal the relationship the ancient Chinese culture of the time had with nature.

A team led by the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archeology began their excavation work at the site in April 2013. Over 100 artifacts made of clay, bones, copper, wood and stone have been unearthed, and the earliest wooden floors seen on the plateau were also found.

The team's leader, Sun Zhanwei said that the thickness of each piece of floorboard was different, which would have created a flat surface on the rugged terrain.

Experts said two winding corridors surrounding the main building clearly demonstrate that the architecture had ritual significance.

City of Style

Shanghai surpassed Tokyo and Hong Kong to become Asia's most stylish city, a new survey has found.

According to research by Global Language Monitor, a U.S.-based data research firm that catalogs trends by tracking word usage, Shanghai is the reigning fashion capital of Asia, ranking 10th worldwide.

Asia is well-represented in the top 20, with Tokyo at No.11, Singapore at No.19 and Hong Kong at No.20. Beijing didn't make the top 55.

First Patrol of 2014

A live fire drill is held in the West Pacific Ocean on February 7 by a flotilla with China's Nanhai Fleet during its annual patrol and training mission.

The three-ship flotilla, consisting of the amphibious landing craft *Changbaishan* and the destroyers *Wuhan* and *Haikou*, patrolled waters off the Xisha Islands, Nanshan Islands and the Zengmu Reef, the southernmost part of the country's territory, in

the 23-day mission.

After the mission in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, the flotilla passed along crucial straits, including the Sunda Strait, Lombok Strait, and Makassar Strait, to enter the Indian Ocean and the West Pacific Ocean for the drill.

They returned to a military port in south China's Guangdong Province on February 11 after sailing nearly 8,000 sea miles.



A Blossoming Hub

A florist wraps up fresh flowers in Shilin, Yunnan Province, on February 11.

Over the last few years, Yunnan has actively promoted development of its flower industry. The annual output value of the sector has surpassed 30 billion yuan (\$4.95 billion) to date.

Flowers from the province have a market share of over 70 percent in China and have been shipped to over 50 countries. The province aims at becoming Asia's flower hub in coming years.



Robust Trade

Stronger-than-expected growth in China's foreign trade in January has surprised the market.

China's foreign trade volume climbed 10.3 percent year on year in January to \$382.4 billion, marking a strong beginning for 2014, according to data released by the General Administration of Customs on February 12.

Exports rose 10.6 percent from a year earlier to \$207.13 billion, while imports increased 10 percent to \$175.27 billion. The trade surplus stood at \$31.86 billion in January, up 14 percent from a year ago and 24.25 percent from December 2013.

Chang Jian, Chief China Economist at Barclays Capital, called the January figures "surprisingly strong," as the institution expected weak January trade performance based on weak PMI export orders, a high base from last year, and holiday distortions.

"Today's strong export report could have been boosted by a rush of shipments ahead of the Chinese New Year holiday," Chang said.

Overall, the data suggest that the underlying strength of Chinese exports is probably better than we expected, he added.

Electric Car Subsidies

On February 8, the Chinese Government announced measures to further promote the use of newenergy vehicles in an effort to save energy and cut emissions.

Subsidies for new-energy car buyers in 2014 and 2015 will be raised from previous levels regulated by a standard introduced in September 2013, according to a statement jointly issued by the Ministry of Finance and three other government departments.

New-energy passenger car buyers received subsidies from 35,000 yuan (\$5,730) to 60,000 yuan (\$9.894) per vehicle in 2013, while new-energy coach buyers received subsidies of up to 500,000 yuan (\$82,450) in 2013.

In 2013, it was stipulated that China would lower the subsidies by 10 percent this year from the 2013 level and by 20 percent in 2015.

The new statement, however, made an adjustment that will lower subsidies by only 5 percent in 2014 and 10 percent in 2015 from the 2013 level. The change came into effect on January 1, 2014.

To enhance government support for new-energy vehicles, the

(-)

SMILE FOR CHINA

People taking snapshots at the 2014 Singapore Airshow's China pavilion on February 12 subsidy policy, which was scheduled to be phased out at the end of 2015, will be extended, the statement said.

