

WORLD: *CHARLIE HEBDO* SHOOTINGS P.22 | BUSINESS: SMARTPHONE SLUGFEST P.34

# BEIJING REVIEW

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## GIVE ME SHELTER

Answering the silent cries for help from  
victims of child sex abuse




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A photograph of a diverse group of business professionals, including men and women of various ethnicities, seated in a lecture hall with red chairs. They are all smiling and looking towards the right side of the frame, suggesting they are attending a presentation or conference.

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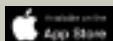
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# EDITOR'S DESK

## Better Protection For Children

In recent years, reports of children suffering sexual abuse have consistently been on the rise. From May 23, 2013 to May 22, 2014, 192 cases of suspected child sexual abuse were reported by the media. Of the 343 alleged victims involved, those aged from 8-14 years old accounted for 85.42 percent of the total.

Frequent outbreaks of such cases clearly point to shortcomings in the current laws and the measures being undertaken. Perhaps the most important of these measures is education for minors on safety and self-protection. Many children either have no idea of the hidden risks of sexual abuse to which they are exposed or do not know how to safeguard themselves. Such ignorance provides gaps for potential abusers to exploit and this may lead to repeated and prolonged instances of abuse over time.

Lack of basic guardianship is another direct contributing factor to child sexual abuse, according to a research report on the protection of girls published in September 2013. The report found that a large proportion of abuse victims are children who have no formal legal guardians, such as children in rural areas whose migrant worker parents have traveled to cities in search of employment and left them to the care of their grandparents or other relatives.

On June 1, 2013, over 100 female journalists launched the Protecting Girls charity program. The venture is dedicated

to conducting sexual abuse prevention courses in primary schools, especially those in rural areas where there are a large number of children lacking parental care. Its long-term goal is to push the government to come up with concrete measures toward the protection of children from sexual abuse.

The program has provided sexual abuse awareness classes to more than 100,000 children in over 20 provinces and municipalities across China including Beijing, Shandong, Zhejiang, Guizhou and Yunnan, as well as distributing over 120,000 pamphlets on abuse prevention. It has trained nearly 1,000 volunteer teachers and cooperated with local government departments such as education bureaus to carry out sexual abuse prevention courses.

The program has formed its own teaching plan, the contents of which have been copyrighted. This plan incorporates accumulated experience and expertise in the field of child sexual abuse prevention both in China and around the world and has been modified over 40 rounds of drafting by a panel of more than 20 experts.

"The goal of the program is to proliferate knowledge on child safety and promote progress in the law with regard to child sexual abuse," said Sun Xuemei, one of the program's founders and leaders. It is hoped that such a goal will be embraced by the whole of society. ■

### WRITE TO US



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## VICTORY DANCE

Soccer player Sun Ke (right) of the Chinese national team celebrates with his teammate after scoring the second goal for China during a match against Uzbekistan in the Asian Cup in Brisbane on January 14.

China beat Uzbekistan 2-1 in the match, in its second straight win at this year's Asian Cup. Four days prior, it defeated Saudi Arabia 1-0.

The two victories have guaranteed China a place in the quarterfinals, representing the first time since 2004 that the country has reached the tournament knockout stages and whipping Chinese fans up into a frenzy.

The Asian Cup is held every four years. This year's matches are being held in five Australian cities—Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane and Newcastle—from January 9 to 31.



CHEN MAODONG

## First Snow

Zhangjiakou in Hebei Province sees its first snow in 2015 on January 14.

The snow hit many places in the north of China, including Beijing and Hohhot, capital city of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. But the snow in Beijing was very light. The city's meteorological station recorded snowfall of less than 1 mm.

## Anti-Graft Priorities

A communique, issued after the fifth plenary session of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the Communist Party of China, which ended on January 14, has put forward seven priorities for 2015, including closer scrutiny of senior officials, an intensification in efforts to track down corrupt fugitives hiding abroad and a tightening of supervision on state-owned enterprises.

