

Students showcase language abilities

More than 120,000 participate in English speaking competition

By GUO JIN
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Happiness, which has aroused much discussion around the world, has not yet acquired a unanimous definition. What do we mean when we talk about happiness? Young Chinese gave their answers on Monday at a top speaking competition in Beijing.

"Happiness is achieved when you can run for your goals and when your goals are achieved," Li Sishang (Paul Benedict Lee), from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said on Monday afternoon at the "21st Century Coca-Cola Cup" National English Speaking Competition. The event was co-sponsored by China Daily and Coca-Cola.

Li, along with the 19 other finalists, was asked to discuss, in a prepared speech, the topic "What We Talk About When We Talk About Happiness."

"I want to be a playwright and write for my own joy," said the 19-year-old. "The most important task to achieve my happiness is not to be distracted by what I have on the way."

Many other contestants likewise shared the view that young people should pursue their own happiness.

"The sense of happiness is a mere personal and private concept: We define our own happiness," said Yang Haotian, 19, from University of Science and Technology Beijing. Yang

TOPICS

SPEECH TOPICS FOR THE FINALS IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

2013: The Road Not Taken in Life

2012: Cultural Clashes vs Coexistence between China and the West: My Personal Perspective

2011: Youth and Faith: Does Belief Make Difference to Our Life?

2010: The Power of Sports in Personal Development: Lessons about Life that We Get from Sports

2009: Our Changing Way of Living with the Times: Initiative vs Convenience

was named first runner-up in the nationwide competition.

"People have different beliefs, different aspirations, and they are simply different beings. They deserve the right to pursue their own happiness. I want to live my life, not a life," Yang said.

Li eventually was named the Grand Champion of the competition, triumphing over 120,000 participants from more than 800 universities who had taken part in the nationwide event over the past 10 months.

Wang Guoqing, vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said he saw in the competition young Chinese people's "passion and desire to



Wang Guoqing (left), vice-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the CPPCC, and Zhong Binglin (right), president of the Chinese Society of Education, pose for a picture with Li Sishang (second left), grand champion of the 19th "21st Century Coca-Cola Cup" National English Speaking Competition, and Yang Cuiyin, champion of the 12th "21st Century Lenovo Cup" National High School and Primary School English Speaking Competition, at the award ceremony in Beijing on Monday.

FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

actively seek a way to express themselves and communicate with the world."

"The speeding up (of China's reform and opening-up) calls for a large number of talented youths who are able to 'take a stand as a Chinese while having a conversation with the world,'" Wang said.

Bai Changbo, vice-president of Coca-Cola in China, said that

the happiness topic matches well with Coca-Cola's culture.

"Happiness is a goal of our Chinese dream, and also a spirit that Coca-Cola values," Bai said. "As we often say: Refresh the world, inspire moments of optimism, create a value and make a difference."

The high school and primary school sessions of the speaking competition, sponsored by

Lenovo Group, also were concluded in Beijing on Monday.

Zeng Guozhang, vice-president of Lenovo Group, spoke highly of the competition's role as a platform for talented students to showcase their personal abilities.

"We saw China shine on the global stage in the past 10 years. But the golden age of the country's globalization will be

the next 10 years," Zeng said. "Young people eloquent in foreign languages are needed direly during this process."

The competition, launched in 1996, has become a great international showcase for China's elite young English speakers. Many past contestants have grown up to become the country's top interpreters, broadcasters and journalists.

Neighbors of new airport to be moved

By ZHENG XIN
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Beijing is planning to relocate 11 villages in the south of the capital because of expected noise pollution at the city's new airport, which is under construction and set to begin operations in 2018.

Another 48 villages, schools and health centers will adopt sound-control measures to soften airport noise, according to construction managers.

Located in Daxing district, which borders Hebei province, the new airport is expected to spur the development of Beijing's southern suburbs while easing traffic pressure at Beijing Capital International Airport, the second-busiest airport in the world by passenger count in 2012.

Airport authorities published the environmental impact assessment of the new facility on Wednesday and invited members of the public to come up with their own opinions and suggestions about the projects to enhance oversight, Daxing district's environmental protection bureau said.

People can go to the official websites of the bureau, Daxing district government, Capital Airports Holding Co or China National Aviation Fuel Group to make a suggestion via e-mail, telephone or letter from March 19 to April 1, it said.

The environmental assessment was conducted from Feb 17 to 28 and mainly focused on noise pollution, air quality, water resource protection, refuse disposal and risk management.

The assessment said construction is feasible from an environmental perspective.

The noise impact of aircraft operations can be muted with certain measures, and new hazards will not be presented to the ecology of the area, it said.

It did not elaborate on the specific measures that could

be taken to reduce the impact of noise.

According to the assessment, 11 of the villages around the new airport will be exposed to aircraft noise of more than 80 decibels, and 24 others to between 75 and 80 decibels.

As many as 23 schools would be troubled with aircraft noise of more than 70 decibels, while one health center would experience noise greater than 75 decibels.

The government said it will relocate the 11 villages that will be exposed to the greatest noise pollution and take sound-dampening measures at the rest.

Feng Yongfeng, founder of the Beijing environmental NGO Green Beagle, urged the government to take measures to ensure that all stakeholders in the projects are informed.

"In fairness, the government needs to make sure more of the public, especially those in the neighborhood of the airport, participate in the assessment," he said.

Longtime exposure to noise pollution will raise serious hazards for people's nervous systems, as well as damage to the heart and cerebral vessels, he said.

However, the assessment shows that noise pollution is controllable.

