

## National database to track marriages

Measure would also make it easier for couples to marry where they live

By HE DAN  
hedan@chinadaily.com.cn

A new national database has been hailed as a major step toward allowing couples on the Chinese mainland to get married where they live, rather than where they have their permanent residence.

Until now, couples had to register their nuptials in the place where they hold *hukou*, or permanent household registration.

However, the database, which went into operation at the end of last month, will make it possible for people, including migrant workers, to file the paperwork anywhere, Yu Jianliang, director of social affairs for the Ministry of Civil Affairs, said at a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday.

"That is our ultimate goal," he said, "but it takes time to amend the laws and regulations to realize that goal."

The national database will connect databases in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and will store the marriage records of every citizen, which will help the government to better manage population information and prevent marital fraud, Yu said.

Starting this month, every marriage and divorce registered with civil affairs departments nationwide will be digitized and stored in the national database.

The civil affairs authorities will also speed up digitizing marriage status information of people whose marital information was recorded manually on paper on the Chinese mainland since 1949, Yu said.

The establishment of a national online database will effectively prevent marital fraud, said Jiang Yongping, a researcher at the Women's Stud-

ies Institute of China under the All-China Women's Federation.

In the past, the lack of a national database gave people a chance to conceal their marital status and illegally marry more than one person at the same time, Jiang said.

She said that this move will better protect women's rights, arguing that studies have showed that most of the time women are victims of bigamy in China.

"In addition, collecting and analyzing such information will help the government and other policymakers to better understand the characteristics of people's behaviors in marriage nowadays," said Ni Chunxia, director of the ministry's marriage registration division.

In the future, the ministry will share and exchange the marriage registration information with the courts, which handle about one-fifth of all divorce cases, and foreign affairs departments that register marriage for Chinese nationals married overseas, in order to keep the national database updated, Ni said.



Journalists photograph a Z-9WZ helicopter during a group interview at a military base in Beijing on Tuesday.

## PLA gives rare demo of helicopter

By XIN DINGDING  
xindingding@chinadaily.com.cn

Journalists from all over the world were given a rare performance by China's attack helicopters on Tuesday.

The Army Aviation 4th Helicopter Regiment hosted 160 reporters, including 118 from 66 overseas media outlets, at its base in Beijing's Tongzhou district in a gesture of military transparency.

It is the first time the People's Liberation Army regiment has opened its doors to foreign media.

"The Chinese military is very transparent," said Geng Yansheng, spokesman for the Ministry of Defense. "Through our cameras and reports, we hope to let more people see this unit."

"We will continue organizing such visits," he said, adding it is the fifth such media

event since 2008.

Formed in 1988, the elite regiment is the first armed helicopter unit of the PLA. In the past three years it has hosted military delegations from Japan, Thailand and Australia.

On a sun-baked parking apron, the regiment's aircraft, including the Chinese-made Z-9WZ armed helicopters and a Russian Mil Mi-171 transport helicopter, were on display.

Pilots also performed stunts in four Z-9WZ helicopters.

According to military experts, army aviation is increasingly important for China's military strength. While other units of the PLA have been cut back in recent years, the aviation unit has been expanding, even establishing flight schools.

Colonel Zhang Zhilin, regiment commander, said the regiment has been expanding

its training priority from basic training for new pilots, to a program encompassing training of commanders, instructors and lead pilots.

Training has also started to include highly tactical subjects. "Now our program includes training in live-fire in attack helicopters and using night vision goggles," he said.

The regiment is also trained in anti-terrorism, security and emergency rescue and disaster relief.

The regiment has participated in some 100 non-combat military operations, Zhang said, including providing security for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, retrieval of all nine Shenzhou spacecrafts, and rescue work after the Wenchuan earthquake, which killed nearly 70,000 people in 2008.

"Experiences from these missions will supplement our

daily training and test our wartime capability," he said.

The regiment's officers and soldiers are particularly proud of their equipment upgrades.

Colonel Liu Zeqiang, 48, has served in army aviation for more than 20 years. In his view the biggest change for the regiment is that all armed helicopters are now Z-9WZ helicopters manufactured in China.

The helicopter, with a maximum cruising speed of nearly 300 kilometers per hour, has replaced imported Gazelle attack helicopters.

"Now all parts of the Z-9WZ are manufactured in China. It guarantees our training will not be interrupted by a shortage of parts," he said.

Liu and regiment commander Zhang said they expect more locally developed equipment will be used in army aviation units in the future.

## Women protest company accused of discrimination

By LUO WANGSHU  
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

A group of women calling for workplace equality demonstrated on Tuesday outside a Beijing company that has been accused of rejecting a job candidate because of her gender.

The 12 women, ranging in age from 19 years old to their early 30s, sang pop songs, read poetry and danced for hours outside the offices of Juren Education Technology Co in Haidian district.

An organizer of the event, who gave her name only as Li, said the demonstration's purpose was to raise awareness of the problems female job-seekers face.

"Discrimination... takes place every recruitment season," said Li, a college student who traveled 20 hours from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

"The problem has never been solved," she said. "I hope employers can hear our voices, ones from the grassroots."

The protesters targeted Juren Education because it is being sued for alleged sex discrimination.

A woman surnamed Cao, originally from Shanxi province, filed her case with Beijing's Haidian district court.

Cao claims a human resour-

**Boys in my class have found it much easier to get a job than the girls. Most boys got offers in winter, but girls are still waiting in April."**

ZHENG CHURAN  
A RECENT GRADUATE OF SUN YAT-SEN UNIVERSITY IN GUANGZHOU

ces employee at the company told her she had been rejected for an office assistant's job because it was a "man-only" position.

China Daily was unable to contact a court spokesperson on Tuesday.

Cao's allegations prompted Li to start a related online discussion group, which she said now has more than 100 members.

Zheng Churan, 23, a recent graduate of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, sympathizes with Cao.

"I majored in sociology, giving me many opportunities to read data about sex discrimination in the workplace," she said. "Boys in my class have found

it much easier to get a job than the girls. Most boys got offers in winter, but girls are still waiting in April."

A human resources employee at Juren Education Technology Co who declined to reveal her name said she had no information about Cao's allegations.

A 33-year-old employee in the company's curriculum-development department who gave her name only as Wu said she believes everyone is treated equally during recruitment.

"As an education company, we do have more women than male workers," she said, adding that she started work with the company last year.

The head of the company was unavailable for comment.

Liu Xiaonan, an associate professor at China University of Political Science and Law, who specializes in labor discrimination, said the case could be the first lawsuit filed over job-recruitment sex discrimination since the Employment Promotion Law went into effect in China.

Liu said the demonstration will raise social awareness of the issue.

"The protest brings pressure on all employers, and reminds them to treat their employees equally," Liu said.

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Female netizens on Tuesday gather outside an education company in Beijing to protest against policies they say the company uses to discriminate against women.

WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY