

EDUCATION

## Mother warns of towering learning pressure

By MA LIE in Xi'an  
malie@chinadaily.com.cn

A mother in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province, built a tower with about 10,000 books as a reminder to parents not to place too much learning pressure on their children.

Li Yuling, who runs a small cafe near a middle school where her son is a seventh-grader, spent more than a month building the tower next to a stairway to the second floor of the shop.

"My assistant and I made the tower with about 10,000 books, all secondhand teaching materials and learning guidance books," Li said.

The tower is 6 meters tall and 2 meters in diameter and reaches from the ground floor to the ceiling of the second floor.

There is an arched door at bottom and holes interspersed in the middle for people to look inside the tower.

"I bought the books with more than 30,000 yuan (\$4,337) from nearby second-hand book stores. I want to tell parents of kids studying in middle school not to put too much pressure on them with their studies," she said.



A cafe owner built a two-story tower with 10,000 books in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, as a reminder for parents.

ZHAO BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Li said she planned to open the cafe in 2015 when her son was busy going to various extracurricular classes to improve his test scores so he could get into a good middle school.

"The whole year, I was worried about my son's academic performance and healthy growth. And I really want my kid to have less of a learning load and more time to play games and go out for fun," she said.

Another mother surnamed Zhang, whose daughter is an 11th-grader in high school, said she agreed with Li's thought but did not think student's learning loads could be lessened because they face serious pressure to get into good colleges.

"All Chinese parents want their kids to be in better schools from primary school to university, which can affect their future and happiness. So they have to bear the learning load," Zhang said.

Feng Yingchun, an education psychologist and instructor who has long focused on children's psychological problems, said students' schoolwork distorts normal life in some families, and parents should stay alert for any emotional problems their children might develop from excessive learning pressure.



### A key player

Guo Shangqing practices the saxophone under the instruction of teachers on Friday at the School for the Blind in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Guo is a grade-two pupil at the school. The band is made up of 13 sight-impaired children from the school. WANG FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

ANTI-POVERTY

## Loan program helps needy women start businesses

By AN BALJIE  
anbaljie@chinadaily.com.cn

For rural resident Chang Ling, a 50,000 yuan (\$7,300) loan from a local bank early this year is helping her fulfill her dream of entrepreneurship.

Chang, 31, said she has long wanted to begin trading in agricultural products common in her village in Wulian county, Shandong province, but she had lacked the capital. With the loan, she can start her own business, selling homemade dried sweet potatoes online.

Chang's loan is just one among the 279.4 billion yuan in loans that the central government had provided to 5.38 million women, as of June this year, to start businesses or create jobs, according to the State Council Information Office. Many of the recipients were poor.

On Sunday, the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, an international seminar was held to mark the occasion.

In a congratulatory letter

“China sees development as the key to solve all of the country's problems, and it is also the top priority of the governance of the Communist Party of China.”

President Xi Jinping, in a congratulatory letter to an international seminar held to mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development

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lived beneath China's national poverty line in 2015. China plans to lift all its poor from poverty by 2020.

to the seminar, President Xi Jinping said on Sunday that the Chinese government views the rights to survive and to development as basic human rights.

"As the world's largest developing country, with a population of more than 1.3 billion, China sees development as the key to solve all of

the country's problems, and it is also the top priority of the governance of the Communist Party of China," he wrote.

Liu Qibao, head of the publicity department of the CPC Central Committee, said in his keynote speech that by lifting more than 700 million people from poverty, China has achieved the largest

scale of poverty reduction in the shortest time in history.

China's development has also benefited the world, with the Chinese government having provided more than 400 billion yuan in assistance to 166 countries and international organizations, he said.

Tom Zwart, director of the Netherlands School of Human Rights Research, spoke highly of the China's efforts and achievements to eradicate poverty.

"The right to development is not about money, but about human dignity," he said.

On Friday, the State Council released a poverty alleviation plan for the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). By the end of 2015, China still had 55.75 million people living beneath the national poverty line of 2,800 yuan per year.

China plans to have lifted all of its poor from poverty by 2020, especially residents of the nation's 128,000 needy villages and 832 counties, where poverty has become a regional issue, according to the document.

## Smog: Mist cannon proven to be effective

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dust and pollutants from vehicle exhaust, Xu said.

The combination of the mist cannon and the chemicals "have been determined effective in reducing the fine particles", Xu said.