Aviation Biofuel

China's top oil refiner has been given a license allowing the commercial use of its self-developed aviation biofuel, the country's aviation authority said on February 12.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) granted the license, the first of its kind, to Sinopec, allowing the company's No.1 Aviation Biofuel to be used by airlines.

Xu Chaoqun, Deputy Director of CAAC's Flight Criteria Department, hailed the development as a significant breakthrough for the country's research, production and application of aviation biofuel.

CAAC received Sinopec's application for commercial use of the biofuel in early 2012. The No.1 Aviation Biofuel had gone through several rounds of strict tests before it was given the green light, according to Xu.

With an annual consumption of nearly 20 million tons, China has become a large consumer of aviation fuels, and the development of biofuel will help ease resource pressures and cut pollution.

Biofuel is gaining popularity worldwide. The International Air



TRAINING DAY

Crew members receive safety tips on a brand new inter-city CRH6 bullet train, which has a maximum speed of 200 km per hour. The train made a no-load run between Chengdu and Dujiangyan, two cities in Sichuan Province on February 10 before being put into operation

Transport Association forecasts that biofuel will account for 30 percent of aviation fuel used by 2020.

License Approved

Suning, one of China's largest appliance retailers, announced on February 7 that it has obtained an international express delivery license from the State Post Bureau, becoming the country's first e-commerce player to operate the service.

The move will enable the Nanjing-based company to expand the overseas market for its online retailing business while competing with FedEx, DHL, UPS and TNT in international express delivery service.

Before the announcement, Suning had already obtained a national license and more than 150 regional licenses for its express delivery services around the country.

It has become common practice for online shopping platforms to enter the logistics market. Jingdong Mall became China's first e-commerce company to obtain an express delivery license in 2012, and



other online retailing platforms such as Vancl, Vipshop and Yihaodian followed suit in applying.

Anti-trust Probe

U.S. patent licensing company InterDigital Inc. promised to work with China's anti-trust authorities in the hope that the latter will suspend its ongoing investigation into the firm.

The anti-monopoly bureau under the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) confirmed on February 10 that it has received a commitment request from InterDigital that could form the predicate for the suspension of the anti-monopoly investigation.

The NDRC said it will further study the case before making any decisions.

InterDigital has allegedly

charged Chinese telecom firms like Huawei and ZTE higher patent royalty rates than it got from Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics. It is also suspected of using unfair trade practices to force Chinese companies to accept the offer.

In last October, a court in south China's Guangdong Province ordered InterDigital to pay Huawei 20 million yuan (\$3.28 million) in compensation for monopolistic practices.

InterDigital said it will continue to cooperate with the investigation and work with the NDRC to resolve any remaining concerns.

Under China's anti-monopoly laws, fines for a company found violating the rules and refusing to cooperate range from 1 percent to 10 percent of its total revenue in the previous year.

Numbers

43

Number of Chinese companies that made initial public offerings on the A-share market in January

4.1 tln yuan

Land sales revenue in China in 2013

10.7%

The aimed share of non-fossil fuels in China's overall energy consumption in 2014, in an effort to further utilize clean energy

Electrical Meltdown

A staff member from a local grid company de-ices a transmission line in Rongjiang, Guizhou Province, on February 11.

More and more power supply lines are covered with ice following continuous snowy and rainy days in the province. The Guizhou subsidiary of China Southern Power Grid sent out staff to inspect these lines and de-ice the lines to make sure of steady power supply.



2.76 tln yuan

Funds outstanding for foreign exchange as of the end of 2013

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THIS WEEK WORLD



BRITAIN

Residents wearing homemade waders evacuate their home during a flood in south England's Berkshire on February 10







Fires blaze during protests outside a local government building in the capital city of Sarajevo on February 7



VIET NAM

People queue during the opening of the country's first McDonald's restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City on February 8







BELGIUM

A pair of diamond-encrusted boots, made from 40,000 diamonds, with a value estimated at \$3.27 million on display at the Museum aan de Stroom in Antwerp on February 10



Participants throw colored powder at each other during the Color Run in Sydney on February 9







Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta announced on February 13 that he would resign from office, after his own Democratic Party, a major force in the ruling coalition, asked for a new cabinet to be formed

THIS WEEK PEOPLE

"A growing number of Chinese tourists are not satisfied with simply taking photos in front of landmarks and shopping for luxury goods. Many of them prefer in-depth travel experience. They want to explore the city, visit the museums and gain a deeper knowledge about its history."

