

NPC



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National People's Congress of China



**XI JINPING
UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED
CHINESE PRESIDENT,
PRC CMC CHAIRMAN**

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Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), talks with deputies to people's congresses at grassroots level in Wanzai Subdistrict of Xiangzhou District in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, on March 21. Pang Xinglei

Zhao Leji stresses need for in-depth research, studies in formulating legislative plan

Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, has stressed efforts to implement a Party-wide campaign of carrying out in-depth research and studies, and work well to formulate the legislative program of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC).

Chairman Zhao made the remarks during an inspection tour of the southern Guangdong Province from March 21 to 24.

Underscoring the importance of formulating the five-year legislative program, Zhao said legislative tasks should be set out in a well-conceived, reasonable and coordinated manner, and the major decisions and deployments of the CPC Central Committee should be implemented in the process.

He urged efforts to strengthen legislation in key and emerging fields and in foreign-related areas, and efforts to build a legal system that is essential to promote national governance, meet the people's increasing demand for better lives, and safeguard national security.

Zhao also called on NPC deputies to consider close contact with members of the public to be a basic requirement to perform their duties and work to help resolve problems of the greatest concern to the people. (Xinhua)





Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC, talks with representatives of villagers who have come back to their hometown to start up their businesses in Lianjiang Village of Lianzhou Town, Doumen District in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, on March 22. Pang Xinglai



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COVER: Xi Jinping, newly elected president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the PRC, makes a public pledge of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 10, 2023. Xi was unanimously elected president of the People's Republic of China and chairman of the CMC of the PRC at the third plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC on March 10. *Li Xueren*



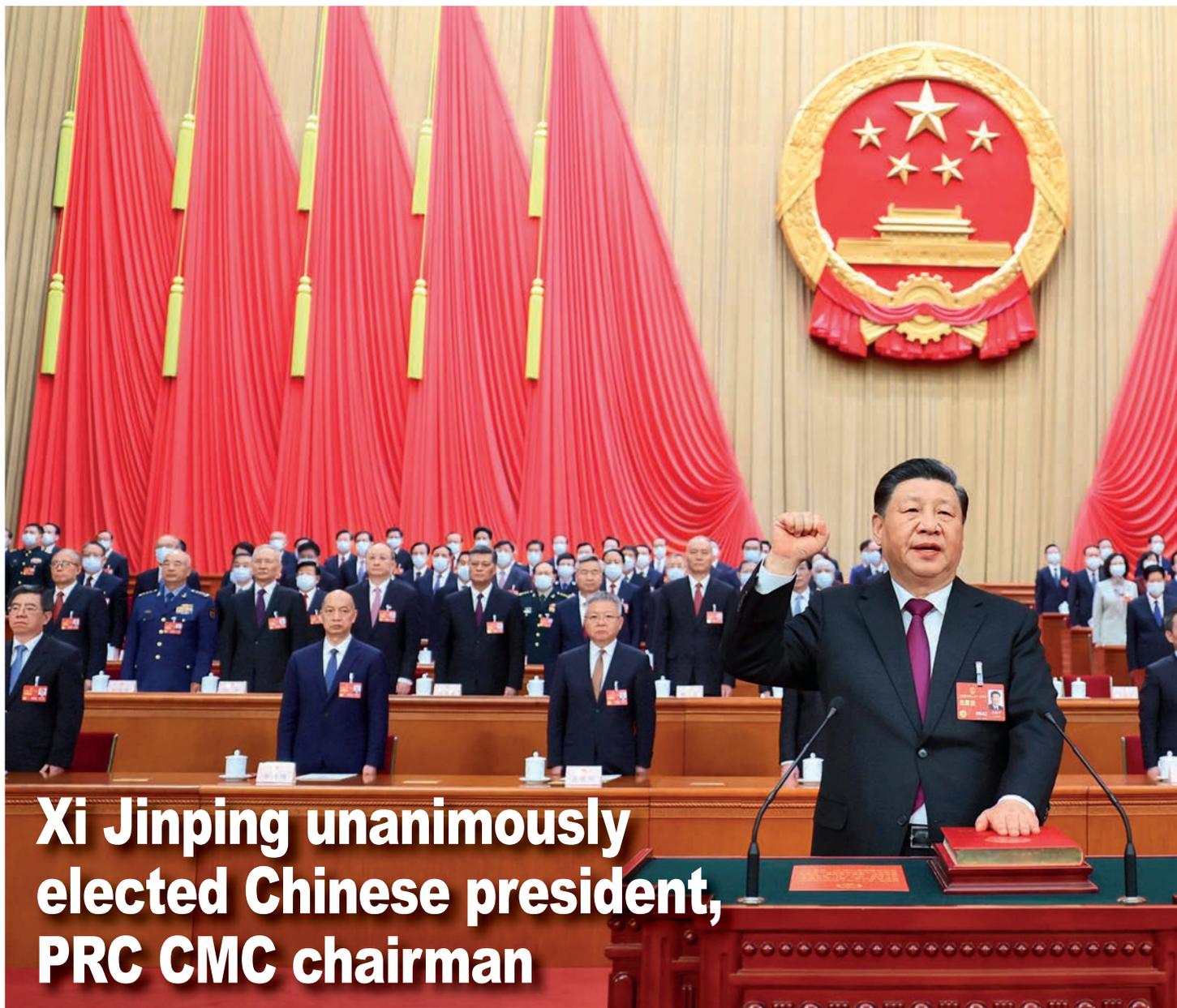
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Xi Jinping unanimously elected Chinese president, PRC CMC chairman