The session, which was attended by 125 CCDI members, reviewed and passed a report presented by Wang Qishan, the CCDI chief. President Xi Jinping also addressed the assembled members, which included many senior Chinese leaders, about the country's efforts to eradicate corruption.

The communique said the campaign required political composure, restraint

and patience, but stressed that it was not merely a "whirlwind campaign" and the efforts undertaken should not spur "mass movements" that could potentially disturb or undermine social order.

## Real ID Online

China will expand the real-name registration system across more social networks and websites. The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) will "comprehensively" promote the management of real identities online, with social networks—including microblogging platforms, forums and instant messaging services—all having to enforce a real-name registration system, CAC official Xu Feng said at a press conference on January 13.

Real names will only be seen by backend administrators and users may still choose a screen name.

## ART SHOW

An item is on display at the Sino-Korean Art Exchange Fair, which kicked off in Beijing on January 14



LI MINGFANG

Chinese Internet authorities have been pressing for a real identity system since 2011, and new users of WeChat and other instant messaging apps have, since August, been required to provide their real names.

China has more than 275 million users on microblogs with Sina Weibo leading the pack, and 459 million users of mobile instant messaging apps, led by WeChat.

## Second Child

Nearly 1 million couples have applied to have a second child since China eased its one-child policy in 2014, allowing couples to have a second child if either parent is an only child.

The number of applications falls close to the estimate of less than 2 million annually by China's National Health and Family Planning Commission, said Mao Qun'an, a spokesman with the commission, at a press conference on January 12.

Since China's family planning policy was eased in a pilot program in east China's Zhejiang Province in January 2014, urban couples nationwide may now have a second child if either parent is an only child.

Mao said that the commission will put more effort toward improving the population-monitoring mechanism and will stipulate relevant policies.

"We will also collect public opinion on healthcare for pregnant women and children in a timely manner," Mao added.

## Lottery Sales

China's major lottery, the welfare lottery, saw sales of 205.96 billion yuan (\$33.6 billion) in 2014, up 16.67 percent year on year, authorities announced on January 12.

Last year it raised more than 57 billion yuan in public welfare funds, according to the China Welfare Lottery Issuing and Management Center.

Lottery sales are divided up to cover the jackpot as well as lottery management fees and public welfare fund.

The majority of money allocated to the public welfare fund covers social insurance programs, poverty relief, initiatives for the disabled as well as donations to other charity projects.



From 1987 to 2014, sales of the welfare lottery totaled 1,170 billion yuan (\$185.8 billion), raising 360 billion yuan (\$57.1 billion) in public welfare funds, according to the center.

## Open Court Trial

Courts in China continue to move toward public accessibility.

China will work to make court trials more open, Liu Xuewen, a senior official with the Supreme People's Court, said on January 14.

He went on to say that courts at all levels should keep working on the litigation system, which is decisive for confirming evidence, establishing facts and reaching fair judgments.

## Residential Rental Market

China will establish a diversified and standardized residential rental market within three years, according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

With home prices increasing, more people, especially transmigrants, are choosing to rent accommodation and the market needs proper regulation, the ministry said on January 14.

The ministry said it would build a government-led service portal for rental information, and encourage estate agents to either lease or purchase social housing apartments to rent to the public.

Meanwhile, the ministry will support developers who wish to rent property to the public and pilot specific funds to bring social capital into the market.

The ministry asked local authorities to step up policy support of the scheme.



“Courts should actively innovate the manner of publicizing trials and trial processes through video, audio, pictures, text and microblogs.”

Liu Xuewen, a senior official with the Supreme People's Court



## Shopping Company

Shopping robot Ke Jia debuts at a shopping mall in Hefei, capital of Anhui Province, on January 13. Designed by the University of Science and Technology of China, the life-sized humanoid robot is capable of serving as a companion and guide for shoppers with the help of cloud computing technology.

## Urbanization in Tibet

Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region plans to push its urbanization rate over 30 percent by 2020.

The region decided to increase the permanent urban population by nearly 280,000 by the year 2020, with three cities or towns with a population of up to 500,000, and two cities or towns with a population of up to 100,000, according to a conference on urbanization on January 14.

The number of towns and cities

in the region has increased from 31 in 1990 to 140 in 2013. The region's urban population has hit 740,000 in 2013 against 287,000 in 1980. In the process, transportation, energy supplies and communications have also improved. The largest city and regional capital Lhasa currently has a population of less than 300,000.

Last March, China unveiled a national urbanization plan (2014-20) designed to steer urbanization onto a more human-centered, environmentally friendly path.

## Cultural Service

Villagers in Wu Village of Xianghe County in Hebei Province put books on the racks of the village's library.

China will strive for equal access to basic cultural services for all, according to an official guideline released on January 14.

A “modern public cultural service system” will accentuate basic cultural services and equal access by 2020, according to the guidelines issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council General Office.



## Easing Inflation

China's consumer prices grew 2 percent in 2014 from one year earlier, much lower than the government's 3.5-percent limit set for the year, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) announced on January 9. The increase was also below the 2.6-percent growth rate registered in 2013, raising market concerns over deflation.

Growth in the consumer price index (CPI), the main gauge of inflation, rebounded to 1.5 percent in December from November's 1.4-percent rise, its slowest increase since November 2009.

In 2014, China's producer price index (PPI), which measures inflation at the wholesale level, fell 1.9 percent.

China's PPI posted its steepest fall in more than two years in December amid a slump in global oil prices and weak domestic demand. PPI dropped 3.3 percent year on year in December, the NBS said. The PPI has been in deflationary territory for 34 months in a row.

Yu Qiumei, a senior statistician with

NBS, attributed the drop to the lower prices of refined oil, oil and natural gas, and chemicals, which contributed to a combined 0.4 percentage point fall in last month's PPI reading.

According to market observers, further easing in consumer inflation and accelerating industrial deflation show signs of stagnation, and that may push the central bank to cut banks' required reserve ratios as a means of easing liquidity and stabilizing growth.

## Lagging Foreign Trade

China's foreign trade increased 3.4 percent year on year in 2014 denominated in U.S. dollars, significantly lower than the 7.6 percent rise in 2013 and the 7.5 percent whole-year target for 2014, indicating more room for monetary easing.

According to data released by the General Administration of Customs (GAC) on January 13, foreign trade totaled \$4.3 trillion in 2014, up 3.4 percent from 2013. Exports increased 6.1 percent



## WINE CITY

A wine cellar in Changli County, Qinhuangdao, north China's Hebei Province, which is home to 28 renowned wine makers



## Capacity for Change

Workers weld equipment in a workshop in Shizuishan, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on January 14.

Shizuishan has upgraded its economy by weeding out 610,000 tons of outdated capacity in 2014, covering 16 businesses in seven industries. To date, non-coal-backed industries have accounted for 56.7 percent of the total.

to \$2.34 trillion, while imports increased 0.4 percent to \$1.96 trillion. The foreign trade surplus widened to \$382.46 billion in 2014.

Trade with the European Union, China's biggest trade partner, edged up 9.9 percent, while trade with the United States, its second biggest partner, rose 6.6 percent. China's trade with its third largest partner Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) rose 8.3 percent in 2014.

Zheng Yuesheng, spokesman for the GAC, attributed the weak foreign trade growth in 2014 to a slow global recovery, less competitive Chinese-made products, less foreign direct investment in the manufacturing sector and falling commodity prices.

"With depressing domestic demand, we still need policy easing," said Bob Liu, an analyst at the China International Capital Corp., adding that the government may set a lower export growth target for 2015.

On January 14, China's State Council announced a string of measures to accelerate the development of trade in services by opening up business in finance, education, culture and medical treatment in an orderly manner and speeding up service trade liberalization between the mainland and both Hong Kong and Macao.