Han Fang, an employee at Mandarin Voyages, a French travel agency that deals mainly with Chinese tourists, commenting on the rise of Chinese tourists in Europe during the Spring Festival break



"It was a great honor to have spoken Shirley's lines. Losing her has brought sadness to the world."

Liu Chunyan, a noted hostess on China Central Television who has dubbed several of Shirley Temple's movies into Chinese, commenting on her death



"Chinese people who are buying a Bordeaux château want to service the market because domestic production cannot meet the growing appetite in China."

Li Demei, Vice Chairman of Wine Institute of China, commenting on Chinese people's increasing interest in wine



"Beijing must implement policies for controlling car ownership and use since they can help the government gain time to ease traffic problems. The move from private cars to a public transport system should be the ultimate goal for Beijing's policymakers in the transport sector."

Xu Kangming, a transport expert, commenting on Beijing's failure to meet its targets for easing road congestion in 2013



FEMININE ICON



Dong Mingzhu, CEO of Gree Electric Appliances, Inc. of Zhuhai, was elected as one of the Top 50 Most Influential Business Women by Fortune magazine on February 6. Dong is ranked 42nd on the list. Dong, 59, joined Gree as a saleswoman in 1990 and became the company's sales chief in 1996, eventually working her way up to CEO in 2001. Under Dong's leadership, Gree has gone from a small appliance maker to the world's leading manufacturer of household air conditioners. Its revenue in 2013 was up 19.9 percent to 120.03 billion yuan (\$19.7 billion). Dong also wrote a best-selling autobiography focusing her marketing experience, Check Around the World, which describes the Gree Pattern of sales management.



SPEED SKATING SURPRISE



Li Jianrou, a Chinese women's short track speed skater, won China's first gold medal at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games on February 13.

Li avoided a collision between three of her competitors to capture first place in the women's 500-meter final with a time of 45.263 seconds. The 27-year-old was the only Chinese in the four-skater final.

Li, born in Jilin City in northeast China's Jilin Province, is the 2012 world champion of the women's 1,500-meter race. With her triumph in Sochi, she extended China's winning streak in the Olympic event to four consecutive victories.

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MEDIA DIGEST THIS WEEK

The New Three Kingdoms

China Newsweek January 20

China's three IT giants—Alibaba, Tencent and Baidu—have reigned in their own realms separately in the past decade, just like the tale in the Chinese classic: Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Alibaba has focused on E-commerce, Tencent on social networking, and Baidu on its search engine.

However, this situation has begun to collapse with the emergence of WeChat, a mobile messaging app created by Tencent three years ago. WeChat not only guards its own realm, but also constantly flies to the

neighboring kingdoms. Obviously, Alibaba and Baidu can't stand Tencent's moving ahead in this regard. A war is about to occur between the three giants.

As predicted by a Chinese business leader, the future of the Internet world belongs to the fore-runner who can capture "three-hour fragment time." The three-hour fragment time refers to the time that people have per day outside of sleep, work, dining, socializing and tak-

ing care of their family. These three hours are scattered throughout many periods including



commuting to and from work.

The integration of the three-hour fragment time with 4G networks and smartphones has already created big changes in business. All IT companies are now seeking to take a lead in the mobile Internet field.

If someone can take this lead, even if they had nothing before, they can still harvest a land of gold. On the contrary, even if you are doing extremely well, you will still meet fail-

ure if you lag behind. With the introduction of 4G mobile networks, a new war has kicked off.

Public Servants' Income Transparency

Yangtze Evening News February 10

Public servants are typically regarded as being well-paid. But now, some governmental officials, particularly those at township level, have begun to complain that their salaries are lower than common workers.