Xi Jinping, newly elected president of the PRC and chairman of the CMC of the PRC, makes a public pledge of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 10. *Ju Peng*

Xi Jinping was unanimously elected Chinese president on March 10 at the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), and will lead the country of 1.4 billion people onto a new journey toward modernization. He was also elected chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) by a unanimous vote.

A total of 2,952 deputies were present at the NPC's third plenary meeting of the first session on the morning of March 10 to exercise their constitutional right to elect China's state leadership. The voting was anonymous.

Thunderous applause broke out throughout the Great

Under Xi's leadership, the world's second-largest economy is marching on a model of modernization that has not been seen before.



Hall of the People in Beijing when the results of the elections were announced. Xi, donning a dark suit with a burgundy tie, rose from his seat and bowed to lawmakers.

Born in 1953, Xi joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in January 1974, and became the Party branch secretary of the Liangjiahe Brigade in rural Shaanxi Province, later that same year.

He then embarked on a journey across China, working in different provinces and municipalities, and rising from the grassroots level to the helm of the Party and state.

Xi was first elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and named CPC CMC chairman in November 2012. He was then elected Chinese president and PRC CMC

chairman in March 2013.

“Over the past 10 years, we have overcome one obstacle after another and created miracle upon miracle,” said NPC deputy Chen Zhen, head of the Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. “Most importantly, the people are happier, feel safer than ever and have a stronger sense of fulfillment under his leadership.”

At the Sixth Plenary of the 19th CPC Central Committee in 2021 Xi Jinping’s core position on the CPC Central Committee and in the Party as a whole was established, as well as the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Experts believe this decision was further consolidated by the election of Xi as Chinese president and PRC CMC chairman.

The assembly was underscored by a ceremony where Xi and other newly elected state leaders pledged allegiance to China’s Constitution. After the national anthem was sung by all, Xi placed his left hand on a copy of the Constitution and held up his right fist.

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

Under his leadership, the world’s second-largest economy is marching on a model of modernization that has not been seen before. In the past decade, China’s gross domestic product has grown to 121 trillion yuan (about 17.37 trillion U.S. dollars) from 53.9 trillion yuan in 2012.

The Chinese economy has come to account for over 18 percent of the world economy over the past 10 years, while its contribution to the world’s economic growth has averaged over 30 percent.

In addition, the country has eradicated absolute poverty and built the largest education, social security and health-care systems in the world. China’s average life expectancy has increased from 74.8 to 78.2 years over the past decade, while there have been historic, transformative and comprehensive changes in ecological and environmental protection.

China has achieved an overwhelming victory and fully consolidated the gains in the fight against corruption, while the country’s military has been through an all-around revolutionary restructuring, becoming a much more modern and capable fighting force.

The country has also joined the ranks of the world’s innovators. It has created a miracle in human history, where a highly populous nation successfully pulled through a pandemic while maintaining social stability and steady economic development.

“The elections will ensure that there is a steady hand at the helm, which will serve China well, particularly in this new era of new challenges,” said Josef Gregory Mahoney, a professor of politics at East China Normal University in Shanghai.

“President Xi has led us out of poverty,” said Peng Xiaying, a resident of Shenshan village in Jiangxi Province. “Now we put our faith in him to bring an even better life for all.” (Xinhua) ■

Xi Jinping pools mighty force for building great country, national rejuvenation



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers a speech at the closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 13. *Yan Yan*

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for forming a mighty force for building a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation on March 13, as the curtains closed on the annual Two Sessions, which started a new chapter of Chinese modernization with a competent leadership and detailed policies.

