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China Today Documents the Maintenance of the Green Corridor in the Taklamakan Desert

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The Taklamakan Desert in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is the largest desert in China. At the same time, its fast-moving sand dunes make it also the most dangerous desert. Stretching across the center of this vast desert runs the Tarim Desert Highway. It was the first desert Highway to be completed in China and is the longest classified highway to pass through a flowing desert in the world.

In order to protect the highway from being damaged or covered by wind and sand, and keep the road open all year round, on both sides of this 532-kilometer route there are green belts of shade. According to He Ling, an employee of the oil field of the middle of Tarim, a total of more than 20 million shrubs including red willow (tamarisk), sacsaoul (haloxylon plants), and calligonum mongolicum were planted. And to maintain the green corridor in the desert, well houses have been placed at regular intervals along the highway, and maintenance staff are assigned to work there. Cao Xuequan is one of the maintenance staff who has worked in No. 4 well house for more than 10 years. He and his wife work and live here in the desert. They pump water for irrigation, maintain the green belt, and service the equipment day after day, year after year.

The desert highway itself is already a miracle, and these dedicated maintenance workers like Mr. Cao are the people who keep the miracle going. It is because of them that the shrubs that protect against wind and sand can survive and this desert highway can be open to provide a smooth trip all year round.

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