



Liu Qian,
mistress of a graft suspect, given
six years in jail for "rescuing"
her lover from investigators
Page 4

Inside:

- Weather** ▶ Page 2
- TV Guide** ▶ Page 13



Farmer, 50,
changes
SEX Page 4



'Curse'
to dominate
despite mixed
reviews Page 16

SZ to charge garbage treatment fee from Jan.

Tan Xiaomi

SHENZHEN will start collecting a garbage treatment fee from every household as well as organizations in the public and private sectors from Jan. 1, Shenzhen Water Group said yesterday.

The fee is set at 13.5 yuan (US\$1.73) each month for every household within the special economic zone. For households outside the zone and companies and organizations in the whole city, the fee is 125 yuan for each ton of garbage, or 0.27 yuan for each ton of sewage discharged.

The fee will be included in the monthly water bill. Shenzhen Water Group is authorized to collect the fee on behalf of the municipal government.

The method of paying the garbage treatment fee is the same as that of the water bill.

All orphanages and households on welfare are exempt from the fee.

The municipal government has for several years been considering plans to charge a garbage disposal fee. A public hearing on the subject was held two years ago to fix the fee.

According to the bureau, households or businesses who fail to pay the fee will be fined 3 percent of the fee amount every day.

Some 10,925 tons of garbage are produced in the city every day, at an annual increase of 7.24-percent, and the number is expected to reach 12,375 tons a day in 2010.

The municipal government spends 300 to 500 million yuan every year treating rubbish. The treatment fee, in line with the "polluters-pay" principle, will fund the city's environmentally friendly garbage treatment plants.

More than 100 cities in China, including 14 in Guangdong, are charging a garbage treatment fee, which ranges between three and eight yuan.

Crosstalk master Ma Ji dies



Ma Ji

MA JI, a renowned performer of the Chinese art of *xiangsheng*, or crosstalk, died of heart disease at the age of 72 in a hospital in Beijing yesterday morning.

Ma will be remembered as one of the masters of crosstalk, a kind of comic dialogue, in the post-1949 era. He not only inherited and developed *xiangsheng* of the Hou School, which was named after his mentor and master performer Hou Baolin, but also created his own performing style, which is

followed by many successors.

Ma is regarded as an artist who connected the traditional and modern *xiangsheng* art forms. His works reflected the changes in Chinese society. He was good at satirizing social problems and praising heroes.

He created more than 100 *xiangsheng* works.

A commentary on the popular Web site www.sina.com.cn said yesterday that Ma's death marked the end of *xiangsheng*.

The article paid tribute to Ma for reviving the traditional art

form during the "Cultural Revolution." His comic dialogues were a stark contrast to the stereotyped revolution-themed plays, offering rare relief and entertainment during a time of repression, the article said.

Tributes poured in on the Internet following news of his death yesterday. A blogger named "Bangbang" wrote that he grew up listening to the comic dialogues of *xiangsheng* masters like Ma Sanli, Ma Ji and Jiang Kun.

(Continued on Page 4)



Foreign students celebrate New Year

Foreign students of Shenzhen University sing the Chinese song "Friends" at their New Year party at the university yesterday. More than 500 international students attended the party, with many of them demonstrating their skills in singing, dancing and acting. (More on Page 8)

Helen Deng, Fang Sheng

Hospital chief suspended for overcharging patient

Li Dan

ZHOU HANXIN, head of the Shenzhen People's Hospital, has been suspended from his post after an investigation confirmed that a patient had been overcharged, the city's health bureau announced yesterday.

Chen Jianliang, vice director of the neurological surgery department, and Liu Lijun,

head nurse of the department, have also been suspended.

The city is launching a one-month campaign to stamp out arbitrary medical fees and tighten medical service standards, the city's health chief Jiang Hanping said yesterday at an emergency meeting.

Shenzhen Party chief Li Hongzhong ordered a crack-down on irregularities in the

city's medical sector after CCTV exposed the overcharging by the hospital last Thursday.

Yu Quntao, a local resident, found the hospital had charged his father-in-law, who was identified only as Sun, for 25 hours' use of a perspiration monitor in a single day, the CCTV report said.

Sun stayed in the hospital

for 67 days until he was discharged Dec. 4.

On another day, the hospital charged him for 27 hours of monitor use. The CCTV report said Yu paid nearly 30,000 yuan (US\$3,750) for Sun's usage of the perspiration and heartbeat monitor, a sum large enough to purchase three monitoring devices.

(Continued on Page 3)

Lianzhou International Photography Festival 2006

The author, photography critic, historian and curator A. D. Coleman, is based in New York and Shenzhen. His work can be found online at photocritic.com. He curated the traveling exhibition "Saga: The Journey of Arno Rafael Minkkinen," and serves on the Academic Committee of the LIPF.