## Monetary Fine-Tuning

China will maintain prudent monetary policies in 2015 with better coordination of tight and loose monetary measures and proper fine-tuning, said the People's Bank of China, the central bank, at a 2015 work meeting on January 9.

The central bank said it will strengthen support for the real economy, cut fundraising costs and boost financial reforms, including reforms on interest rates, the yuan exchange rate and foreign exchange management.

The central bank implemented new tools to tackle changing economic landscape in 2014, including medium-term lending facility and pledged supplementary lending.

The new tools are more flexible and targeted to ensure sufficient liquidity, support the real economy and facilitate structural adjustment, said Zeng Gang, a





CHEN JIANNING

## Money-Making Trees

A farmer picks coffee beans in Manzhongtian Coffee Garden, Pu'er, southwest China's Yunnan Province, on January 12.

The city of Pu'er has become a major coffee production base in China, with an estimated output of 50,000 tons of coffee beans this season.

researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Traditional measures like adjustment in interest rates and reserve requirement ratio still remain as options.

### Facilitating FTA

China and South Korea will encourage mutual investment in more sectors as new opportunities are brought about by the expected free trade agreement (FTA).

The two countries will boost investment in automobiles, culture, elder care, film and television production, manufacturing, and medicine, according to the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) on January 9.

The ministry will cooperate with agencies of South Korea to support the building of industrial parks in China for enterprises from both sides.

The governments of Changzhou, Weifang, Weihai, Wenzhou and Yantai

### FLORAL BOOM

Guests view flowers in a greenhouse in Kunming, capital of southwest China's Yunnan Province, on January 14



HU CHAO

intend to set up China-South Korea industrial parks.

The two sides concluded FTA negotiations in 2014. The MOFCOM said in November 2014 that the agreement will be signed this year and will take effect in the second half of this year.

### Unified Pension System

Measures on old-age insurance for workers in government agencies and public institutions were unveiled on January 14.

Insurance will now be paid by both workers and organizations, instead of just by organizations or central budgetary funds as in the past. Workers will pay 8 percent of their monthly salary into the scheme, while the organization will pay 20 percent of the salary, according to a statement by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social

Security.

China has nearly 40 million such workers in government agencies and public institutions. Most of them are civil servants, doctors, teachers and researchers.

In the past, corporate employees had to pay for their own old-age insurance, while government staff enjoyed pensions without making any contributions at all.

China introduced the pension system in 1955 and the system started to diverge in the early 1980s as three decades of a planned economy came to an end. Businesses were allowed to assume sole responsibility for their profits and losses and gradually developed their own old-age insurance requiring both employees' and employers' contributions.

The previous pension scheme remained for public employees and dual systems came into being.

Pensions without worker contributions are unsustainable and have become a huge burden on the government. The dual system also hindered free flow of staff between private and public agencies. In addition, public outcry about the resulting inequity has been mounting.

The unification will help create a fair environment for people in different walks of life.

### E-Commerce Experiment

Foreign investors will be allowed to fully own e-commerce companies in a pilot scheme in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone (FTZ), the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) announced on January 13.

The MIIT said in a brief statement that telecommunication authorities in Shanghai would take charge of the pilot scheme and regulate and supervise foreign investors.

The entry of foreign investors to Shanghai FTZ is expected to trigger a gradual opening to overseas capital in China's lucrative e-commerce business, which is currently dominated by home-grown giants including Alibaba, JD.com and others.

The Shanghai FTZ was launched in September 2013 to test a broad range of economic reform measures.



