

TRAVEL

New entry permit rule for Taiwan residents starts July 1

By SUN LI and HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou

The Chinese mainland authorities will remove the entry permit requirement for Taiwan residents beginning July 1, according to a revised regulation released by the State Council on Thursday.

Taiwan residents will only need a travel pass to enter the mainland and will no longer have to apply for an entry permit for each visit, the revision said.

Plans to lift the entry permit requirement were announced on Sunday by a high-ranking official, Yu Zhengsheng, in a keynote speech at the Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province.

5.37 million

The number of Taiwan residents who traveled to the mainland last year

Yu, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said the mainland will further facilitate cross-Straits exchanges with new preferential policies including permit-free entry.

The *Taibaosheng*, a passport-like document that is currently used to carry the entry permits for *Taibao*, or Taiwan compatriots, will be converted into a card, Yu said.

The Ministry of Public Security said on Thursday that a digital version of the document will be available by the end of the year.

The previous regulation, released in 1992, says Taiwan residents traveling to the mainland to see friends and relatives, deal with properties or attend weddings or funerals must provide documentary proof of the purpose of the visit.

To visit the mainland for academic, business, cultural and educational events, they had to produce an invitation sent by an organization or agency on the mainland. The revised regulation removes the need for such documents.

The validity of travel passes to Taiwan held by mainland residents will be extended from five years to 10, while passes for Taiwan residents will continue to be valid for five years.

However, a new type of travel pass for Taiwan residents, valid for three months, is to be introduced.

Chang Jieh-ren, a college teacher in Ilan, Taiwan, said the changes will provide greater convenience for Taiwan residents as the application procedure for the travel pass is much simpler than the current arrangements.

Dai Shugen, a professor of economics at Xiamen University, said the policy change will enhance cross-Straits relations.

"The revision will make it easier for Taiwan residents to work, travel and live on the mainland, and will make people from both sides of the Straits feel emotionally closer to each other," Dai said.

Official statistics show that people from Taiwan made about 5.37 million visits to the mainland in 2014, and 4.04 million mainland tourists traveled to Taiwan.

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Premier Li Keqiang meets Pham Binh Minh, Vietnam's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN/ CHINA DAILY

Sea: Marine frictions to be controlled

FROM PAGE 1

Vietnamese Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong led a large delegation to China in April. He vowed with President Xi Jinping to manage and control maritime frictions and safeguard stability in the South China Sea.

In May, the two nations' defense ministers met and witnessed joint patrols on both sides of the border.

On Wednesday, the Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of Vietnam

held a seminar in Shanghai.

Xu Liping, an expert on Southeast Asian affairs at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "Vietnam has realized that controlling disputes with China in the (South China) sea is in line with its national interests."

Premier Li told Minh on Thursday that the two countries "share far more common interests than disputes."

He suggested advancing cooperation on maritime, land and financial affairs "at the same time", and taking infrastructure construction and

connectivity projects as "breakthrough points".

This would enable "China's advanced industrial capacity to be paired with Vietnam's demand for industrialization and modernization," Li said.

Chu Hao, a researcher of Southeast Asian studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said infrastructure cooperation with China would result in more investment for Hanoi. He said this would be vital for Vietnam to shoulder downward pressure.

Tangible cooperation would also draw the two countries closer to help control friction, Chu said. Such cooperation, despite the maritime disputes, could set a good example for the region to handle territorial issues, the researcher added.

China is Vietnam's top trading partner. The two countries have set a target for bilateral trade to reach more than \$100 billion in 2017.

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CONSERVATION

182 detained during big international campaign against wildlife smugglers

By ZHANG YAN zhangyan1@chinadaily.com.cn

Authorities have confiscated more than 600 kg of illegal wildlife products during an international joint law-enforcement campaign targeting the illegal trade in endangered wildlife and plants, the State Forestry Administration said on Wednesday.

Officers seized 10 pieces of raw ivory, 292 kg of worked ivory items, 226 kg of pangolin scales and 16.2 kg of products made of rhino horn, along with live animals such as turtles and birds.

During the 23-day campaign that started on May 4, 182 suspects were held in 123 cases involving trafficking and illegal trading of wildlife and endangered animals, the administration said.

The administration cooperated with 63 countries, including South Africa, Thailand, France, Germany and the United States, to fight cross-border trafficking involving Tibetan antelopes, rhinos, redwoods and a variety of other animals and plants.

It was the third joint law enforcement action, code-named Cobra, since 2013 and considered the largest scale, with the most countries participating.

With financial and technical support from Interpol and the World Customs Organization, the countries uncovered 300 contraband cases and captured more than 200 wildlife traffickers.

They confiscated 12 tons of ivory and its products, 187 kg of rhino horn products, 5.2 tons of pangolins and their products, as well as 2,000 kg of redwood and 3,500 cactuses.

Zhao Shucong, head of the State Forestry Administration, said the operation command center is based in Thailand. It draws up detailed action plans and coordinates with other

Country intensifies efforts to halt trade

China will step up its efforts to stop the smuggling of wildlife and wildlife products, a senior official at the State Forestry Administration said.

Zhao Shucong, director of the administration, said officials will focus on combating the smuggling of wild animals and items such as ivory, ivory products and rhino horns by enterprises involved in transportation, post or express delivery.