But such complaint does not garner much support. Most people argue that public service positions are steadier than average workers and that they have more hidden income and better welfare benefits. The contradictory opinions on the salary standard of public servants reflect the necessity to make their income transparent to the public. Actually, government employees at the township level are not as well paid as people think. However, most people are not aware of the fact due to a lack of transparency.

The transparency of governmental workers' income disclosures is helpful for dispelling wide-spread misunderstanding and preventing local governments from paying welfare to their employees recklessly. What's more, knowing the income of public servants is a right of the public. Furthermore, transparent information of public servants will help improve the salary system for them, thereby quelling complaints among the public.

Advertising Forced Marriage

The Beijing News February 10

Recently, an advertisement video clip produced by a dating service provider has stirred controversy. In the video clip, a young girl in a wedding dress, with tears in her eyes, tells her grandma who is gravely ill that she finally getting married after years of waiting,

Thousands of netizens condemned the video, saying the ad failed to take into account the feelings of unmarried people. It seems to imply unmarried adults should apologize to their parents. Marriage is a personal choice, but the video clip equates marriage with kinship and family ties. It suggests that being unmarried is not in

accordance with filial duties. Thus, the ad attracted a negative response of the public.

Today, many single people are forced to attend blind dates as parents persuade them to get married as early as possible. In such circumstances, forced marriage is inevitable for some . Although forced marriage reflects parents' care for their adult sons and daughters, it violates freedom of personal choice and can even lead to family tragedy.

China's Naval Capability Oriental Outlook January 16

In 2013, the Chinese navy's offshore training and drills have become the focus of media attention. Headlines such as "China sails through the first island chain" have been frequently seen, highlighting the capabilities of the Chinese navy. The "first island chain" refers to the first major archipelagos off the East Asian continental mainland, including the Japanese archipelago, Ryukyu Islands, China's Taiwan and the northern Philippines.

However, China should not be satisfied with its recent achieve-

ments. Given the country's vast territory and economic development needs, the Chinese navy will undertake more non-war military actions and the Chinese navy's current combat ability on the open sea shows there is still a long way to go. This ability requires far more than a single ship or a single airplane's ability to reach an area. It calls for comprehensive combat ability and for the corresponding tasks to be completed successfully.

From the perspective of hardware, take the example of the navy's recent escort mission to the Gulf of Aden: once a conflict occurs, without a cover from the air by the aviation, the probability for survival of the fleet is quite small. That's why we need comprehensive combat ability. In terms of software, more are needed, including logistics and technical support, mental adaptation, meteorological and hydrographic knowledge and so on.

The major method for China to realize its future development goals is still economic development. Military force is just a guarantee, but not the major means for when China strives to achieve its strategic goal. From this point of view, the world should be reassured and need not worry about China's development in its open sea and ocean combat ability.





COVER STORY

CONTRABAND: On February 10, customs officers in Shenyang, northeast Liaoning Province, catalog raw ivory and ivory products seized during Operation Cobra II, a global clampdown on illegal wildlife trade

UNITED FRONT FOR CONSERVATION

Countries in Asia, Africa and North America are joining forces in cracking down on wildlife crime By Wang Hairong

cross-continent operation against illegal wildlife trade was conducted secretly from December 30, 2013 to January 26, 2014.

The operation, code-named Cobra II, was co-organized by China, the United States, South Africa, the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network, along with the support of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of

Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the World Customs Organization and Interpol.

The global crackdown focused on key species that are subject to illegal trade and achieved "excellent" results, according to John E. Scanlon, Secretary General of the CITES.

Huge success

Operation Cobra II led to conclusions of more than 350 cases and the arrest of over 400 sus-

pects. Seized illegal animal products included more than 3 tons of raw ivory and ivory products, 1,000-plus hides, 36 rhino horns and a large number of other wildlife products, according to the China Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office.

The operation was participated in by 28 countries in total, while the first Cobra operation launched a year earlier involved 22 countries. "Six more countries were involved this year, resulting in even greater cooperation," said

Wan Ziming, Director of the Law Enforcement Department with the China Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office.

According to Wan, China played a leading role in carrying out Operation Cobra II. China's forestry, customs, police, judiciary and quarantine authorities assigned more than 100,000 staff on the operation, and uncovered over 200 cases involving more than 350 suspects, which ended up accounting for more than half of all cases cracked.