## SWITZERLAND

UN special envoy to Libya Bernardino Leon (center) welcomes representatives of Libya's warring factions prior to peace talks in Geneva on January 14



## UKRAINE

A bus hit by a long-range Grad rocket in Donetsk, east Ukraine, on January 13, leaving 10 civilians dead and nearly 20 injured



## THE UNITED KINGDOM

A man walks between snow-covered houses in Bogside area of Londonderry (Derry) in Northern Ireland on January 14. More than 100 schools and nurseries were shut and many roads closed as wintry weather swept across the United Kingdom







## THE UNITED STATES

Smoke inhalation victims walk past a firefighter toward a medical aid bus after smoke filled the L'Enfant Plaza Metro Station during the evening rush hour on January 12 in Washington, DC. One woman passenger died in the accident, according to local police



## JAPAN

Cosplayers pose at the Cosplay Festa TDC (Tokyo Dome City) in Tokyo on January 10, which drew about 2,500 participants



## EGYPT

Supporters of ousted former President Hosni Mubarak hold aloft portraits of him and shout slogans outside a court in Cairo on January 13. Mubarak will remain in detention while awaiting a retrial of a case concerning embezzlement charges ordered by a high court on the same day



## ↓ TOP SCIENCE AWARD WINNER

Nuclear physicist **Yu Min**, who was behind China's first successful hydrogen bomb test in 1967, was awarded the country's top science award on January 9. The award, granted annually since 2000, comes with a cash prize of 5 million yuan (\$806,933), 10 percent of which is given to the awarded scientist, with the rest earmarked for scientific research under the scientist's guidance.



Yu, an academicien at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), was born in north China's Tianjin in 1926. In 1951, he graduated from Peking University with a master's degree and entered the Modern Physics Institute of the CAS to study nuclear physics. Yu's life converged with the bomb in January 1961 when he was assigned to research hydrogen bomb theories, a clandestine career that would last more than 20 years before the mission was declassified. Following their successes with the hydrogen bomb, Yu and his team worked on the miniaturization of nuclear weapons and the neutron bomb.

## Making Taxi Franchise Fees More Negotiable

**Shijiazhuang Daily**  
January 13

Recently, taxi drivers in cities across China such as Hefei and Nanjing have staged a strike, demanding a reduction of the monthly franchise fees paid to taxi companies, which eat up a large share of their revenue.

The taxi companies have bought the rights to operate taxis from the government and they tend to charge franchise fees in the pursuit of the highest possible level of profit. However, with competition from unlicensed taxis, taxi drivers have been feeling the pinch as their incomes increasingly shrink. The only solution that appears to be in sight is that the franchise be reduced.

In order to diffuse tensions between taxi drivers and their companies, a communication mechanism should be established for drivers to negotiate their economic rights with their employers. Trade unions would be one option to unite taxi drivers. However, in reality, there are either no trade unions or those existing haven't fulfilled their obligations.

The priority at present should be to establish trade unions or to make use of existing organizations of this nature to furnish taxi drivers with the opportunity to engage in dialogue on an equal footing with their employers. At the same time, government agencies should serve as coordinators that help ensure fairness and equity in setting franchise fees.

## A New Era of Entrepreneurship

**South Reviews**  
January 1-13

With preferential policies from the government and the provision of other favorable conditions, business start-ups are sprouting up across China. Some of the current reform measures, including streamlining administration and lowering thresholds for fledgling businesses, have also fostered growth in this area.

Culturally speaking, starting one's own business has become somewhat fashionable in China. In matchmaking reality TV shows, running a start-up regularly curries favor with the opposite sex for male contestants. In addition, China's progress in respect to urbanization in the last 30 years or so has provided an ideal breeding ground for business start-ups.

Although it is now easier to create a company, in reality, the potential for fledgling businesses in China is limited. First, start-ups abound in a select few sectors such as the Internet industry, so they can hardly be expected have an effect on reshaping China's overall economic structure. Second, there is a dearth of start-ups oriented toward original technological innovation, with the majority of companies imitating or even

**"Being an official and making a fortune are two different roads. If you want to be an official, then you must forget about getting rich."**

**Xi Jinping**, Chinese President, sharing his views on China's campaign with a group of 200 county-level officials from across the country on January 12

**"We expect restructuring to be gradual as the government tries to balance growth and restructuring, overcome resistance from various interest groups and address redundancy and debt issues."**

**Wang Tao**, UBS Chief China Economist, commenting on the restructuring of China's state-owned enterprises in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency



copying their foreign counterparts.

