

# NPC



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## 《中国人大》对外版

National People's Congress of China



# KEEP GOING

## WITH THE PURSUIT OF HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AND BETTER LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

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The second session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. VCG









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**Keep going  
President Xi stresses the importance  
of addressing key national issues**



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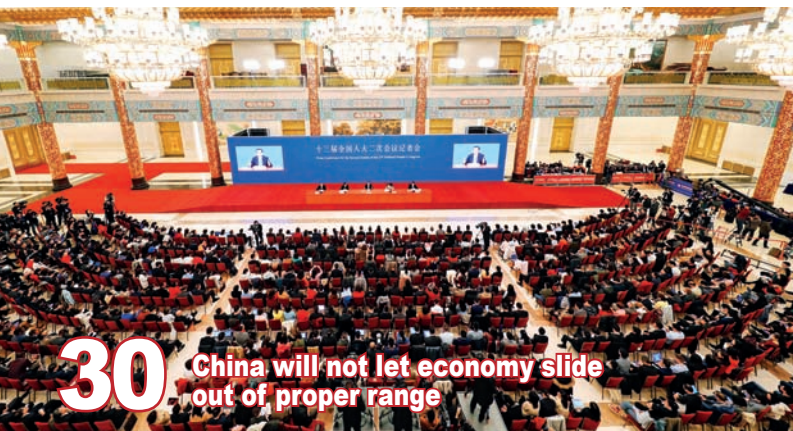
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COVER: The second session of the 13th National People's Congress convenes from March 5 to 15, 2019 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. GETTY IMAGES



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# Keep going

## President Xi stresses the importance of addressing key national issues

By Lan Xinzhen

During the annual sessions of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) and the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing, President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joined some panel discussions with NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members, listened to opinions and suggestions and delivered important speeches. His remarks, while instructing the work for 2019, further elaborated Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

### Cultural confidence

On March 4, Xi called on writers, artists and theorists to strengthen cultural confidence, serve the people with fine works and guide the public with high moral standards. He made the remarks at a joint panel discussion of political advisors from the culture, art and social sciences sectors attending the second session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee.

"A country, or a nation, cannot be devoid of soul," Xi said, adding that the mission of professionals in culture, literature, art, philosophy and social sciences is to nurture the roots and soul of the nation.

In recent years, these professionals have made notable achievements in improving the quality of their craft. China's cultural industry has grown consistently and become more competitive.

In addition, a number of quality books, TV programs and films have recently emerged which reflect people's voices, showcase Chinese wisdom and approach to resolving global issues, and are well received at home and abroad.

China's cultural exchange with foreign countries has de-



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

**China's cultural exchange with foreign countries has developed quickly, with China's cultural symbols no longer limited to traditional ones.**





veloped quickly, with China's cultural symbols no longer limited to traditional ones, such as kungfu or the Peking Opera. TV dramas that tell the stories of ordinary Chinese people have also helped global audiences better understand China. Such exchanges promote people-to-people communication and friendship between China and other countries.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The country has entered a new era. All professionals in culture, literature, art, philosophy and social sciences should keep pace with the times, bear the people-centered principle in mind and produce fine works that reflect reality and are conducive to solving real

problems, answering real questions and describing the big transformation China is undergoing.

### **Ecological preservation**

On March 5, Xi stressed efforts to maintain a strategic resolve in enhancing the building of an ecological civilization and to protect the country's beautiful scenery in the northern border areas.

Xi made the remarks during a panel deliberation with his fellow deputies from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on March 5, at the second session of the 13th NPC, the highest





President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins deliberation with deputies from Gansu Province at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 7. *Sheng Jiapeng*

organ of State power, where he also said the Party's theory on an ecological civilization has been constantly enriched and improved since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012.

Xi urged all localities and departments to earnestly implement the Party's plan and requirements for building an ecological civilization, pushing it to a new level.

Ecological civilization construction is also in line with the pursuit of high-quality development which refers to innovative, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development.

"In the construction of the Chinese economy in the phase from rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development, pollution control and environmental governance are two major tasks that must be accomplished," Xi said.

Economic data in 2018 showed that domestic demand has become the primary engine of growth, while the service industry made a significant contribution to the economy. Local governments must not relax environmental protection efforts due to difficulties in development that come from economic transformation and upgrading.

Tackling pollution was one of the three tough battles listed in the 2018 Government Work Report. Over the past year, China has made great progress in curbing pollution, with over 30 million tons of iron and steel capacity phased out and the average density of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, a major particle pollutant, visibly reduced.

This year's Government Work Report said China plans

## Local governments must not relax environmental protection efforts due to difficulties in development that come from economic transformation and upgrading.

to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by 3 percent in 2019, while making continuous efforts to reduce the average density of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in key locations such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta and the Fenhe-Weihe River Plain.

Xi underlined a resolute and effective fight to prevent and control pollution, saying prominent environmental issues the people are strongly concerned about must be properly addressed.

## Poverty alleviation

Perseverance is now crucial in the fight against poverty since there are only two years left for China to meet its goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2020.





President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, celebrates International Women's Day with female deputies when joining deliberation with deputies from central China's Henan Province at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 8. *Li Xueren*

"There should be no retreat until complete victory," said Xi while deliberating with deputies from northwest China's Gansu Province on March 7.

Xi emphasized "strong confidence, firm determination, all-around efforts and targeted measures to ensure the achievement of the poverty-elimination goal."

"Decisive progress has been made in the country's tough fight against poverty over the past years," Xi said. Since 1949, the CPC has led the Chinese people toward eradicating poverty down a path with Chinese characteristics. Economic growth has helped lift more than 700 million people out of poverty, making China the first and largest country to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals.

All-around poverty alleviation is a key condition for building a moderately prosperous society, one of the Two Centenary Goals.

However, along with poverty elimination, Xi warned that the task ahead remains arduous, as those still living in poverty are the worst stricken. He asked Party committees and governments at all levels to shoulder their responsibilities in the critical battle against poverty.

## Rural vitalization

During the panel deliberation of the Henan Province delegation on March 8, Xi called for more efforts to implement

the rural vitalization strategy with the chief goal of modernizing agriculture and rural areas.

Tremendous changes have taken place in China's economic and social development after more than 40 years of reform and opening-up. The Chinese economic aggregate is now ranked second in the world. However, the country's economic and social development is not yet balanced, with the manufacturing and service industries growing much faster than the agricultural sector, and urban areas developing much faster than rural areas, leading to a huge urban-rural gap.

In China, the rural population still accounts for quite a large proportion of the total population. The modernization of the whole country would be impossible without the modernization of agriculture, rural areas and farmers' lives. The Chinese Government has vigorously tried to promote the development of rural areas. For over a decade, the No.1 Central Document has focused on issues concerning agriculture, rural areas and farmers. At the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, the rural vitalization strategy was put forward and has since become an important guide for the CPC Central Committee and the Central Government in the work around agriculture, rural areas and farmers.

## Innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity

During the panel deliberation of the Fujian Province dele-





President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins deliberation with deputies from Fujian Province at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on March 10. *Li Xueren*

gation on March 10, Xi stressed the need to create a favorable development environment for innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity. He said China should seek momentum from reform and opening-up, unleash to the maximum the whole society's power for innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity, and keep improving the country's influence and competitiveness in a world which is undergoing profound changes. He emphasized the creation of favorable conditions for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and young people, and the establishment of an acceleration mechanism for hi-tech companies. He also urged solid implementation of policies and measures to encourage, guide and support the development of the private sector.

Since the 19th CPC National Congress, China has entered a new era where the economy has shifted from high-speed to high-quality growth, with hi-tech, high value-added, emerging and service industries becoming main growth drivers. Innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity hence have become important measures and tasks to advance the rapid development of new growth drivers.

Several years ago, the Chinese Government launched a campaign of mass innovation and entrepreneurship and vowed to change from "Made in China" to "Created in China." Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that in 2018, strategic emerging manufacturing and service industries grew rapidly, with the value-added of the hi-tech manufacturing industry increasing by 11.7 percent.

However, for a market with a population of 1.39 billion and a GDP of over 90 trillion yuan (\$13.39 trillion), China's innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity are still inadequate to play a decisive role in supporting the country's economic and social development. Therefore creating a favorable environment for them to facilitate their development still remains a priority of the government.

## National defense and military development

As Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Xi stressed that the set targets and tasks of national defense and military development must be fulfilled as scheduled. He made the remarks during a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed Police Force on March 12.

Xi said the entire armed forces must clearly understand the importance and urgency of implementing the 13th Five-Year Military Development Plan (2016-20), firm up their resolve, intensify their sense of mission, forge ahead with a pioneering spirit and make every effort to carry out the plan in time.

After the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC set the goal of winning modern informationized warfare, putting forward new thoughts and theories for national defense and military construction. Since 2015, it has also carried out bold and resolute reform based on the most fundamental goal of building





President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, meets with deputies from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and armed police before attending a plenary meeting of the delegation of the PLA and armed police at the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 12. *Li Gang*

## China will complete the basic modernization of national defense and the armed forces by 2035.

combat capability able to win.

According to the plan, China will achieve the second goal of the three strategic goals for national defense and military modernization construction, namely, completing military reform and having armed forces capable of informationized warfare by 2020. The PLA will also have finished the mechanization of all forces and made important progress in incorporating information and computer technology.

The plan also states that the five years from 2016 to 2020 will lay a solid foundation for the PLA to become a world-class military force. China will complete the basic modernization of national defense and the armed forces by 2035, which is the third of the three strategic goals for national defense and military modernization construction.

In 2014, Xi proposed the idea of cultural confidence. This concept, together with confidence in the socialist path, theory and system, constitutes the Four Matters of Confidence. In

2017, while delivering a report at the 19th National Congress of the CPC, Xi said that building stronger cultural confidence and helping socialist culture to flourish is an important task.

The 18th CPC National Congress put forward the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social and ecological advancement, while the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in October 2015 developed the vision of innovative, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development.

The CPC has set the goal of lifting all impoverished people in rural areas out of poverty by 2020, which was first raised by Xi in November 2015.

Xi proposed the rural vitalization strategy in the report to the 19th CPC National Congress, stating that issues relating to agriculture, rural areas and rural people are fundamental since they directly concern China's stability and people's well-being. Addressing these issues should have a central place on the work agenda of the Party.

After the 18th CPC National Congress, the Chinese Government launched a campaign of mass innovation and entrepreneurship, vowing to change "Made in China" to "Created in China." The report to the 19th CPC National Congress called for making China a country of innovators.

In May 2016, the Central Military Commission issued the 13th Five-Year Military Development Plan (2016-20), which is an overall strategy for military development under new circumstances. (Beijing Review) ■





The closing meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 15. *Huang Jingwen*

# NPC makes major accomplishments

Session ends with progress on nation's economic, social, judicial development

**T**he National People's Congress concluded its annual plenary session on March 15 after adopting the foreign investment law and a number of other key plans on the country's economic, social and judicial development.

President Xi Jinping and other leaders attended the

closing meeting of the second session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing. Xi signed a presidential decree to promulgate the foreign investment law, which will take effect on January 1, 2020.

"The newly adopted legislation is a fundamental law in lifting China toward a new stage of high-level opening-up





in the new era,” chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee Li Zhanshu said in his closing remarks at the closing meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC.

Li hailed the achievements made in the past year under the leadership of the Communist Party of China Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core.

He also called on legislators nationwide to better perform their duties and support the country in fulfilling the goal of building a moderately well-off society in an all-around way by 2020.

NPC figures show that national lawmakers have been more active in making legislative proposals.

During this year’s annual session, lawmakers filed 491 bills, up by 51 percent year-on-year. Among them, 487 are on legislation and four on supervision.

“Bills filed by deputies reflect the will of the people and bring together the wisdom of the people. It’s an important part of socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics,” the secretariat of the session said in a report delivered on March 14.

Those bills mainly focus on pushing forward high-quality growth, such as amending laws to better protect property rights and improve the business environment, supporting innovation and guarding against financial risks, better-pro-

tecting minors and caring for the elderly, promoting green development and the cultural sector, advancing social governance and safeguarding national security.

All motions will be handed over to NPC committees for further review and may be absorbed into the legislative or supervisory agenda of the NPC Standing Committee, according to the secretariat of the session.

On March 15, NPC deputies also approved resolutions on the Government Work Report and the work reports of the NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate.

Also approved were resolutions on reports on the national economic and social development plans, the central and local budgets and the resignation of NPC Standing Committee member Zhang Rongshun.

Zhang was appointed deputy director of the central government’s liaison office in the Macao Special Administrative Region in June. According to the Organic Law of the National People’s Congress, NPC Standing Committee members should not hold concurrent government posts. (China Daily – Xinhua) ■

## NPC deputies file 491 bills, 8,000 proposals at annual legislative session

Deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC) have filed **491** bills and **8,000** proposals to the secretariat of the second session of the 13th NPC.

The bills can be grouped into five categories in terms of the issues concerned: **reform and opening-up, people’s well-being, ecological civilization and green development, State safety and social management, cultural development**, according to Guo Zhenhua, an official with the secretariat.

The proposed legislative work includes making laws on big data, AI, autonomous driving, personal information protection, pre-school education, national parks, revising the Company Law, the Securities Law, the Anti-Money Laundering Law, among others.

The proposals mostly concern **risk control and prevention, poverty relief, environmental protection, financing for mid-and-small enterprises, rural infrastructure development**. (Xinhua)







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

# China sets growth, reform targets for 'crucial year'

China unveiled its growth and reform targets for 2019 on March 5, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and a "crucial year" in the country's endeavor to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020.

The world's largest developing economy set its new year GDP target at 6-6.5 percent, according to a government work report delivered at the opening of the second session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders attended

the opening meeting with nearly 3,000 NPC deputies gathering at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

## Appropriate range

The range target came after the Chinese economy outperformed the 2018 official projection of "around 6.5 percent" to expand 6.6 percent. China watchers observed that the new target is still within reasonable range and should be perceived in the right context.





Premier Li Keqiang delivers the Government Work Report during the opening meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5. Pang Xinglei

“A full analysis of developments in and outside China shows that in pursuing development this year, we will face a graver and more complicated environment as well as risks and challenges, foreseeable and otherwise, that are greater in number and size,” Premier Li Keqiang said while delivering the report.

The International Monetary Fund lowered its global economic growth projections for 2019 and 2020 in January, while maintaining China GDP growth forecast at 6.2 percent for the two years.

China set its 2019 consumer inflation target at around 3 percent, the surveyed urban unemployment rate at around 5.5 percent, and the registered urban jobless rate within 4.5 percent.

Li called the projected targets “ambitious but realistic,” as they “represent the country’s aim of promoting high-quality development, are in keeping with the current realities of China’s development, and are aligned with the goal of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects.”

China aims to double its 2010 GDP by 2020, and an average growth rate of about 6.2 percent in 2019 and 2020 is enough to achieve this end, according to Liu Shijin, vice chairman of the China Development Research Foundation.

A range target can offer policymakers more leeway for maneuver amid uncertainties, said Liu, a member of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the country’s top political advisory body.

In addition, the fixation on headline GDP overlooks deeper issues shaping the China growth debate, because the Chinese economy is in the midst of an extraordinary structural transformation – with a manufacturing-led producer model

giving way to an increasingly powerful services-led consumer model, noted Stephen Roach, senior fellow at Yale University’s Jackson Institute for Global Affairs.

## Goals within reach

The expected GDP growth and other goals are widely considered attainable thanks to the economy’s proven resilience and government’s powerful policy toolkit.

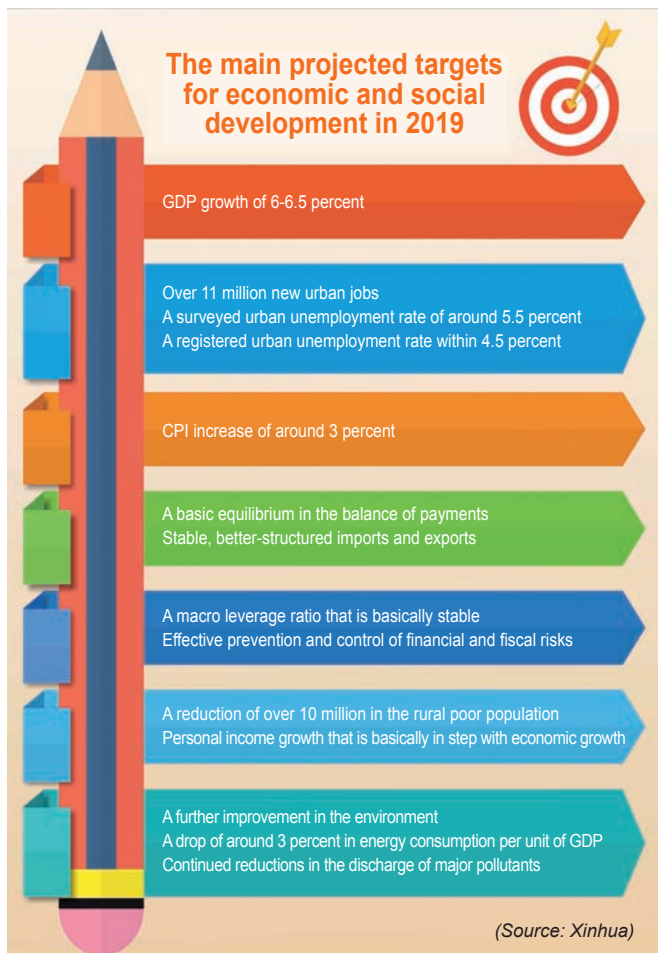
Li reiterated that China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development and has ample resilience, enormous potential, and great creativity to unleash. “The longing of our people for a better life is strong,” he said.

China will maintain a proactive fiscal policy stance this year, with a higher deficit-to-GDP ratio to leave policy space to address potential risks.

A prudent monetary policy will be eased or tightened to the “right degree” with focus on feeding the real economy.

The government will boost consumption via means such as steeper tax and fee cuts, and expand effective investment with increased spending on infrastructure.

Bigger roles are also expected from new growth drivers including industrial upgrading, development and application of state-of-the-art technologies and burgeoning entrepreneurship.







Xu Zhijun, Huawei's rotating CEO, introduces achievements of 5G technology during the release ceremony for world leading Internet scientific and technological achievements in Wuzhen, East China's Zhejiang Province, December 3, 2017. *Zheng Huansong*

“The Internet will be fully integrated with and transform industrial value chains, boosting resource allocation efficiency and serving the high-quality development of the real economy,” said Pony Ma, Tencent CEO and a national lawmaker.

Latest indicators such as growing credit demand and improving business confidence show that economic recovery is gathering momentum thanks to a raft of supportive policies.

## Commitment to reform

China will also step up reform and opening-up to improve market mechanisms and foster new strengths in international economic cooperation and competition, the report shows.

Reforms will be deepened on State-owned enterprises, fiscal, taxation, and financial systems, Li said.

For example, network ownership and operation in natural monopoly industries will be separated to make the competitive aspects of their operations fully market based.

Meanwhile, China will expand opening-up by diversifying exports markets and expanding imports, boosting foreign investment inflow and advancing the Belt and Road Initiative.

The government will further relax controls over market access, shorten the negative list for foreign investment and permit wholly foreign funded enterprises to operate in more sectors, Li said.

A new survey released last month by the American Chamber of Commerce in China (AmCham China) said that China remains a high priority market for the majority of companies, despite challenges.

“Substantial improvements in market access, intellectual property rights protection, regulatory transparency and even-handed enforcement are all cited by members as critical to their continued success,” said Tim Stratford, AmCham China chairman.

The annual NPC session passed the foreign investment law which was designed to attract more foreign investment and protect foreign investors' legitimate rights and interests.

“China's investment environment is all set to get better and better, which means more and more business opportunities for foreign companies in China are a sure thing,” Li said. (Xinhua) ■



Aerial photo taken on August 9, 2018 shows a photovoltaic power plant built above the fish pond in Yintu Township of Jinhu County, East China's Jiangsu Province. *Li Yuze*



# Major tasks for 2019: Government Work Report

Premier Li Keqiang delivered the government work report at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress that opened in Beijing on March 5.

Here are the major 2019 tasks from the report.

## 1. Continue to develop new and improved approaches to macro regulation and keep the main economic indicators within an appropriate range.

-- Reduce the current rate of 16 percent in manufacturing and other industries to 13 percent, and lower the rate in the transportation, construction, and other industries from 10 to 9 percent.

-- Reduce the tax burdens on and social insurance contributions of enterprises by nearly 2 trillion yuan.

-- 2.15 trillion yuan of special local government bonds will be issued, an 800 billion yuan increase on last year.

-- Use multiple channels to achieve stable and expanding employment.

## 2. Work to energize market entities and improve the business environment.

-- Lower electricity costs in manufacturing, and cut the average electricity price for general industrial and commercial businesses by another 10 percent.

-- Within two years, almost all expressway toll booths will be removed at provincial borders.

## 3. Continue to pursue innovation-driven development and foster new growth drivers.

-- Speed up efforts to pursue Internet Plus initiatives in all industries and sectors.

-- Average broadband service rates for small and medium enterprises will be lowered by another 15 percent, and average rates for mobile internet services will be further cut by more than 20 percent.

-- Implement preferential tax policies such as raising the VAT threshold from 30,000 to

100,000 yuan in monthly sales for small-scale taxpayers.

-- Establish a science and technology innovation board that will pilot an IPO registration system.

## 4. Stimulate the development of a robust domestic market and keep unlocking the potential of domestic demand.

-- Fully implement the revised Individual Income Tax Law.

-- Take significant steps to develop elderly care, especially community elderly care services.

-- Encourage private actors to run childcare and early childhood education agencies.

-- Continue preferential policies on the purchase of new-energy vehicles.

-- 800 billion yuan will be invested in railway construction, 1.8 trillion yuan will be invested in road construction and waterway projects.

## 5. Make solid progress in poverty alleviation and rural revitalization and move closer to completing the tasks of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

-- Move toward completion of the 13th Five-Year Plan's construction tasks for planned relocations of poor populations from inhospitable areas, and strengthen follow-up support.

-- Speed up reform and innovation in agricultural technologies, make a big push to develop a modern seed industry, implement programs to protect agricultural products with geographical indications, and advance the mechanization

of entire agricultural production processes.

-- Expand the use of practices proven successful through trials of rural land requisitions, marketing rural collective land for development purposes, and reforming the system of rural residential land.

## 6. Promote coordinated development across regions and improve the quality of new urbanization.

-- Facilitate Northeast China's full revitalization, central China's rise, and East China's trailblazing development.

-- Give priority to relieving Beijing of functions of nonessential to its role as the capital and on developing the Xiongan New Area according to high standards.

-- Developing the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

-- Elevate the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta to the status of national strategy.

## 7. Strengthen pollution prevention and control, enhance ecological improvement, and make big advances in green development.

-- Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions will be cut by 3 percent.

-- Achieve a 2-percent drop in both chemical oxygen demand and ammonia nitrogen emissions.

## 8. Deepen reforms in key sectors and speed up the improvement of market mechanisms.

-- Enterprises under all forms of ownership will be treated on an equal footing.

-- Prudently advance legislation on real estate tax.

-- Reform and improve the structure of the financial system, and develop private and community banks, to better serve the real economy.

## 9. Promote all-round opening-up and foster new strengths in international economic cooperation and competition.

-- Host the second China International Import Expo.

-- Shorten the negative list for foreign investment.

-- Expand the China(Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, step up the building of the China (Hainan) Pilot Free Trade Zone, and explore the opening of a free trade port with Chinese features.

-- Host the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

-- Continue to promote China-US trade negotiations.

## 10. Speed up the development of social programs to better ensure and improve living standards.

-- Central government spending on education will exceed one trillion yuan.

-- Raise the reimbursement rate from 50 to 60 percent.

-- Make sure we are ready for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, undertake detailed planning and preparatory work for the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Beijing, and host a successful Seventh World Military Games.

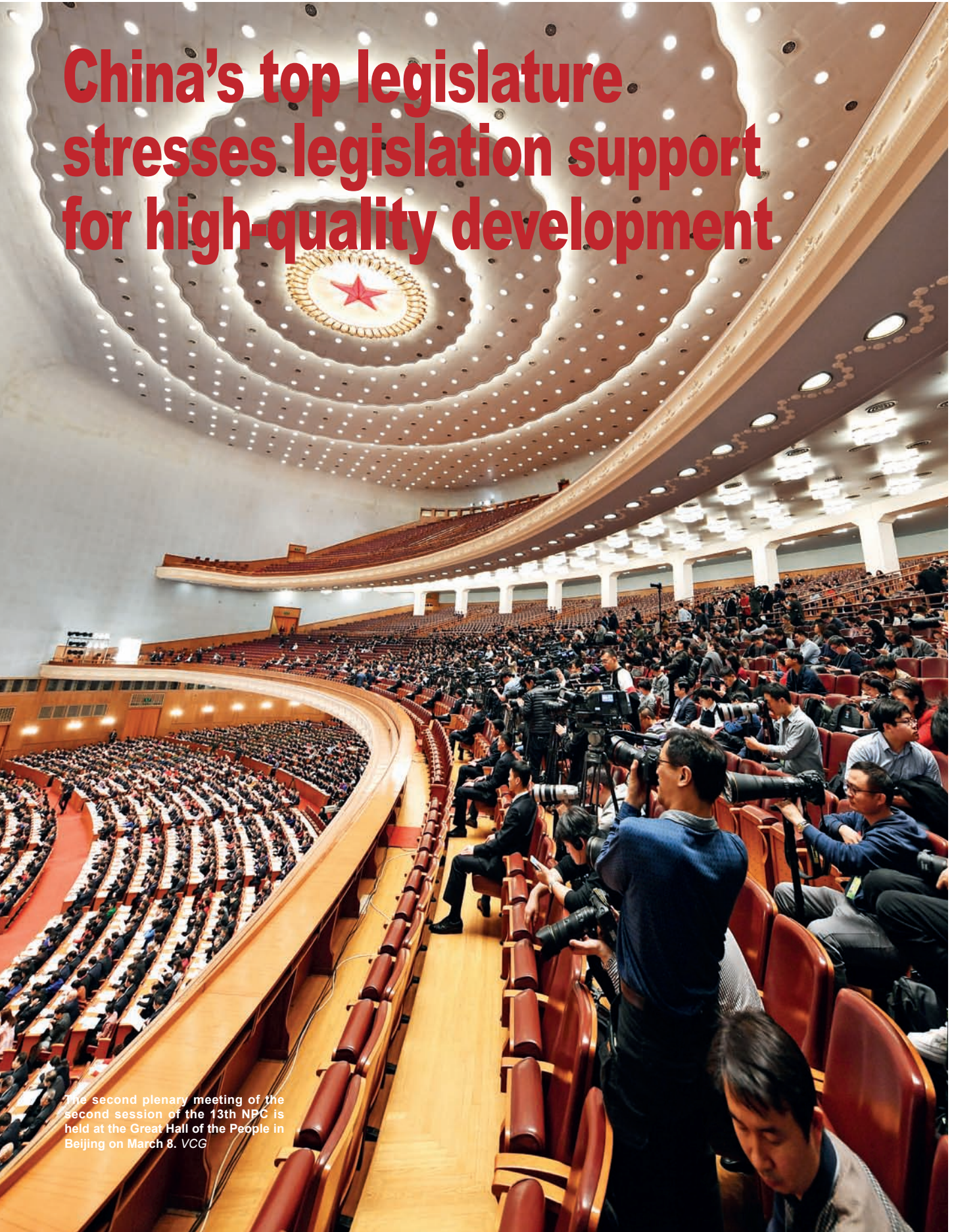
-- Intensify the special campaign to root out organized crime and local mafia.

(China Daily)



# China's top legislature stresses legislation support for high-quality development

The second plenary meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 8. VCG





**C**hina's top legislature on March 8 underscored efforts to provide the country's high-quality development with the backing and support of high-quality legislation in 2019.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) will move forward with formulating and revising urgently needed laws for deepening market-based reforms and expanding high-standard opening-up, said the committee's chairman Li Zhanshu when delivering a work report at the second session of the 13th NPC.

Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders including Li Keqiang, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji, Han Zheng and Wang Qishan attended the plenary meeting at the Great Hall of the People.

It also needs to expedite legislation in the domains of public wellbeing, national security, intellectual property rights protection, social governance, and ecological advancement, enforce the principle of law-based taxation, and improve relevant laws on State institutions, according to Li.

This year's legislation plan includes deliberation on the Civil Code, formulation of Amendment XI to the Criminal Law and the laws on promotion of basic medical and health care, real estate tax, export control, community correction, integrated military-civilian development, guarantee for veterans, and administrative discipline.

Other items on the agenda include revision of the Securities Law, the Law on Officers on Active Service, the Military Service Law, the Law on the People's Armed Police Force, the Organic Law of the NPC, and the NPC procedural rules.

Research will be conducted for the drafting of laws on bio-security and Yangtze River conservation.

"All these tasks need to be expedited so that they are completed on schedule," Li said.

Summing up its work over the past year, he said the top legislature has got off to a good start under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core.

"The NPC Standing Committee made studying and implementing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era the foremost political task," Li said, noting that the move aims to ensure a correct political orientation in NPC work.

Li also highlighted the amended Constitution, saying new progress has been made in studying, publicizing, implementing, and enforcing the Constitution, thereby demonstrating its legal standing, authority, and efficacy.

He went on to underscore legislation guarantees for the country's reform, opening-up, and stability.

The NPC Standing Committee formulated eight laws, revised 47 laws, and adopted nine decisions on legal issues and other major issues.

Among them are the enactment of the E-commerce Law and the Law on the Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution, as well as the revision of the Company Law.

Li said the draft foreign investment law submitted to the ongoing annual session for its third reading "is a full reflection of new ideas, approaches, and measures in reform and opening-up, and will play an important role in lifting China toward a new stage of high-level opening-up in the new era."



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, delivers a report on the work of the NPC Standing Committee during the second plenary meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 8. *Gao Jie*

**The NPC Standing Committee will move forward with formulating and revising urgently needed laws for deepening market-based reforms and expanding high-standard opening-up.**

The foreign investment law, once adopted, will become a new and fundamental law for China's foreign investment, said Wang Chen, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, when explaining the draft to deputies.

With unified provisions for the entry, promotion, protection, and management of foreign investment, it is an innovative improvement of China's foreign investment legal system, he noted. (Xinhua) ■



# Major tasks of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for 2019

The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and is a crucial year for our efforts to finish the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and fulfill the first centenary goal. The Standing Committee must hold high the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and fully implement the guiding principles from the 19th National Congress of the Party and the second and third plenary sessions of the 19th Party Central Committee. We must maintain firm awareness of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership; strengthen confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics; resolutely uphold General Secretary Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, and resolutely uphold the Party Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership; maintain the unity between the leadership of the Party, the position of the people as masters of the country, and law-based governance; focus closely on coordinating efforts to pursue the five-sphere integrated plan[ This refers to a strategy for comprehensive moves to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, deepen reform, advance law-based governance, and strengthen Party self-governance.] and the four-pronged comprehensive strategy;[ This refers to a plan to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological advancement.] remain committed to the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability; implement the new development philosophy; and devote energy to improving our work on legislation, oversight, deputies, international exchanges, and self-development, in a bid to break new ground for NPC work in the new era.

**First, we need to unremittingly advance enforcement of the Constitution and oversight in this regard.**

The Constitution can only come to life and be authorita-

tive through enforcement. We must implement the constitutional system by improving our laws and legal framework, and ensure the enforcement of the Constitution and the law through proper and effective oversight, thereby exerting the important role of the Constitution in national governance. We need to implement the system of pledging allegiance to the Constitution, ensure that National Constitution Day activities are organized well, promote implementation of the seventh five-year plan on increasing public knowledge of the law, conduct thorough campaigns to publicize the Constitution and educate people about it, and enhance theoretical research on the Constitution. We need to implement systems for overseeing enforcement of the Constitution, refine mechanisms for constitutional compliance inspection, and step up the recording and review of normative documents. We will establish a nationally unified platform for recording and reviewing normative documents, and promote the extension of the information platforms of local people's congresses to autonomous prefectures, autonomous counties, and cities with subsidiary districts.

**Second, we need to work diligently to raise the quality and effectiveness of legislative work.**

We must earnestly implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's new concepts, thoughts, and strategies on comprehensively advancing the rule of law and the Party Central Committee's decisions on legislation. We will promote lawmaking that is well-conceived, democratic, and law-based, exert the guiding role of the NPC and its Standing Committee in legislative work, and fully implement the five-year legislative program and annual legislative plan of the Standing Committee. We will actively advance legislation in key areas, and coordinate work on enacting, revising, repealing, and interpreting laws. While keeping up quantity, we must put even greater emphasis on quality, ensuring that we follow through with every piece of legislation put forward so that we may provide high-quality development with the backing and support of high-quality legislation. We should strive to ensure that every piece of legislation reflects the will of the people and earns their support, making the



public feel that each of our laws is fair and just.

This year, we must move forward with formulating and revising urgently needed laws for deepening market-based reforms and expanding high-standard opening-up. We need to expedite legislation in the domains of public wellbeing, national security, intellectual property rights protection, social governance, and ecological advancement, enforce the principle of law-based taxation, and improve relevant laws on State institutions. We will focus our energy on effectively implementing major legislative items identified by the Party Central Committee, which include deliberation on the Civil Code; formulation of Amendment XI to the Criminal Law and the laws on promotion of basic medical and health care, real estate tax, export control, community correction, integrated military-civilian development, guarantee for veterans, and administrative discipline; and revision of the Securities Law, the Law on Officers on Active Service, the Military Service Law, the Law on the People's Armed Police Force, the Organic Law of the NPC, and the NPC procedural rules. We also need to conduct research for the drafting of laws on bio-security, Yangtze River conservation, and the Hainan Free Trade Port to ensure that these legislative tasks are completed on schedule.

**Third, we need to make oversight work more targeted and effective.**

We must push State organs to perform their duties and exercise power in accordance with the law through commitment to keeping the big picture in mind, staying in tune with public wellbeing, focusing on key issues, and abiding by the law. This year, we will inspect enforcement of six laws including the Law on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution, the Law on Renewable Energy, the Fisheries Law, the Law on Promoting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, the Law on Promoting Employment, and the Higher Education Law. While continuing to promote enforcement of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Air Pollution, we will make inspecting enforcement of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution the main focus, putting in persistent effort, and relying on the law and law-based governance to protect sound natural environments as the most universally beneficial aspect of public wellbeing. We will hear and deliberate relevant work reports and enhance oversight over the management of State-owned assets, relevant criminal trials, and public interest litigation by procuratorates. We will conduct research focused on the fight against poverty, mitigation of financial risks, reform of the supervision system, and enforcement of the supervision law. We will carry out special inquiries on the basis of deliberating reports on enforcement inspection of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution, on enforcement inspection of the Law on Promoting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and on the work of public interest litigation by procuratorates. We have arranged 29 items of oversight work for this year, including 7 for deepening supply-side structural reform and promoting high-quality development, 8 for aiding the three critical battles against potential risk, poverty, and pollution, 5 for ensuring and improving public wellbeing, 5 for the review and oversight of government budgets and financial accounts by people's congresses, and 4 for the oversight over law enforcement

and judicial activities.

**Fourth, we need to constantly improve mechanisms for deputies to carry out their duties.**

We will boost the participation of deputies in the work of the Standing Committee by inviting them to attend Standing Committee meetings and participate in law enforcement inspections and research activities, while also refining mechanisms for contacting deputies for budget review. We will maintain mechanisms for discussion with deputies invited to attend Standing Committee meetings, and strengthen direct contacts between deputies and Standing Committee members. We will earnestly handle the suggestions and proposals of deputies, ensure that inspection tours and research activities for deputies are organized well, enhance training of deputies, and strengthen oversight of deputies to make sure that they perform their duties.

**Fifth, we need to actively and effectively carry out international exchanges.**

Focusing closely on China's overall diplomacy, we will deepen friendly exchanges between legislative bodies, coordinate work on bilateral and multilateral exchanges, steadily advance mechanism-based exchanges, enhance communication with our counterparts on multiple levels, and promote development of the Belt and Road and practical cooperation in all fields, thereby exerting the unique role of the NPC in foreign relations.

**Sixth, we need to enhance self-improvement of the Standing Committee in all respects.**

Taking political building as our overarching principle, we will continue to build greater theoretical competence, push forward theoretical research on the people's congress system, and strengthen our ability to resolve problems using ideas and methods based on the rule of law. We will fully enforce the central Party leadership's eight-point decision on conduct and the rules for its implementation, further improve our conduct, and take concrete steps to prevent and overcome bureaucratism and the practice of formalities for formalities' sake. We will maintain a spirit of struggle, boost our ability to work hard and our courage to take on responsibility, and take a clear-cut and determined stand on issues that touch upon key political principles or China's core interests. We will encourage officials to carry out enterprising work, ensure proper management and oversight of officials, and make sure that the NPC is composed of high-caliber officials who are loyal to the Party, clean and honest, and willing to take on responsibility.

It is of great importance that this year's NPC work be performed well. We must rally more closely around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, scrupulously abide by our duties, and make solid progress in our work, celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China with outstanding achievements, and striving toward the goals of finishing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, capturing great success for socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. (Xinhua) ■



# Chairman Li Zhanshu attends panel deliberations at NPC's annual session

Summing up the work over the past year, Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, said on March 5 when meeting with deputies from Jiangxi Province that it was essential to always follow the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and firmly safeguard Xi's status as the core of the CPC Central Committee and the whole Party, as well as the authority and centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee.



Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, attends a panel discussion with his fellow deputies from Jiangxi Province at the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 5. *Wang Ye*

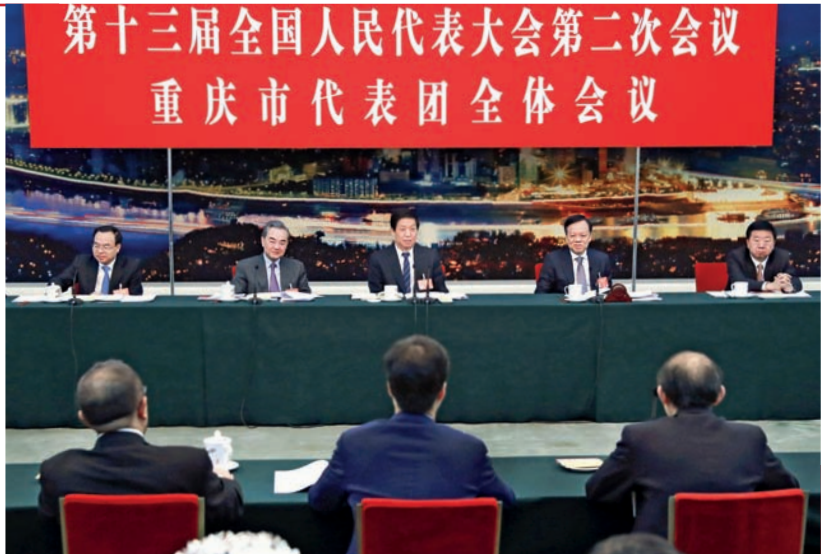
Joining the deliberation with NPC deputies from Shandong Province on March 7, Li Zhanshu called for efforts to adhere to green, high-quality development and link poverty alleviation with rural vitalization strategy.



Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, joins deliberation with deputies from Shandong Province at the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 7. *Ding Lin*



Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, joins deliberation with deputies from Chongqing Municipality at the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 9. *Pang Xinglei*



Joining deputies from Jiangsu Province on March 10, Li Zhanshu said formulating the foreign investment law is a major legislative task set by the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core. Deliberating with the delegation from Jiangsu Province, Li said the legislation is conducive to creating a first-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and international, providing an even stronger legal guarantee for high-level opening-up.

Meeting with deputies from Chongqing Municipality on March 9, Li Zhanshu called for high-quality legislation to promote high-quality development. He said legislation should better contribute to economic and social development and help accomplish major reform tasks.

## 江苏省代表团



Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, deliberates with the delegation from Jiangsu Province at the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 10. *Xie Huanchi*

Joining the deliberation by deputies from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Li Zhanshu stressed the adherence to the Party's centralized and unified leadership over advancing law-based governance in all fields, and called for sound legislation, strict law enforcement, impartial administration of justice and the observation of law by everyone.

Li Zhanshu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, joins deliberation by deputies from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region at the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 12. *Li Tao*





# China adopts foreign investment law

**T**he second session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) passed the foreign investment law on March 15, a landmark legislation that will provide stronger protection and a better business environment for overseas investors.

At around 9 a.m., an overwhelming majority of the deputies voted in favor of the law, which will become effective on January 1, 2020.

With unified provisions for the entry, promotion, protection, and management of foreign investment, it is a new and fundamental law for foreign investment in China.

It aims to improve the transparency of foreign investment policies and ensure that foreign-invested enterprises participate in market competition on an equal basis.

The State shall manage foreign investment according to the system of pre-establishment national treatment plus a negative list, the law stipulates.

Foreign-invested enterprises will equally enjoy government policies supporting enterprise development, and be able to participate in standard-setting on an equal footing and in government procurement through fair competition, according to the law.

The State shall protect the intellectual property rights of foreign investors and foreign-invested enterprises, it reads.

The law sends the signal of greater transparency, and will boost Chinese market's appeal to foreign capital, said Vivian Jiang, vice chair of Deloitte China.

With the new law, China will be able to better protect foreign investors' legitimate rights and interests, and create a law-based business environment that is internationalized and enabling.

After taking effect, the unified law will replace the three existing laws on Chinese-foreign equity joint ventures, wholly foreign-owned enterprises and Chinese-foreign contractual joint ventures.

The law on equity joint ventures was put into effect in 1979, soon after the country started to implement the reform and opening-up policy. The latter two were enacted in the 1980s. Over the past decades, they have provided effective legal safeguards for foreign firms, but are no longer commensurate with the needs of reform and opening-up in the new era.

By the end of 2018, about 960,000 foreign-invested enterprises had been set up in China, with the accumulated foreign direct investment exceeding \$2.1 trillion. Foreign direct investment into China has ranked first among developing countries for 27 consecutive years, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

**China will be able to better protect foreign investors' legitimate rights and interests, and create a law-based business environment that is internationalized and enabling.**

The new law shows China's will and determination to follow through with reform and opening-up in a new historical context, said Wang Chen, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee. "It is a full testament to China's determination and confidence in opening wider to the outside world and promoting foreign investment in the new era."

"For foreign companies in China, I think everyone is waiting for the law to be passed, as it will create a level playing field," said Harley Seyedin, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in South China.

According to a survey of 240 companies by the chamber, the respondents plan to increase their reinvestment budgets from profits in China this year to an estimated total of \$19.4 billion, up nearly 40 percent from 2018.

"The law will give more people confidence in China," said Adam Dunnett, secretary-general of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China. (Xinhua) ■



The 13th National People's Congress adopts the foreign investment law at the closing meeting of its second annual session on March 15. Du Yang



An aerial photograph of a large port facility, likely Xiamen, showing a massive container ship docked at a pier with numerous red cranes. A smaller tugboat is assisting the ship in the water. The background shows a cityscape and mountains under a clear sky.

# Foreign investment law opens new chapter in China's institutional opening-up

By Chen Fuli

Aerial photo taken on August 26, 2017 shows a freighter entering the Dongdu port at Xiamen Area of China (Fujian) Pilot Free Trade Zone in Xiamen, Southeast China's Fujian Province. *Jiang Kehong*

**S**ignificant measures and decisions have been made by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee to pursue high-level opening-up and to promote foreign investment since the 18th CPC National Congress held in 2012.

China's reform and opening-up will never be stopped or suspended, said President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of CPC Central Committee, who emphasized that the rule of law would play an increasingly important role during such process.

On March 15, China's top legislature passed the foreign investment law at the second session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC). The legislation illustrates China's strong determination and firm commitment to pushing forward reform and opening-up.

The promulgation of the foreign investment law represents a milestone in China's foreign-related legislation framework, opening a new chapter in China's institutional opening-up.

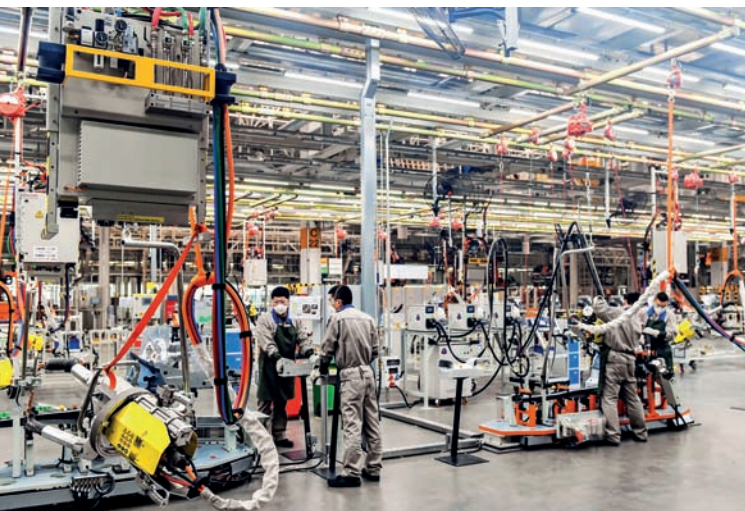
Firstly, the foreign investment law will play a positive role in safeguarding the all-around opening-up, which is also an important act in implementing Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law in a comprehensive way.

The law summarizes the experiences China has gained in utilizing foreign investment during the past four decades, with the aim to meet the latest requirement of domestic re-

form and opening-up. It absorbed the international good practices in attracting foreign investment and turned the former three foreign investment related laws into one basic law in foreign investment, thus further enriched and improved the current legal framework on foreign related legislations. The law hence plays a fundamental role in China's foreign investment regime.

During the past 40 years, foreign investments in China kept growing. By the end of 2018, the accumulated use of foreign investment had surpassed \$2.1 trillion, with the establishment of 960,000 foreign investment enterprises in China, making China a global fore-runner in attracting foreign investment among the developing countries for 27 consecutive years.

During the 5th China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue in July 2013, China agreed for the first time to enter into substantial stage of bilateral investment treaty negotiation with the US on the basis of pre-establishment national treatment (PENT) and negative list. Starting from the same year, the State Council began to set up 12 pilot free trade zones in Shanghai and other regions. In September 2016, the NPC Standing Committee adopted the decision to amend four laws including the 3 foreign investment related laws. According to the decision, the approval mechanism for registration and alternation of foreign-invested firms that do not involve



Workers carry out welding production at FAW-Volkswagen's new Audi Q plant in Changchun, Northeast China's Jilin Province, March 29, 2018.  
*Xu Chang*

special market access administration will be replaced by an automatic filing system.

Based on the successful achievements of pilot FTZs, the foreign investment law has legalized the fundamental national policies of continuous reform and opening-up. The new law not only clarifies China's equal support to foreign-invested companies as to their domestic counterparts, but also stipulates detailed regulations to promote and protect foreign investments. In a nutshell, the promulgation of the foreign investment law has laid a solid foundation for an all-round pattern of reform and opening-up.

The total foreign direct investment globally registered at \$1.2 trillion in 2018, according to a report issued by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in January 2019. The US, UK, Germany and France as well many newly emerging economies have hammered out concrete measures to attract foreign investment, which has led to a fierce competition in this field.

Just like fresh air, only sound investment environment can attract foreign investment, said President Xi, adding that China should rely on improving its investment environment rather than preferential policies to attract more foreign investment.

The foreign investment law focuses on the creation of friendly, convenient and legalized environment for foreign companies' management and development, requiring the government to adopt ambitious investment liberalization and facilitation policy, establishes and improves foreign investment promotion mechanism, and clearly noted that the investment, benefit and other legitimate rights of foreign companies must be protected in China. The law is conducive to fostering a new advantages in China's international economic cooperation and competition.

Secondly, the implementation of the foreign investment law has drawn advanced experiences from foreign countries in the legislation on foreign investment.

Major developed and emerging economies such as the US, Germany, Japan, Canada, Australia and South Korea, Brazil, India, Mexico, Indonesia and the Philippines have their own related laws on the use of foreign investments.

Since first put forward in the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, PENT has been adopted by over 70 countries up to now. The foreign investment laws in these countries mainly focus on information report and promotion of investment, seldom targeting on the form and structure of organizations as well as the business operation from registration to liquidation.

China's foreign investment law borrows the ideas from advanced legislative experiences from abroad when establishing its own norm, which features on the adoption of PENT and negative list system in full operation.

In other words, national treatment will be expanded into the phase of market entry of foreign investment. Besides, negative lists will be drafted in fields where foreign funds are prohibited; and in some other areas, limitations applicable to foreign investments are clearly listed out. It is worth mentioning that the number of entries of foreign investment negative list has been reduced to 48 in 2018. For all the fields that are not listed, national treatment will be provided to all the enterprises from home and abroad in terms of market access. The foreign investment law has achieved a harmonization of China's practice and advanced foreign administrative experiences.

Currently, investment protection treaties are the mainstay of international investment rules. By the end of 2017, among all the 3,322 investments agreements between different countries, 2,946 agreements were bilateral ones. So far, China has signed bilateral investment treaties with 134 countries and regions. Investment protection agreements in modern society share some common traits, such as investment market access, investment protection and fair competition.

Speaking of investment market access, liberalization and facilitation in investment has become a trend, which demands the provision of national treatment extending from post-investment access stage (including management, conduct, operation, sales or other disposition of investment) to the market access phase (including establishment, acquisition and expansion of investment). As mentioned above, negative lists will be made for fields where foreign investments are prohibited or restricted. The UNCTAD's Global Action Menu for Investment Facilitation puts forward a total of 10 courses of action and more than 40 policy options to facilitate investment.

As to investment protection, it mainly involves three aspects: Firstly, a clear definition of investment and investors should be made; Secondly, national treatment, most-favored-nation treatment, fair and equitable treatment to investors, which mainly refers to judicial remedy and police protection; Thirdly, expropriation and compensation rules as well as foreign exchange administration.

As to fair competition, it refers to performance requirements, which prohibits the host country in setting some performance requirements, such as export performance, localization ratio, local procurement, foreign currency balance and technology transfer and directional sales, as conditions for investors to access the market or preferential treatments.

The foreign investment law has clarified regulations on investment access, investment protection and fair competition, which conforms to the basic principles of modern investment protection.

Moreover, investment environment, which includes the transparency of laws, regulations and policies, implementa-



tion of laws and intellectual property rights protection, also plays a key role in the investment law making and agreements in different countries. The foreign investment law aims to create a stable, transparent, predictable and fair market environment.

National security review on foreign investment is another major concern in the legislation process in many countries. A national security review system toward foreign investment has been established according to the foreign investment law.

Thirdly, priorities are given to the promotion and protection of foreign investment, which demonstrates the nature of foreign investment friendliness of foreign investment law.

China respects international business operation practice and will give equal and fair treatment to all types of enterprises registered within China, said President Xi. Responding to the concerns of foreign investors toward China's investment environment, the foreign investment law has made explicit regulations in this regard. Equal treatment will be given to investment from home and abroad when the nation adopts supporting policies for the development of enterprises, standards setting, government procurement and the approval of administrative licensing. Moreover, further efforts will be made to strengthen protection of intellectual property rights. No government institutions or their employees are permitted to disclose the business secrets they obtained during work. They are also banned to demand compulsory technology transfer by using administrative power. The law will play a key role in preventing some local governments from drafting regulations, policies and agreements that threaten the legitimate rights of foreign investors. It is slated to effectively curb the regional protectionism by meeting the demand of foreign investors.

To better protect and promote foreign investment, the law clarifies basic principles in its general provisions and sets up two independent chapters. More than 20 articles of the total 42 articles of the law address the protection and promotion of foreign investment, which illustrates the keynote of the law. The law indicates China's support, promotion and attraction toward foreign investment, which can be embodied from policy making to the solicitation of public opinion, from the perfection of foreign investment service mechanism to the cooperation of international investment promotion, from the complaint mechanism of foreign investment to the arrangement of preferential policies given to foreign investors.

Standing at the new historical starting point, the foreign investment law aims to establish an all-around opening-up pattern, to emulate international practice in foreign investment and to construct an institutional framework in the market access, promotion, protection and management of foreign investment in China. The law represents a top-level design in the new era in the law making of foreign investment. It is a law of reform, openness and protection, which is friendly to foreign investment in terms of both legislative purpose and the provisions in particular. The promulgation of the law has established a stronger legal and institutional foundation for the high-level utilization of foreign investment, ushering in a new chapter in China's institutional opening-up. ■

*(The author is a member of the 13th NPC Standing Committee and member of the 13th NPC Foreign Affairs Committee.)*



VCG

## China's endeavor to improve business environment for foreign investors

China has been making consistent efforts to optimize its business environment and embrace investors worldwide.

The following are major moves China has taken in the past year to reach out to overseas investors and ensure fair competition between domestic and foreign players.

-- March 7, 2019: The China Securities Regulatory Commission allowed the International Monetary Fund to access the country's capital market via the RMB Qualified Foreign Institutional Investors program.

-- March 5, 2019: China pledged in its Government Work Report to further relax controls over market access, shorten the negative list for foreign investment, and permit wholly foreign funded enterprises to operate in more sectors.

-- December 25, 2018: China rolled out a nationwide shorter negative list for market access, with the number of items down to 151, which is 177 items fewer than that in the previous pilot version.

-- December 3, 2018: China's securities regulator approved UBS AG's plan to gain a majority stake in its mainland securities joint venture, with the company's stake in UBS Securities Co. rising to 51 percent.

-- November 25, 2018: China approved the German insurer Allianz Group's preparatory establishment of the country's first ever wholly-foreign owned insurance holding company.

-- October 16, 2018: China rolled out a plan for establishing Hainan as a pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ), the 12th and largest among its peers.

-- October 10, 2018: The Shanghai FTZ issued the country's first negative list in the service trade field.

-- June 28, 2018: China unveiled a shortened negative list for foreign investment, with the number of items down to 48, from 63 in the previous version, following an experiment in pilot FTZs.

Last year, China saw a record foreign direct investment of \$135 billion despite a global economic downturn and rising protectionism. (Xinhua)

# Chinese judiciary makes headway in ensuring stability, development



Beijing Intellectual Property Court VCG

Chinese judicial and procuratorial organs have maintained high pressure on law violations, including graft, local mafia and “Peppa Pig” copyright infringement, to safeguard justice, social stability and development.

The judiciary also endeavors to serve the country’s all-round opening-up, the Belt and Road Initiative, and high-quality development, according to the work reports of the Supreme People’s Court (SPC) and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate (SPP) delivered to the annual national legislative session on March 12.

Chief Justice Zhou Qiang and Procurator-General Zhang Jun highlighted progress made in the past year when delivering the reports.

“The top court has punished crimes, protected the people, and resolutely safeguarded national security and social stability in accordance with the law,” Zhou said.

The SPC handled 34,794 cases in 2018 and concluded

**The SPC and the SPP will continue to ensure legal guarantees for sustained and sound economic and social development and strengthen their team building.**

31,883 cases, up 22.1 percent and 23.5 percent year on year respectively. Local courts saw an increase of 8.8 percent and 10.6 percent in the cases they handled and concluded.

The top procuratorate has “based its work on people’s increasing demands for democracy, the rule of law, fairness and justice, security, and a better environment in a new era,” Zhang said.

With unwavering resolve to bring the corrupt to justice, Chinese courts concluded 28,000 graft cases involving embezzlement, bribery and dereliction of duty last year. Among the 33,000 people involved were 18 former officials at the provincial level and above. Meanwhile, 32 such former high-ranking officials, including Sun Zhengcai and Wang Sanyun, were charged.

Sun is the former Party chief of southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality, who was sentenced to life in prison in May



for taking bribes of over 170 million yuan (\$25.29 million), while Wang, former Party chief of Gansu Province, stood trial in October, accused of using his position for bribe-taking.

A total of 2,466 people who offered bribes were convicted last year amid a heavier crackdown on bribery.

Prosecutors handled work-related criminal cases transferred by supervisory commissions involving 16,092 suspects in 2018. Among them, 9,802 have been prosecuted.

The courts also targeted corruption among their own ranks in 2018, with 1,064 court staff investigated and punished for abusing the power of their positions.

Making headway in the campaign to combat organized crime and root out local mafia, Chinese courts concluded 5,489 related cases in 2018, which involved 29,000 criminals, while procuratorates across the country approved the arrest of 73,385 suspects involved in such crime, among whom 61,188 were indicted.

Addressing pollution, China prosecuted 42,195 suspects for damaging the environment and resources last year, up 21 percent year on year, and the courts concluded 2,204 cases involving crimes of environmental pollution.

Strengthening intellectual property protection, Chinese courts concluded 288,000 cases related to intellectual property rights (IPR) of first instance in 2018, marking a year-on-year increase of 41.8 percent.

Meanwhile, 8,325 suspects were prosecuted for criminal acts such as infringement of patent rights and trademark rights, up by 16.3 percent.

A tribunal for IPR-related cases was set up at the SPC last year to further strengthen the judicial protection of IPR.

In addition, the judiciary improved legal service of China's all-round opening-up. The courts concluded 15,000 foreign-related civil and commercial cases of first instance in 2018.

Among the cases was one handled by the Hangzhou Internet Court, which adjudicated a copyright infringement case last August and ordered two offending Chinese companies to compensate for the economic loss of British animation "Pep-pa Pig" character's copyright owners.

Looking into 2019, the SPC and the SPP will continue to ensure legal guarantees for sustained and sound economic and social development and strengthen their team building, according to the reports.

Vowing to deepen judicial reform this year, Zhou said, "The SPC will uphold the principle of administering justice for the people to enhance their sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security."

Impressed by the judicial initiatives in the work reports, Lu Man, an NPC deputy from Jiangsu, said she noticed that the judiciary has rectified a number of wrongful convictions and many problems that incurred strong public dissatisfaction have been effectively solved.

"The people feel the progress of fairness and justice," she said.

2019 is a key year for the sprint to finishing building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. "I expect the judicial system to continue to serve as a 'reassuring pill' for the common people, and escort our country to achieve the centenary goal," she said. (Xinhua) ■



The third plenary meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 12. Huang Jingwen





Premier Li Keqiang meets the press after the conclusion of the second session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 15. *Liu Zhen*

## China will not let economy slide out of proper range

China's adoption of a GDP target range this year is consistent with the government's determination of not allowing major economic indicators to slide out of the proper range, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said on March 15.

The 6-6.5 percent GDP growth target for 2019 is compatible with the GDP expansion of 6.6 percent achieved last year, Li told a press conference after the closing of the annual legislative session, adding that the new target has sent a message of stability to the market.

Li said the downward adjustment of the GDP growth target was made against the backdrop of a slowing global economy, as several international organizations have recently lowered their forecasts for global growth this year.

The 6.6-percent GDP growth rate in 2018 did not come by easily, and the 6-6.5 percent target is going to be a growth on top of a very large base figure, according to Li. "Keeping steady growth of China's economy in itself is an important progress."

Li pointed out that a deluge of stimulus is not a viable option as it might work in the short run, but may lead to future problems, and China's choice is "to energize market players to counter the downward pressure."

China has over 100 million market entities, whose vitality will create incalculable energy once fully unleashed, Li said, reiterating that China will continue to cut taxes and fees,

**China will continue to cut taxes and fees, streamline administration, foster new drivers of growth, broaden market access, and level the playing field for all market players.**

streamline administration, foster new drivers of growth, broaden market access, and level the playing field for all market players.

Li said China has policy room reserved for dealing with possible uncertainties this year such as raising the deficit-to-GDP ratio, or using other instruments like required reserve ratios and interest rates.

"We are not going for monetary easing, but trying to provide effective support to the real economy," Li said.

Facing whatever new circumstances, China will stay firmly grounded in its realities and take a long term view to keep its economic growth stable, and the sound momentum of economic development unchanged for the long run, according to Li.

"China's economy will remain an important anchor of stability for the global economy," Li added. (Xinhua) ■



# ‘Prudent’ policy still appropriate

China’s “prudent” monetary policy stance has not changed and even has room to lower interest rates and increase liquidity, depending on the domestic economic outlook, Yi Gang, governor of the central bank, said on March 10.

The target this year is to maintain a monetary policy that is neither too tight nor too loose, and to keep the broad money supply and aggregate financing growth consistent with nominal GDP growth, Yi said at a news conference at the ongoing session of the 13th National People’s Congress.

China’s M2, a broad measure of money supply that covers cash in circulation and all deposits, rose 8 percent from a year earlier to 186.74 trillion yuan (\$27.8 trillion) at the end

of February, the People’s Bank of China had reported a few minutes earlier. The growth pace slowed from January’s 8.4 percent.

Financial institutions issued 885.8 billion yuan in new loans in February, down significantly from the record-high 3.23 trillion yuan in January, the bank reported.

After fast credit growth in January, the financial data have returned to normal, said Wen Bin, chief researcher at China Minsheng Bank. “To maintain a prudent policy stance will be supportive of deleveraging and preventing financial risks,” Wen said.

Yi noted that China’s overall debt-to-GDP ratio – the macro leverage level – had dropped to 249.4 percent by the end of 2018, 1.5 percentage points lower than a year earlier, as the authority has tightened financial regulations and cracked down on shadow banking.

The central bank will evaluate domestic economic conditions, which is the key variable, as it sets policy, and will work to lower real interest rates and drive down financing costs for small and private companies, Yi said. “China still has some room to cut the reserve requirement ratio, but less than in previous years.”

After five cuts of the reserve ratio, totaling 3.5 percentage points since last year, the current average level of the ratio stands at 12 percent, approximately the same as in some developed countries, he said.

The world’s leading central banks reversed their monetary policies into a more dovish stance recently in response to a less cheerful global economic outlook. The Federal Reserve in the United States has put rate increases on hold. “The global economy is still under downside pressure,” Yi said.

The exchange rate for the yuan fluctuated between 6.28 and 6.97 against the US dollar, or within an 11 percent fluctuating band, and China’s foreign exchange reserve stayed above \$3 trillion, according to the central bank.

“The yuan has been influenced by market forces just like any other currency for a very long time now, and any assumption that China could be, for whatever reason, deliberately influencing its currency is very wide of the mark,” said Jameel Ahmad, global head of currency strategy and market research at FXTM, a global foreign exchange platform. (China Daily) ■

**The target this year is to maintain a monetary policy that is neither too tight nor too loose, and to keep the broad money supply and aggregate financing growth consistent with nominal GDP growth.**



Yi Gang (3rd L), governor of People’s Bank of China, discusses financial reform and development at a news conference in Beijing on March 10. *Li Ran*



Ecology and Environment Minister Li Ganjie takes questions at a press conference in Beijing on March 11. VCG

## Ecology should not be ‘sacrificed’

By Hou Liqiang

**T**he head of China’s top environmental watchdog stressed that the environment should not be “sacrificed” for economic growth in the country.

Li Ganjie, minister of ecology and environment, made the comment in a news conference on the sidelines of the ongoing two sessions on March 10.

The relationship between environmental protection and economic development is often discussed in China.

While some people say one-size-fits-all approaches in environmental law enforcement have damaged economic development, others say local governments have relaxed their efforts in environmental protection as the country experiences an economic downturn, Li said.

Those things have happened in the country but only in a few areas, and those cases do not reflect the general situation in China, the minister said.

“We resolutely oppose those tendencies. Once we find such cases, we will resolutely stop them and hold officials

fully accountable,” Li said.

He said the sacrifice of the environment for economic development goes against the central authorities’ directives.

Li said President Xi Jinping has warned against the tendency of sacrificing the environment for economic growth. Xi made the point during a panel discussion with his fellow deputies to the National People’s Congress from the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on March 5. Xi said no sacrifice of the environment is allowed when encountering “just a little difficulty in economic development”.

The minister said it will be one of the key tasks for central environmental inspections to see whether local governments are making such sacrifices.

While the country has encountered some challenges in its environmental progress, there are also many opportunities for environmental protection work, he said.

The high-quality development the country is rolling out will assist in ecological improvement and resolve pollution at the





Photo taken on March 28 shows blooming cherry blossoms along the Baidi causeway of the West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. VCG



Children plant trees at Wuzhong Village in Qiaoxi District of Xingtai, North China's Hebei Province, March 11. Students from Guoshoujing Primary School planted trees to greet the upcoming Tree Planting Day, also known as Arbor Day, which falls on March 12 each year. Mu Yu

## No sacrifice of the environment is allowed when encountering 'just a little difficulty in economic development'.

source. Increased investment from the central government will also provide an impetus, he said, adding that the national budget for environmental protection will increase by almost 36 percent year-on-year to 60 billion yuan (\$8.9 billion).

Li also said China still confronts great challenges in curbing air pollution despite the tremendous improvement it made last year.

The 338 major cities across the country had fairly good air quality during 79.3 percent of the days in 2018, up by 1.3 percentage points year-on-year, he said.

The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cluster saw its average density of PM2.5, hazardous tiny particles, drop by 11.8 percent year-on-year, he added.

He warned, however, that it will be increasingly difficult to further decrease PM2.5 concentrations. Meanwhile, progress in different regions and industries is uneven.

Law enforcement capabilities, facilities and technologies are not yet adequate, he said. (China Daily) ■



Aerial photo taken on March 25 shows the spring scenery of Shexian County, East China's Anhui Province. VCG



# Foreign Minister meets the press

**S**tate Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met the press on March 8 on the sidelines of the second session of the 13th National People's Congress.

Wang takes questions regarding China's foreign policy and diplomatic relations.

Here are the highlights:

## Chinese diplomacy at new starting point

The world is experiencing profound shifts unseen in a century and the Chinese diplomacy has reached a new starting point.

"We will remain on the path of peaceful development, work for win-win outcome, uphold existing international systems and shoulder more international responsibilities."

Over the past 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese diplomacy has established a fine tradition with distinctive features.

## Korean Peninsula issue

China has been committed to denuclearization and the peaceful settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue and its role is irreplaceable.

The Hanoi summit between Pyongyang and Washington was an important step to solve the issue.

The leaders from both countries overcame obstacles and exchanged views face-to-face in a candid way, which is a positive progress and should be applauded.

## Beijing to host 2nd Belt and Road forum

The second forum on the Belt and Road cooperation will be held in Beijing in late April, with more comprehensive cooperation.

President Xi Jinping will deliver a keynote speech during



The Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) International Conference Center in Boao, Hainan Province VCG



the opening ceremony.

The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, or BRF, will have more foreign heads of State and government than the previous forum and thousands of delegates from over a hundred are expected to attend.

## Huawei's lawsuit case

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China supports the company and individual in question in seeking legal redress to protect their own interests and refusing to be victimized like silent lambs.

The Chinese government has and will continue to take all necessary measures to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese businesses and citizens.

“This is the duty of the Chinese government.”

## China-Europe relations

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Europe is always an important priority on China's diplomatic agenda and China supports European integration and a united and strong EU.

According to Wang, President Xi Jinping will visit Europe later this month as he kicks off this year's overseas trip.

China welcomes Italy and other European countries to take an active part in the Belt and Road Initiative.

## China-US ties

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Cooperation is still the mainstream of the China-US relationship and China has a positive outlook on it.

Wang also refuted statements by some individuals that the two countries should decouple their economies.

“Decoupling from China will mean decoupling from opportunity, from the future and in a sense from the world,” he said, noting that the interests of both countries are inseparable.

## China-Russia ties

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Russian President Vladimir Putin will attend the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, while President Xi Jinping is planning to pay a State visit to Russia this year.

The two countries enjoy deep political trust, win-win economic cooperation, and support each other in international affairs.

Bilateral trade volume between the two last year exceeded \$100 billion.

## China upholds UN-centered intl system

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China sees multilateralism as a cornerstone of the international system and will resolutely uphold a United Nations-centered international system.

China will carry the banner of building a community with a shared future for humanity, continue to stand on the right side of history and on the side of the common interests of a majority of countries.



State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks at a news conference in Beijing on March 8. Hou Yu

**The world is experiencing profound shifts unseen in a century and the Chinese diplomacy has reached a new starting point.**

## BRI to benefit all

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The Belt and Road Initiative is an “economic pie” that benefits the local people rather than a “debt trap” that some countries may fall into.

It is not a geo-political tool but a great opportunity for shared development. The initiative has enabled countries to grow at a faster pace, improve their people's lives, and reaped win-win outcomes.

## China-Africa partnership

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Criticism that China has established a debt trap in Africa, or practices neo-colonialism in the continent, should not be considered seriously, as Chinese-African cooperation is open and inclusive.

China-Africa relations have never been better, and China has demonstrated a role model for international cooperation with Africa.

Wang called on the international community to increase input in Africa to promote development of the continent.

## India-Pakistan tensions

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China advised Pakistan and India to quickly turn the page and seek fundamental and long-term improvement in their relations.

China has stressed from the beginning the need to exercise calm and restraint, prevent escalation, find out what has happened and resolve the matter through dialogue.

In the meantime, sovereignty and territorial integrity should be fully respected.

## Situation in Afghanistan

There is no vacuum in Afghanistan to be filled, because the land belongs to the people of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan should not again become an arena of great power rivalry, nor should it be subjected to conflicts.

Wang appealed to all parties in Afghanistan to settle differences through dialogues and join hands to push the door to the peace.

## Venezuela crisis

China will continue to promote the search of a political settlement to the Venezuela issue and support all parties in Venezuela to carry out peaceful dialogue.

External interference will only escalate tensions and bring back the law of jungle.

The internal affairs of any country should be solved by its own people.

Wang noted that the rights of Latin America countries to develop their relationship with China should be respected and not be interfered with or criticized.

## China will be stronger, not assertive

China will protect its lawful and legitimate interests, and will not allow any infringement of its sovereignty and dignity.

Wang was responding to a question from the Bloomberg on "accusations" over some of China's comments over Canada and Sweden.

"China's preference and goal is always to interact with other civilizations on the basis of mutual respect and to live peacefully with all countries, and to pursue win-win results with the rest of the world".

China will surely become stronger, but will not be assertive. China values its independence, but will not go forward alone. China will stand up for its rights, but will not seek hegemony.

No matter how far China develops, China will reach a fair judgment based on the merits of each matter, and act within the bonds of international law.



The Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) annual conference this year took place from March 26 to 29 in Boao, a coastal town in Hainan, with the theme "Shared Future, Concerted Action, Common Development." Luo Yunfei

## Ties with Pyongyang

Beijing stands ready to carry forward the traditional relationship with Pyongyang in the new era and jointly safeguard the fundamental interests of the two peoples as well as the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula.

Developing long-term traditional relationship with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is China's firm choice and also conforms to the interests of both countries.

## China-India relations

China and India should be partners in pursuing their respective dreams and important opportunities for growing each other's economies.

The current priority is to see that the strategic understanding of the two countries' leaders trickles down to the people and becomes the common view.

## Overseas consular services

China will take new measures in 2019 to offer better consular protection and assistance to Chinese citizens.

One of the measures is that mobile payment will be available in overseas Chinese embassies and consulates to bring more convenience.

## South China Sea conduct code talks to be speeded up

China and ASEAN countries will speed up negotiation of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea on the basis of consensus and give updates of the progress to the public at appropriate time.

China and ASEAN countries will stay focused and eliminate interference, and maintain necessary transparency during the negotiation of the COC.

## China-Japan relations

China and Japan are still in the early stage of improving their ties.

Sino-Japanese relations got back on track last year and has seen a good momentum for their improvement.

Wang urges the Japanese side to honestly consider the history, objectively understand the reality and actively create prospects so as to move forward the ties earnestly in the right direction.

## China to promote provinces in global arena

As China is still a developing country, facilitating domestic development is an important mission of the country's diplomacy.

This year, the presentation of Chinese provinces will be continued in various international and domestic platforms to help more provinces embrace the world. (China Daily) ■



# China to lower defense budget growth to 7.5 percent

China will lower its defense budget growth rate to 7.5 percent in 2019, from last year's 8.1 percent, according to a draft budget report submitted to the annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC) held on March 5.

The 2019 defense budget will be 1.19 trillion yuan (about \$177.61 billion), figures from the report show.

The rate marks the fourth straight year for the budgeted growth rate remaining single digit, following five consecutive years of double-digit increases.

China's budgeted defense spending growth rate stood at 8.1 percent in 2018, 7 percent in 2017, and 7.6 percent in 2016.

"The Chinese government has always paid attention to controlling the scale of defense expenditure," said He Lei, former deputy head of the Academy of Military Sciences.

Describing China's defense budget increase as reasonable and appropriate, Zhang Yesui, spokesperson for the legislative session, said the rise aimed to "meet the country's demand in safeguarding national security and military reform with Chinese characteristics."

"China's limited defense spending, which is for safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, poses no threat to any other country," Zhang said at a press conference on March 4.

The expenditure has been mainly used for advancing defense and military reforms, supporting military training and diverse tasks, modernizing weapons and equipment, and improving welfare of service personnel, according to He, who is also a deputy to the NPC.

"The defense budget increase is appropriate against the backdrop of profound changes in the country's overall strength, its security environment, and the global strategic situation," He said.

China's defense budget takes up a fairly small share of its GDP and national fiscal expenditure compared with other major countries, said He, noting that its military spending per capita and per soldier was also very low.

While the national defense spending in a number of major developed countries accounts for more than 2 percent of their GDP, the ratio was

only about 1.3 percent for China in 2018.

The US has increased its national defense expenditure for the fiscal year 2019 to \$716 billion, about four times the budget of China, the world's second largest economy.

China's military spending per capita is only about one-nineteenth of that of the United States.

"When it comes to whether a country poses a threat to other countries, the key is not that country's national strength and armed forces, but the policies it adopts," said Chen Zhou, research fellow with the Academy of Military Sciences.

"China has always been following the path of peaceful development and firmly adheres to a defense policy that is defensive in nature," Chen said, noting that China's development would not pose a threat to any other country.

He Lei highlighted China's role in providing public security goods for the international community, saying the Chinese military had actively participated in UN peacekeeping missions, maintained security of marine passages, and engaged in international rescue and security cooperation.

"The growth in China's defense spending is the growth of forces for world peace," he noted. (Xinhua) ■



The IDEX 2019 international defense exhibition is held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, February 16-17. Su Xiaopo



# ‘Passage interview,’ a snapshot of Chinese democracy

Deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress receive an interview before the opening meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 5. VCG

**O**n national TV, Ma Shanxiang tells people how to best solve quarrels with their neighbors, Tashi shares new developments of his Tibetan school, and Yao Ming encourages teenagers to play basketball.

Welcome to China’s “passage interview,” a live broadcast that presents China through the stories of common people as well as international superstars.

The broadcast is part of the country’s “two sessions,” an important annual event in China’s political calendar which sees the gathering of thousands of national legislators and political advisors in Beijing.

The “two sessions” serve as a window for observers to

closely watch where the world’s second-largest economy is heading.

For years, domestic and foreign news media have squeezed into press conferences and political meetings, trying to create stories from statements of political heavyweights during the two-week event.

Today, the stories might come from somewhere else -- personal experiences of legislators and advisors who pass through the lobby of the Great Hall of the People to attend the plenary meetings.

China first broadcast the “passage interviews” with lawmakers and political advisors during the national “two sessions” in 2018. This year, many local “two sessions” which





preceded the national one, also adopted similar live broadcasts.

Lawmakers and political advisors from across the country, different professions, and different ethnicities, answered questions during the interviews.

The agenda is extensive this year. Scientists hinted China's plans for space and AI. Officials introduced the latest local developments on the country's grand strategies such as the Xiongan New Area and the Greater Bay Area. Local-level workers told stories of the people and regions they represent.

The interviewees answered questions, voiced problems and often struck a constructive note in their answers.

"We not only present problems facing our jobs and society

## 'Passage interview' is a snapshot of Chinese democracy – devoid of partisan fights or destructive critiques, and in favor of diverse voices and consensus.

at the sessions but also focus on their causes and solutions," said Ma Shanxiang, a legal mediator in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality, who did a passage interview this year.

Ma, with more than 30 years of experience working for a local community, shared his dispute-solving solutions during the interview.

Over the years, Ma has resolved more than 2,000 disputes ranging from family quarrels to bigger issues like rallies against local government's relocation programs or dissatisfaction with layoffs at State-owned companies.

"We are the ones who face the problems directly," he said, "and during the passage interview, we speak from our experience to show people what the society is really like."

Like Ma, several lawmakers who head poverty-stricken villages voiced problems during their interviews, such as poor network coverage in remote areas, lack of garbage disposal facilities, and insufficient access to employment information.

Addressing these issues on live national TV marks the Chinese government's attitude towards greater openness.

It's also a snapshot of Chinese democracy – devoid of partisan fights or destructive critiques, and in favor of diverse voices and consensus.

During one passage interview, three political advisors from the Mongolian, Tibetan and Uygur ethnicities dressed in traditional clothes and stood behind the microphones to take questions from the press.

Tashi, a Tibetan language teacher from a primary school in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, introduced the changes happening in his school, while behind him stood his interpreter who translated his words into Mandarin.

"It doesn't matter if it's in a county, a township or a village, the most beautiful building in Tibet must be its school," Tashi said.

Built in 1990, his school had only eight teachers, 108 students and one teaching building. "But now it has 155 teachers, 2,112 students and three big teaching buildings equipped with advanced teaching equipment," he said.

An Australian reporter from Hong Kong Satellite Television, who only gave his Chinese name as Maizi, watched Tashi's interview.

He was impressed by many topics mentioned by the political advisors. "Such progress made in remote places shows the Chinese government's strong support for the development of Tibet. I'm looking forward to the region's further progress in the future," he said.

Maizi has been in China for 13 years and can speak fluent Mandarin. It's his first time to report on the "two sessions."

He said the passage interviews can help the world better understand China. "They can help reporters and common people better understand the stories across China, even in its remote corners." (Xinhua) ■





# Ethnic minority women play big role in political and social development

Deputies to the 13th NPC leave the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the second session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on March 15. *Chen Yehua*



**D**uring the “Two Sessions,” female lawmakers and political advisors of ethnic minorities have made significant contributions as China continues to pursue high-quality economic and social development this year.

In the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of the 13th Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), there are 742 female deputies and 440 female members respectively, marking a historic high for female representation.

Women, many from ethnic minorities, are playing a big role in China’s national legislature and top advisory body, as they contribute their wisdom and strength to almost every sector of society.

“I used to hope that all the women in the village could wear high-heeled shoes freely, and have a bright and nice square for dancing even after dark,” said Zhao Huijie, Party secretary of Xiaomiaozi Village in the city of Chifeng in north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

As an NPC deputy of the Manchu ethnic group, Zhao knows the importance of development in the village. She has established cooperatives and expanded planting scales among villagers to increase their incomes.

Scores of distinctive cooperatives have been set up so far, increasing the average annual income for villagers to 14,000 yuan (about \$2,100).

Last year, 100 street lamps, another 5.5 km of cement roads and a public square were added to the village.

“Now, women in the village won’t sprain their ankles while walking in high heels. The square is always packed with people dancing,” she said.

The percentage of ethnic-minority women in China is small but their power is infinite, Zhao said.

Long Xiaohua, head of Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in central China’s Hunan Province, shares Zhao’s thoughts.

“Ethnic-minority women play an important part in the battle against poverty,” she said.

As a member of the Miao ethnic group, she knows only too well how creative and powerful women can be. Miao women are known for their handicrafts and diligence.

“We have planned to build 48 new anti-poverty workshops for local specialties such as embroidery and traditional clothing by 2020, with over 80 percent of employees being women,” she said.

Political advisor Shi Hong, also from the prefecture, is a member of the Tujia ethnic group.

Shi, the chairwoman of the prefecture’s association of industry and commerce, said her primary obligation is to help promote processed products for local private enterprises.

In 2018, she helped a dozen private enterprises sell their products to Jinan, capital of east China’s Shandong Province.

“Now, women in my ethnic area have higher status. They can work for the government, or run their own businesses. Decades ago, they were not allowed to have dinner at the same table with men,” Shi said.

The Government Work Report Premier Li Keqiang made on March 5 mentioned that the government would promote further development and opening-up in western China, which included Shi’s hometown.

“We are looking forward to the new policies and measures,” Shi said.

Kelsang Drolkar, from Tibet Autonomous Region, has been focusing on the urban low-income population in Lhasa this year in her suggestion to the National People’s Congress.

“Besides rural residents, poor urban residents, especially the unemployed and old, also need attention from the government to help them live better,” she said.

Having been a village Party secretary for over 40 years, she said her job has brought her a sense of achievement by solving problems, big and small, for her fellow villagers.

Over the past few years, she has submitted suggestions concerning old town protection, rural medical care, heating and gas supply—all about people’s livelihood.

“I kept submitting the same suggestion until it was solved, and then I moved onto the next,” she said.

“I have paid attention to issues concerning children’s education and health care, especially children living in ethnic minority regions,” said political advisor Hu Guozhen, vice governor of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of southwest China’s Guizhou Province.

She was impressed by this year’s Government Work Report, which specifically mentioned that “we... need to work hard to provide education that our people are happy with to do justice to our hope for tomorrow.”

## **Ethnic minority women are playing a big role in China’s national legislature and top advisory body, as they contribute their wisdom and strength to almost every sector of society.**

Hu has submitted six proposals, four of which are aimed at improving the education and health conditions of children from poverty-stricken ethnic areas in Guizhou.

Deputy Narantuyaa, an ethnic Mongolian from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has also been focusing on education issues.

She said, “As a mother myself, I know how important my role is for my family. So, I strongly suggest to improve the level of parenting and provide more support to mothers who play a significant part in it.”

Besides poverty relief and education, ethnic women have also dedicated themselves to other traditionally men-dominated fields, such as the oil industry.

Adalet Ezes is a petroleum scientist in Karamay, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. She has been experimenting in the oilfield for 22 years and pioneered multiple development missions of exploratory wells.

“It’s a privilege to follow my father’s path as an oil worker. As an NPC deputy, I feel obliged to stimulate more people around me to strive for a better future for our city,” she said. (Xinhua) ■



Aerial photo taken on July 24, 2018 shows the Ruichang section of Yangtze River in Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province. *Hu Bowei*

# Yangtze conservation paying off

By Wang Zhuoqiong, Zhou Lihua and Liu Kun

**W**aters of “mother river” improve, while industrial transformation creates growth opportunities

Over the past three years, Hubei Xingfa Chemicals Group Co Ltd has shut down about one-third of its production capacity as well as four chemical waste discharge flues along the Yangtze River.

The moves are in line with government calls for improving ecological protection and cleaning up China’s “mother river”, which has faced severe environmental challenges in recent years.

Central government bodies and provincial authorities

along the river have been prioritizing the protection of the Yangtze since 2016, when President Xi Jinping highlighted environmental restoration and protection in and around the country’s longest waterway.

Li Guozhang, chairman of Hubei Xingfa Chemicals Group Co, said the company took the lead in shuttering plants near the river in 2016.

He said that despite strong opposition from management, “we formed an understanding that lagging production capacity had to be eliminated and updated. The relocation was a challenge, but it was an opportunity if we grabbed the chance to upgrade our products.”





Three years after relocation projects began, the group has not laid off any employees but instead added 1,300 workers as its new operations – microelectronics and organic silicon – gained momentum, Li added.

With an investment of about 2 billion yuan (\$298 million), new business has taken up about 20 percent of Xingfa’s overall operations.

Xingfa is one of the petrochemical companies that shut down polluting production, and it has relocated production to new areas of Yichang, Hubei Province, that are away from the river.

The petrochemical industry has fueled strong growth in Yichang for years.

Last year, Yichang achieved strong recovery, with GDP growth climbing to 7.7 percent from 2.4 percent in 2017. Its GDP reached more than 400 billion yuan.

The transformation and update of traditional industries for a city like Yichang is a must, not an option, said Zhang Jiasheng, mayor of Yichang and a deputy to the National People’s Congress.

“Only by taking initiatives will lagging industries have more opportunities,” he said.

Last year, the city continued its efforts to relocate petrochemical enterprises and close outdated production facilities.

Two companies moved into industrial parks and three optimized their production structures.

The city took the lead in the province in shutting down its coal mining industry, which had operated for about 200 years. This year, an additional four petrochemical companies will be closed, 18 will be updated and 14 relocated, Zhang said.

The city government has set up a subsidy fund of 500 million yuan that from 2018 to 2020 is helping petrochemical companies relocate and optimize structures, with another 20 million yuan to develop technology to more efficiently extract phosphogypsum, the waste product of phosphorus-related production, to help reduce pollution.

Innovations have stimulated the city’s development and smoothed transformation to high-end and environmentally friendly industries, he added.

The city has fostered biological medicine, electrical information, new materials and equipment manufacturing to drive its new economic growth. In 2018, the four sectors have taken up 38.1 percent of its industrial gross production value.

Jiang Chaoliang, Party secretary of Hubei Province and an NPC deputy, said Hubei has the longest stretch of the Yangtze, and is also home to the Three Gorges Dam, so a vibrant ecology and green development are top priorities in guiding the province to achieve high-quality development.

In 2018, across the province, more than 100 petrochemical companies along the Yangtze were closed and relocated.

To better preserve the ecology along the Yangtze, a systematic and national-level management network integrating related government sectors should be established to plan, regulate and guide the process, said Niu Xinqiang, head of the Changjiang Institute of Survey, Planning, Design and Research.

Overfishing and shipping have also contributed to the degradation of the fishing industry in the river, said Niu.

Lack of proper waste disposal treatment is also a grave threat to the river. Cities along the river have to strengthen new infrastructure, better process sewage and enhance water conservation, he added. (China Daily Global) ■

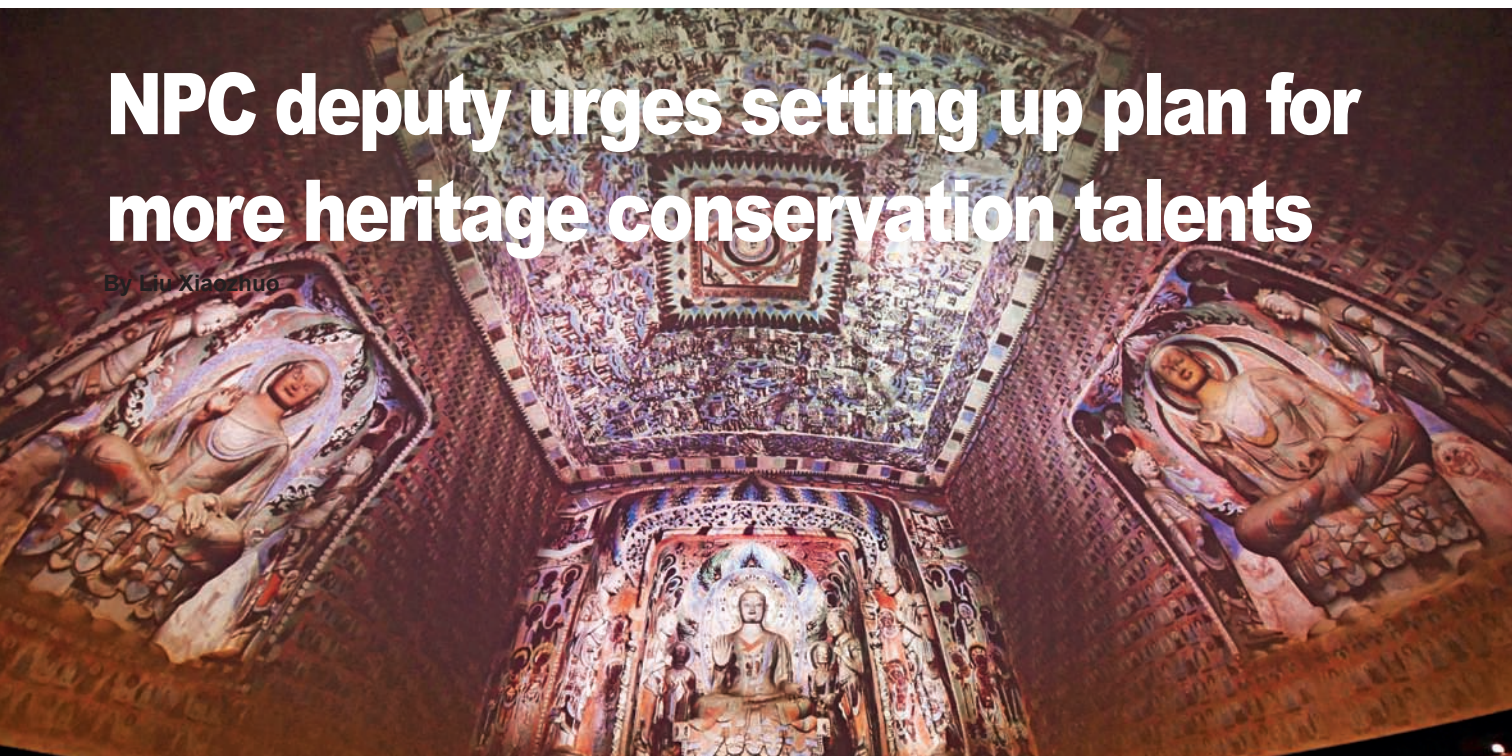


Chinese sturgeons, a critically endangered fish under State protection, are released into the Yangtze River in waters off Shanghai’s Changxing Island in June. *Fan Jun*



# NPC deputy urges setting up plan for more heritage conservation talents

By Liu Xiaozhuo



Statues and wall paintings are shown on a giant spherical screen at the digital center of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Northwest China's Gansu Province, April 15, 2017. *Fan Peishen*

**A** legislator is urging the training of more professional and high-level heritage conservation talents.

China, as one of the earliest cradles of civilization, has substantial amounts of cultural relics, but only a limited number of heritage protection professionals, said Su Bomin, an NPC deputy and director of the Protection Department of the Dunhuang Research Academy, which is responsible for the conservation and management of the Mogao Grottoes.

“We have so many precious cultural relics in need of



A visitor is attracted by the charm of the Dunhuang murals at an exhibition held at the Tashkent National Art Museum, the capital of Uzbekistan, December 12, 2018. *Cai Guodong*

scientific and systematic protection, while the lack of professionals hinders that endeavor. This is a paradox,” Su said.

Su observed that though in recent years authorities have provided much financial support for heritage conservation, cultural relics in some regions still don't have due protection because of this paradox.

Su's research shows that about 60 universities in China offer a major in heritage conservation.

“Despite that, there are issues, like there is no standard teaching material and systematic training mode,” Su said.

In addition, heritage conservation, from the current educational perspective, is still in the range of history, museology or even art. “It should have an equal position as other disciplines,” Su said.

Through the experience of many years of practical work in Dunhuang and international cooperation, Su suggested heritage conservation be treated as an independent discipline and two kinds of talents be trained. First, cultural heritage scientists who conduct fundamental research, and second, talents with high-level restoration skills.

Su also calls for more innovative measures to protect cultural relics and raise the public's awareness for heritage conservation.

The fast development of digital technology helps better restore the information of cultural relics and by using the internet, more people can appreciate the beauty of ancient relics.

“We noticed that recently the topic of cultural relics has become a hit on the internet and also in actual life,” Su said.

The Dunhuang Research Academy, therefore, is making the effort to digitalize the wall-paintings in the Mogao Grottoes and develop derivative cultural and creative products to attract more young people, according to Su. (China Daily) ■



# Young voice speaks out for migrant workers

By Feng Zhiwei and Zou Shuo

**A** young deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, 24-year-old Zou Bin, comes from a humble background and made his name as a highly skilled construction worker.

Zou was elected as a deputy to the NPC, China's top legislative body, last year.

Born in a village in Loudi, Hunan Province, he worked as a construction worker for years and participated in various national and international craftsman competitions.

Zou said he believes he was elected an NPC deputy because he is able to represent the voices at the grassroots level, and the country has been paying more attention to the welfare of migrant workers, especially those with advanced skills.

Zou wants to do two things as an NPC deputy: help solve the wage arrears problem for migrant workers; and encourage young people with lower levels of education to pick up technical skills so that they can contribute to society.

"I began to work as a construction worker in Changsha with my father and uncle when I was 16, as many people in my village chose this profession," he said.

Young construction workers usually have to work as apprentices for three years before they can learn the necessary skills. However, Zou managed to become a professional within half a year due to his hard work.

In April 2014, he participated in a national construction competition and won the top prize. A year later, he represented China in the 43rd WorldSkills Competition in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"The competition really broadened my horizons and made me realize that there are many things to learn, such as how to use the latest technologies and tools in construction," Zou said.

Since being elected an NPC deputy, Zou has started to feel the responsibility of helping other migrant workers solve their problems.

"Many migrant workers have come to tell me their difficulties, like wage arrears, children's education and housing," he said. "I do my best to help them solve their problems."

Zou also wants to use the skills he gained in construction competitions to guide others, so he has set up workshops to teach the skills to others.

"Being an NPC deputy has helped me broaden my ways of thinking while providing better clarity regarding my construction work and ways to further improve my skills," he said. "To work toward a prosperous society, we need to work hard for ourselves and not just wait around for the government's help. If I can be successful, other people can make it too." (China Daily) ■



NPC deputy Zou Bin (R) speaks to another deputy from Hunan Province on March 9 during the second session of the 13th NPC. Wang Yuguo



The 43rd WorldSkills Competition is held in Sao Paulo, Brazil from August 11 to 16, 2015, attracting attention from people with vocational skills throughout the world. Zou Bin participates in the construction competition. Xu Zijian

# Internet tycoon calls for steps to boost Greater Bay Area

By Wang Yu and Cheng Yu

Chinese internet tycoon Pony Ma proposed building a development bank and a university for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area on the sidelines of the ongoing annual two sessions in Beijing on March 3.

Ma, Tencent's chairman and CEO, as well as a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, raised the idea that a Greater Bay Area development bank, if possible featuring fintech, the technology used to support financial products or services, would greatly facilitate convenience and industrial upgrading among cities within the area.

"(With such convenience), we hope that more foreign capital can be attracted to invest in technology and innovative industries," he said in his proposal.

He also suggested building a Greater Bay Area university with the aim of nurturing more high-end talents to drive the region's future development.

Zhang Jun, a professor at the School of Economics at Fudan University, said: "Finance and technology determine the future of the Greater Bay Area." Like the bay areas in San Francisco and New York, the combination of the two will be a key driver of the area's economic growth, he noted.

Ma's proposal calls for more efforts to be made to support innovation, upgrade high-end manufacturing and facilitate financial services within the area.

Ma pointed out that it is crucial for China, a global manufacturing hub, to upgrade its manufacturing capability.

"Therefore, it is of great significance for China to drive the industrial internet," he noted.

The industrial internet refers to the convergence of industrial systems with the power of advanced computing, analytics, and new levels of connectivity on assembly lines.

Wu Hequan, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said that Chinese companies are expected to shift their energy to the industrial internet, after leading the world in consumer-oriented applications.

In September, Tencent undertook major restructuring and announced that it was preparing to "embrace the industrial internet". It also pledged to share its research results in the field with industrial players.

The company's cloud computing technologies and solutions, for instance, have been used to promote the digital transformation of the country's top manufacturers. This has helped traditional manufacturing firms detect malfunctions and manage equipment in real time.

With regard to Tencent's overseas business expansion strategy, Ma disclosed that smart retailing will be a priority as millions of Chinese people travel overseas and make purchases using mobile payment.

Cloud computing services can be another priority for its overseas expansion plan since more Chinese companies expanding into overseas markets are in huge demand of cloud services including supercomputing and data storage. (China Daily) ■



The "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Cooperation Forum 2019" is held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center on March 25, with the theme of "Greater Bay Area: A New Era of Opportunities". Xie Guanglei





Aerial photo taken on October 13, 2018 shows the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. *Xinhua*





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