From today until mid-century, the central task of the entire Communist Party of China (CPC) and all Chinese people will be to build China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts, said Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), at the closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC).

"The relay baton of building a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation has been historically passed on to our generation," said Xi, who was unanimously elected Chinese president and chairman of the People's Republic of China CMC at the session on March 10.

Xi stressed accelerating Chinese modernization in accordance with the strategic decisions made at the 20th CPC National Congress. "The people's trust is the biggest motivation that drives me to march on and is a great responsibility I shoulder," Xi said. "I will faithfully fulfill my responsibilities bestowed by the Constitution, with the nation's needs as my mission and the people's interests my yardstick."

Xi pledged to perform his duty scrupulously, do his utmost and prove worthy of the trust of the NPC deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups. On the new journey ahead, China will unswervingly advance high-quality development, he said.

The country should fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts and accelerate efforts to

create a new pattern of development, he added, calling for fully implementing the strategy of invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy and the innovation-driven development strategy.

China should work to achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology, promote industrial transformation and upgrading, advance coordinated urban-rural and regional development, and foster green and low-carbon economic and social development, Xi said.

Efforts should also be made to effectively upgrade and appropriately expand the economy and continuously increase the country's economic strength, scientific and technological capabilities and composite national strength, he added.

Emphasizing the need to put the people first on the new journey, Xi said the people are the decisive force in building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. He urged efforts to actively develop whole-process people's democracy and uphold the unity of the CPC leadership, the running of the country by the people and law-based governance.

He added that a people-centered philosophy of development must be implemented so that the gains of modernization will benefit all people fairly and that more notable and substantive progress will be made in promoting prosperity for all.

Xi also emphasized strengthening and expanding the

President Xi said the people are the decisive force in building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.



The closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 13. Liu Jinhai



The closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 13. Yue Yuwei

great unity of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and abroad. “By doing so, we will mobilize all favorable factors and form a mighty force that will facilitate the building of a great modern socialist country and the advancement of national rejuvenation,” Xi said.

Stressing better coordinated development and security, Xi noted that security is the bedrock of development, while stability is a prerequisite for prosperity. He underscored the need to pursue a holistic approach to national security, improve the national security system, strengthen China’s capacity for safeguarding national security, enhance public safety governance, improve the social governance system and safeguard China’s new development pattern with a new security architecture.

Xi called for efforts to advance the modernization of national defense and the armed forces on all fronts, and to build the people’s armed forces into a “Great Wall of steel” that is capable of effectively safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests.

He stressed solid efforts in advancing the “one country, two systems” policy and the cause of national reunification. He highlighted the need to fully, faithfully and resolutely implementing the policy of “one country, two systems,” where the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong and the people of Macao administer Macao, both with a high degree of autonomy.

Xi underscored the importance of remaining committed to law-based governance in Hong Kong and Macao, and supporting the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the Macao SAR in growing their economies, improving people’s lives and better integrating themselves into the country’s overall development.

China’s development benefits the world and China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world.

Regarding Taiwan, he emphasized adhering to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, actively promoting the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, resolutely opposing external interference and “Taiwan independence” separatist activities and firmly advancing the process of national reunification.

Pledging efforts to promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, Xi said China’s development benefits the world, and it cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world. Stressing that China will make concrete efforts to advance high-standard opening up, he said the country will not only leverage global markets and resources for its own development, but also promote global development.

“We will be dedicated to peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit; stand firmly on the right side of history; practice true multilateralism; and uphold the shared values of humanity,” Xi said.

He added that China will play an active role in the reform and development of the global governance system, contribute its share to building an open world economy, advance the implementation of the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, add more stability and positive energy to peaceful global development and foster a favorable international environment for China’s development.

In addition, Xi stressed upholding CPC leadership and the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, adding that it is important to stay alert and determined to tackle the special challenges that a large party like the CPC faces.

He underlined the importance of always having the courage to carry out self-reform, unceasingly conduct full and rig-

orous Party self-governance and resolutely fight corruption.

Efforts are also needed to always maintain the Party's solidarity and unity, and ensure that the CPC will never change its nature, conviction or character, so as to provide a firm guarantee for building China into a great modern socialist country and realizing national rejuvenation, Xi added. (Xinhua) ■

Highlights of Xi's speech at closing meeting of 14th NPC session

President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on March 13.

Here are the highlights.

Xi says people's trust is the biggest motivation for him to forge ahead

"I will faithfully fulfill my responsibilities bestowed by the Constitution, with the nation's needs as my mission and the people's interests my yardstick," he said.

Xi pledged to perform his duty scrupulously, do his utmost, and prove worthy of the trust of all NPC deputies and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups.

Xi stresses contributing to building great country, national rejuvenation

From this day forward to the mid-21st century, the central task of the entire Communist Party of China (CPC) and all Chinese people will be to build China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts, he said.

"The relay baton of building a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation has been historically passed on to our generation," he said.

Xi stresses unswervingly advancing high-quality development

The country should fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts and accelerate efforts to create a new pattern of development, he said.

He called for fully implementing the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy and the innovation-driven development strategy.

Xi emphasizes putting people first on new journey

It is a must to put the people first on the new journey of building China into a great modern socialist country and advancing national rejuvenation, he said.

The people are the decisive force in building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects, he said.

Xi stresses better coordinating development, security

"Security is the bedrock of development, while stability is a prerequisite for prosperity," he said.

Xi underscored the need to pursue a holistic approach to national security, improve the national security system, strengthen China's capacity for safeguarding national security, enhance public safety governance, improve the social governance system, and safeguard China's new development pattern with a new security architecture.

Xi stresses advancing "one country, two systems," national reunification

He stressed the need to fully, faithfully and resolutely implement the policy of "one country, two systems," under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong and the people of Macao administer Macao, both with a high degree of autonomy.

He stressed adhering to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, actively promoting the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, resolutely opposing external interference and "Taiwan independence" separatist activities, and firmly advancing the process of national reunification.

Xi stresses building human community with shared future

China's development benefits the world and China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, he said.

"We will be dedicated to peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, stand firmly on the right side of history, practice true multilateralism, and uphold the shared values of humanity," he said.

