

Food, medicine safety cases on rise

By ZHAO YINAN
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There has been a huge increase in trials concerning food and medicine safety, but this indicates, at least in part, a more focused approach by legal authorities, a top legal official said.

"A surge has been observed in the number of cases that have been filed and heard in courts, at all levels, in the past two years," Miao Youshui, deputy director of the Second Criminal Tribunal under the Supreme People's Court, said at a news conference.

Courts across the country have seen 688 cases related to fake medicine in the first six

months of this year, up nearly 70 percent on last year's total. The number of cases concerning fake medicine in 2011 rose by 275 percent on the 2010 figure, according to statistics provided by the court.

The number of food safety disputes has risen sharply.

Cases heard by courts stood at 330 at the end of June, nudging close to the entire total for 2011. The number of food safety disputes in 2011, in turn, saw a 216-percent increase on 2010.

Miao said one of the reasons that contributed to the increase was a more sharpened focus, both in legislation and judicial practice, on the issue.

China amended its Criminal Law in 2011 and introduced

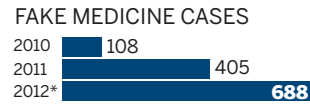
specific crimes relating to the manufacturing and dealing of substandard food and fake medicine. Prior to this, food and medicine issues were usually treated under general crime, like counterfeit production.

"The top legislature (the National People's Congress) has effectively lowered the requirement on what can constitute such a crime in the amendment, a move widely believed to account for the rising number of disputes," Miao said.

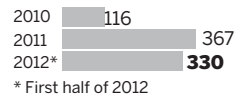
But legislation needs to be clarified further, especially regarding punishment, he added.

The judge said a judicial interpretation on this is likely to be

Number of fake medicine and food safety cases filed from 2010 to 2012



FOOD SAFETY CASES



* First half of 2012

Source: Supreme People's Court
CHINA DAILY

introduced next year.

Wang Dingmian, former vice-chairman of the Guangdong Dairy Industry Association, said penalties for crimes involving food and medicine are "generally light", and those involved need to be punished

more severely.

Miao said the top court is working on a judicial interpretation to standardize rulings.

The draft has been discussed and passed by the criminal committee of the court, although he did not indicate when the bylaw will come into effect.

The government's efforts have failed to uproot illegal activities involving food and drug safety even though the country has boosted a crackdown on such activities since an incident with contaminated milk in 2008. At the time, melamine-tainted milk killed six infants and left more than 290,000 others with kidney damage.

On Tuesday, six government

officials in Xinchang county, in East China's Zhejiang province, were transferred for criminal investigation for suspicion of dereliction of duty. The officials are being accused of having turned a blind eye to quality testing. Authorities say that more than 900 out of 2,000 capsule producers in the region were found to have never tested their products for heavy metal contamination, while only 700 manufacturers were equipped with testing facilities.

Also on Tuesday, 12 officials in North China's Hebei province were fired, warned or forced to write a review due to their involvement in a case in April when industrial gelatin was used to make capsules.

Govt offers help to good Samaritans

By HE DAN
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When Li Boya, an intern with the railway police, tried to stop a middle-aged man from jumping onto the rails as a train approached, his life changed forever.

Both of the 20-year-old's legs were crushed as he heroically tried to save the man in Changli county, North China's Hebei province, on July 9.

Li Song, Li's father, who runs a village clinic in Henan province, said on Tuesday that his son has undergone several operations and remains hospitalized in Qinhuangdao in Hebei. The family will have to take out a loan to pay the expensive medical fees without an official subsidy, he said.

"I have heard from the hospital that the medical costs have added up to more than 200,000 yuan (\$31,400). It's too much for us," said the father.



We want to achieve the goal that people who have been hurt performing heroic acts don't need to pay their medical bills."

LI LIGUO
MINISTER OF CIVIL AFFAIRS

However, Li and his family are feeling relieved after the government reiterated that a social security network will be established for people who are injured when performing acts of heroism. The new policy for acts of heroism was discussed in a video conference jointly held by seven ministry-level departments, including the ministries of health and civil affairs, on Tuesday.

The State Council released regulations on Thursday that set out principles for different government departments to jointly guarantee the rights of good Samaritans. As a result, officials from the seven government agencies each took on various responsibilities to help families of those who performed heroic acts.

Guo Yanhong, deputy director of the Ministry of Health's medical administration division, said hospitals nationwide should arrange their best medical teams to treat people who have been seriously hurt when protecting the rights and wealth of the public and other individuals.

She also stressed that hospitals are banned from denying treatment to heroic patients who cannot afford their medical expenses.

For those who are financially burdened to pay their long-term treatment fees after reimbursement, the Ministry of Civil Affairs will also help by providing medical aid subsidies, said Li Ligu, minister of civil affairs.

"We want to achieve the goal that people who have been hurt performing heroic acts don't need to pay their medical bills," Li said.

The regulations also stipulate that when people are badly hurt or even killed when performing brave acts, local governments should facilitate their children's access to education.

Liu Limin, vice-minister of education, said at the conference that children of those disabled or killed when performing heroic acts will be granted additional marks in high school and university enrollment exams.

If their families are poor, local educational departments should reduce or remove the tuition fees of their children, he said.

Xiang Mingchao in Zhengzhou contributed to this story.

13 dead, 15 missing after Xinjiang mudslide

By XINHUA
and CHINA DAILY in Urumqi

Thirteen people have been confirmed dead and 15 remain missing after a mudslide in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on early Tuesday morning, the local government said.

The mudslide occurred at an iron ore mine in the Araltobe township of Xinyuan county, Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture, a spokesman for the prefecture's fire brigade said. The brigade received an emergency call around 1 am, he added.

Mud and debris buried 28 people, initially identified as 22 mine workers and six local residents who collect iron ore to sell, the spokesman said.

By Tuesday afternoon, seven bodies were recovered from the debris, which, according to China News Service, covered an area 500 meters by 60 meters and five to six meters deep.

Nine men, three women and a child were confirmed dead.

Rescuers were using sniffer dogs, life-detecting devices and excavators to find the missing.

"Twenty-two miners, mainly from Yunnan and Fujian provinces, and six local herders were buried in the accident," said Yan Qing, a local government official.

About 370 policemen, firefighters and government officials participated in the rescue work, with 20 front loaders and excavators and a life detector, Yan said.

The rescuers found 20 suitcases of TNT and 10 bags of detonators in a warehouse near the iron ore mine, which they moved to safer places, the



Rescuers carry the bodies of mudslide victims in Xinyuan county in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on Tuesday.

LI CHENGGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

China News Service report said.

The Ili fire brigade dispatched nine vehicles and 54 workers for the rescue mis-

sion. As they neared the scene of the mudslide, they had to carry their equipment because the roads were narrow and steep, according to the report.

The nearby mountains remained unstable and more mudslides were likely to occur at any time, according to the rescue crews.

Jiao Xinming, an official from Ili road management bureau, said the continuing rain and large area of the mudslide were making the rescue

work more difficult.

The rescue efforts will continue, Jiao said, but more rain is expected in the coming days, adding to the danger.

Typhoons trigger flood alerts

By JIN ZHU and WANG QIAN

Two typhoons will challenge the country's flood control capabilities in coming days, as many regions are now suffering from torrential rains and floods, authorities said.

Heavy rains brought by Saola, the ninth typhoon of the year, are expected to hit coastal areas in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces on Thursday or Friday accompanied by strong winds. The 10th typhoon, named Damrey, may affect Jiangsu and Shandong provinces on Friday, Chen Zhenlin, spokesman for the China Meteorological Administration, said on Tuesday.

The winds could reach 51 kilometers per second when the center of Saola passes the coastal areas, he added.

The two typhoons may cover more than 10 provinces in the country, according to the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters on Tuesday.

The headquarters urged its local branches to make full preparations to respond to possible disasters brought by the typhoons.

On Tuesday, the headquarters sent four work teams to affected provinces and cities, such as Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Shanghai, to prepare for potential damage caused by the typhoons.

"Some major rivers in China, such as the Haihe River, the Yellow River and the Huaihe River, have experienced severe floods in summer time over the past few decades because of the combined impact of typhoons and cold air," the headquarters said.

"Many local residents and government officials in North China do not have much experience in preventing disasters from typhoons. Also, providing timely protection to a great number of tourists stranded in coastal cities is another big challenge," it said.

Entering the flood season in June, the country saw an average precipitation volume of 232 millimeters as of Monday, about 11 percent more than the level in the same period since 1981, according to statistics from the meteorological administration.

"Global warming partially

triggered the abnormally rainy summer this year," Sun Chenghu, senior engineer of the National Climate Center, said, adding that global warming increases the water content in the atmosphere and activates the cold and warm air movement.

The increasing moisture and active air movement caused frequent rainstorms this summer, he said.

For instance, Beijing is facing the wettest summer since 1999, according to the meteorological administration, with about 63 percent more rain in June and July than the average level from 1981 to 2010.

According to China Three Gorges Corp, water was released from the Three Gorges Dam at a rate of 43,700 cu m per second on Tuesday afternoon in an effort to reduce the flood risk on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River.

Zhang Genxi, a local flood control official in Jingzhou, Hubei province, told China Daily on Tuesday that the city now is safe, but has been under great pressure to control floods for a long time.



Fishermen fasten their traps in preparation for Typhoon Saola in Pingtan, East China's Fujian province, on Tuesday.

ZHANG GUOJUN / XINHUA

The city, about 220 km from Wuhan, the provincial capital, is traversed by the Jingjiang River, a section of the Yangtze River, and has long been regarded as a key flood control region.

"Some river sections in Jingzhou have seen water level exceed the warning level since July when floods released from the Three Gorges Dam pushed

them up," he said.

At present, more than 32,000 local residents and flood control officials are busy monitoring the flood situation day and night and are dealing with any disasters triggered by floods, he said.

Torrential rains in Southwest China's Yunnan province on Tuesday morning left 11 people missing, the provincial

authorities said.

In the coming 10 days, rain belts will remain in the northern parts of the country with a maximum precipitation volume of 200 mm expected in parts of Liaoning and Inner Mongolia, Chen said.

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