In addition, authorities will focus on combating the online ivory trade and monitoring suspicious bank accounts and websites involved in such activity, while strictly overseeing ivory process-

ing and trade until the commercial manufacturing and sale of ivory products are halted altogether.

Yu Guangzhou, director of the General Administration of Customs, said the country has taken a series of measures to cope with wildlife smuggling. New laws were introduced and a number of special actions have been taken to curb the illegal hunting and trading of endangered animals.

On May 30, the Chinese government destroyed 662 kg of confiscated ivory in Beijing, and in January, 6.1 metric tons of confiscated ivory were destroyed in the southern city of

Dongguan, Guangdong province, in a demonstration of the government's stance against wildlife crimes.

Beijing is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which in 2013 identified China as one of eight nations that was failing to do enough to tackle the illegal trade in ivory.

The State Forestry Administration said that in February, China announced a one-year ban on imports of ivory carvings to fight the smuggling and illegal trading of ivory, especially in the black market.

ZHANG YAN

“We attach great importance to the action and enhanced law enforcement cooperation with some African countries.”

Zhao Shucong, head of the State Forestry Administration

countries and regions to make cross-border arrests.

"We attach great importance to the action and enhanced law enforcement cooperation with some African countries, including South Africa and Kenya," he said. "We share intelligence and conduct joint actions that greatly reduce the occurrence of certain crimes."

In recent years, Chinese criminals have colluded with gangs in Africa to smuggle wildlife contraband and sell it in black markets for huge prof-

its, Meng Xianlin, director general of the Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Import and Export Management Office.

"The criminal gangs tend to be professional. Gang members assume different tasks, including purchasing, smuggling, transport and sales, to form a secret chain of interest," he said.

According to Meng, some of the traffickers smuggle ivory to Hong Kong or the Chinese mainland for transfer later to the US or Europe,

after it is worked into some sort of art.

Hu Wei, deputy director at the General Administration of Customs, said that most of the confiscated wildlife products, such as ivory and rhino horn, was smuggled from Africa either by travelers who carried it in their luggage or through their luggage.

He said customs departments will further broaden their pool of clues and assess travelers from key areas and their luggage.

Moreover, it's necessary to enhance judicial cooperation with other countries, especially some Asian and African countries but also the US, so that case information can be shared in a timely manner and investigations can be launched to cut off interest chains between the traffickers and the purchasers, he said.

GUIZHOU

Xi pledges support for vocational training

President visits 'education city' that has 60,000 students and teachers

By ZHAO YINAN zhaoyinan@chinadaily.com.cn

10.4 percent

President Xi Jinping promised during a visit to Guizhou province to promote vocational education to support manufacturing and alleviate poverty.

During a visit to Qingzhen Vocational Education City on Wednesday, Xi said vocational education is an important part of China's education system.

A large number of technicians and skilled workers are urgently needed in different professions and trades, Xi told students at Guizhou Machinery Industry School, a 6,000-student vocational school that trains equipment technicians, according to video footage on China Central Television.

The footage showed Xi watching students operating machines, and a student showed the president a chessboard made of aluminum alloy.

Qingzhen Vocational Education City, an area of about 50 square kilometers in Qingzhen, is now home to 19 vocational schools and more than 60,000 students and teachers.

Qingzhen students who are not admitted to senior high schools and universities can receive free vocational training in schools in the vocational education city — a way to eliminate poverty, the education city's website says.

Although the Guizhou economy expanded by 10.4 percent in the first quarter this year — the second-fastest rate in the country in that period, following 10.8 percent growth last year — it is still one of the provincial areas with the highest concentration of poverty-stricken communities.

Total economic volume in Guizhou reached \$148.9 billion last year, ranking only 26th among the 31 provincial areas on the Chinese mainland. By 2013, nearly 7.5 million of Guizhou's rural population were still living below the poverty line — about \$370 a year.

Xi urged Guizhou to adopt a unique development path, different from both the

The growth rate of Guizhou's economy in the first quarter this year — the second-fastest in the country during the period

7.5 million

The number of rural residents in Guizhou living below the poverty line at the end of 2013

nation's east and the west, and to catch up with the developed areas.

During his trip, Xi also called for more investment in the big data industry while he visited a big data exhibition center in Guiyang, Guizhou's capital. More effort should be made to promote the integration of information and industrialization, he said.

Experts said Guizhou, where temperatures are moderate and hydropower is abundant, is a suitable place for the development of the big data industry, which requires a cool climate and relatively cheap energy.

It is the first province in China to come up with a big data industrial development plan, which envisions a big data trading center, free Wi-Fi and a big data laboratory. So far, data centers of Foxconn, China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom have set up shops in Guiyang.

Statistics from the Guiyang municipal government show that the total value of the big data industry in the city reached 66.3 billion yuan (\$10.71 billion) by the end of last year.

During his three-day visit to the southwestern province, Xi told the local government it could improve its people's livelihoods through sound management of key issues including education, medical care, social security and food safety. He called for better care for senior citizens and rural children whose parents have left them to work in cities.

Xinhua contributed to this story.



Sharing zongzi

Contestants in the China Super Model Contest in Tianjin distribute zongzi, a traditional Chinese rice dumpling, to guests on Wednesday to celebrate the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on Saturday. HULINYUN/ FOR CHINA DAILY