In addition to the noise measures, the government also vows to further reduce aircraft emissions and adopt natural gas for boilers in buildings.

It also promised that surface and underground water won't be polluted, and that neither waste disposal nor electromagnetic radiation will affect nearby residents.

The new airport will cover an area of 3,032 hectares, with 1,807 hectares of that within the capital and 1,225 hectares in Langfang, Hebei province.

The project was approved by the State Council and the Central Military Commission at the end of 2012.



ICY EXERCISE

PHOTO BY ZHANG HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

A Pekingese provides company as its owner swims in the Heilong River in Heihe, Heilongjiang province, on Monday. The dog accompanies its master for exercise every day at noon.

City eyes growth with green energy

By WANG QIAN
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Bijie, a mountainous city in Guizhou province, has an ambitious plan to become southern China's energy hub with an economic value of about 130 billion yuan (\$21 billion) before 2020, local authorities say.

But before that can happen, the city must balance economic development and environmental concerns.

For Bijie Mayor Chen Changxu, that means not only upgrading and transforming the development methods of traditional industries such as coal, but also encouraging the development of new energy, including wind and hydro power, to power the city's future green economic engine.

"To protect the city's fragile bio-environment, we are focusing on transforming industrial energy efficiency and boosting renewable energy," said Chen, also a deputy to the National People's Congress, in an interview with China Daily during the recently concluded annual NPC session in Beijing.

Chen said Bijie will intro-



Chen Changxu, mayor of Bijie



duce high-tech industry that uses the Beidou Navigation Satellite System, clean-energy vehicles and sustainable energy.

Bijie plans to build 40 wind farms with a total capacity of 2 million kilowatts by 2018, according to the city government's plan.

The plan estimated that clean energy in Bijie will account for 20 percent of the

city's energy output by 2020.

As for coal, the city's main industry, Chen said small- and medium-scale coal mills will be merged and reorganized.

To minimize the effects of overmining, the number of mines was reduced from 940 in 2000 to the current 536, with total output reaching 117 million metric tons per year, data from the city government showed.

"Coal mines with a capacity below 150,000 tons per year will be shut down gradually," Chen said.

Bijie is in northwestern Guizhou province, bordering Sichuan province to the north and Yunnan province to the west. Exploitable reserves of coal reached nearly 76 billion tons, scattered over 12,000 square kilometers, about 45 percent of the city's total area. "Overexploitation of coal caused many environmental issues such as land subsidence, water loss and soil erosion," Chen said.

The city has taken a series of measures to boost the environment.

Forested areas have increased from 400,000 hectares in 1988 to 1.2 million

hectares in 2013 in the city, the local government said.

"We are turning our green mountains and waters into our surging gross domestic product," Chen said.

"The closure of small mines is helping the environment, reducing pollution and changing the past economic development mode into a healthy and sustainable one," he added.

Premier Li Keqiang said during the opening ceremony of the NPC session this year that China is declaring war on pollution as the country previously declared war on poverty. But Bijie's war on poverty and pollution began decades earlier.

In 1988, the State Council designated the city as an experimental zone for "development-oriented poverty alleviation and ecological construction" under a proposal by Hu Jintao, then the province's Party chief.

The city, the only one to lack rail service in the province, is accelerating its infrastructure program.

Chen said the investment in railway projects is more than 1.8 billion yuan. The city's airport started operating in June.

Shanghai to install safety seats in taxis

By YU RAN in Shanghai
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Shanghai will soon roll out taxis equipped with children's safety seats in compliance with a new regulation on protecting minors while riding in vehicles.

A total of 168 taxis from four local companies — Dazhong, Qiangsheng, Jinjiang and Haibo — will install the safety seats.

Gifted by Shanghai Services Federation, the seats are worth about 3,000 yuan (\$480) each and suitable for children aged 9 months to 12 years.

The Shanghai Minors Protection Regulation, which requires all car-owning parents to install safety seats in their cars for children below the age of 4, was issued by the city's legislative body in the end of 2013 and took effect in March.

168 taxis

in Shanghai will install safety seats for children to ensure minor passengers' safety

"Each company will receive 42 child seats to offer assistance to adult passengers taking young children in the near future," said Zhou Wenhua, the operational manager of Shanghai Qiangsheng Taxi Company.

Because it will be the first time child seats are to be installed in taxis in the country, Zhou added, it will take some time to find out which type of car is more suitable to have the seats installed without affecting the drivers' daily routine.

"Training on how to install and uninstall the child seats will also be given to drivers to make sure they are able to do it quickly," Zhou said.

Telephone reservations for the safety seat-equipped taxis will be available to the public after all the testing and training are completed.

Some local parents and grandparents have said they are looking forward to the taxis with child seats as they will be convenient and they will worry less about their or their child's safety.

"If they are equipped with child seats, taking a taxi will be a great option for us over driving our family car as some places lack parking spaces," said Chen Shuxia, mother of a 3-year-old boy in Shanghai.

Chen added that more Chinese parents have realized that using the seats is essential for their child's safety, while the new law will make more people aware of their importance.

According to the new law, children under the age of 12 are not allowed to sit in the front seat of a car for safety reasons.

Statistics from the national traffic management authority showed that more than 18,500 children under the age of 14 are killed in traffic accidents every year in China.

"Although more attention has been paid to children's safety while riding in cars, there are still many parents who've made a habit of holding their kids in the vehicle instead of putting them in the safety seats," said Pan Shuming, a doctor with Xinhua Hospital in Shanghai.