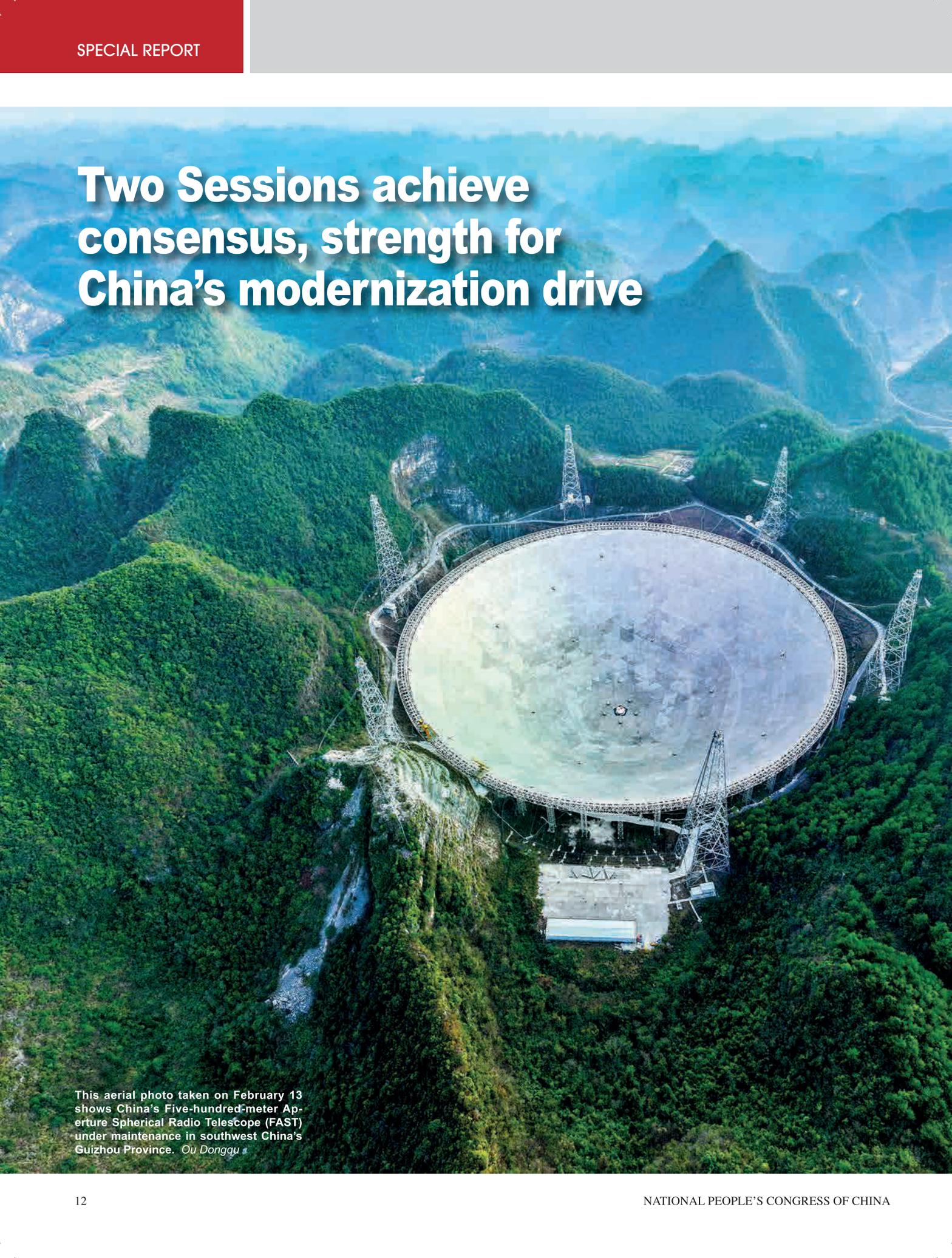
Xi stresses upholding leadership of CPC

It is important to stay alert and determined to tackle the special challenges that a large party like the CPC faces, he said.

He underlined the importance of always having the courage to carry out self-reform, conducting full and rigorous Party self-governance unceasingly, and fighting corruption resolutely.

(chinadaily.com.cn)

Two Sessions achieve consensus, strength for China's modernization drive



This aerial photo taken on February 13 shows China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) under maintenance in southwest China's Guizhou Province. *Ou Donggu*



For any China observer, the 2023 Two Sessions provided a golden opportunity to get a glimpse at how the country's grand blueprint for modernization turns into policies and actions. As development and reform priorities were reviewed and discussed by over 5,000 national lawmakers and political advisors, ranging from farmers to state leaders, the annual meetings of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), served to build consensus and pool strength for the country's modernization drive.

This year's Two Sessions took place after the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October 2022, which laid out major policies and strategic plans for building a modern socialist country in all respects. From common prosperity to high-quality development, the CPC vision and the will of the people converged at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on the action plan for modernization.

Prosperity for all

An array of development tasks for 2023 were mapped out in a government work report with a focus on steady and quality growth for the economy, submitted for deliberation to the NPC, China's top legislature.

The report unveiled a target for the Chinese economy to

President Xi Jinping said Chinese modernization is the modernization of common prosperity for all.

expand by about 5 percent this year, faster than the 3 percent recorded in 2022. Other objectives included creating about 12 million urban jobs, keeping the consumer price index increase at about 3 percent and generally raising personal income in step with economic growth.

On March 10, the NPC approved a plan for reforming State Council institutions, which focuses on optimizing and adjusting their responsibilities in order to enhance governance capacity and efficiency.

While these moves will make a difference in advancing China's modernization, the most challenging tasks remain in rural areas, which are generally less developed than urban areas.

Dong Jianxin, Party secretary of Yuangudui Village in Dingxi of Gansu Province, said an affluent life, prosperous industries, a desirable environment to live in, and a stable and safe society full of goodwill were his vision of modernity. Yuangudui was one of the 128,000 villages that was removed from the national poverty list since 2012 thanks to China's vigorous fight against poverty. Dong, also an NPC deputy, contributed his wisdom to revitalizing the countryside at the Two Sessions, putting forward suggestions on attracting talents to rural regions and boosting rural tourism.

According to the government work report, China should



This photo taken on December 9, 2022, shows the delivery ceremony of the first C919 large passenger aircraft in Shanghai, east China. *Ding Ting*

foster rural industries with local features to create more channels for increasing rural incomes, while consolidating and expanding the achievements made in poverty alleviation to prevent large-scale relapse into poverty.

Chinese modernization is common prosperity for all, said President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, at a joint group meeting of national political advisors on March 6.

In the eastern province of Zhejiang, at a demonstration zone to basically achieve common prosperity by 2035, local authorities are trying out various programs to narrow the urban-rural income gap and ensure that no one is left behind amid China's modernization drive.

Zhang Tianren, Party secretary of Xinchuan Village in Changxing County of Zhejiang, is leading villagers to develop rural tourism, leisure agriculture and a homestay economy that will shift away from a reliance on resource-intensive industries that have resulted in environmental damages.

To achieve common prosperity, targeted efforts must be made to foster industry clusters and chains, said Zhang, also an NPC deputy. "The road to common prosperity is bound to feature green and sound development that brings happiness to the people."

The government work report pledges 'encouraging and supporting the private sector and private businesses in growing and expanding.'

Quality development

High-quality development is the "first and foremost" task in China's modernization bid, entailing development that is innovative, coordinated, green, open and accessible to all.

