

CHINA

Tibetan glamour



Tourists pose for photos in traditional Tibetan attire on Barkhor street in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Wednesday. As the eighth round of the "winter tour of Xizang" campaign continues, winter travel to the region gains popularity, with free admission to most attractions and discounted travel services drawing visitors to experience the plateau's seasonal charm. The campaign, that began on Nov 1, runs till March 15, 2026. LI LIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

Tianjin leverages its district's green assets for growth

By YAN DONGJIE in Tianjin
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Tianjin's Ninghe district is seeking to turn its ecological assets into long-term economic growth as China prepares to implement its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30).

In a recent interview, Bai Fengxiang, secretary of the Ninghe District Committee of the Communist Party of China, said the district is accelerating integrated development across agriculture, culture, sports, education, tourism and commerce, guided by a broader push for green transition in economic and social development.

"Ecology is Ninghe's greatest asset and strongest foundation," Bai said. "Lucid waters and lush mountains are not only natural assets, but also economic ones. What matters is transformation — turning ecological value into real development momentum and better livelihoods."

Ninghe is home to the Qilihai Wetland, one of the world's three major ancient coastal wetlands. It is also the only national nature reserve in China where an ancient coastline and a wetland coexist.

In recent years, Ninghe has promoted what it calls an "ecology plus" development model, extending ecological protection into agriculture, tourism, sporting events and technolo-



Bai Fengxiang
logical innovation. The aim, Bai said, is to move beyond conservation alone to build an economy shaped by ecological strengths.

Agriculture remains central to the district's identity. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), Ninghe's total agricultural output remained above 8 billion yuan (\$1.14 billion), while grain output rose for four consecutive years. Branded products under the "Jinghu Qilihai" label have entered Southeast Asian markets, and the brand value of Qilihai river crabs has exceeded 500 million yuan. The district's Hongyao sweet potato planting area now ranks first nationwide.

"Ninghe is a major agricultural district, and ecology and agriculture define its character," Bai said. "We are moving from traditional farming toward branded, smart modern agriculture."

Ecological advantages also extend beyond farming. Cultural tourism and sports events, including marathons and the Lutai fair, have drawn growing crowds. Annual tourist visits have risen to more than 9 million, generating around 700 million yuan in revenue and forming a cluster that combines ecological sightsee-

ing, cultural experiences and study tours.

As industries diversify, rural livelihoods are changing, too. "Farmers are no longer just growers," Bai said. "They have become tour guides, cultural interpreters and partners in industrial development."

Income sources have expanded to include tourism services, ecological compensation, land transfers and profit sharing, while villages have become more livable and attractive to tourists.

Alongside agriculture and tourism, Ninghe is also exploring new growth areas linked to technological innovation. Drawing on its wetland ecosystem and biodiversity, the district has established the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region's first low-altitude safety technology industrial park and has launched Tianjin's first integrated sky-ground biodiversity monitoring system. Applications now cover crop protection, inspections and logistics.

"Ecology plus innovation is our way of fostering new quality productive forces suited to local conditions," Bai said.

The district is also strengthening cooperation with Beijing, positioning itself as a place where the outcomes of research in the capital can be applied to industry. By guiding scientific achievements from Bei-

jing and Tianjin into practical use locally, Ninghe aims to build industrial clusters that are linked to emerging sectors.

Its efforts to measure and monetize ecological value have gained international recognition. Last year, Ninghe joined the "Cities with Nature" platform, a global partnership initiative aimed at nature advocacy, and the "Biodiversity Charming City" initiative. The value of its ecological products is estimated at about 46.6 billion yuan.

"Accurate accounting of ecological value is the key to unlocking the pathway from clear waters and green mountains to real economic returns," Bai said. Looking ahead, the district plans to improve ecosystem product accounting, expand wetland and forestry carbon sink trading and accelerate the industrialization of ecological resources.

As the 15th Five-Year Plan period approaches, Bai said, Ninghe will remain committed to an ecology-first development path. It seeks to build a modern city that balances environmental protection with economic vitality.

