

Development of sports facilities pushed

Government looks to further boost participation and cater to growing demand

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The government has introduced new measures to boost the development of public fitness facilities as part of broader efforts to implement the Healthy China initiative and encourage greater public participation in sports programs.

On Oct 10, the General Office of the State Council published a guideline that outlined policy measures in 11 fields to meet the growing demand for fitness facilities.

Constructing more fitness facilities and enabling greater public participation in sports are necessary requirements of Healthy China 2030 and the National Public Fitness Program, the office said.

To provide more space, local authorities will be allowed to use idle land in urban areas to construct sports facilities, while private enterprises will be permitted to rent land for a maximum of 20 years if they intend to build fitness centers, the guideline said.

It called for local authorities to conduct surveys of existing facilities to identify their basic condition and weak links, as well as urban spaces such as unused land, green space in parks, factory grounds and rooftops that can be used for fitness purposes.

Governments in different areas must come up with five-year plans to strengthen the development of facilities, including multipurpose sports grounds, sports parks, trails and squares for fitness purposes and miniature soccer fields within a year, according to the document.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified the importance, necessity and urgency of bolstering the development of fitness facilities and grounds,” Wang Ke, an official with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, told a news conference on Oct 10.

Wang noted that fitness facilities easily accessible to the public are severely inadequate, and the government will accelerate the development of small and mini-sized grounds and facilities.

The guideline included a plan to construct or renovate 1,000 sports parks across the country during the period of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25).

Stadiums and other large sports complexes will be encouraged to open for free or have a low admission charge, and the government will adopt the necessary incentive mechanisms to open facilities in schools and colleges to the general populace.

The document also highlighted the need for public sports grounds to establish sound mechanisms to allow visitors to reserve services via mobile applications, instant-messaging platforms, websites and phones, and to implement measures to ensure the traceability of users and avoid large gatherings.

The government will entrust



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specialized institutions with the development of community sports service systems that will integrate functions to allow people to search for and reserve facilities, consult sports coaches and register training sessions, the guideline said.

A stay-at-home fitness promotion program will be pushed forward as the Healthy China initiative is enforced, and local authorities will be encouraged to work with online fitness service platforms to open home fitness courses.

Ou Xiaoli, head of the Department of Social Development at the National Development and Reform Commission, told the Oct 10 news conference that the development

of public fitness facilities may be included in the 14th Five-Year Plan and the central fiscal budget will step up investment in this regard.

Such facilities will also be included in plans for the development of new urban areas and the renovation of older residential communities, neighborhoods and villages, he said.

The guideline came before the release of a document by the general offices of the Central Committee of

the Communist Party of China and the State Council, China's Cabinet, on Thursday, which outlined moves to comprehensively strengthen and improve physical education in schools.

Schools must increase the weight of physical education in their curriculums, step up training of students in sports skills and categories, and improve all their sports facilities and equipment, the document said.

Huo Jianxin, a sports industry professor at Capital University of Physical Education and Sports in

Beijing, said the growth in the number of fitness enthusiasts has given rise to stronger demand for sports grounds and facilities.

He noted that the latest guideline has expanded the supply of land for the development of fitness facilities and alleviated the pressure on private investors as it greenlighted their use of rental land to develop facilities.

It also catered to surging demand for stay-at-home fitness activities during the pandemic by encouraging the growth of online service platforms, he added.

POLICY RESPONSE

Govt cracks down to stop street blackmail and scamming

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A slew of ministry-level departments, including those responsible for law enforcement, taxation, statistics and health have responded to matters of public concern.

Judicial moves made against fake accidents

Judicial officials underlined the country's commitment to cracking down on street blackmailing and scamming, particularly fake accidents, at a news conference on Wednesday to interpret a recently issued guideline targeting such illegal behaviors.

In recent years, street blackmailing and scams targeting drivers and cyclists have provoked great public concern after making headlines in local media across the country.

The guideline — issued by the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security on Sept 22 — identifies and specifies several illegal acts, such as deliberately crashing a car to claim compensa-

tion, and outlines the corresponding punishments.

The guideline stipulates that people who deliberately cause traffic accidents or attempt to blackmail others by citing their violation of traffic laws — offenses under the related provisions in the Criminal Law — will be charged with the crime of extortion by blackmail.

Import Expo tax exemptions announced

China has announced a policy for import duty exemptions on foreign goods to be sold at the Third China International Import Expo from Nov 5 to 10 in Shanghai, according to a statement published on the website of the Ministry of Finance on Wednesday.

The statement, initially issued on Oct 12 by the ministry, the General Administration of Customs and the State Taxation Administration, said an “appropriate number” of exhibition products will be exempted from import tariffs and import value added tax.