In this context, China has placed innovation at the heart of its modernization drive. One eye-catching move in the country's reform of State Council institutions is the restructuring of the Ministry of Science and Technology to better allocate resources for overcoming challenges in key and core technologies.

The reform also includes setting up a national data bureau to coordinate the integration, sharing, development and application of data resources, a key asset in a modern economy.

Building self-reliance and strength in science and technology is key to building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects within the set time frame, Xi said during deliberations with lawmakers from Jiangsu Province at the Two Sessions.

In addition, in its pursuit of high-quality development, China is trailblazing a new path toward harmony between humanity and nature. To embrace green development, the CPPCC, China's top political advisory body, set up a new sector on the environment and resources this year to pool wisdom for the country's transition to a more eco-friendly and sustainable road.

The move is a solid step toward promoting environmental conservation and high-quality development, said Yu Guodong, a national political advisor from the new sector. Yu put forward five proposals this year regarding such issues as zero-waste cities and biodiversity conservation. "I look forward to working with my fellow advisors to contribute to promoting harmony between humanity and nature," he said.

The role of the private sector in pursuing high-quality development was also highlighted. The government work report pledged to "encourage and support the private sector and private businesses to grow and expand."

Private firms should take the initiative to pursue high-quality development, Xi said during the joint group meeting with national political advisors, stressing that private enterprises and entrepreneurs "belong to our own family."

"The Party and the government remain committed to supporting the private sector. Neither the direction nor intensity of supportive policies has changed," said Liu Yonghao, chairman of China's agricultural conglomerate New Hope Group and a national political advisor.

Private enterprises can contribute greatly to the development of Chinese modernization, said Wang Yu, board chairman of Spring Airlines and a national political advisor.

"With strong confidence in an overall stable business environment, companies will expand investment and explore new markets, effectively stimulating entrepreneurship and fully unleashing market vitality and driving forces for devel-

opment," Wang said.

NPC deputies represent a broad cross-section of the population, with every region, ethnic group and sector of society having an appropriate number of representatives. National political advisors come from diverse backgrounds. They all have one common aspiration: to make the largest scale modernization drive in human history a reality.

As of March 5, Chinese lawmakers submitted over 8,000 suggestions to the legislative session, while some 5,400 proposals were put forward by national political advisors to the advisory session. The suggestions and proposals covered a wide range of issues, such as development of the real economy, pollution control and accessibility to high-quality medical resources.

"Only when all the people work together with one heart and one mind, unite as one and have the courage and ability to carry out our fight, will we continue to win new and greater victories," Xi emphasized. (Xinhua) ■

Xi Jinping stresses healthy, high-quality development of private sector

President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, urged proper guidance for the healthy and high-quality development of the private sector at a joint group meeting with national political advisors on March 6.

During a meeting with national political advisors from the China National Democratic Construction Association and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, attending the First Session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, he listened to their comments and suggestions.

Xi stressed that the CPC Central Committee has always unswervingly consolidated and developed the public sector, while unswervingly encouraging, supporting and guiding the development of the non-public sector.

The CPC Central Committee maintains that the non-public sector's status and functions in the country's economic and social development have not changed, the principle and policies to unswervingly encourage, support and guide the development of the sector have not changed and the principle and policies to provide a sound environment and more opportunities to the sector have not changed, Xi said.

He added that the CPC Central Committee continues to believe that private enterprises and entrepreneurs "belong to our own family." (Xinhua)



A worker waters seedlings using an automatic sprinkler system at a seedling breeding base in Guandong Township of Congjiang County in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, southwest China's Guizhou Province, on February 15. Spring ploughing and seedling raising have started in the prefecture recently as temperature gradually rises. *Yang Wenbin*

Xi Jinping stresses high-quality development in China's modernization drive

Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed that high-quality development is the first and foremost task in building a modern socialist country in all respects during deliberations with his fellow deputies from the delegation of Jiangsu Province at the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5.

Efforts should be made to fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts and better coordinate the effective quality upgrade with the appropriate expansion in quantity in economic development, said Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Central Military Commission chairman.

The country must unswervingly deepen reform and opening up, and transform the development model to accelerate the formation of sustainable institutions and mechanisms for high-quality development, Xi said, adding that China's development must serve to continuously strengthen the people's sense of fulfillment, happiness and security.

He spoke approvingly of the government work report and acknowledged Jiangsu's achievements in the past five years in various areas, including economic and social development, and Party building.



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, takes part in a deliberation with his fellow deputies from the delegation of Jiangsu Province, at the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 5. *Huang Jingwen*

Speeding up efforts to achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology is the path China must take to advance high-quality development, Xi stressed. It should rely on scientific and technological innovation to open up new development areas and arenas, and foster new growth drivers and strengths amid fierce international competition.