According to tests conducted by researchers with the China National Environmental Monitoring Center, the mist cannon and the chemicals can together "cut the PM10 by 20 percent, PM2.5 by 5 percent and nitrogen oxides by 10 percent", according to Xu.

There are two trucks covering 35 streets in the capital's Chaoyang district, mainly around the Olympic venues and regions where embassies are concentrated, because of the high population densities and frequency of events. The trucks started operating in October and plans call for them to continue to April 2017.

Li Gang, from the company's marketing department, said that additional districts in Beijing and other cities may adopt the services if the mist

### Alert renewed for northern China

Some areas in northern China are likely to see another day of smog as the national observatory issued an orange alert for air pollution on Sunday. Heavy smog was expected to stay in some parts of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei, Shandong, Henan and Shanxi provinces from Sunday overnight to Monday morning, according to the National Meteorological Center.

Central and southern Hebei will see PM2.5 density higher than 500 micrograms per cubic meter of air with visibility reduced to less than 200 meters, according to the center. Meteorologists forecast a cold front will help disperse the smog later Monday. China has a four-tier color-

coded system for severe weather, with red being the most serious, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

After experiencing frequent episodes of smog, the Chinese public has become increasingly sensitive to the health hazard. To address public concerns, the government aims to cut the density of inhalable particulate matter by at least 10 percent in major cities by 2017.

The center also issued an alert for heavy fog in parts of Beijing, Tianjin, Chongqing, and Hebei, Sichuan and Guizhou provinces with visibility possibly reaching less than 200 meters.

XINHUA

and chemicals perform well. Many cities in northern China, including Xi'an in Shaanxi province and Zhangjiakou in Hebei prov-

ince, have used mist cannons since 2014. There also is interest in them from cities this year such as Chengdu in Sichuan province and cities

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## Beijing takes first place in ranking of China's cities

Survey appraises economic growth, social development and environment

By WANG YANFEI  
wangyanfei@chinadaily.com.cn

With a sustainable and balanced growth pattern, Beijing outstripped its closest economic competitor Shanghai to rank at the top of 295 cities nationwide, in a rating from the nation's top economic regulator.

The capital's No 1 position is based on economic growth, social development and environment in the China Integrated City Index, compiled by the National Development and Reform Commission and Cloud River Urban Research Institute and released last week.

Shenzhen, which ranked top in the environment category, was No 3 overall in the index, following Beijing and Shanghai.

Zhou Muzhi, a professor of urban planning at Tokyo Keizai University and one of lead authors of the study, said that openness and cultural legacy help Beijing stand out from other outstanding economic performers.

"But Beijing needs to make a lot more efforts to improve its environmental situation if it wants to keep its top ranking," said Zhou, adding that surrounding regions need to improve pollution control, especially Hebei province, which relies heavily on natural resources.

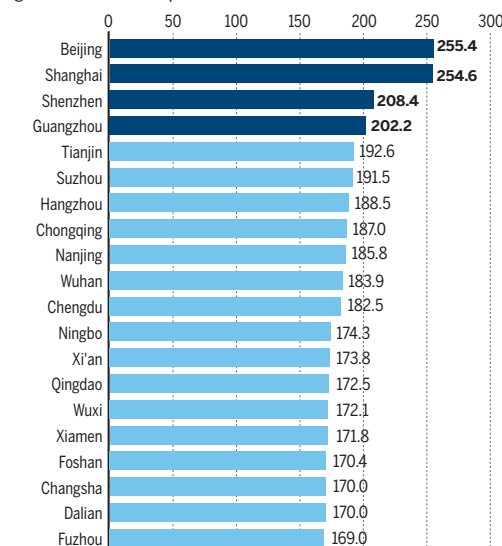
"Coal-fired plants located only several hours drive from Beijing remain a major regional source of polluted air in the capital," he said.

Ultimately, only cities with sustainable growth patterns will be able to attract and retain residents, Zhou said, noting that cities located in China's three major urban clusters — the Yangtze River Delta, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and the Pearl River Delta — currently attract huge population inflows.

Seventeen of the top 30 cities where immigrants exceed permanent residents are located in one of those three clusters, the study showed.

### Top 20 cities in China

China Integrated City Index overall score based on economic growth, social development and environment



Source: National Development and Reform Commission  
Cloud River Urban Research Institute