In addition, consumption tax will be waived on the sale of a number of

product categories, including machinery, medical equipment and artworks, according to the statement.

The quotas for products in each category will range from two to 12 items per exhibitor. Duty exemptions will also apply to goods in other categories on condition that sales do not exceed \$20,000 per exhibitor, the statement said.

Consumer inflation eases, factory gate prices fall

A recent mild fall in food prices eased consumer inflation growth last month, while the decline in producer prices widened, according to data issued by the National Bureau of Statistics on Thursday.

Last month, the Consumer Price Index, a major benchmark of inflation, rose 1.7 percent from the same

month last year, according to the bureau. The figure eased after a rise of 2.4 percent in August.

Dong Lijuan, a senior statistician with the bureau, attributed the easing of CPI growth to moderating prices of food, especially vegetables and pork.

Last month, food prices, which account for nearly one-third of the weighting in China's CPI, climbed 0.4 percent month-on-month, with the pace of growth slowing from 1.4 percent in August, data showed.

The country's Producer Price Index, which measures the cost of goods at the factory gate, fell 2.1 percent year-on-year, registering a slight decline from the 2 percent drop seen in August.

Dong said fluctuations in international crude oil prices and in the cost of downstream activities, such as refining, had ended the upward trend.

Urban hospitals assist over 800 poor counties

More than 1,000 major urban hospitals have delivered assistance to hospitals in over 800 poor counties



during the period of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), official figures showed on Wednesday.

Major urban hospitals sent more than 80,000 medical professionals to support 1,172 hospitals in poor counties during the period of the plan as part of widespread efforts to mobilize health circles and other parts of society to assist in the battle to eradicate poverty.

Since the start of such assistance in 2016, China has seen a marked improvement in terms of services and management in county-level hospitals, according to Jiao Yahui, an official with the National Health Commission.

China will further incorporate the paired assistance into efforts to promote rural revitalization in the future, Jiao said.

Policy digest

Quality growth of listed companies prioritized

On Oct 9, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a circular outlining plans to improve the quality of listed companies and achieve healthy development of the capital market.

The number of listed companies in China has risen significantly in recent years, but problems still exist, such as management irregularities and a lack of quality in development, the circular said.

It said listed companies should standardize their management systems and clarify the duties and legal responsibilities of controlling shareholders, directors, supervisors and senior managers.

Meanwhile, listed companies, shareholders and other relevant parties should disclose true, accurate and complete information in a timely manner.

A registration-based bond issuance system will be introduced and listing standards will be optimized to help high-quality companies go public on the stock market.

Assistance will be strengthened for companies with the potential to undertake an initial public offering, according to the circular.

Market-oriented mergers and acquisitions will be promoted to encourage listed companies to revitalize their assets and achieve transformation for development.

The financing systems of listed companies should be improved by strengthening coordination and balance between the financing and investment ends. Also, listed companies are urged to optimize their financing arrangements based on both development needs and market conditions.

The incentive and restraint mechanism for listed companies should be improved as well, the circular said.

Moreover, it urged efforts to refine the delisting mechanism by improving delisting standards, simplifying procedures, intensifying supervision and broadening exit channels.

Related government departments should solve prominent problems facing listed companies and strengthen policy support for listed companies severely affected by major emergencies, according to the circular.

Furthermore, listed companies and related entities should face stronger penalties for actions contrary to laws and regulations.

Relevant departments should strengthen supervision and urge listed companies as well as intermediary agencies to fully accept their responsibilities.

Zhejiang administrative changes approved

To catalyze reform and policy piloting, the State Council issued a circular on Oct 15 approving temporary changes to four administrative regulations requested by the eastern province of Zhejiang.

The changes help to streamline administration, improve government services and create a more enabling business environment.

The four regulations are related to marriage registration, quality management, surveys and design of construction projects, and drug sector administration.

Under one of the changes, mainland couples undertaking marriage or divorce procedures can choose any marriage registration authority in Zhejiang if either party is a registered permanent resident in the province.

Prior to the change, such couples had to opt for either of the authorities that held their household registration information.

For construction projects, the adjusted rules allow the province to manage and regulate construction design documents by categorization, exempting projects in low-risk categories from review, according to the circular.

Before, blueprint documents could not be implemented until the end of a government review.

Entrepreneurs looking to register businesses in pharmaceutical retailing in the province will no longer require regulatory approval for startup preparations.

The adjustments will be effective until Dec 31, 2023.

The circular urged related State Council departments and the Zhejiang government to align their regulations with the latest changes and shape supervision and management systems to better match the reforms.

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