A. D. Coleman

FIVE Shenzhen photographers — Jia Yuchuan, Wang Fan, Yu Haibo, Xiao Quan, and Yang Junpo — were featured at the 2006 Lianzhou International Photography Festival (LIPF), which concluded yesterday. All five took part in the extensive group show "Distance," whose oversize digital prints filled the ground floor of the Culture Center in Lianzhou, a small town near Shenzhen in Guangdong Province.

At the exhibition, curated by Zhang Qing, Wang Fan offered "Bosses," a suite of posed formal color portraits. The other four all chose to pair works from two different series. Jia's contribution juxtaposed studies of mannequins in a factory with images of homeless children in a temporary shelter. Yu combined a selection from his prize-winning study of the "China Oil-Painting Village" with documentation of "old" Shenzhen from 1989 to 1994. Xiao presented extracts from "Women" and "Time." And Yang used urban bus commuters as a counterpoint to coal miners.

The selections this year at the LIPF placed heavy emphasis on documentary and photojournalistic projects from China and elsewhere. The works in this vein on view included images from the "Cultural Revolution" by Weng Naiqiang and contemporary group portraits in the classic tradition by Li Nan.

However, more experimental presentations of "personal" documentary, such as Olivier Pin-fat's hellish, diaristic visions of Burma, Thailand, and Sri Lanka; Philip Blenkinsop's painful images of Thailand and Nepal; and Steven Benson's "Red, White, and Blue in Black & White," a critique of the U.S. media, balanced those out.

Meanwhile, projects in other forms such as Arno Rafael Minkkinen's "Saga," a series of self-portraits; a selection from Maleonn's "Romance of the Three Kingdoms," a set of staged images; and Miao Xiaochun's digital reworking

of Michelangelo reflected the diversity of contemporary photographic practice both inside and outside China. (Unlike some other festivals, the LIPF so far has deemphasized fashion, commercial, and other applied forms of the medium.)

Awards

This year's LIPF Awards Committee selected three Chinese photographers, one Chinese curator, a Chinese architect, and two foreign photographers for recognition at a public ceremony on Dec. 10.

Among the Chinese photographers, Meng Minsheng won the first prize. Mo Yi took the second prize for his installation "The Scenery I Inhabit," a roomful of intriguing sets of typological images comparing such everyday features of the urban Chinese environment as quilts being aired outdoors, apartment-building entrances, and protective terrace grilleworks. Wang Xinwei received the Young Photographer of the Year prize. Guo Xiaoyan was named Curator of the Year for the large group exhibition "Liminal." Chen Xudong was presented with a Special Contribution Award for his architectural design for the interior of the Granary.

Bangkok-based photojournalist Philip Blenkinsop of Australia received a Special Contribution Award for the results of a long-term residency in Lianzhou, which included his own intense, highly emotional installation in a candy factory and the output from a student workshop he taught during his time in the city. A Special Jury Award went to the Finnish-American photographer Arno Rafael Minkkinen for "Saga," a 35-year retrospective of his unusual self-portraits.

Magazine launched

LIPF 2006 highlights included the debut of a new bimonthly magazine, *Photography*, published in Shenzhen in both Chinese and English; evening slide projections in the Culture

Square in Lianzhou; and several public lectures on aspects of contemporary photography.

Directed by Duan Yuting, the LIPF had its premiere in November 2005. The second LIPF continued the theme established last year, "Between the Observer and the Observed." Under that broad rubric, it brought together work by a mix of Chinese photographers and their counterparts from Western Europe (especially France), Britain, Russia, Finland, Australia, the United States, and elsewhere: 163 participants altogether, 117 Chinese and 46 from overseas. This resulted in a rich stew of imagery — 79 exhibitions with more than 3,200 pictures.

Using a model that originated in the west, the LIPF wisely has based itself in a city that seems ideally suited for such a project. Unlike Houston, Texas, home of Fotofest International, the U.S. counterpart to this southern Chinese event and one of its inspirations, Lianzhou is a relatively small, human-scale metropolis. The four sites chosen for the LIPF's exhibitions — the city's Cultural Center plus three unused former industrial spaces (a shoe factory, a granary, and a candy factory) — all lie within easy walking distance of each other.

As a destination city for cultural tourism, Lianzhou also stands somewhere between a completely modern megalopolis like Shenzhen and the smaller towns and rural areas of China. So, for those visiting photographers from abroad who wanted to use this opportunity to photograph daily life in China, the city and its surrounding areas offered additional attractions.

The LIPF will publish a full catalogue of the 2006 edition in March of 2007, providing a permanent record of the event.

For those who were unable to attend the festival, a book version of "Distance" has just been published by the Shenzhen-based Haitian Publishing Co. at 280 yuan (US\$35.80).

For more information visit the Web site at www.lipf.cn.



Photograph from the series "The Scenery I Inhabit" by Mo Yi.



Photograph from the series "Melancholy Portrait" by Wang Xinwei.



Installation, "Saga: The Journey of Arno Rafael Minkkinen" by Arno Rafael Minkkinen.