Ensuring that green development translates into tangible benefits for local residents is the goal, he said.

Huang Linyi and Zhang Haoyu contributed to this story.

Illegal fintech activities worth 30b yuan weeded out

By YANG ZEKUN
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China's public security authorities uncovered more than 1,500 cases involving illegal financial activities worth nearly 30 billion yuan (\$4.27 billion) during a six-month special operation, according to data released by the Ministry of Public Security on Thursday.

The campaign, jointly launched by the ministry and the National Financial Regulatory Administration, was carried out in 17 key provinces and municipalities from June to November to address the root causes of financial disputes and risks. It involved nearly 60 coordinated raids, dismantled more than 200 professional criminal gangs and helped cleanse the financial market.

Hua Liebing, director of the ministry's economic crime investigation bureau, said rising consumer disputes in the financial sector in recent years have fueled the growth of illegal intermediaries. These actors spread rapidly online, forming a complete "black and gray" industrial chain that seriously infringes on consumers' rights and disrupts financial market order.

Hua said such crimes have developed into a full industrial chain that includes false advertising, so-called countermeasure tutorials, custom-

ized scripts, forged certificates and agency negotiations. Practitioners are highly professional, with some lawyers and debt collection agency employees joining "anti-debt collection" teams for profit by exploiting their knowledge of laws and credit compliance rules. This has given rise to professional complainants and agents. Criminals also increasingly use new technologies and artificial intelligence tools, making detection more difficult.

Many of these illegal activities rely on internet technologies, with products that are multilayered and nested, complicating identity verification. The trend toward internationalization of such crimes has also become more evident, Hua said. Complex legal relationships, coupled with criminals exploiting loopholes and disguising illegal purposes as legitimate activities, further hinder crime detection.

"With intensified regulation and crackdowns, such illegal activities will become more concealed and their methods more complex," he said.

In August, police in Qingdao, Shandong province, investigated a loan fraud case involving a suspect surnamed Wang and others.

Since 2020, the group, acting as first-tier loan intermediaries, has developed more than 10 second-tier

intermediaries to recruit locals to carry debt.

They forged bank statements, property deeds and work certificates to qualify debt carriers for high-value mortgages, colluded with appraisal firms to inflate property values, and bribed bank staff to secure loan approvals, defrauding more than 120 million yuan in housing loans. Suspects including Wang and Cheng have been arrested, and the case remains under investigation.

Xing Guijun, director of the NFRA's investigation bureau, said the growth of financial "black and gray industries" has been a long-standing problem requiring sustained governance.

While recent efforts have curbed their spread, increasingly concealed and evolving criminal methods have made enforcement more difficult.

"These industries have evolved into high-tech, large-scale, intelligent and industrialized fraud, outpacing traditional risk control measures," Xing said.

Effective governance requires stronger law enforcement and judicial coordination, as well as financial institutions taking primary responsibility for comprehensive risk and compliance management to build solid defenses.

Xing said financial institutions should better regulate cooperative

partners, strengthen third-party qualification checks and supervision, and improve complaint-handling and assessment mechanisms.

He also called for increased investment in technology, including the use of big data and artificial intelligence to enhance risk identification and build intelligent prevention systems.

In March, the NFRA and the Ministry of Public Security issued regulations on transferring suspected criminal cases, laying an institutional foundation for joint law enforcement. By the end of November, more than 4,500 leads involving 21 billion yuan had been transferred to public security authorities, while financial institutions, under official guidance, reported 1,700 cases involving 17 billion yuan.

In 2026, the NFRA will intensify crackdowns on key illegal financial activities, including illegal loan intermediaries and agency services, maintaining a high-pressure enforcement posture, Xing said.

Authorities will strengthen cross-departmental cooperation with market regulators and judicial bodies, develop standards for evidence transfers to improve administrative-criminal coordination, and conduct joint research to propose legislative recommendations on financial crime regulation.