In addition, Xi said that building self-reliance and strength in science and technology is key to building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects within the set time frame.

He called for accelerating the implementation of the in-



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, poses for a group photo with deputies from the delegation of the PLA and the People's Armed Police Force before attending a plenary meeting of the delegation during the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 8. *Li Gang*

Xi Jinping highlights enhancing integrated national strategies, strategic capabilities

President Xi Jinping stressed opening new ground for enhancing integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities during a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed Police Force at the First Session of the 14th Na-

novation-driven development strategy; furthering cooperation among industries, universities and research institutes; supporting top scientists to lead original and pioneering research to achieve scientific and technological breakthroughs; and ensuring self-reliance in major areas and key links.

Efforts must also be made to build industrial science and technology innovation centers with global influence, while deepening scientific and technological system reform, he told the NPC deputies.

Xi noted that accelerating the establishment of a new development pattern is the strategic priority in pursuing high-quality development, calling for efforts to integrate the implementation of the strategy of expanding domestic demand with deepening supply-side structural reform, and modernize the industrial system more quickly.

Noting that the real economy should be the focus in seeking economic development, Xi stressed advancing reforms in key areas, coordinating the building of a modern infrastructure system and a high-standard market system, and expanding institutional opening up.

He underscored that strong agriculture is the foundation of a great modern socialist country, while promoting agricultural modernization is an essential requirement for achieving high-quality development.

China must take concrete moves to ensure the stable and secure supply of grains and major farm produce, Xi said, adding that it should foster and develop new industries and new forms of business in rural areas and broaden channels for farmers to increase their incomes and get rich. In addition, he said that China should speed up the building of a beautiful

and harmonious countryside that is desirable to live and work in.

The country also needs to both improve science and technology and advance reforms in order to add impetus and vitality to agricultural and rural development, Xi stressed.

He noted that the people's happiness and wellbeing are the ultimate goals of promoting high-quality development. Primary-level governance and ensuring people's wellbeing are crucial to the people's immediate interests and fundamental to advancing common prosperity and building high-quality lives. He called on Party committees and governments at all levels to bear in mind these tasks and strive to accomplish them at all times, so as to yield concrete results.

Xi emphasized the need to enhance the system of basic public services, noting that efforts ought to be made to facilitate the employment of key groups, regulate the distribution of incomes and improve the social security system and elderly and underage group services.

He added that COVID-19 prevention and control work in the new phase must be carried out in a solid and meticulous manner, and underscored the need to continuously enhance China's systems of public health, disease prevention and control, and medical services.

To advance high-quality development, it is also a must to uphold and strengthen the Party's overall leadership and ensure the Party's full and rigorous self-governance, Xi emphasized. (Xinhua)

tional People's Congress on March 8.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, said that consolidating and enhancing integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities has profound significance in building a modern socialist country in all respects and advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts, as well as in achieving the goals for the PLA centenary in 2027 and more quickly elevating the armed forces to world-class standards.

Highlighting the goal of maximizing China's national strategic capabilities, Xi called for efforts to integrate the strategic layouts, resources and strengths in all areas, in order to systematically upgrade the country's overall strength to cope with strategic risks, safeguard strategic interests and realize strategic objectives.

Xi urged efforts to advance collaborative innovation in science and technology, with a focus on independent and original innovation, thus building high-level self-reliance and strength in science and technology at a faster pace.

Strategic capabilities in emerging fields must be bolstered in pursuit of new advantages in national development and international competition, while industrial and supply chain resilience must be enhanced, he stressed.

Xi also called for coordinating the construction of major infrastructure, accelerating the building of national reserves and making the reserves more capable of safeguarding national security.

Consolidating and enhancing integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities must draw momentum from reform and innovation, he said, urging more progress in this regard.

In addition, he called for efforts to foster a sound environment of taking care of, being devoted to, and building and safeguarding national defense among members of the public to pool strengths for consolidating and enhancing integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities and building a strong country with a strong military. (Xinhua)

十四届全国人大一次会议记者会

Press Conference for the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress



Premier Li Qiang meets the press after the closing of the First Session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 13. Vice premiers Ding Xuexiang, He Lifeng, Zhang Guoqing and Liu Guozhong attended the press conference. Yue Yuewei

China's new premier confident in economy, pledges greater opening up

China's new premier voiced full confidence in the country's economic outlook despite challenges and pledged to further expand opening up regardless of external changes on March 13.