For example, most Internet companies in China have achieved success by imitating the technologies and business models of their U.S. counterparts and taking advantage of the large Chinese market. Many of them can be seen to possess deficiencies in terms of coming up with original ideas for commercial innovation and contributing to the global progress of information technology.

## New Fever for Robot Production

### *Oriental Outlook* January 1

According to the China Robot Industry Alliance, China has overtaken Japan as the largest consumer of robots around the globe, buying more than one fifth of the world's robot output. In 2014, 36,860 industrial robots were sold in the Chinese market, a growth of 36 percent year on year. Robots have been increasingly employed in China owing to rising labor costs. Industrial robots, which can facilitate automatic production, have helped manufacturers cope with ever-increasing costs of production.

As the market grows, robot-producing companies are being set up in a large quantity. By September 2014, there were 428 robot-related

companies in China, 175 of which had been established in the first three quarters of that year. Many companies have dabbled in the area of robots owing to the currently promising market prospects, even though some do not have the capacities and resources needed to produce robots at all.

A select few robot-producing companies in China possess the ability to produce an entire robot, but are unable to develop the complicated application system, which must be installed before a robot can be put into operation. Also, many companies don't possess the technology

for producing the key components necessary to build robots. The import of such parts has inadvertently added to production costs and put Chinese robot producers in a disadvantageous position in terms of competition with their foreign counterparts. To sharpen their competitive edge, Chinese robot companies should seek to make breakthroughs on both fronts.



### ↓ ASPIRANT SUBMERSIBLE PILOT

**Zhang Yi**, a pilot trainee, became the first Chinese female to dive into the Indian Ocean with the *Jiaolong*, China's deep-sea manned submersible, on January 10. Zhang was in charge of communicating with the sub's support ship, operating the camera and observing obstacles during the dive.



In July 2013, China recruited six pilot trainees for *Jiaolong* out of 130 candidates and two of the six are female, including Zhang, who was born in 1988 in Tangshan, north China's Hebei Province. A year after being recruited, she graduated with a master's degree from the College of Shipbuilding Engineering at Harbin Engineering University in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

Zhang and other trainees are participating in *Jiaolong's* ongoing 120-day expedition in the southwest Indian Ocean. They will be qualified to pilot the deep-sea manned sub after completing their two-year training.

**“Ordinary Chinese will be dealing with tax authorities much more frequently. In the process, they will care more about how their money is spent and how their rights as taxpayers are guaranteed.”**

**Liu Jianwen**, a professor with Peking University, talking about a draft version of the Tax Collection and Administration Law, according to which individuals may receive a taxpayer identification number for the first time

**“Power, money and other temptations are tests to everyone.”**

**Mo Yan**, China's Nobel laureate writer, disclosing that he is preparing to write a novel about the ills of corruption

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A young girl is walking home alone in the rain. She is wearing a brown jacket, a red backpack, and red rain boots. She is holding a red and yellow umbrella. The background is a blurry, overcast sky with some bare trees.

COVER STORY

# GUARDING THE VULNER

With an increasing number of child sexual abuse cases coming to light, society needs to stand up and take action By Ji Jing

**HIDDEN DANGER:** A primary school girl walks home alone after class in Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on March 11, 2014





# ABLE

HUANG XIAOBING

**C**hild victims of sexual abuse may not be preyed upon by strangers, but rather people known to their family, according to one report published by the Protecting Girls program, a charity project, in May 2014. The report covered sexual abuse cases exposed by the Chinese media from May 23, 2013, to May 22, 2014.

In recent years, there has been increasing media coverage on children becoming victims of sexual abuse. On May 8, 2013, a headmaster and a government employee in south China's Hainan Province were reported to have taken six primary school girls to hotels. Within 20 days of the incident going public, eight more cases of children being sexually abused had been reported by the Chinese media. These incidents have caused nationwide concern over the safety of the most vulnerable members of society.

Reports of sexual assaults on minors were disturbingly frequent from 2013 to 2014 in China, with a total of 192 cases having been reported by the media, according to the aforementioned report, averaging out at one reported case every 1.9 days. However, the total is tragically predicted to be far higher, with unreported incidents considered to likely be much more common, as victims are often afraid to tell their parents or teachers.

In some cases, parents who have learned about the cases have chosen to keep quiet out of concerns over their children's reputation, Wang Zhongwu, a professor of sociology at Shandong University, told Xinhua News Agency in July 2014.

The report also said that most of the 343 victims involved in the reported cases are primary school students, with children between 8 to 14 years old accounting for 85 percent of the total. Over 55 percent of the cases happened in rural areas, where many children have been left behind in the village to live with other relatives while their parents seek a living in the cities. Of the 192 cases, over 80 percent were committed by acquaintances, with 42 cases committed by the victims' teachers and 36 by their neighbors.

For example, seven girls from Shangyuan Village Primary School in Ruichang, east China's Jiangxi Province, were sexually assaulted by their 62-year-old teacher Tao Biaocong from September 2012 to May 2013, according to Xinhua. Tao called the girls to the classroom or to his dormitory under the premise of correcting their homework or listening to them recite ►►



passages from the textbook. Six of the seven girls were found to have contracted sexually transmitted diseases, and all of them were left-behind children whose parents entrusted them to the care of their grandparents when they were less than 1 year old. In addition to the physical harm caused, the girls have mental scars that could be considered even worse, with some tragically showing suicidal tendencies at their young, fragile age.

"Left-behind children, especially girls, who live with their grandparents or other guardians often lack adequate protection and care, which predators may identify as an opportunity. The psychological wounds inflicted on this group of children are often deep and difficult to heal," said Sun Yunxiao, Deputy Director of the China Youth and Children Research Center.

It should also be noted that being a victim is not gender specific. Of the 192 cases reported, six cases were assaults on boys. For example, a 7-year-old boy in Shadun Village of Wuxue, central China's Hubei Province, was sexually abused by one of his male teachers and contracted a sexually-transmitted disease from the attack, Xinhua reported back in 2013.

The boy's parents worked far away from home in south China's Guangdong Province. The boy told his parents that the teacher would give him some snacks to eat every time before he abused him. As a result of the abuse, the once active and happy boy has become quiet, according to his mother.

"Today more and more boys are becoming victims of sexual assault. However, as the victims are often ashamed to report the incidents or lack awareness of self-protection, many of these cases have been kept secret," Gao Yujing, the host of a helpline for children of single parents, told *Beijing Evening News* in November, 2014.

"Sexual abuse will cause both physical and psychological damage to a child. Some victims will hate school, suffer anxiety or depression, or even develop split personalities. It may also affect a child's attitude toward sex," Li Chunman, a psychologist told *China Youth Daily* in July 2014.

## Lack of education

The frequent exposure of child sexual abuse cases underscores the lack of sex education in China.

"We seldom tell our children what things nobody can ever ask of them, as a result,



**LEARN ABOUT YOUR BODY:** A volunteer teacher of the Protecting Girls program gives a class at a primary school in Beijing on October 20, 2014

many children who have become victims of sexual abuse have no idea that they have been abused. We seldom tell our children that they can say no to teachers if they ask them to do something that makes them uncomfortable," Li Bin, a professor of sociology with the Central South University in Changsha, central China's Hunan Province, told Xinhua in July 2014.

According to a survey of 235 boys and 219 girls conducted by the Protecting Girls program, only 17.58 percent of children know what sex education is, 60.88 percent have no idea of this concept and 21.54 percent know a little about it.

Of the 902 parents surveyed, only 35.92 percent have given their children some form of sex education. However, many parents have never taught their children about how to prevent sexual abuse.

"In China, few parents have recognized the importance of sex education, and often wait until their children are 14 or 15 years old," Hong Daode, a law professor at China University of Political Science and Law, told *China Daily* in June 2014.