For the first time, China sent enforcement staff to Kenya to arrest a man suspected of ivory trafficking and to host lectures on wildlife protection.

"The success of Operation Cobra II came from the coordination, cooperation and intelligence generated to combat wildlife crime syndicates," said Bonaventure Ebayi, Director of the LATF. The task force is an inter-governmental organization with the main function of facilitating cooperative activities in/among the party states to the Lusaka Agreement, in carrying out investigations on violations of national laws pertaining to illegal trade in wild fauna and flora.

Ebayi added, "As much as the seizures of contraband were welcomed, the real impact was in the intelligence gained, networks developed and the number of investigations, arrests and prosecution of the suspects behind these illegal shipments."

Edward Grace, deputy chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Law Enforcement, said that the operation sent a powerful message to poachers and smugglers across the globe that the world's endangered wildlife and plant resources are not theirs for the taking.

"Only as global partners can we protect the world's wildlife." Grace said.

Senior superintendent Uttam Kumar Karkee of the Nepal police said that this operation has proved itself an excellent model for fighting transnational crime.

Stopping trafficking

"This second Operation Cobra initiative shows what can be achieved when law enforcement authorities across range, transit and destination states work together in a coordinated manner. It also serves to highlight that intelligence-led operations are essential in the fight against transnational organized wildlife crime," Scanlon said.



Participants of Operation Cobra II

Botswana, Brunei, Burundi, Cambodia, China including Hong Kong SAR, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, Tanzania, the United States, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe (In alphabetical order)

(Source: CITES website)

Wildlife is the world's fourth most smuggled item, after drugs, counterfeit goods and human trafficking.

"Leaving aside timber and marine products, it is estimated that the annual value of the illegal wildlife trade is up to \$20 billion and it has often been regarded as a high-profit low-risk crime—although this is starting to change as states recognize its negative economic, social and environmental impacts," Scanlon said at the International Wildlife Trafficking Symposium held in London on February 11-12.

According to *China Daily*, every year, about \$1 billion worth of python skins are smuggled from Southeast Asia into Europe to meet the needs of the luxury goods industry.

At least 5 percent of the wild rhinos and elephants in Africa are killed for their horns and ivory every year, usually to meet demand in Asia. On top of this, wild animals are often smuggled out of their habitats to be kept as pets.

"Wildlife trafficking is now more organized, lucrative, widespread and dangerous than ever before. We need strong partnerships to fight the global problem of illicit wildlife trafficking," Wan said

China is a major destination for ivory, rhino homs, pangolin scales, as well as tiger and leopard products. In China, ivory has traditionally been used in the carving of exquisite sculptures and ornaments. Rhino homs, pangolin scales and tiger bones are prized ingredients in traditional Chinese medicine. Leopard fur is loved for its attractive pattern.

To regulate trade in wildlife, China joined

the CITES in 1981. The convention aims to prevent international trade from threatening the survival of wild flora and fauna.

Today, CITES regulates international trade in close to 35,000 species of plants and animals, including their products and derivatives according to the convention's website.

After signing the convention, China has made significant progress in its wildlife protection efforts. In 1988, China's Law on the Protection of Wildlife went into effect. That year, China made it illegal to kill or sell 256 species of wild animals.

Border patrol and customs officers actively clamp down on wildlife trafficking. In addition, the government has tackled the problem online.

During the more than 30 years since joining the convention, China has actively fulfilled its responsibilities and participated in international cooperation, and played an important role in wildlife protection and trade regulation, Scanlon said at the 16th meeting of the CITES' Conference of the Parties in Bangkok, Thailand, last March.

Zhang Jianlong, Director of the National Interagency CITES Enforcement Collaborative Group and Deputy Director of the State Forestry Administration, said that China will continue to cooperate with other countries to strengthen wildlife protection and fully fulfil its international obligations.



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COVER STORY

KNOCKING POACHERS

China steps up seizures in the fight against illegal wildlife trade By George Okore

espite considerable efforts to combat wildlife poaching, the practice continues to threaten endangered species all over the world. In Africa, it is having a devastating impact on the continent's wildlife population.