Local rules to be reviewed to help disabled

Limited access to motorized scooters seen as being against Constitution, law

By CAO YIN

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China's top legislature has urged changes to local regulations that require people with disabilities to hold a permanent household registration to purchase or register mobility scooters, citing the need to uphold the Constitution and ensure its implementation.

The Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress said in a report that it received requests earlier this year to review some local regulations that bar people with disabilities from registering motorized wheelchairs without a local *hukou*, or permanent household registration.

Shen Chunyao, head of the commission, said during an ongoing session of the NPC Standing Committee that motorized scooters are essential to the daily lives of residents with disabilities. Reviews found that *hukou*-based restrictions result in unequal treatment and create "unreasonable barriers" for this group, he said.

Yan Dongfeng, an official responsible for reviewing normative documents at the commission, said people with disabilities have a more urgent need for mobility scooters than ordinary residents who use motor vehicles or nonmotorized vehicles.

"Restricting access to motorized wheelchairs based on household registration status imposes undue hardship on the daily lives and mobility of disabled individuals, which contradicts the Constitution and the law on the protection of persons with disabilities," Yan said.

He said the Constitution requires the State and society to assist people with disabilities in employment, livelihood and education, while national law guarantees their right to equal participation in social life and protection of personal dignity.

Yan said the commission urged local authorities to amend the restrictive regulations and that revisions are underway. He said the review was triggered by an

application from a person who argued that a local regulation prohibited people with disabilities from buying mobility scooters unless they held a local *hukou*.

After careful examination, the commission found legal problems with the restriction and moved to correct it, Yan said.

Recording and reviewing normative documents, including administrative rules, local regulations and judicial interpretations, is a constitutional duty of the NPC Standing Committee to ensure consistency with the Constitution and national laws, the commission said.

Yan emphasized the role of constitutional review, saying the commission always considers constitutional issues first when it receives a review application. Regulating public power and protecting individual rights are its priorities, he said.

He also cited another case handled this year involving a local regulation that required a clean criminal record for applicants seeking local *hukou* status after obtaining a residence permit. While some limits on people with criminal records may be allowed, such restrictions must be "necessary, well-defined and proportionate," Yan said.

"Overly broad or arbitrary limits are unreasonable and inconsistent with the constitutional principle of equality before the law," he said, adding that the discriminatory provisions have since been revised.

Shen said the commission will continue to strengthen constitutional review and will also focus on examining regulations related to residential property management, an area that has seen frequent disputes.

"Everyone lives in a residential community and deals with property management companies. We all want our garbage collected and services maintained," Yan said. He called for a specialized legal framework for the sector to better address emerging issues, protect residents' rights and resolve disputes.

Strawberry picking



Visitors pick the season's first winter strawberries inside a soilless cultivation greenhouse in Hangzhou's Tangqi village, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday. NI YANQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

4 dead, 3 missing in coal mine accident

Rescuers have retrieved four bodies and three people are still missing following a suspected coal and gas outburst at a coal mine on Wednesday in Southwest China's Yunnan province, local authorities said on Thursday. The accident struck the Daying coal mine in Zhenxiong county at around 8:10 pm, according to the county government. Rescue efforts and an investigation into the cause of the accident are underway.

952 telecom fraud suspects sent back

The Ministry of Public Security said on Thursday that 952 Chinese

suspects involved in telecom fraud were repatriated from Myanmar's Myawaddy region, as China, Myanmar and Thailand launched a new joint crackdown on cross-border gambling and telecom scams.

Myanmar has carried out a new round of targeted operations in and around Myawaddy, focusing on arresting suspects and dismantling illegal fraud and gambling compounds. On Dec 15, a joint task force of police from the three countries conducted on-site inspections of major fraud hubs in Myawaddy. The ministry said the tripartite cooperation has led to the repatriation of more than 7,600 Chinese nationals involved in online gambling and telecom fraud in Myawaddy since the start of this year.

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