"Schools only offer physical health classes rather than opening sex education courses, and

most victims lacked awareness of how to protect themselves," he added.

## Rise to action

The high incidence of sexual assault cases has caught the attention of the government. On September 24, 2013, four institutions, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Security, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League and the All-China Women's Federation, issued a notice, demanding local educational departments carry out sexual abuse prevention classes by giving courses and compiling and giving out pamphlets.

Social organizations are also taking actions to combat child sexual abuse. The Protecting Girls program represents one such initiative.

The program was launched by 100 female journalists from across the country in June 2013 following a string of sexual abuse cases which broke out that year. The program is aimed at popularizing knowledge about how to avoid sexual abuse and raising children's awareness of self-protection against such an offense.

"However, the biggest challenge is to give the lessons in rural areas where there



**SPREADING KNOWLEDGE:** Local police officers distribute pamphlets to students at a primary school in Ruichang, Jiangxi Province, on June 30, 2013

are a large number of left-behind children. However, so far few local governments in such places have contacted us. Another problem is that there are not enough volunteer teachers,” said Sun Xuemei, one of the initiators of the program.

The program has compiled their own teaching materials which have been modified over 40 times by more than 20 experts on child protection. By July 23, 2014, the program had trained nearly 1,000 volunteer teachers and had given lessons to over 100,000 children in more than 20 provinces including Shandong, Zhejiang, and Yunnan. It had also given out over 120,000 pamphlets on preventing sexual abuse.

Many local government departments are also inviting our teachers to their schools. “Some places find it difficult to compile their own textbooks, so they asked us to give classes there,” Sun added.

## Shortcomings of the law

In addition to spreading knowledge about how to prevent sexual abuse, China’s laws are also being improved to impose harsher punishment on offenders.

Participants at the annual sessions of the

National People’s Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in March 2014 have proposed to repeal the law that identifies sex with an underage prostitute as a separate crime, claiming that such crimes should be treated in the same way as the rape of a child, and punished accordingly.

Under the current law, people who have sex with prostitutes under 14 years old face a maximum of 15 years in prison, whereas those convicted of raping a child face the death sentence.

Zhu Zhengfu, a member of the National Committee of the CPPCC, criticized criminalization of children under 14 who are pushed into prostitution, saying that the law improperly treats the victims as prostitutes, rather than children who have been raped.

However, the proposal was not accepted as the NPC’s Legislative Affairs Committee replied that the law itself is not wrong but it is improperly applied to cases where rape is involved. The application of the law should be more strictly supervised in the future to ensure justice. However, the committee also said it would take into consideration the sug-

gestions while revising and improving the Criminal Law.

## Role of schools and parents

With legal progress in protecting children from sexual abuse yet to be made, parents and schools should play their part in protecting children from sexual abuse.

“Parents should give children the necessary sex education,” said Sun Yunxiao with the China Youth and Children Research Center.

They should tell children at an early age that others should not touch their bodies, especially the private parts. If children know such a simple thing, they will shout aloud if somebody tries to abuse them and the offenders may stop their act, he added.

For those parents whose children have already suffered abuse, they should call the police. Parents should stay calm and keep evidence such as the pants their children wore when being abused.

Once children have suffered abuse, they should tell those they trust rather than hiding the fact. Some girls who have been sexually abused feel too ashamed to tell their parents. Such attitudes could be changed through sex education.

In addition to giving sex education courses, schools should enhance safety measures. “School management staff should conduct regular patrols of classrooms and equip students’ dormitories with protective measures because many sexual assaults occur in classrooms and dormitories,” Shi Weizhong, a senior official with China’s Supreme People’s Procuratorate, said.

Also, to prevent teachers from committing sexual abuse, higher moral standards should be upheld for teacher recruitment. Once employed, teachers should receive training programs on morality.

“We should trust teachers, but on the other hand, restrictions should be set out on contact between teachers and students. For example, teachers should not offer one-to-one instruction to students in the dormitories but in their office, with the door wide open,” said Sun Yunxiao. ■



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