Aware that poaching in Africa has reached alarming levels, particularly that involving rhinos and elephants, and with the most popular destination for their export being Asia, China has mustered timely international action against wildlife crime. In January, John E. Scanlon, Secretary General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES), led the world in burning 6 tons of confiscated illegal ivory and other animal products in a show of commitment toward ending the illicit trade.

The public destruction in Dongguan, south China's Guangdong Province, of 6.15 tons of ivory stockpiles seized from illegal trade will both raise public awareness and show the Chinese Government's resolve to put a halt to slaughtering wildlife for their body parts.

"We congratulate China for timely intervention. The international community should reciprocate by improving law enforcement and increased efforts to reduce demand. These efforts need to be stepped up and strengthened to produce desired results," said the UN Environment Program Executive Director Achim Steiner, who added that the latest CITES data estimates that some 47,000 animals were killed in Africa in 2011 and 2012.

The African Elephant Specialist Group under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission estimates the African elephant population to be around 500,000.

CITES said that preliminary indicators suggest that even higher levels of illegal trade may be reached in 2013. Although incomplete, the raw data for large-scale ivory seizures in 2013 (classed as involving at least 500 kg of ivory in



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION: Representatives from foreign countries and international organizations witness the destruction of confiscated ivory stockpiles in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, on January 6

a single transaction) already represented the greatest quantity of ivory confiscated through this type of seizure over the last 25 years. Large-scale ivory seizures typically indicate the participation of organized crime and so far, 18 such seizures have yielded over 41.6 tons of ivory this year. Whether this reflects better law enforcement or a further escalation in trade, can only be known when a full analysis of the 2013 data is possible. According to CITES, if the present rate of poaching activity is maintained, elephants in Africa could face extinction.

Tom Milliken, an ivory trade expert with TRAFFIC, a wildlife trade monitoring network, said, "From 2000 through 2013, the number of large-scale ivory movements has steadily grown in terms of the number of such shipments and the quantity of ivory illegally traded. The year 2013 already represented a 20-percent increase over the previous peak year in 2011; we're hugely concerned."

Last October, the African Elephant Summit in Gaborone, Botswana, also advocated stronger global action to halt illegal trade and secure viable elephant populations across Africa.

Zhao Shucong, head of China's State Forestry Administration, said that China is

strengthening enforcement efforts both domestically as well as collaborating with other countries to stop illegal trade in elephant ivory and other illegal wildlife products.

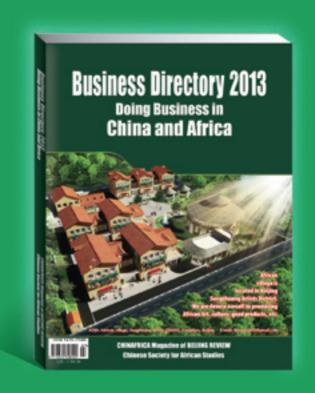
To prevent the extinction of elephants, China is currently implementing its comprehensive National Ivory Action Plan. It has identified countries that are primary sources, transit routes and importers of illegal ivory. These include Kenya, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Uganda, Tanzania and Viet Nam. Collaboratively, China is working with these countries to enhance strong national legislation and regulations coupled with international enforcement, outreach and public awareness.

On an international level, China has led two cross-continental wildlife enforcement efforts, known as Operation Cobra and Operation Cobra II, to combat illegal wildlife trade, as well as providing funding to the African Elephant Fund and the Monitoring of Illegal

Kenya Wildlife Service Director, William Kiprono, said that there is strong evidence of increased involvement of organized crime syndicates and rebel militia in wildlife crimes. This is channeled through well-developed criminal networks, which is changing the dynamics of combating this highly destructive criminal activity. One of the regional initiatives to deal with this is the Nairobi-based Lusaka Agreement Task Force adopted in 1994. This was implemented to fight elephant poaching and other wildlife crimes. This, in turn, established the Africa Elephant Enforcement Special Account to mobilize resources toward conservation of African elephants, to which China is a contributor.

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Killing of Elephants project.



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