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National People's Congress of China



A BIG STRIDE FORWARD

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← Li Zhanshu takes an oath of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17. Li was elected chairman of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) at the first session of the 13th NPC on March 17. Yao Dawei



↑ Newly-elected vice chairpersons of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) Wang Chen, Cao Jianming, Zhang Chunxian, Shen Yueyue, Ji Bingxuan, Arken Imirbaki, Wan Exiang, Chen Zhu, Wang Dongming, Padma Choling, Ding Zhongli, Hao Mingjin, Cai Dafeng and Wu Weihua, and newly-elected secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee Yang Zhenwu, take oath of allegiance to the Constitution at the first session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17. Liu Zhen

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President Xi Jinping vows to serve the people as national legislature concludes annual session



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Fresh faces at China's top legislature

COVER: President Xi Jinping waves to deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 20. The first session of the 13th NPC concluded in Beijing on March 20. Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders took group photos with the deputies to the 13th NPC on the afternoon of March 20. *Lan Hongguang*



General Editorial

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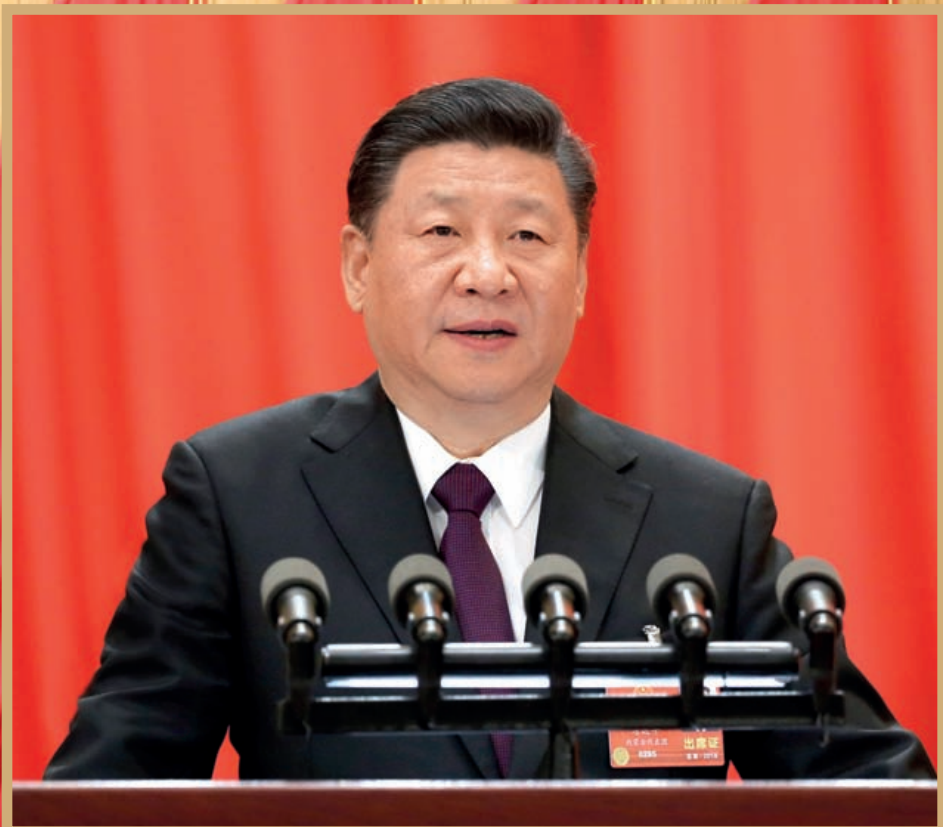
President Xi Jinping vows to serve the people as national legislature concludes annual session

President Xi Jinping vowed to continue to serve the people at the closing meeting of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) annual session on March 20.

"It is a glorious mission and weighty responsibility to take on this great position of the President of the People's Republic of China. I will, as always, faithfully fulfill my responsibilities empowered by the Constitution, be loyal to the motherland and the people, perform my duty scrupulously, do all my best, be diligent at work, and stay devoted and dedicated," Xi said in a speech.



President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders attend the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 20. Ju Peng



President Xi Jinping makes a keynote speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 20. Yao Dawei



“I will continue to serve as a servant of the people, accept supervision by the people, and will absolutely not betray the great trust from all deputies and Chinese people of all ethnic groups,” he added.

Xi asked all personnel of State organs to always put the people in the most prominent place in their hearts, always serve the people wholeheartedly, and always work hard for the people’s interests and happiness.

“No matter how high a position one holds, all personnel of State organs should keep firmly in mind that our republic is the People’s Republic of China,” he noted.

The meeting was chaired by NPC Standing Committee Chairman Li Zhanshu.

Other Chinese leaders including Li Keqiang, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji, Han Zheng and Wang Qishan attended the meeting. Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng and Zhang Gaoli were also present.

Lawmakers adopted the Supervision Law and resolutions on the government work report, and work reports of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate.

They also passed resolutions on the reports of the national economic and social development plan as well as the central and local budgets.

Xi signed a presidential decree to promulgate the Supervision Law.

The Chinese people are people with great creativity, Xi stressed in his speech, noting that he is confident that as long as the over 1.3 billion Chinese people keep on developing such great creativity, China will definitely create miracles one after another.

The Chinese people are people with great spirit of struggle, he said, noting that he believes as long as they uphold that spirit, China will definitely fulfill the great goal of creating a better life.

The Chinese people are people with great spirit of unity, he said, noting that he believes as long as they uphold the great spirit of unity, China will definitely forge an unstoppable and

invincible force.

Chinese people are people with great spirit of pursuing dreams, he said, noting that he believes that as long as they keep carrying forward this great spirit of pursuing dreams, China can and will realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

“It is a country where all power of the State belongs to the people. We must base our efforts on the interests of the people, ensure the principal status of the people, humbly learn from the people, and heed their needs and draw on their wisdom,” he said.

Expressing his full confidence in China’s future, Xi urged everyone to adapt to the new historic juncture for the development of the country and act in response to the evolution of the principal contradiction in Chinese society.

The Chinese people have always had the sense of justice and compassion and tied their destiny closely to that of the people around the world, he said.

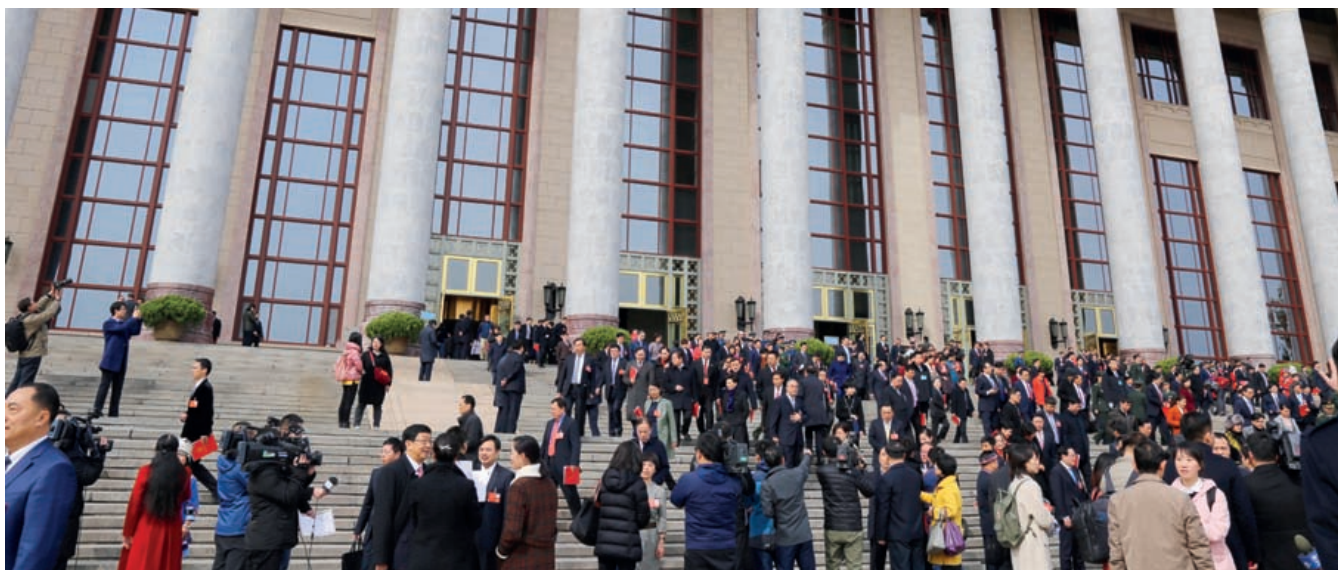
“The Chinese people are always ready to do their utmost to contribute to the peace and development of humanity,” he said.

Xi stressed that the leadership of the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Party is the highest force for political leadership and the fundamental guarantee of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In his speech after Xi’s, Li Zhanshu said it has been the collective will of nearly 3,000 NPC deputies and common wish of all Chinese people to unanimously elect Xi president of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

“Comrade Xi is the core of the Party, commander of the army and leader of the people, who is supported by the whole Party, loved and respected by the people,” he said. “He is the helmsman of the socialist nation with Chinese characteristics in a new era and the guide of the people.”

Li said he was honored to be elected the NPC Standing Committee chairman and pledged to work hard to fulfill his duty. (Xinhua) ■



Deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress walk out of the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 20. Yu Qingmei

Highlights of President Xi Jinping's keynote speech

President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 20. Here are the highlights.

People are creators of history

It is the people who have created the history and they are the real heroes, Xi said. As long as people have confidence, the country will have a future and power.

He reaffirms his commitment to serve the people and fulfill his legal obligations.

Chinese people have the spirit of creativity, hard work and unity and are great dreamers, Xi said.

Happiness comes with hard work. If Chinese people hold the spirit of working hard, we can achieve the goal of creating a better life, said Xi.

Xi stresses that Chinese people well aware that unity is power and driving force to move the nation forward, adding it is impossible for a divided and fractured nation to advance.

China is a socialist State under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, said Xi, noting that all power in the country belongs to the people.

He urges all civil servants to always put people at the highest place, wholeheartedly serve the people and work for the people's interests and happiness.

New Long March

China has continuously striven for its dream of realizing great national rejuvenation for over 170 years, said Xi.

History has proved and will continue to prove that only socialism can save China. Only by sticking to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics can we achieve the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China is still in a period of strategic opportunity. The 19th CPC National Congress has drawn up a lofty blueprint of securing a decisive victory in building a well-off society in all respects and in starting a new journey

of building a modern socialist country, and in achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Turning the grand blueprint for China into reality is new Long March.

We need to uphold the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

China's goal is to build a socialist, modern country by the middle of the 21st century.

We need to deepen reform more comprehensively and broaden opening-up with intensified efforts and with more concrete measures, said Xi.

We should put into action the new development concepts and pursue high-quality growth of our economy.

We should intensify our efforts and take more specific measures to develop socialist democracy.

We should step up our efforts and take more concrete measures to advance the cultural industry of a socialism country.

We should continue to foster and implement the core socialist values and continue to translate fine results of Chinese civilization into innovative and creative development.

We should step up efforts and take more concrete measures to safeguard and improve people's well being.

We should continue to step up efforts and take more concrete measures to promote the construction of ecological civilization.

We should also make sure that the CPC have the ultimate leadership over the military.

We will continue to implement "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong, Macao people governing Macao, and high degree of autonomy in the special administrative regions.

We should continue to stick to one-China principle, 1992 Consensus and advance the peaceful development of the cross-Straits relations and expand the economic and cultural exchanges between the two sides.

Safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity, completely uniting China are

Chinese people's common goal and the country's fundamental interests.

Every inch of the Chinese territory absolutely cannot be separated from China, said Xi.

Shared future

China is always willing to make contributions to peace and development of humanity, and fate of Chinese people always closely linked to that of others.

China won't develop itself at the expense of others, China's development won't pose a threat to any country, said Xi.

China holds the view that world affairs should be managed through consultation between the people of all countries, said Xi, noting that China will not impose its own will on others.

China will continue to advance its Belt and Road Initiative, and strengthen exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the world, so that the reform and opening up of China will benefit all mankind.

The shared future for all mankind will shine brighter in every corner of the world.

CPC leadership

The CPC and its leadership are the defining features of the socialism with Chinese characteristics. The CPC is the supreme leadership of the country, and it is also the fundamental guarantee of achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

To assume the responsibility of leading the people in conducting a great socialist revolution, the CPC should be able to continue itself with the revolution.

Under the leadership of the CPC, and thanks to the hard work of past seven decades, our country has striven, taking a brand new look in the east of the world.

New era

We should guide our country towards a future full of hope, said Xi, adding that new era belongs to everyone, nothing can stop us fulfilling our dream.

(chinadaily.com.cn)

A big stride forward

Annual political gatherings usher in a new era of development

By Lan Xinzen





The first session of the 13th National People's Congress opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. Liu Zhen



President Xi Jinping (2nd R), also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Guangdong Province at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 7. Yan Yan

The first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) came to a close in Beijing on March 20. Over the two weeks of its duration, more than 2,900 NPC deputies elected and appointed State leaders, adopted an amendment to the Constitution, the Supervision Law, and endorsed a cabinet institutional restructuring plan, among other agenda items. Also, more than 2,100 national political advisors convened their annual session from March 3 to 15 and elected a new leadership of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

On March 17, Xi Jinping was reelected Chinese President and Chairman of the Central Military Commission at the fifth plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC in a unanimous vote. The Chinese people will continue to strive for the realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation under the leadership of Xi.

"It is a glorious mission and weighty responsibility to take on this great position of the president of the People's Republic of China. I will, as always, faithfully fulfill my responsibilities as empowered by the Constitution, be loyal to the motherland and the people, perform my duty scrupulously, do all my best, be diligent at work, and stay devoted and dedicated," Xi said in a speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC on March 20.

"I will continue to serve as a servant of the people, accept supervision by the people, and will absolutely not betray the great trust from all deputies and Chinese people of all ethnic groups," he added.

In his speech after Xi's, Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said it has been the collective will of nearly 3,000 NPC deputies and common wish of all Chinese people to unanimously elect Xi president of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

"Comrade Xi is the core of the Party, commander of the army and leader of the people, who is supported by the whole



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 5. *Xie Huanchi*

Party, loved and respected by the people,” he said. “He is the helmsman of the socialist nation with Chinese characteristics in a new era and the guide of the people.”

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, has been working to do away with the old and ring in the new, improve people's well-being, combat corruption and promote the new development of society. He has boosted targeted poverty reduction so that the whole Chinese nation can share the fruits of development. “To meet the people's desire for a happy life is our mission” were Xi's words which, alongside his unremitting effort, have deeply moved the people and made the country more united.

Benefits for all

Over the past five years, the CPC Central Committee with Xi at the core has launched a series of reforms based on wide-ranging studies of China's national conditions, resolving many longstanding problems and accomplishing many elusive goals, thus leading socialism with Chinese characteristics into a new era. Showing great foresight, Xi has led China to make historic successes in political, economic, social, diplomatic and national defense realms, epitomizing the conduct appropriate for the leader of a powerful country.

In the new era there are still many challenges which China must face. Despite this, China has established the goals of finishing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the time the CPC marks its centenary and building itself into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary.

In order to achieve the Two Centenary Goals and the



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins a panel discussion with the deputies from southwestern municipality of Chongqing at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 10. *Xie Huanchi*

national rejuvenation, the Chinese nation must, under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and behind the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi at the core, maintain concerted efforts to tackle tough issues and courageously forge ahead.

China's new era is also an opportunity for world peace and development. China's destiny is closely connected with that of other countries through both good and bad times. Xi's proposal of building a community with a shared future for mankind is increasingly supported by the international community, and this idea is beginning to manifest itself in action. Xi will continue to lead the Chinese people to strengthen co-operation with the international community to promote common prosperity.

Xi's vision for a community with a shared future for mankind is an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity. All countries should respect each other, enter into discussion as equals, reject the Cold War mentality of competition and power politics, and approach State-to-State relations through communication rather than confrontation and partnership instead of alliance.

The Belt and Road Initiative, first proposed by Xi in 2013, is tangible evidence that China is committed to building this community with a shared future for mankind. The Belt and Road Initiative, consisting of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, aims to build a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along and beyond the ancient Silk Road trade routes. It has already become a model for cooperation within the international community with the participation of more than 60 countries and regions.

Under the leadership of Xi, China has transformed itself



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Shandong Province at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 8. Yao Dawei



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, shakes hands with deputies from People's Liberation Army (PLA) and armed police before attending a plenary meeting of the delegation of PLA and armed police at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 12. Li Gang

from a mere supplier of material products into a provider of international public products as well, contributing the ancient wealth of Chinese wisdom to the world. In the future, China will provide more positive perceptions, ideas and experience to global governance for the greater development of human society.

Deepened reforms

The adoption of an institutional restructuring plan of the State Council, China's cabinet, at this year's NPC session marked the launch of China's biggest government reshuffle in years. But it is just part of a revolutionary reform of CPC and State institutions. According to a plan unveiled on March 21, the reform will involve the people's congresses, governments, political advisory bodies, as well as supervisory, judicial and prosecutorial organs. People's organizations, enterprises, public institutions and social organizations will also be covered.

Initiated by the CPC Central Committee, the reform demonstrates the Party's intention to promote the modernization of the system and capacity for governance of the State.

The public's aspirations for a better life necessitate the optimization of the structure and functions of Party and State institutions in education, culture, employment, healthcare and social security, so as to ensure people's access to child care, education, employment, medical services, elderly care, housing and social assistance. Their demands for democracy, the rule of law, justice, security and a better environment require the consolidation of the functions of Party and State institutions to improve democracy, the rule of law, market supervision, social governance and ecological protection in order to make legislation more sound, law enforcement more strict, judicial justice more fair, supervision more powerful and governance more effective.

"Optimized, coordinated and efficient" is a phrase that concisely encapsulates the principles underpinning successive instances of institutional restructuring since reform and opening up began 40 years ago. After identifying the outstanding problems in the structure and functions of Party and State institutions, these principles form the blueprint for successfully affecting their reform.

Optimization emphasizes a well-conceived structure of the Party and State institutions, and the more streamlined functions of these entities. The fundamental goal of deepening the reform of Party and State institutions in the new era is to uphold and strengthen Party leadership. In accordance with this prerequisite, it is necessary to ensure the reasonable allocation of duties and the augmentation of cohesive power to prevent the overlap of organizations and the duplication of roles and work. Government functions in economic management, market regulation, social governance, public services and ecological protection should also be strengthened and improved.

Since the transfer of functions is closely connected with the reorganization of institutions, attention must be paid to the coordinated progression of reform and the strengthening of cooperation, while optimizing the structure and functions of Party and State institutions, so that those at all levels cooperate with and complement one another, and so that the overall system is both coordinated and highly efficient.

These changes are aimed to adapt to the increasingly multi-faceted demands of the Chinese people in the new era. "It is a country where all power of the State belongs to the people. We must base our efforts on the interests of the people, ensure the principal status of the people, humbly learn from the people, and heed their needs and draw on their wisdom," Xi said at the closing meeting of the NPC annual session. (Beijing Review) ■

Xi Jinping unanimously elected Chinese President, CMC Chairman



Xi Jinping takes an oath of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17. Xi was elected Chinese President and Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 17. *Ju Peng*

Xi Jinping was elected Chinese president by a unanimous vote at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 17.

Thunderous applause reverberated at the Great Hall of the People when the election result was announced.

Xi, 64, stood up and bowed, while the voters responded by standing up and clapping vigorously. Li Keqiang and Zhang Dejiang, who stood beside Xi, shook hands with him and expressed congratulations.

Xi was also elected chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) by a unanimous vote.

Right after the election, Xi took an oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

"I pledge to be allegiant to the Constitution of the PRC, safeguard the Constitution's authority, fulfill my legal obligations, be loyal to the country and the people, be committed and honest in my duty, accept the people's supervision and work for a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful," he said.

This was the first time for a Chinese president to take such an oath upon assuming office.

Last October, Xi was elected general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and appointed CMC Chairman of the CPC at the first plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee.

He was first elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee in late 2012, and Chinese President and CMC Chairman of the PRC in March 2013.

In the president's first five-year tenure, China has made historic achievements and undergone historic changes – Having "stood up" and "grown rich," China is "becoming strong."

Xi told the 19th CPC National Congress in the opening speech that socialism with Chinese characteristics had entered "a new era."

At the 19th CPC National Congress, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era was written into the CPC Constitution, and into the country's Constitution on March 11, making it the guiding principle of China.

He laid out a two-step approach to future development: working to basically realize socialist modernization from 2020 to 2035; developing China into a great modern socialist country from 2035 to the middle of the century.

“I am so lucky to be part of such a great age led by a great man,” said Yu Zhigang, an NPC deputy. “The unanimous vote showed that as our leader Xi has our full support and trust and bears our high expectation.”

Gesang Zhoigar, an NPC deputy from Tibet Autonomous Region, was also deeply touched by the election. “Being one of more than 3 million people from Tibet, I have strong trust in Comrade Xi, the whole Party’s core, our nation’s leader and the army’s commander,” she said.

Also on March 17, lawmakers elected Li Zhanshu as chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee and Wang Qishan as vice president of China.

A total of 14 vice chairpersons and a secretary-general were also elected for the 13th NPC Standing Committee.

They all took oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

Lawmakers also adopted an institutional restructuring plan of the State Council. (Xinhua) ■



Deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress cast their ballots at the fifth plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 17. *Liu Weibing*

Chinese President takes oath of allegiance to Constitution for the first time

“I pledge my allegiance to the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to safeguard the Constitution’s authority, fulfill my legal obligations ...” Newly elected Chinese President Xi Jinping took the solemn oath in Beijing on March 17.

This was the first time for a Chinese president to take oath of allegiance to the Constitution upon assuming office.

Xi was elected Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the PRC earlier on March 17 at the first session of the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC).

Last October, he was elected general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and appointed CMC chairman of the CPC at the first plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee.

With the national emblem hung up high in an auditorium inside the Great Hall of the People, everybody stood and a hard copy of the Constitution was brought to the stage by honor guards as the ceremony started at

around 10:49 a.m.

After a chorus of the national anthem was sung by all present, 64-year-old Xi, in a dark suit, took the podium, placed his left hand upon the Constitution, raised his right fist, and read the oath.

“[I pledge to] be loyal to the country and the people, be committed and honest in my duty, accept the people’s supervision and work for a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful,” he said.

He then bowed and returned to his seat amid warm applause.

The ceremony was held just six days after the national legislature added oaths of allegiance into the newly-amended Constitution on March 11.

The amendment also added Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as a guiding theory for China.

Based on a legislative decision passed by the top legislature in July 2015, China

put the system into effect in January 2016, requiring all State functionaries to take a public oath of allegiance to the Constitution when assuming office.

China enacted its first Constitution in 1954. The current Constitution was adopted in 1982 and amended in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004 and 2018.

Joining NPC deputies in a panel discussion on March 10, Xi urged officials to uphold rule of law, oppose rule of man, be in awe of the Constitution, and exercise their duty within the boundaries of the Constitution and laws.

The ceremony was broadcast live via State television and the Internet.

“By taking the lead in swearing the oath, the president is telling the public that every one is equal in front of the law, and there is no exception,” said Xiao Shengfang, an NPC deputy and president of Guangdong Lawyers Association. “It shows commitment by the Chinese leadership to rule of law, which will ensure China’s journey toward modernization.” (Xinhua)

A plan for the New Era

Government work report puts forth a new vision for national development

By Lan Xinzhen



Premier Li Keqiang delivers a government work report at the opening meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. *Liu Zhen*

Against the backdrop of uncertainty and instability around the world, what direction will China's social and economic development take this year? What positive influence will it have on the global economy? At this year's Two Sessions such questions of concern to the international community are being addressed by China's leadership.

In the Report on the Work of the Government delivered at the first session of the 13th NPC on March 5, Premier Li Keqiang reviewed China's achievements over the past five years and laid out the requirements and direction of policy for social and economic development in 2018.

According to legislators and political advisors at the Two Sessions, the report provides an important opportunity for those at home and abroad to understand China's development strategies.

"The report has made a series of important arrangements for high-quality development and the deepening of reforms," said Zhang Zhanbin, a member of the CPPCC National Committee and director of the Economic Research Department under the Chinese Academy of Governance. "It represents President Xi Jinping's thought on socialist economy with Chinese characteristics for a new era."

Ouyang Hua, an NPC deputy and secretary of the Baita Village general branch of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Yixing, east China's Jiangsu Province, spoke highly of the

rural revitalization strategy mentioned in the report. He said he was impressed by the emphasis on building powerful new growth drivers for rural development through reform and innovation and improving the institutions and mechanisms needed to achieve integrated urban-rural development.

The report also highlights the current social and economic challenges faced by China. "The report specifies our tasks in many areas, reflecting the current government's clear understanding of domestic and international affairs," said Qiu Xiaoqi, a CPPCC National Committee member and China's ambassador to Mexico.

Huang Shouhong, deputy director of the State Council Research Office and head of the team responsible for drafting the report, said his colleagues had collected ideas and suggestions from millions of people representing a variety of professions, social backgrounds and age groups through numerous channels including the Internet and symposiums, fully accommodating the wishes of the people.

"The report addresses people's aspirations for a better life as well as their expectations for democracy, the rule of law, justice, fairness, safety and the environment," said Yang Yanyi, a CPPCC National Committee member and former head of the Chinese Mission to the European Union.

Stable progress

The report sets the projected target for GDP growth at 6.5 percent for 2018, explaining that this target takes into consideration the need to secure a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Qiu said the target is appropriate, suggesting that the government is not pursuing a high rate of growth. It is also in line with the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability for the Chinese economy, which has ensured healthy economic expansion in recent years.

There have always been controversies surrounding China's growth targets, with some foreign media outlets expressing concern about the country's economic prospects after India's growth rate surpassed China's in 2017. Such concerns are unfounded considering that a 6.5-percent growth rate based on last year's GDP of over 82 trillion yuan (\$12.96 trillion) would be sufficient to fulfill China's social development goals such as wage increases for urban and rural residents, a high employment rate and an improved environment.

However, the difficulties and challenges faced by the Chinese economy are many. World economic recovery is sluggish, global financial markets are plagued by uncertainty and protectionism is mounting. Domestically, deep-rooted structural problems in the economy are becoming prominent and

downward pressure has been increasing. In response to these issues, the Chinese Government has endeavored to stabilize growth by accelerating economic restructuring rather than resorting to strong stimulus measures.

This year the government will continue following the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability, with the two regarded as indivisible. Such a policy will allow China to positively contribute to world economic growth, while bolstering the international community's confidence in the Chinese economy.

High-quality growth

China's GDP growth rate for 2017 was 6.9 percent, better than the pre-set target of 6.5 percent, leading some to question the ambition of this year's target.

According to Qiu, the prudent target reflects the government's resolve to put quality before quantity in economic growth and improve the long-term competitiveness and performance of the economy.

The Chinese economy is transitioning from a phase of rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development, according to Huang.

High-quality development is essential to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialist Economy with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

In the face of fluctuation in the international financial market, sluggish global trade and the downward pressure on the Chinese economy, the Chinese Government has avoided stimulus measures such as quantitative easing and expansionary fiscal policies adopted by some developed countries and emerging economies, instead seeking to transform the growth model by reform and innovation to strengthen momentum in the long run.

The prioritization of quality growth reflects the Chinese Government's strong sense of responsibility. Although the international community has expressed doubts over the Chinese economy whenever fluctuations in the stock market and foreign exchange rate have occurred, economic indicators are looking up as a result of the Chinese Government's policies.

"Had China chosen the traditional path of stimulation, robust economic growth in the short term might have been possible but serious negative outcomes would have followed, making today's achievements impossible," said Huang.

Premier Li's report underlines China's intention to focus on high-quality growth, while addressing unbalanced and inadequate development. Committed to developing a modernized economy, the country will give priority to performance, promoting structural improvement and economic upgrading.

People first

The concept that development should be for the people, depend on the people and that the results should be shared by the people, is central to the governance of the CPC.

According to Huang, the Report on the Work of the Government reflects a vision of people-centered development, establishing a series of measures closely related to people's lives with a view to improving their overall livelihood, such as cutting the cost of starting businesses through alleviating tax burdens, raising the personal income tax threshold so as

to boost incomes, promoting the rebuilding of dilapidated urban and rural housing, and increasing fiscal subsidies to basic healthcare. New requirements have also been put forward to increase incomes, improve healthcare and education, and simplify various procedures to make people's daily lives easier and more convenient. The report responds to every issue of major concern to the public with tangible measures.

"China's development demonstrates the State's focus on the benefit of the people and their share in the country's progress," said Huang.

Poverty alleviation is key to achieving the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020, which represents China's greatest challenge. The report highlights the importance of winning the three critical battles of forestalling and defusing major risks, stepping up targeted poverty alleviation and addressing pollution, and of securing a decisive victory on all fronts. "I'm fully confident of victory as there are a lot of detailed and specific measures to cope with these problems," said Zhang.

Sustaining reform

This year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up policy, a move that made possible China's current social and economic achievements. As the Report on the Work of the Government suggests, the Chinese Government is set to further push forward reform and opening up by building on the achievements of the past four decades, maintaining efforts to unleash and develop productive forces.

The report explicitly states that "reform and opening up was a game-changing move in making China what it is today; it now remains a game-changing move for us to achieve China's Two Centenary Goals." The Two Centenary Goals are to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the time the CPC marks its centenary and to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary.

The word "reform" appeared an unprecedented 97 times throughout the report, far higher than in previous versions, signifying the Chinese Government's determination to uphold the mission of reform and opening up.

Reform is to be conducted in many areas. China will continue with supply-side structural reform, as well as the reform of market regulation and services, finance, taxation, the State innovation system and efforts to improve the ecological environment this year and beyond.

"The report aims to drive reform and opening up by encouraging different regions to proceed from their own specific conditions, no matter how difficult the situation is," said Zhang. "Tax reduction, a better business environment, and the protection of entrepreneurship and property rights will all help to promote China's reform and opening up."

The world economy still faces unstable and uncertain factors as a rise in protectionism hampers globalization. As a steadfast champion and the driving force behind free trade and economic globalization, China will continue to benefit the world economy and the global community by intensifying the process of reform and opening up. (Beijing Review) ■

NPC urged to uphold Constitution



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress, addresses the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 20. *Rao Aimin*

The NPC and its Standing Committee must firmly stick to the guiding principle of the Constitution, the leading status of the CPC, as well as the country's fundamental task, the development path set in the Constitution.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), called on lawmakers to firmly uphold the Constitution and fulfill their duties as representatives of the people on March 20.

Li said the rapid development of the Communist Party of China and the country has raised higher requirements for the work of the NPC. He asked legislators to clearly realize their obligations and exercise the power of legislation and supervision according to law.

He made the remarks while addressing the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC on March 20.

Li said it has been the collective will of nearly 3,000 NPC deputies and the common wish of all Chinese people to unanimously elect Xi Jinping as president of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Li said he was honored to be elected NPC Standing Committee chairman and pledged to work hard to fulfill his duty.

He also asked lawmakers to uphold the leadership of the CPC and keep in close touch with the people.

The Constitution is the fundamental law of the country and enjoys the supreme legal status. The NPC and its Standing Committee must firmly stick to the guiding principle of the Constitution, the leading status of the CPC, as well as the country's fundamental task, the development path set in the Constitution, Li said. (China Daily) ■

Li Zhanshu – Chairman of Standing Committee of 13th National People’s Congress

Li Zhanshu, male, Han ethnicity, was born in August 1950 and is from Pingshan, Hebei Province. He began his first job in December 1972 and joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in April 1975. Li graduated from Department of Political Education, Night College, Hebei Normal University where he completed an in-service undergraduate program. He holds an executive MBA degree.

Li is currently a member of the Standing Committee of the 19th CPC Central Committee Political Bureau and chairman of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People’s Congress.

2018- Member, Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau
Chairman, Standing Committee of the 13th National People’s Congress

2017-2018 Member, Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau

Director, Office of the National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee

2014-2017 Member, CPC Central Committee Political Bureau

Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat

Director, CPC Central Committee General Office

Director, Office of the National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee
Secretary, Working Committee of the Organs Directly under the CPC Central Committee

2012-2014 Member, CPC Central Committee Political Bureau

Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat

Director, CPC Central Committee General Office

Secretary, Working Committee of the Organs Directly under the CPC Central Committee

2012 Deputy Director (minister level) in charge of routine work and Director, CPC Central Committee General Office

Secretary, Working Committee of the Organs Directly under the CPC Central

Committee

Chairman, Standing Committee of the Guizhou Provincial People’s Congress
2010-2012 Secretary, CPC Guizhou Provincial Committee

Chairman, Standing Committee of the Guizhou Provincial People’s Congress
2008-2010 Deputy Secretary, CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee

Governor, Heilongjiang Province
2007-2008 Deputy Secretary, CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee

Acting Governor, Heilongjiang Province
2004-2007 Deputy Secretary, CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee

Vice Governor, Heilongjiang Province
Studied executive business administration at Harbin Institute of Technology and received an executive MBA degree (2005-2007)

2003-2004 Deputy Secretary, CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee

2002-2003 Deputy Secretary, CPC

Shaanxi Provincial Committee
Secretary, CPC Xi’an Municipal Committee

Chairman, Standing Committee of the Xi’an Municipal People’s Congress

2002 Member, Standing Committee of the CPC Shaanxi Provincial Committee

Secretary, CPC Xi’an Municipal Committee

Chairman, Standing Committee of the Xi’an Municipal People’s Congress

2000-2002 Member of Standing Committee and Head of Organization Department, CPC Shaanxi Provincial Committee

1998-2000 Member of Standing Committee; Deputy Head of Leading Group for Rural Work and its Office Director, CPC Shaanxi Provincial Committee

Attended an in-service graduate program in business economics at Department of Finance and Trade, Graduate School, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (1996-1998)

1997-1998 Member of Standing Committee and Deputy Head of Leading Group for

Rural Work, CPC Hebei Provincial Committee

1993-1997 Member of Standing Committee and Secretary-General, CPC Hebei Provincial Committee

Studied economics through Correspondence School of the Central Party School (1992-1994)

1990-1993 Deputy Secretary, CPC Chengde Prefectural Committee; Hebei Province Commissioner, Chengde Prefecture, Hebei Province

1986-1990 Secretary, CYL Hebei Provincial Committee

Took a training course in Party building theory at the Central Party School (Feb-Aug 1988)

1985-1986 Deputy Secretary, CPC Shijiazhuang Prefectural Committee; Hebei Province Commissioner, Shijiazhuang Prefecture, Hebei Province

1983-1985 Secretary, CPC Wuji County Committee, Hebei Province

1976-1983 Administrative secretary and Chief, Information Section, Office of the CPC Shijiazhuang Prefectural Committee, Hebei Province

Studied at Department of Political Education, Night College, Hebei Normal University (1980-1983)

1972-1976 Administrative secretary and deputy head, Office of the Shijiazhuang Prefecture Commercial Bureau, Hebei Province

1971-1972 Studied commodity prices at Shijiazhuang Prefecture Finance and Trade School, Hebei Province

Alternate member, 16th and 17th CPC Central Committees

Member, 18th and 19th CPC Central Committees

Member, Political Bureau and Secretariat, 18th CPC Central Committee

Member, Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, 19th CPC Central Committee

Chairman, Standing Committee of the 13th National People’s Congress. (Xinhua)

Li Zhanshu joins panel discussion during the NPC annual session

Joining deputies from Jiangxi Province on March 5, Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, stressed the important role the CPC Central Committee with Xi at the core has played in leading development over the past five years. He said it will be essential to fully implement Xi's thought, especially his thought on economy, which is mainly based on a new vision for development, and the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress to ensure this year's economic and social development.

Li Zhanshu joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Jiangxi Province at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 5. *Ding Lin*

第十三届全国人民代表大会第一次会议 江西省代表团全体会议



Meeting with deputies from Beijing on March 7, Li Zhanshu said he completely agreed with the draft constitutional amendment, adding that the incorporation into Constitution of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and other theoretical, practical and institutional progress made at the 19th CPC National Congress would provide constitutional guarantee for safeguarding the authority and centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi at the core.



Li Zhanshu joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Beijing at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 7. *Wang Ye*

Joining deputies from Hubei Province on March 9, Li Zhanshu stressed the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Li said all deputies have shown great consistency in their recognition for and agreement with the draft constitutional revision, which is under deliberation at the session, and have expressed their great trust in the CPC Central Committee with Xi at the core.

Li Zhanshu joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Hubei Province at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 9. *Rao Aimin*



Meeting with deputies from Yunnan Province on March 10, Li Zhanshu said he hopes the province will build itself into an exemplary region in promoting ethnic unity, progress and ecological development, as well as become a center of opening up to South Asia and Southeast Asia.



Li Zhanshu joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Yunnan Province at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 10. Yao Dawei

Joining deputies from Jilin Province on March 12, Li Zhanshu said that to uphold and improve the people's congress system, it is key to fully understand Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and well implement major policies made at the 19th CPC National Congress.

Li Zhanshu joins a panel discussion with the deputies from Jilin Province at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 12. Yao Dawei



China's national legislature calls Party leadership its 'greatest strength'



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress, delivers a work report of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC at the third plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 11. *Ju Peng*

China's national legislature underlined Party's leadership when summarizing its work over the past five years on March 11.

The leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) is the essential element and greatest strength of the people's congress system, said Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, when delivering a work report of the committee at the first session of the 13th NPC.

Chinese leaders Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Li Zhanshu, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji and Han Zheng attended the plenary meeting.

"We must uphold the centralized, unified leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core," Zhang said.

The national legislature should closely base the planning

and advancement of its work on the overall work of the Party and the country, and promptly follow up on the needs of the Party and the people, he said.

Zhang stressed that the national legislature should fully implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

During the period, the national legislature enacted 25 laws, revised 127 ones, passed 46 decisions on legal questions and other major issues, and issued nine legal interpretations.

In terms of their oversight duty, lawmakers have inspected enforcement of 26 laws and one legislative decision, heard and deliberated 83 work reports, and conducted 15 special inquiries and 22 research projects.

Efforts were made to raise public awareness of the Constitution. With the NPC Standing Committee's decision, all officials have to publicly swear allegiance to the Constitution when taking office.

Since 2013, the NPC Standing Committee has launched a two-year research program and developed guidelines to improve people's congresses at county and township levels, followed by revision to several laws.

In 2015, the 12th NPC passed a revision to the Legislation Law, granting more Chinese cities the power to issue local regulations.

Zhang voiced his confidence in the people's congress system.

"The confidence the Chinese people have in the people's congress system derives from their confidence in the strong leadership of the Party and in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics," he said.

Zhang also underlined the role of the people's congresses in realizing the principle of "the people running the country" and advancing law-based governance.

Although this system has proved to be an effective political system, Zhang said that it does not mean that the national legislature can be complacent.

He suggested that new mechanisms for legislative, oversight and deputy-related work should be explored, and efforts should be made to enrich and broaden the practices of people's congresses.

According to the report, in next five years China's national legislature will speed up compiling the civil code, formulate a foreign investment law and e-commerce law, and do research on formulating a real estate tax law.

Environment laws will be one of the priorities. The soil pollution prevention law will be drafted while the law on solid waste control will be revised.

It also plans to revise the criminal procedure law and draft a community correction law. (Xinhua) ■

Graft-buster to lead new commission

A senior graft-buster was elected by the top legislature to lead China's new National Supervisory Commission, marking a key step forward in the country's sweeping reform toward building a more centralized oversight system.

Yang Xiaodu, deputy secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China, was elected director of the National Supervisory Commission on March 18 during the first session of the 13th National People's Congress.

He took the oath of allegiance to the country's Constitution after being elected.

Yang, born in 1953, is a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. He had headed the Ministry of Supervision and the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention until an institutional restructuring plan of the State Council, which was adopted on March 17, merged the two agencies to form the National Supervisory Commission.

As the first director of the commission — the national agency of a new anti-graft and supervisory network that was endorsed by constitutional amendment a few days ago — Yang is expected to play an important role in pushing forward the country's reform.

The revised Constitution, adopted by the 13th NPC on March 11, first listed supervisory commissions as a new type of State organ. As the supreme supervisory organ, the National Supervisory Commission will oversee local commissions.

The country's first law on supervision is being deliberated by lawmakers.

The law, an essential part of China's reform of supervisory institutions, is expected to serve as a fundamental and guiding law against corruption and for State supervision, Li Jianguo, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC, said when explaining the draft to the top legislature on March 13.

The draft law incorporates practices of the pilot reform of the supervisory system, which began in Beijing and Shanxi and Zhejiang provinces in December 2016 and was expanded nationwide in November 2017. Supervisory commissions have been established at the provincial, city and county levels across the country.

Under the old supervisory system, the Party disciplinary network oversaw all Party members, while administrative supervisory agencies governed civil servants, which left a considerable number of State functionaries unsupervised. As the



Yang Xiaodu takes the oath of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 18. Yao Dawei

The revised Constitution, adopted by the 13th NPC on March 11, first listed supervisory commissions as a new type of State organ.

reform unfolds, supervisory commissions will be entitled to oversee the staffs of Party organs, legislatures, governments, courts, procuratorates and political advisory bodies, as well as executives of State-owned enterprises and the managing staffs of public institutions, among others.

Sharing offices and staff with Party disciplinary inspectors, the new supervisory commissions incorporate existing supervisory, corruption prevention and control agencies within governments and procuratorates, pooling anti-graft resources.

The new supervision system and the law on national supervision highlight the unified leadership of the CPC and the principle of the rule of law in fighting corruption, said Guo Yingguang, an NPC deputy and deputy director of the Standing Committee of the Shanxi People's Congress.

He said the pilot program in Shanxi has provided experience and a practical basis for the reform, and it's the right time to adopt such a law to carry forward the country's ongoing anti-corruption campaign. (Xinhua) ■

China's national legislature adopts landmark constitutional amendment

China's National People's Congress (NPC), the national legislature, enshrined Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the country's Constitution on March 11, codifying its guiding role.

The amendment, adopted at the first session of the 13th NPC with an overwhelming majority, wrote Xi's thought into the Constitution's preamble, along with other guiding theories including Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the Theory of Three Represents.

Scientific Outlook on Development has also been incorporated into the Constitution as a guiding theory.

"As an important content of the amendment, the inclusion of Xi's thought into the country's fundamental law reflects the common aspiration of the entire Communist Party of China (CPC) and all Chinese people of various ethnic groups," said Shen Chunyao, chairman of the Commission for Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee.

"It has been the fundamental theoretical guide for the historic achievements and shifts made in the cause of the Party and the country since the 18th CPC National Congress," Shen

said at a press conference held right after the amendment was adopted.

The CPC announced the formation of Xi's thought for the first time at its 19th National Congress in October 2017, hailing it as "the latest achievement in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and an important component of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics."

Upon conclusion of the congress, Xi's thought was written into the Party's Constitution as a new guide to action.

This was the first amendment to the country's fundamental law in 14 years.

Key concepts, policies and strategies the Thought encompasses were embedded in the Constitution.

Included are a vision of innovative, coordinated, green and open development for all; the five-sphere integrated plan for coordinated economic, political, cultural, social and ecological advancement; the goal of a "great modern socialist country"; and an oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

The amendment has enriched clauses on the patriotic united front, harmonious relations among ethnic groups, and peaceful foreign policies, including the addition of building a



Shen Chunyao (2nd L, back), secretary of the Bill Group of Secretariat of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) and chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, and Zheng Shuna (3rd L, back), deputy secretary of the Bill Group of Secretariat of the first session of the 13th NPC and vice chairwoman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, take questions at a press conference on an amendment to the country's Constitution in Beijing on March 11. *Yan Yan*

community with a shared future for humanity.

The expression that China will “adhere to the peaceful development path and the mutually beneficial strategy of opening-up” was added to the preamble.

The following sentence was also added in the Constitution to stress the overall CPC leadership: “The leadership of the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

“The greatest strength of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the CPC,” said Cao Qingyao, an NPC deputy and a district Party chief of Chongqing Municipality.

“The revision has enriched provisions concerning upholding and strengthening the overall CPC leadership and is significant to ensuring the Party and the country to forge ahead along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics,” Cao noted.

Other revisions include adding core socialist values and

‘It has been the fundamental theoretical guide for the historic achievements and shifts made in the cause of the Party and the country since the 18th CPC National Congress,’ said Shen Chunyao.



The third plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 11. Hou Yu

granting Chinese cities, with subordinate districts, the power to make local laws and regulations.

The people's congresses and their standing committees in these cities will be able to adopt local laws and regulations under the condition that they do not contradict the Constitution, national laws and regulations, and provincial laws and regulations, according to the amendment.

A revision to a clause concerning the Chinese President and Vice President's terms of office was also incorporated. “It is a key measure to improve the State leadership system,” Shen told the conference.

Supervisory commissions have been listed as State organs in the Constitution, with a section about such organs added to the third chapter, “The Structure of the State.”

Supervisory organs are listed together with administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs of the State, all of which are created by the people's congresses to which they are responsible and by which they are supervised.

Lawmakers at the session agreed that the constitutional revision, which accords with the aspiration of the Party and the people and has won approval from both inside and outside the Party, is of historic significance for ensuring prosperity and lasting security of both the Party and the country.

The draft amendment was submitted to the first session of 13th NPC for deliberation among nearly 3,000 deputies on March 5.

A constitutional change is either proposed by the NPC Standing Committee or by more than one-fifth of all NPC deputies, and then requires the approval of two-thirds or more of NPC deputies during the annual session.

The amendment was put into effect on March 11.

Revising part of the Constitution is a major decision made by the CPC Central Committee from the overall and strategic height of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, said Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, when joining NPC deputies in a panel discussion on March 7.

The People's Republic of China enacted its first Constitution in 1954. The current Constitution was adopted in 1982 and amended in 1988, 1993, 1999 and 2004.

While the reform and opening-up drive, which began 40 years ago, has made amazing progress, it brought major changes to the country's Constitution.

From 1988 to 1999, amendments included reform of land-use rights, a legal status for the private economy, the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, replacing the phrase “planned economy” with “socialist market economy,” and incorporation of Deng Xiaoping Theory.

The most recent amendment in 2004 protected private property and human rights, and gave the Theory of Three Represents constitutional authority.

China's Constitution has been developed along with the people's practices of building socialism with Chinese characteristics under the CPC leadership, according to Li Shuzhong, vice president of the China University of Political Science and Law.

“The amendment makes the Constitution in keeping with the times by incorporating new achievements, experiences and requirements of the Party and the country's development as socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era,” Li said. (Xinhua) ■

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era

Xi Jinping was elected President by a unanimous vote on March 17 at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress.

China's national legislature has adopted constitutional amendments, enshrining Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era into the Constitution.

The thought represents the latest achievement in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and encapsulates the practical experience and collective wisdom of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the people.

The CPC announced the formation of the thought for the first time at its 19th National Congress in October 2017 and wrote the thought into the Party's Constitution as a new guide to action upon conclusion of the congress.

The thought makes eight fundamental issues clear at the theoretical level, and presents the 14-point fundamental principles to guide the endeavors:

-- It makes clear that the overarching goal of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics is to realize socialist modernization and national rejuvenation. On the basis of finishing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, a two-step approach should be taken to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful by the middle of the century.

-- It makes clear that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society in the new era is that between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. It stresses the people-centered philosophy of development, and well-rounded human development and common prosperity for everyone.

-- It makes clear that the overall plan for building socialism with Chinese characteristics is the five-sphere integrated plan, and the overall strategy is the four-pronged

comprehensive strategy. It highlights the importance of fostering stronger confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

-- It makes clear that the overall goal of deepening reform in every field is to improve and develop the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance.

-- It makes clear that the overall goal of comprehensively advancing law-based governance is to establish a system of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and build a country of socialist rule of law.

-- It makes clear that the Party's goal of building a strong military in the new era is to build the people's forces into world-class forces that obey the Party's command, can fight and win, and maintain excellent conduct.

-- It makes clear that major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics aims to foster a new type of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

-- It makes clear that the CPC leadership is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the greatest strength of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics; the Party is the highest force for political leadership. The thought sets forth the general requirements for Party building in the new era and underlines the importance of political work in Party building.

The 14-point fundamental principles are as follows:

-- Ensuring Party leadership over all work;
-- Committing to a people-centered approach;

-- Continuing to comprehensively deepen reform;

-- Adopting a new vision for development;

-- Seeing that the people run the country;

-- Ensuring every dimension of governance is law-based;

- Upholding core socialist values;
- Ensuring and improving living standards through development;
- Ensuring harmony between humans and nature;
- Pursuing a holistic approach to national security;
- Upholding absolute Party leadership over the people's forces;
- Upholding the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" and promoting national reunification;
- Promoting the building of a community with a shared future for humanity;
- Exercising full and rigorous governance over the Party.

(Xinhua)



A China-themed book exhibition kicks off in Warsaw, the capital city of Poland on February 8. Various China-themed books, including the first and the second volume of "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" were displayed and sold in Poland, Czech, Bulgaria and Romania. VCG

Supervision Law gives legal teeth to China's graft-busting agency

The Supervision Law was adopted by China's national legislature on March 20, legalizing a more sophisticated and efficient anti-graft network.

The law was adopted at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) through a vote after three readings.

Also at the session, Yang Xiaodu was elected director of the national supervisory commission that oversees local commissions at provincial, city and county levels.

"With the new law, the country will pool supervisory powers that used to be divided, and form a centralized, unified and efficient State supervisory system," said Professor Ma Huaide, vice president of the China University of Political Science and Law.

When explaining the draft law to lawmakers on March 13, Li Jianguo, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of

the 12th NPC, said the Supervision Law, an essential part of China's reform of supervisory institutions, was expected to "serve as a fundamental and guiding law against corruption and for State supervision, aimed at enhancing the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on anti-corruption campaigns."

The law is a highlight in the reform of the supervisory system. A pilot reform, authorized by the NPC, began in Beijing, Shanxi and Zhejiang in December 2016, and then expanded nationwide in November 2017.

Existing supervisory, corruption prevention and control departments within governments and procuratorates were merged into the new supervisory commissions, which shared offices and staff with Party disciplinary inspectors.

In late February, local supervisory commissions were founded with their chiefs elected across the country.

"The new supervisory system serves as an important institutional tool to realize law-based governance and modernize State governance," Ma said.

Network covering all

The new law entrusts supervision commissions to oversee staff of Party organs, legislatures, governments, courts, procuratorates, political advisory bodies, as well as their own staff, executives of State-owned enterprises, managing staff of public institutions and mass organizations, among others, in public office.

After the pilot reform, the number of State functionaries under effective surveillance has notably increased, in many places doubling and even tripling.

In Beijing, one of the three localities that started the reform first, the total number of officials under supervision increased from 210,000 before the reform to 997,000 as of December last year.

In the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, a contractor of the local urban management agency named Yang Guilun was detained and found taking bribes worth of about 574,000 yuan (about \$90,880).

Due to limited budgets, local governments and public services sometimes hire contractors like Yang, who serve in public office but not as formal civil servants. Not a Party member, Yang was unsupervised by either the Party disciplinary inspection agency or the administrative supervisory agency.

"Now people like him will not be able to escape punishment," said Zheng Baisheng, deputy director of the Baiyun district supervisory commission of Guangzhou.

THE FUNCTIONS OF A SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

It shall provide integrity education to public officials, and conduct supervision and inspection of public officials' performance of functions in accordance with the law, impartial exercise of power, clean administration, and moral integrity.

It shall conduct investigations of duty-related violations and crimes such as suspected corruption, bribery, abuse of power, neglect of duty, power rent-seeking, tunneling, practice of favoritism and falsification, as well as the waste of State assets.

It shall, in accordance with the law, make decisions on government sanctions against public officials who violate any law, hold liable the leaders who fail to perform their functions in an effective manner or neglect their duties and responsibilities, transfer investigation results on suspected duty-related crimes to people's procuratorates for examination and initiating a public prosecution in accordance with the law, and offer supervisory suggestions to the entities where supervisory objects work.

VCG



The 13th National People's Congress adopts a supervision law at the closing meeting of its first annual session on March 20. Du Yang

The Supervision Law was adopted by China's national legislature on March 20, legalizing a more sophisticated and efficient anti-graft network.

More efficient, unified taskforce

The new law integrates supervisory power that was divided among three agencies – the Party disciplinary agencies, administrative supervisory agencies and procuratorates.

Due to integration of different agencies, more officials were added to daily supervision and investigation. In Guangzhou, the number increased by 10 percent.

Officials with different backgrounds are expected to complement each other and improve efficiency.

Working for the corruption investigation division under a city procuratorate in southwestern Sichuan Province for more than 20 years, Long Yong said he was looking at his job from a more political perspective now.

"I not only care about taking the suspect to the court but also how to root up the source and prevent it from happening

again," he said.

Meanwhile, a disciplinary inspector like Xu Caijin from southeastern Fujian Province is trying to be more competent in legal affairs.

"Before the reform we just needed to establish the facts and then handed the case over to prosecutors for judicial investigation. Now we need to think about whether the case can be taken to the court," he said.

Rigorously regulated

Under the new law, supervisory commissions have their power legally regulated and themselves supervised.

Clear protocols are established for supervision and investigation procedures, and provisions are included to better protect personal and property rights of those under investigation.

A new detention system will replace the practice of "shuanggui," an intra-Party disciplinary practice, exercised by Party disciplinary officials, where a Party member under investigation had to cooperate with questioning at a set time and place.

"Supervisory commissions will not be a super agency of power. They mostly serve to give warnings," said Yang Xiaodu in a group interview on the sidelines of the NPC session on March 5. (Xinhua) ■

Changes in focus

The massive State Council restructuring creates new ministries, cuts or merges others

By Yuan Yuan

The institutional restructuring plan of the State Council, China's cabinet, was adopted on March 17 at the fifth plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC). It is the country's "biggest government reshuffle in years" as Xinhua News Agency commented and is seen as a dramatic continuation of the previous seven rounds of cabinet restructuring that began in 1982.

"The reform is unprecedentedly large, deep and expansive," said Guo An, an NPC deputy and mayor of Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province. "It will optimize the government's functions by promoting coordinated actions and improving levels of management and public service to better satisfy people's expectations and national developmental needs in a new era."

A massive move

In total, the number of ministerial-level entities was reduced by eight and that of vice-ministerial-level entities by seven after the reshuffle.

According to the restructuring plan, functions that have long overlapped are integrated. For example, the four ministries of land and resources, water resources, environmental protection and agriculture were involved in water pollution treatment and prevention before the shake-up. When water pollution was exposed by the media or local residents, these departments often passed the buck among themselves instead of dealing with the problem immediately. The new Ministry of Ecological Environment will be responsible for compiling and implementing ecological and environment policies, plans and standards, as well as ecological and environment monitoring and law enforcement, aiming to put all problems concerning pollution under one roof.



Deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) press buttons to vote for an institutional restructuring plan of the State Council at the fifth plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 17. *Liu Weibing*

The restructuring is part of a broader plan by the CPC to deepen the reform of the Party and State institutions.

"The reform comes at a crucial time," Chen Xi, head of the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said in an article in the People's Daily. "It will support the efforts over the next three years toward building a moderately prosperous society and lay a foundation for building a great modern socialist country by the middle of the century."

"When a frog jumps into a river, it is in the charge of the Ministry of Agriculture. But when the frog is back on land, it is the State Administration of Forestry's responsibility," said Lou Jiwei, a member of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's top political advisory body, referring to the previously



Heads of Cabinet Departments

- Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Wei Fenghe, Minister of National Defense
- He Lifeng, Head of the National Development and Reform Commission
- Chen Baosheng, Minister of Education
- Wang Zhigang, Minister of Science and Technology
- Miao Wei, Minister of Industry and Information Technology
- Bateer, Head of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission
- Zhao Kezhi, Minister of Public Security
- Chen Wenqing, Minister of State Security
- Huang Shuxian, Minister of Civil Affairs
- Fu Zhenghua, Minister of Justice
- Liu Kun, Minister of Finance
- Zhang Jinan, Minister of Human Resources and Social Security
- Lu Hao, Minister of Natural Resources
- Li Ganjie, Minister of Ecological Environment
- Wang Menghui, Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development
- Li Xiaopeng, Minister of Transport
- E Jingping, Minister of Water Resources
- Han Changfu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
- Zhong Shan, Minister of Commerce
- Luo Shugang, Minister of Culture and Tourism
- Ma Xiaowei, Head of the National Health Commission
- Sun Shaocheng, Minister of Veterans Affairs
- Wang Yupu, Minister of Emergency Management
- Yi Gang, Governor of the People's Bank of China
- Hu Zejun, Auditor General of the National Audit Office

rigid division of responsibilities between government departments. “It is these types of problems that have confused people about where they should go when they need consultation or help.”

Nie Weiguo, a CPPCC National Committee member and director of the Executive Office of the Three Gorges Project Construction Committee of the State Council, applauded the abolishment of the committee, which oversaw the world’s largest hydropower project on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. The functions of the committee will be incorporated into the Ministry of Water Resources. “We have always clashed with the Ministry of Water Resources since our responsibilities over the Three Gorges Project overlapped,” Nie said. “It has been a headache for me for a long time.”

Nie said even though some central government departments are keeping their original names, their functions will change considerably. For example, many powers of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) have been transferred to newly-formed or restructured ministries and administrations. The new Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has taken over part of the functions that belonged to the NDRC as well as ministries of commerce, land

and resources, and water resources before the reshuffle.

“The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs isn’t simply adding the words ‘rural affairs’ to the name of the previous Ministry of Agriculture,” said Dang Guoying, an expert on agriculture from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. “The development of agriculture can’t be achieved simply by working on the farmland. The change of the name shows the importance attached to the social development in rural areas.”

Dang said agriculture-related funds in the past were dispatched to several departments and the Ministry of Agriculture could only manage part of the allocations. Now, with the reform, such funds will be forwarded to one ministry, optimizing its use.

The new Ministry of Natural Resources, which merges the Ministry of Land and Resources and the National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation, combines oversight of all types of natural resources—from land to oceans—in one place.

The National Health Commission has been set up to promote the Healthy China initiative and ensure the delivery of comprehensive life-cycle health services to the Chinese people. The commission is responsible for formulating national health policies; coordinating and advancing medical



Top: People take photos in front of the defunct Ministry of Agriculture on March 13.

Above: Citizens take photos of newly-hung nameplate of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. *Jia Tianyong*

'The reshuffle will also help China build a modern economy with high-quality growth and make the government better-structured, more efficient and service-oriented,' State Councilor Wang Yong said.

and health care reform; establishing a national basic medical system; and supervising and administering public health, medicare, health emergencies and family planning services. It replaces the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

In addition, the Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission has been formed to replace both the China Banking Regulatory Commission and the China Insurance Regulatory Commission, with the goal of solving existing problems such as overlap in responsibilities, cross-regulation and lack of supervision. The new body will enhance oversight of both banking and insurance industries and be more effective in forestalling risks in the financial sector.

The new ones

Besides the ministries that combine or replace old ones, some totally new entities have emerged such as the ministries of veterans affairs and emergency management.

The Ministry of Veterans Affairs is in charge of making and implementing policies and regulations related to demobilized military personnel and dealing with related affairs such as their reemployment and training. Its establishment aims to protect the rights and interests of military personnel and their families, improve services and management systems for demobilized military personnel, and promote public respect for military service as an occupation.

The Ministry of Emergency Management has the responsibilities of compiling and implementing emergency management plans, as well as organizing rescue and relief for disasters and workplace accidents. It is also tasked with work safety and the prevention and control of fire, flood, drought and geographical disasters.

There are also new agencies under the State Council after the reshuffle. The International Development Cooperation Agency is formed by merging some functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce. When unveiling the institutional restructuring plan to the first session of the 13th NPC on March 13, State Councilor Wang Yong said the new agency will "give full play to foreign aid as a key means of major-country diplomacy."

The State Immigration Administration, set up under the Ministry of Public Security, will formulate and enforce immigration rules since "the number of foreigners working and living in China has been increasing, raising new requirements on immigration administration and services," according to Wang.

The State Market Regulatory Administration appears set to be a powerful new regulator for companies operating in China, incorporating functions of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, and the China Food and Drug Administration. The changes also create the country's first agency specializing in anti-monopoly issues.

"Different from previous rounds of institutional restructuring, which involved only government bodies and the administrative system, the new reform is more comprehensive since it involves institutions of the Party and the government, legislative and political advisory bodies, judicial and military organs, as well as social groups and non-governmental organizations," Liu He, a member of the Political Bureau of the 19th CPC Central Committee, wrote in a signed article published in the *People's Daily*.

Wang told lawmakers on March 13 that the reform, which focuses on institutional restructuring in key areas, will strengthen the government's functions on economic management, market regulation, social management, public services and ecological and environmental protection.

"It focuses on the needs of development and meets the people's expectations," Wang said, adding that the restructuring is part of a broader plan by the CPC to deepen the reform of the Party and State institutions. "The reshuffle will also help China build a modern economy with high-quality growth and make the government better-structured, more efficient and service-oriented." (Beijing Review) ■

Further opening-up of economy to benefit everyone

By Ren Xiaojin and Zhang Yunbi

China will open domestic industries such as services and manufacturing even wider to foreign investors, lower tariffs to increase imports and streamline its negative list for market entry to make it “a market for domestic and foreign firms regardless of their ownership to compete on a level playing field”, Premier Li Keqiang vowed on March 20.

The premier also urged the United States to treat Sino-US trade relations rationally and relax its restrictions on high-tech exports to China, given that a trade war does not serve the interests of either side.

China still has a lot of potential and space for further economic opening-up, Li said at a news conference right after the conclusion of the first session of 13th National People's Congress.

“The Chinese economy has become deeply integrated into the global economy and closing the door would only block its own way,” he said. “If there is something that will be different from the past, it will be that China will open even wider.”

China will expand the entry of foreign companies in the services industry, such as elderly care and health, education and finance, lift foreign-owned equity limits in some areas and fully open the manufacturing sector. “There will be no mandatory requirement for technology transfers, and intellectual property rights will be better protected,” Li said.

The country plans to adjust and shorten its negative list system, which is a global practice defining areas that are not allowed for foreign investment, and eliminate import tariffs on drugs, especially anti-cancer drugs, and on consumer goods that the people urgently need, he said.

The premier said US enterprises should take advantage

of the opportunities provided by China's wider economic opening-up, and the US should relax its control of high-tech exports to China to help bridge bilateral trade gaps.

US President Donald Trump announced in early March that the country will levy hefty tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum products from many of its major trade partners, including China, a step that analysts said could lead to a trade war between the world's top economic powers.

Li said that a trade war does no good to either side, and no one will emerge as a winner.

If it is necessary to use the term “war”, it means the rules of trade are being violated, because trade is realized through negotiations, consultation and dialogue, Li said.

Last year, China-US trade was valued at more than \$580 billion, and Li said it was achieved using business rules and market principles.

He said China does not want to see a large trade surplus with other countries, including the US. “What we want to see is an overall trade balance; otherwise, this kind of trade would not be sustainable.”

On March 20, Li also said he is ready to consider attending the China-Japan-Republic of Korea leaders' meeting and making his first official visit to Japan in the first half of this year amid the “sustained momentum” of improving China-Japan relations.

Bilateral ties are warming up again, but the nations also need to watch for any possible return of a chill, Li said.

The last visit to Japan by a Chinese premier was made by then-premier Wen Jiabao in 2011 to attend the Fourth China-Japan-ROK leaders' meeting and visit earthquake-hit areas. (China Daily) ■



Premier Li Keqiang, vice premiers Han Zheng, Sun Chunlan, Hu Chunhua and Liu He attend a press conference after the conclusion of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 20. Hou Yu

Foreign Minister meets the press

Foreign Minister Wang Yi introduced China's foreign policy to the press

On March 8, Foreign Minister Wang Yi responded to questions on China's foreign policy and international relations at a press conference on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress.

Major-country diplomacy

In his report to the 19th CPC National Congress, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Xi Jinping emphasized that the CPC will strive for both the well-being of the Chinese people and human progress. To make new and greater contributions to humanity is

our Party's abiding mission.

A committed and responsible China will adopt a more visionary foreign policy. While securing an enabling environment for its own development, China will be concerned with the welfare of humanity and partner with other countries to build a community with a shared future. Our vision is to forge a new type of international relations that features mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation and to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

We will also have a broader mind. No matter what stage of development the country reaches, China will stand for the equality of all countries, big or small, and will respect differ-



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (2nd L, back) takes questions on China's foreign policies and foreign relations at a press conference on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 8. *Li Xin*

ent civilizations and systems. China will put the greater good before its self-interest, and oppose the practice of the strong bullying the weak. China will stand up for small and weak countries, and help less developed countries achieve better growth.

We will also play a more active role. China will strive to meet growing international expectations and approach global governance on the basis of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. China will be more active in helping to reform and improve the global governance system, find more constructive ways to settle regional and international issues by political means, and forge more effective partnerships to address various global challenges.

An ancient Chinese classic teaches that “when justice prevails, the world will be one community.” We are determined to uphold our country’s sovereignty and dignity. We are determined to be on the side of international justice and human progress. We are determined to build world peace, contribute to global prosperity and uphold the international order.

Head-of-State diplomacy

Head-of-State diplomacy, as the highest form of State-to-State interaction, plays a pivotal role and is of irreplaceable strategic value. Since 2012, President Xi Jinping has been the chief architect of China’s distinctive major-country diplomacy. He was personally involved in the planning and conduct of head-of-State diplomacy, which by all accounts has been

A committed and responsible China will adopt a more visionary foreign policy.

brilliant. To date, President Xi has visited 57 countries in different parts of the world and received more than 110 foreign heads of State. These important visits and meetings go a long way toward deepening the world’s understanding of China, enhancing China’s profile and influence, and facilitating the solution of many global problems. President Xi’s leadership and charisma has earned him—and his country—many friends among foreign leaders who represent a diverse range of cultures and social systems.

In the coming year, President Xi will host four diplomatic events, and he will also attend the BRICS Summit in South Africa, the APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting in Papua New Guinea and the G20 Summit in Argentina. We believe that President Xi’s personal diplomacy will make a positive and responsible contribution to the well-being of his people, the interests of China and the welfare of the world. It will write a new chapter of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road is a transparent initiative launched by China. It follows the “golden rule” of extensive consultation,

joint contribution and shared benefits. Belt and Road cooperation aims to be equal-footed, inclusive and beneficial to all. The planning and implementation of Belt and Road projects have been discussed by the participants in the open. No country is dominating the process; all parties have an equal say. There is no back-room deal; everything is transparent. There is no “winner takes all”; every project delivers win-win results.

As a global public good, the Belt and Road Initiative of course abides by international rules. As a platform for international cooperation, it naturally follows market principles. The joint communiqué of last year’s forum committed to this and emphasized the importance of the economic, social, fiscal and environmental sustainability of projects. We sincerely ask for ideas from all parties, so that we will together make a success of the Belt and Road Initiative. Our goal is not only to strengthen the physical connectivity of infrastructure, but also to improve the institutional connectivity of policies, rules and standards. Belt and Road projects must be high-standard as well as results-oriented, high-quality as well as economically viable and beneficial to the world as well as to China.

Contribution to global development

For decades, the West has made all kinds of assessments and predictions about China. To some Westerners, China is either “collapsing” or “threatening.” As China continues to grow, the first theory has collapsed and become an international laughing stock. Meanwhile, proponents of the second theory have conjured up new versions, which find dwindling support because facts speak louder than words.

What are the facts? For years, China has been the leading engine of global growth. At more than 30 percent, China’s annual contribution is bigger than that of America, Japan and the eurozone combined. China accounts for more than 70 percent of poverty reduction worldwide, a marvel of human history. As the largest source of peacekeeping personnel among the permanent members of the Security Council and the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, China is bearing a weighty responsibility for maintaining world peace. Not to mention that in the last five years, with its Belt and Road Initiative and other major proposals, China has come to the fore in championing global governance, free trade and an open global economy.

From these facts, those who do not have bias or practice double standards will see in China not a threat, but plenty of opportunities. It’s time the “China threat theory” was laid to rest.

China-Russia partnership

We have great confidence in the future of China-Russia relations. Our confidence comes from the strong friendship and trust between our presidents, which is fundamental to the further growth of our relationship. It also comes from the deepening of our cooperation in so many fields, our firm support for each other’s core interests, our close coordination on international affairs and the growing exchanges between our two societies. In short, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is as unshakable as a mountain. I ask you to convey this to our friends in Russia: the sky

In the last five years, with its Belt and Road Initiative and other major proposals, China has come to the fore in championing global governance, free trade and an open global economy.

is the limit for Sino-Russian cooperation, and we must continue to make the relationship even better than it already is.

China-US trade

China and the US agree that we share broad interests and important responsibilities for global peace, stability and prosperity. Our two countries are to carry out broad cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit, manage our differences on the basis of mutual respect, deepen mutual understanding and friendship between our people, and work together to address major regional and global challenges. We ought to work for the sustained, healthy and steady growth of our relations.

As for our trade frictions, history teaches that a trade war is never the right solution. In a globalized world, it is particularly unhelpful, as it will harm the initiator as well as the target country. In the event of a trade war, China will make a justified and necessary response. The bottom line is, as the world's largest economies, China's and America's interests are deeply entwined. We must bear in mind not just the interests of our own people, but also the well-being of the world. When all is said and done, we hope China and America will have a calm and constructive dialogue as equals, and find a win-win solution.

China-Africa cooperation

In our new endeavor to build a global community with a shared future, Africa is an indispensable partner. China welcomes our African brothers and sisters to continue their ride on China's fast train of development. The Forum on China-

Africa Cooperation summit scheduled for September will bring together Chinese and African leaders again, 12 years after their last gathering in Beijing. They will discuss China-Africa cooperation in the new era and focus on jointly advancing the Belt and Road Initiative and turning China and Africa into a community with a shared future. By aligning the Belt and Road Initiative with the UN's 2030 Agenda, the AU's Agenda 2063 and the development strategies of individual African countries, we will give wings to China-Africa cooperation to help it soar to greater heights.

China-EU ties

Global governance has emerged as a new dimension of such cooperation, China and the EU have a joint responsibility to safeguard the global free trade system, and negotiation needs to be expedited to conclude a China-EU investment agreement.

There are also some disagreements between China and the EU. But both sides have realized the need to put oneself in the other's shoes and to be more open, tolerant and understanding of each other. China has always appreciated the importance of Europe. We support European integration and have confidence in Europe's future. Given all the uncertainty around us, China is ready to partner with Europe to provide more stability and make the world a better place.

No outdated mindset

It seems there is never a shortage of headline-grabbing ideas. They are like the sea foam in the Pacific or Indian Ocean: they may get some attention, but soon will dissipate. Contrary to the claim made by some academics and media outlets that the "Indo-Pacific strategy" [pursued by the US, Japan, India and Australia] aims to contain China, the four countries' official position is that it targets no one. I hope they mean what they say and their action will match their rhetoric. Nowadays, stoking a new Cold War is out of sync with the times and inciting confrontation will find no market. (Beijing Review) ■



Photo taken on March 31 shows the Boao International Conference Center in Boao, South China's Hainan Province. The Boao Forum for Asia 2018 Annual Conference was held in Boao on April 8-11. VCG

Chinese judiciary maintains high pressure against graft



The second plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 9. Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court Zhou Qiang (R) shakes hand with Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate Cao Jianming. *Du Yang*

China's judicial and procuratorial organs have maintained high pressure against graft, as the numbers of both investigated public servants and convicted high-ranking officials set records.

At a plenary meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 9, Chief Justice Zhou Qiang and Procurator-General Cao Jianming delivered work reports on the Supreme People's Court (SPC) and the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) respectively, highlighting the anti-graft campaign progress over the past five years.

Procurators investigated 254,419 people for suspected involvement in duty-related crimes from 2013 to 2017, up 16.4 percent compared with the previous five years, Cao said in the SPP report.

Losses of over 55.3 billion yuan (\$8.7 billion) were recovered from the concluded cases, he said.

Among the investigated, 120 are former officials at the provincial and ministerial level or above. Prosecution proceedings were launched against 105 of them, said Cao.

Graft cases involving 101 former officials at the provincial and ministerial level or above were concluded from 2013 to 2017, Zhou said in the SPC report.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress held in November 2012, China has intensified measures to prevent and fight corruption, including disciplinary inspections and supervisory reform.

Chinese courts concluded 195,000 graft cases during the period, implicating 263,000 individuals. A total of 13,000 people were convicted of offering bribes, the report read.

The case of Yang Xiuzhu, who was number one on the list of China's top 100 fugitives in an Interpol Red Notice, was heard during the period, said the chief justice.

Yang, former vice mayor of Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, fled China in 2003 and surrendered to police in November 2016. She was sentenced to eight years in jail for embezzlement and taking bribes in October 2017.

Chinese courts also investigated and punished 3,338 court staff members for abusing judicial and enforcement power. Cases involving 531 of them were transferred to the judicial organ.

"Drawing a profound lesson from the case of Xi Xiaoming, we resolutely punished judicial corruption with zero-tolerance," Zhou said.

Xi Xiaoming, former SPC vice president, was sentenced to life in prison for accepting bribes worth over 100 million yuan in 2017.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress held in November 2012, China has intensified measures to prevent and fight corruption, including disciplinary inspections and supervisory reform.

Supervisory commissions at the provincial, prefectural and county levels have been formed to supervise all who exercise public power. The national supervisory commission is established at the first session of the 13th NPC.

Zhang Weiguo, an NPC deputy, said the record high number of convictions, including cases of those former high-ranking officials, have shown China's zero-tolerance for graft.

"Judging from the anti-corruption achievements over the past five years, I am confident that we can secure an overwhelming victory against graft under the leadership of the CPC," he said. (Xinhua) ■

China's legislatures to improve supervision on expenditure budget, policy

A guideline issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee has outlined how Chinese legislatures' review and supervision concerning expenditure budget and relevant policies will be enhanced.

The extension is aimed at strengthening and improving the legislatures' review and supervision on budget in accordance with the law and is an important measure to establish and perfect the budget review and supervision system with Chinese characteristics, it said.

"By strengthening the people's congresses' supervision over expenditure budget and policies, the guiding and constraining effects of policies on relevant budgets will be enhanced," the guideline said, adding that relevant measures would also help ensure that the CPC Central Committee's major principles, policies and decisions are better implemented with budgetary arrangements and policies.

It said that in the past, the focus on government budget review and management and legislatures' review and supervision was the size of deficit and balance of budgeted revenue and expenditure, which did not pay enough attention to expenditure budget, policies, and the efficiency of fiscal fund and policies.

The document called for adherence to the centralized and unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee.

It called for focusing on and serving the overall development of the Party and nation and promoting supply-side structural reform while carrying out review and supervision over expenditure budget and policies, so that fiscal budget and policies could better serve the central work of the Party and nation.

It stressed "a people-centered approach, regarding people's aspirations for a better life as the goal, promoting expenditure budget and policies, and ensuring and improving people's wellbeing."

The document said that carrying out budget review and supervision should strictly follow the laws, including the Constitution, the Budget Law and a supervision law.

People involved should focus on solving problems and implementing major principles, policies, decisions and plans of the CPC Central Committee, the document said.

The document called for strengthening review and supervision over expenditure budget and policies based on public concerns and insisting on development with both innovative and down-to-earth manners.

According to the guideline, "the supervision should cover the total amount and structure of the budgets to make sure that the budgets conform with the annual economic and so-

Carrying out budget review and supervision should strictly follow the laws, including the Constitution, the Budget Law and a supervision law.

cial development targets set by the CPC Central Committee, the general requirements for macro-regulation of the country, relevant plans for national economy and social development, and mid-term fiscal plans."

The supervision over key expenditures and major investment projects, budgets of various Party and governmental departments, and the implementation of transfer payment budgets and policies will be intensified to ensure that relevant arrangements in the CPC Central Committee's major principles, policies and decisions are properly carried out, the document said.

The legislators will also enhance scrutiny of government debts, according to the guideline.

"Constraints over local governments' budgets will be made more binding," it said, noting that "disorderly use of debt financing for construction will be resolutely stopped and the governments' bond issuance practices will be standardized."

The National People's Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee, as well as people's congresses at various levels and their standing committees, should attentively implement the CPC Central Committee's major principles, policies and decisions, fully hear opinion and suggestions, and conduct in-depth research, according to the document.

They should explore ways of organizing investigation on major issues or specific problems and carrying out special review on budget, and promote the implementation of resolutions on budget and final account by people's congresses and their standing committees, it said.

They were also asked to hear reports on major fiscal and taxation policies in a timely manner and promote supervision on budget via the Internet.

All Party committees should strengthen their leadership over the work.

The NPC and its Standing Committee, as well as people's congresses at various levels and their standing committees, should strengthen their review and supervision on expenditure budget and policies, while governments at all levels should actively accept supervision by people's congresses and their standing committees at the same level, it said. (Xinhua) ■

Chinese yuan ready for greater global role

As China plans to further open up its market and promote free global trade and investment, the yuan is expected to play a greater global role.

China has done most of what it takes to pave the way for expanded usage of yuan globally, central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan told a press conference on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 9.

Zhou estimated the drive will make further progress after China gradually makes its capital account convertible and ease other restrictions.

Chinese yuan's globalization journey generally started from piloting RMB settlement in cross-border trade in 2009 and picked up pace in 2016 when the IMF included the yuan in the basket of currencies that make up the Special Drawing Right, an alternative reserve asset to the dollar.

China has inked bilateral currency swap agreements with over 30 countries and regions since late 2008 to facilitate cross-border trade and investment.

The internationalization of the yuan had slowed down amid depreciation pressure since August 2015, when the People's Bank of China (PBOC) reformed the yuan's midpoint rate determination mechanism, but momentum picked up in 2017 with a stronger-than-expected yuan.

Data from international financial transaction agency SWIFT showed that about 1.66 percent of global payments processed in January were denominated in yuan, edging up slightly from the previous month but still lower than a record high of over 2 percent.

There have been signs that international institutions are warming to the Chinese currency.

In January, Pakistan's central bank adopted the yuan as a currency for trade with China. Central banks in European countries including France and Germany are including the yuan in their forex reserve mix.

MSCI's addition of Chinese mainland shares into its emerging market index, and connect programs between stock exchanges as well as bond markets in the mainland and Hong Kong, help international investors trade mainland assets. Crude oil futures in Shanghai will support yuan use in commodity pricing.

The Belt and Road Initiative will be a powerful force pushing the yuan to global stage since it boosts cross-border use of yuan, according to Cao Yuanzheng, chairman of BOCI Research.

To encourage use of yuan for cross-border trade and investment via the B&R Initiative, the PBOC decided in January that income from investment, including profits and dividends, of foreign-funded companies could be transferred abroad freely via a cross-border yuan settlement scheme.

A survey by the Bank of China showed rising confidence

overseas in the yuan over expectations of China's bolder opening-up in its financial sector. About 60 percent of the surveyed 3,000-plus overseas firms and financial institutions mulls using yuan or increasing its usage.

The use of yuan on digital platforms has been growing fast as Chinese mobile payment platforms like Alibaba's Alipay and Tencent's WeChat Pay keep promoting a cashless society, according to a SWIFIT report.

The building blocks for the internationalization of the currency are generally in place, and authorities plan to connect capital markets and other financial fields. But it will take time as the process of capital account convertibility will be carefully measured so as to prevent financial risks from undermining the economy, Zhou said.

The Chinese yuan's march on global markets will be a gradual process as it depends on the willingness of other countries on how much they would like to use the Chinese currency, Zhou added.

For foreign firms, it increasingly pays to use Chinese yuan, Cao pointed out. Using the yuan in trade and investment will make it easier and cheaper for foreign firms to do business with China, while including the yuan into investment portfolios will help optimize investment structure and return.

The rise of the yuan will bring about a more balanced and diverse international monetary mechanism and reduce risks from over reliance on one currency and geopolitical uncertainties, Cao added. (Xinhua) ■



Zhou Xiaochuan (C), governor of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), Yi Gang (R), deputy governor of the PBOC and Pan Gongsheng, deputy governor of the PBOC and head of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, attend a press conference on financial reform and development on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 9. Li Xin



Legislative efforts highlighted in promoting rule of law

A press conference on legislation work of the National People's Congress is held on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 12. *Li Xin*

A group of senior legislators shared their insights on the legislation work and promoting rule of law over the past five years on March 12.

Xu Anbiao, vice chairman of Commission for Legislative Affairs of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, highlighted the role of legislation in providing a legal basis for reforms.

"The NPC had issued 21 authorization and reform decisions to support reforms on pilot free trade zones, government review system, rural collective land ownership, financial management and the judicial system," said Xu, at a press conference held on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th NPC.

"It was unprecedented to see 95 laws coordinately revised in 15 batches to correct the inconsistency between existing laws and reform requirements," he said.

Over the last five years, the 12th NPC and its Standing

The NPC Standing Committee work report highlighted the legislature's 'heavy responsibilities in building China into a socialist country of rule of law.'

Committee have enacted 25 laws, revised 127 laws, passed 46 decisions on legal questions and other major issues and issued nine legal interpretations, according to a work report submitted to the NPC on March 11.

"Making authorization decisions is a type of legislation, which is to ensure that all reforms have a legal basis," said

Uzhitu, vice chairman of the 12th NPC Financial and Economic Affairs Committee.

Uzhitu explained that NPC special committees helped with researching and drawing up decisions, as well as evaluating their progress and preparing for future revisions of relevant laws.

“We must tailor legislation to meet the needs of reform and development, ensuring reform is advanced under the rule of law and the rule of law is improved through reform,” said the work report.

Xu also briefed on the implementation of the recording and review system on normative documents in accordance with the Constitution.

The 12th NPC Standing Committee examined 1,527 review suggestions from citizens and organizations, said Xu, adding that 92.5 percent of the suggestions were on judicial interpretations.

If any reviewed document was found to be in conflict with the law, its formulating body was urged to make corrections

as necessary.

“In most cases, the formulating body would swiftly correct the flawed document during the NPC review, thanks to China’s political system, which has a strong central leadership,” Xu said.

Wang Chaoying, another vice-chairperson of Commission for Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee, talked about the legislative efforts to protect courts from administrative interference.

A revision to the Administrative Procedure Law offered courts jurisdiction in cross-regional administrative cases, according to Wang.

The NPC Standing Committee work report highlighted the legislature’s “heavy responsibilities in building China into a socialist country of rule of law.”

The most recent move made by the NPC to promote the rule of law was an amendment to the Constitution adopted on March 11. (Xinhua) ■

China mulls new law to promote, protect foreign investment: Spokesperson

Chinese lawmakers are planning to combine the country’s three foreign investment laws and work on a new basic law to promote and protect foreign investment, a spokesperson for the annual session of China’s top legislature said.

Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the first session of the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC), revealed the move at a press conference prior to the yearly meeting.

The new legislation will stick to policies of high-standard liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment, and significantly ease market access for foreign companies, Zhang said.

It will create a transparent, stable and predictable business environment for foreign investors and protect their rights and interests, ensuring that they enjoy national treatment and a fair market, he said.

Chinese leadership has pledged at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China last October that “China will not close its door to the world, and it will only become more and more open.”

The lawmakers are planning to introduce or modify more than 20 laws this year, including compiling the individual books of a civil code and formulating laws on specific taxes, according to Zhang.

A five-year legislative plan for the 13th NPC Standing Committee is also underway, which will be formulated on the basis of extensive consultation and thorough study, he said. (Xinhua) ■



Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the first session of the 13th National People’s Congress, arrives to attend a press conference on the NPC session at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 4. Han Haidan



Journalists scramble to interview deputies to the 13th National People's Congress before the opening meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 5. VCG

China's lawmakers debut in 'passage interview'

A new style of interview is quickly gaining popularity at China's annual political meetings, known as the "Two Sessions."

In a move to provide journalists with more chances to interview NPC deputies, this year's meeting introduced "passage interviews" featuring a wide range of deputies.

The live-broadcast group interviews take place on a passageway leading toward the main hall of the Great Hall of the People, which was previously limited to ministers' interviews only.

Chinese tech entrepreneur Ma Huateng, or Pony Ma, was the first among 10 deputies introduced at the first "passage interview" of the first session of the 13th National People's

The live-broadcast group interviews take place on a passageway leading toward the main hall of the Great Hall of the People, which was previously limited to ministers' interviews only.

Congress (NPC).

“Our goal is to build a digital China, a country with strong cyber technology,” said Ma, founder and chairman of Tencent, during the interview at the Great Hall of the People on March 5.

Ma, who came to Shenzhen in 1984, said he is a real witness and beneficiary of the reform and opening up policy.

Ma said China’s reform and opening up drive, which marks its 40th anniversary this year, has been a miracle.

“If you look back in human history, there has been no other country that has lifted nearly 700 million people out of poverty in just 40 years,” he said.

Ma said that Shenzhen has developed from a small fishing village to a metropolis whose GDP exceeded 2.2 trillion yuan last year. Meanwhile, Tencent has developed from a company with only five members to one of the ten biggest internet companies in the world.

Notably, Ma said, the monthly global active users on the company’s messaging app WeChat have reached one billion.

“In 2015, I made the Internet Plus proposal, and in 2017 I proposed building a digital economy. This year, I bring a proposal on building a digital China,” said Ma.

“Internet Plus was the method, digital economy is the result, and our goal is to finally build a digital China,” he added.

Female astronaut Wang Yaping, Mayor of east China’s Hangzhou City Xu Liyi, and Chairman of SAIC Motor Corporation Limited (SAIC Motor) Chen Hong were among the first group of deputies invited to answer questions from the press.

Wang Yaping said giving a televised science lesson from space to Chinese students in 2013 was an unforgettable moment. Not only had she fulfilled her dream, but she also inspired many.

“After I came back from my mission, I received letters from many children who said they wished to become astronauts as well. It made me feel proud and happy,” she said.

Xu Liyi said the city government of Hangzhou, the host of the G20 summit in 2016, will further simplify affair-handling procedures for enterprises and individuals.

Gong Baoxiong, Party secretary of Liangjiahe village of Yanchuan County in northwest China’s Shaanxi Province, spoke about the development of his village during the past five years.

“We received over one million tourists last year, and I hereby invite more people to visit our village,” Gong said.

A total of 10 questions were raised and the interview lasted about 40 minutes. The group interview was broadcast live on state television and various portals. (Xinhua) ■



Ma Huateng (R), Wang Yaping (C) and Xu Liyi, deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress, receive an interview before the opening meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 5. *Jin Liwang*



Guo Fenglian, Gong Baoxiong, Yang Changqin and Zuo Xiangyun (R to L), deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress, receive an interview before the opening meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 5. *VCG*



Chen Hong, Wang Jianqing and Guo Rui (R to L), deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress, receive an interview before the opening meeting of the first session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 5. *Gao Jie*

89-year-old Shen Jilan, China's longest-serving lawmaker

By Lyu Qiuping and Huo Yao



According to China's Electoral Law, all citizens aged 18 or above are eligible to be NPC deputies. There are no upper limits. Shen Jilan has been elected to the congress 13 times in a row.

Shen Jilan (2nd L) and other deputies to the 13th National People's Congress from Shanxi Province arrive in Beijing on March 2. VCG

Shen Jilan stands out among nearly 3,000 National People's Congress (NPC) deputies as the only one to serve at all previous 12 NPCs since 1954. She started out at 25 and turns 89 this December.

According to China's Electoral Law, all citizens aged 18 or above are eligible to be NPC deputies. There are no upper limits. Shen has been elected to the congress 13 times in a row.

She believes herself lucky as she lives long enough to witness China's marching towards a moderately prosperous society by 2020. Most people of her generation are not so fortunate.

Shen is from a remote village in the mountains of Taihang, a revolutionary base of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in north China's Shanxi Province.

It was she who proposed the clause on "equal pay for equal work" between men and women, which was written into the first Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1954.

The first session of the 13th NPC on March 11 adopted a constitutional amendment, the fifth revision since the current Constitution was formulated in 1982. The latest amendment incorporates major theoretical achievements, principles and policies adopted at the 19th CPC National Congress, particularly Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

"The revision, a huge State affair to adapt the fundamental law for the new era, has come through the demands of development and the people," said Shen.

During an NPC session, deputies submit proposals and suggestions as well as review and vote on legal documents and personnel changes.

Role model for women's liberation

Shen married a soldier from the village of Xigou, Pingshun County, when she was 17 years old.

It was a time when many women still had "lotus feet," the

former custom of foot binding. Her mother-in-law kept telling her to stay at home. Only men worked on the land.

“Being confined to the house yard was killing me,” she recalled.

In the village with mostly barren land, villagers struggled to survive. In 1951, two years after founding of the PRC, the village formed a cooperative to expand farming to make ends meet. Li Shunda, head of the co-op, turned to women for farming.

Shen was appointed deputy head of the cooperative and managed to mobilize women through door-to-door visits and persuasion, only to find they would not get the same pay as men.

“Men got 10 work points a day, but we only got a maximum of five points no matter how much work we did.”

The work point was a labor pay system during China’s planned economy, in which grain and other materials were allocated to farmers based on the work points they earned on the collective land.

To prove that women and men should be equally treated, Shen organized a manuring contest. Women won as many men paused to smoke. As a result, Shen and other women won equal pay.

Shen gained national fame in 1953 due to media coverage of the village co-op. As a role model for women’s liberation, Shen attended the World Congress of Women in Copenhagen the same year. It was the first and only time that Shen wore a qipao, a traditional one-piece dress that is usually high-collared and a tight fit.

“The slim dress held back my steps. It is not suitable for farmers like me,” she recalls. “But I was told to wear it as courtesy because we represented China.”

Elected as a deputy to NPC, she attended the first session of the First NPC in 1954. It was during the session that the first Constitution was passed, legitimizing “equal pay for equal work” as she had proposed.

Among the 1,226 deputies, 147 were women, accounting for less than 12 percent. The percentage has doubled this year, with 742 women in the lineup of the 13th NPC.

New identities

After serving as the head of the provincial women’s federation for 10 years, Shen returned to the village in 1983.

“I was nobody but a farmer. My fellow villagers needed me,” she recalled.

While China, under the reform and opening-up drive since 1978, was in transition from the planned economy to a market economy, Shen grew a new identity as an entrepreneur, enabling her to keep voters’ trust.

She opened a collectively-owned ferroalloy plant with bank loan, the first enterprise in her village, in 1985. A walnut oil factory and a cannery were later built.

Villagers’ efforts in farming and forestation led by Shen and other cadres have transformed Xigou into a tourist attraction with more than 1,300 hectares of trees.

Shen now volunteers to receive tourists, telling stories of the CPC revolution in the Taihang mountains as well as her own remarkable tale. She also keeps on farming, which she says keeps her healthy.

“The countryside develops slower than the cities, but prog-



Shen Jilan signs in as she attends the first session of the 1st National People’s Congress in September 1954. *Xinhua*

Shen Jilan has rendered hundreds of proposals and suggestions to the NPC in topics like rural development, education and anti-corruption.

ress never stops,” said Shen, adding she is confident that her county will be free of poverty by 2020.

In 2008, she was selected as a carrier in the Beijing Olympics torch relay at the age of 79. “I got up at 5:30 a.m. every day for exercise and imitated the relaying pose from television,” she recalled.

Over the past 60-plus years as an NPC deputy, Shen has been in the best position to witness the profound changes in China.

“I rode a donkey, then a truck and then a train to arrive in Beijing for the 1954 meeting, spending four days. But today, it only took three hours by high-speed train,” she says.

Shen has rendered hundreds of proposals and suggestions to the NPC in topics like rural development, education and anti-corruption.

Not all her comments are appreciated. In 2013, her support for stringent internet regulation drew wide controversy.

“Maybe I’m too old to follow the trends among the young, but that’s the charm of our NPC system, having multiple voices heard,” she says, adding that she watches TV news every day to keep up.

Her suggestions this year are about poverty alleviation, including rural roads and tailored measures to help lift people out of poverty.

She is delighted to see new, young faces among deputies, evoking her memories of attending her first NPC session over six decades ago.

“Deputies are elected by the people and should speak for them,” she says. (Xinhua) ■

Fresh faces at China's top legislature

Having swapped his overalls for a suit and tie, Qi Songyu boarded a train to Beijing.

Qi, an automaker technician, is a new deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), China's national legislature.

The 13th NPC is holding its first session in Beijing. Of the nearly 3,000 deputies, three out of four are new faces.

More than 15 percent of the deputies are workers and farmers, up 2.28 percentage points from the previous NPC. Professionals number 613, with their share growing by 0.15 percentage point to 20.57 percent.

Qi, 44, is a maintenance worker from northeast China's Jilin Province, part of the country's old industrial base.

He won voters' heart as he converted a key-cutting machine into a sharpener to recycle the used blades, tools for auto electrode repair. The invention helps save 2.3 million yuan (\$363,000) every year for his State-owned employer, FAW Car Co., Ltd.

Qi submitted three suggestions to the session, including raising the wages of skilled workers. He said under the current salary system, workers are paid based on their posts.

"Workers' skills vary even if their posts are the same," said Qi, adding that a differentiated pay system should be introduced to encourage quality workmanship and innovation.

NPC deputies are members of the highest organ of State power in China and are elected by secret ballot at people's congresses of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities ahead of the NPC.

During an NPC session, deputies submit motions and suggestions as well as review and vote on legal documents and personnel changes.

Unlike legislators in the West who make a career of politics, NPC deputies work part-time and many of them are ordinary citizens, including workers, farmers, teachers, artists and even street cleaners.

Deputy Gao Xiangqiu is a farmer and entrepreneur from northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

She has organized 170 households to plant peppers and invited professionals for technical advice. The annual income per household increased by 20,000 yuan last year.

"I suggest the government offer policy support for bean farmers, as well as trial plantation of high-protein beans," she said.

With its vast tracts of fertile farmland, Heilongjiang is known as the country's "grain barn," with beans among its major products.

Many deputies proposed methods of developing agriculture as the country strives for rural revitalization, a concept proposed at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

A package of policies was unveiled in the first central document of the year to see a strong agricultural sector, a beautiful countryside and well-off farmers.

Duan Jun, one of the 45 migrant worker deputies, proposed

upgrading seats on slow trains so that migrant workers, who sit for long hours on slow trains, could have a comfortable journey.

Although spacious and comfortable high-speed trains have connected large parts of China, migrant workers with meager pay prefer slow trains as the ticket price is only about a quarter that of a second-class seat on a high-speed train traveling the same distance.

China has 286 million migrant workers.

Film director Jia Zhangke was born in north China's Shanxi Province, known as the country's "coal capital." Last year, he organized the first international film festival in Pingyao, a World Cultural Heritage site in central Shanxi.

"Many have identified Shanxi with coal, neglecting its history of thousands of years," said Jia, now a tourism ambassador for the province.

He suggested developing the cultural industry to detach Shanxi from traditional coal mining in order to fight overcapacity and pollution.

Another suggestion related to pollution reduction was proposed by Li Shufu.

Li, chairman of leading Chinese auto brand Geely, suggested more government support for clean energy vehicles as well as market access for methanol-fueled cars to reduce car exhaust.

While many parts of China are limiting cars for better air, Gesang Degyi has been thrilled to see more vehicles in her hometown in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

Gesang Degyi, 40, is a primary school teacher from the border county of Medog, where there was no asphalt road until 2013.

"I have witnessed the great changes over the past five years in my hometown, with transportation and school conditions greatly improved," she said. "My suggestion is about balanced development in border areas."

Gesang Degyi is one of 400-plus ethnic minority deputies to the 13th NPC and the only deputy of the Moinba minority, one of the smallest ethnic groups in China.

According to China's electoral law, NPC deputies should be elected in proportion to the population, urban and rural regions alike. A deputy might represent several hundreds of thousands of people.

However, each of the country's 55 ethnic minorities is entitled by law to have at least one deputy to the NPC.

Over the past five years, deputies to the 12th NPC submitted 2,366 motions and 41,353 suggestions, said Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the 12th NPC, on Sunday.

Hundreds of the motions have been adopted or are being deliberated, he said in a work report.

At the first session of the 13th NPC, new deputies have a chance to meet and discuss how they will fulfill their duties in the next five years.

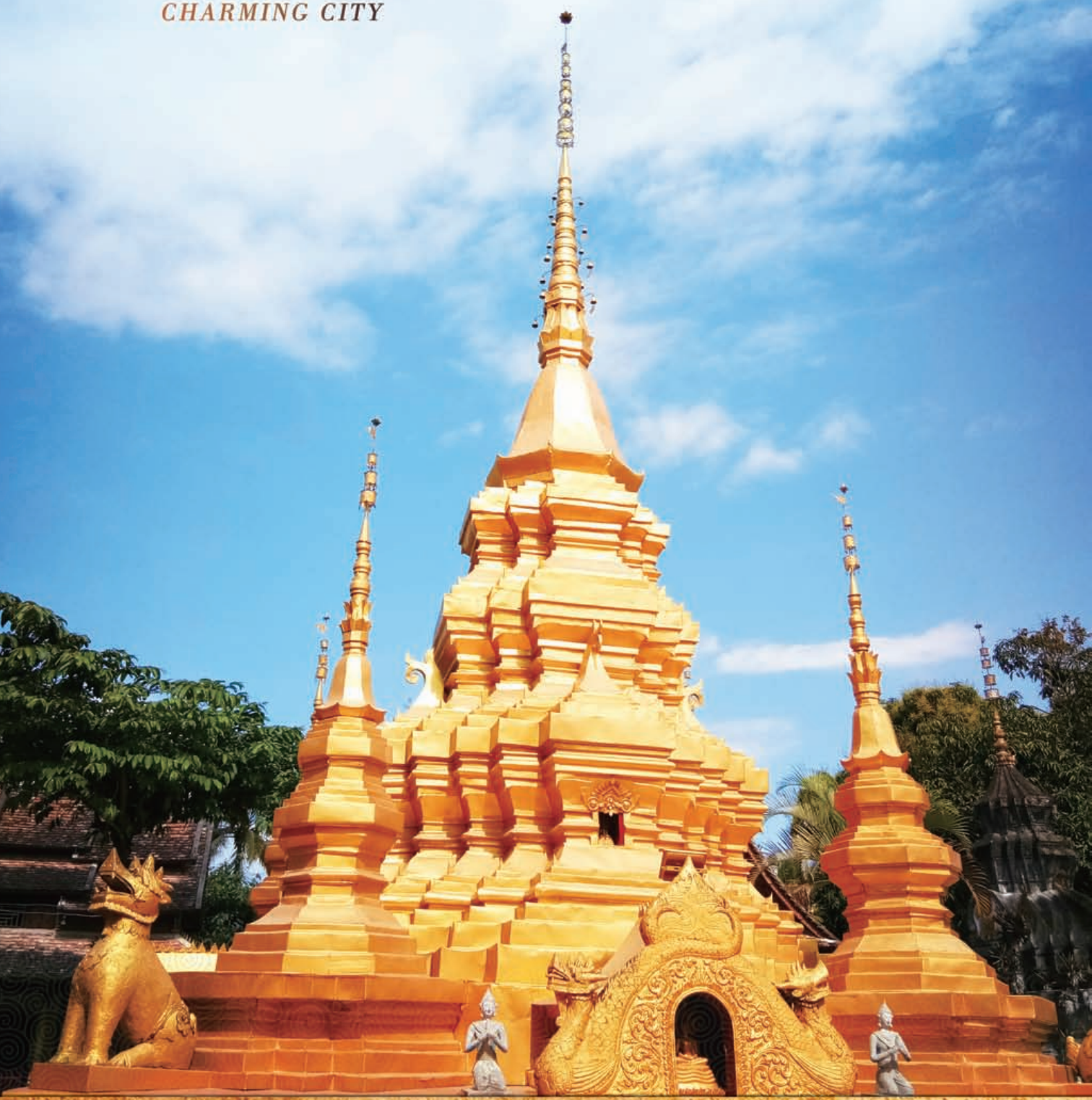
"An NPC deputy should speak for the people. I can feel the responsibility – it's huge but an honor," Gesang Degyi said. (Xinhua) ■

The first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) holds its closing meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 20. Some deputies to the 13th NPC, take a group photo in front of the Great Hall of the People. *Man Huiqiao*



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