Citing the many factors of uncertainty and instability facing the global economy, Premier Li Qiang told reporters that stabilizing economic growth this year is a challenging task not just for China but for all countries.

It is "no easy task and requires redoubled efforts" to achieve the economic growth target of about 5 percent in 2023 on a high base of economic output and amid new chal-

lenges, Li said during a press conference at the conclusion of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress, the national legislature.

However, the premier assured that China's development is supported by multiple advantages, including a vast market, a complete industrial system, abundant human resources, a solid foundation for development and most importantly, notable institutional strength.

"I believe the Chinese economy will brave the wind and waves, and sail toward a brighter future. I'm full of confidence in that," he said, noting that the Chinese economy has

been stabilizing and picking up in the first two months of 2023.

Pursue progress while ensuring stability

China will keep to the general principles of prioritizing stability and pursuing progress while ensuring stability, and push for a turnaround in the country's overall economic performance this year, Li told reporters.

"Regarding stability, the emphasis will be placed on ensuring stable growth, employment and prices, while the key to seeking progress lies in making new advancements in high-quality development," he said.

China will make good use of policy combinations in the areas of leveraging macro policies, expanding demand, advancing reform and innovation, and preventing and defusing risks, according to the premier.

He also vowed to create a level playing field for all kinds of business entities, while further supporting private enterprises to grow and thrive. "The private sector will enjoy a better environment and broader space for development," Li said, stressing that China's commitment to private sector development is unequivocal and steadfast.

Meanwhile, the premier dismissed concerns over China's demographic change, saying the country's "demographic dividend" has not disappeared and that its "talent dividend" is in the making.

"To assess the demographic dividend, we will not only look at the sheer size of the population, but also at the scale of the high-caliber workforce," he said, noting that more than 240 million people have received higher education in China and the average length of education of workforce newcomers has increased to 14 years.

People-centered development

Li said the ultimate goal of the work of the Party and the government is to improve the people's wellbeing, thus he vowed there will be efforts in various sectors regarding the people's livelihood, from employment to rural development.

With 11.58 million college graduates expected to enter the workforce this year, China will continue to pursue an employment-first strategy and increase support in terms of employment services and technical training, the premier noted.

Meanwhile, Li said rural revitalization should be advanced across the board, while different localities should develop the countryside based on their local conditions.

The country will further increase its grain production capacity by focusing on arable land and seeds, Li said, noting that China's food security is "well guaranteed on the whole."

"The government will make sure that the rice bowls of 1.4 billion Chinese people will always be firmly held in our own hands," he stressed.

The premier also pledged efforts to strengthen governance by further transforming government functions and improving efficiency and conduct. He encouraged officials at all levels to engage more with local communities to learn about what the people need and seek their opinions on the work of the government.

"We need to learn from the people and help the people at the grassroots solve problems," Li said.



Premier Li Qiang meets the press after the closing of the First Session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 13. *Liu Bin*

China will make good use of policy combinations in the areas of leveraging macro policies, expanding demand, advancing reform and innovation, and preventing and defusing risks, according to the premier.

Door to open wider

This year marks the 45th anniversary of China's reform and opening up, which has not only developed China but also influenced the world, Li said, adding that China will further expand opening up in alignment with high-standard international trade rules and open its door wider to the world with a better business environment and services.

"Opening up is a basic Chinese state policy and no matter how the external situation evolves, China will stick to pursuing this policy," the premier told the press, stressing that the country welcomes investors from all over the world.

China has remained a favored destination for global investment, Li said, citing statistics that foreign direct investment into the Chinese mainland, in actual use, reached a record high of more than 189 billion U.S. dollars in 2022.

Commenting on China-U.S. relations, the premier refuted the U.S. hype on "decoupling" from China, saying that the two countries can and must cooperate, and by working together will achieve a lot. "Encirclement and suppression are in no one's interests," he said, noting that the two countries are closely intertwined economically and have benefited from each other's development.

Promote cross-Strait exchanges, support HK, Macao

In terms of cross-Strait cooperation and communication, Li said the early restoration of normal exchanges and regular cooperation between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is a shared aspiration that requires joint efforts.

The Chinese mainland will continue to promote economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation across the Straits on the basis of the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, he said, adding that he hoped more Taiwan compatriots and

businesses come to the mainland.

“We hope they are not only willing to come to the mainland, but are also able to integrate into the local communities and achieve better development,” Li said.

The premier also voiced confidence in the prospects of Hong Kong and Macao, saying that the two regions will enjoy an even brighter future since the central government will give them full support in integrating into the country’s overall development, growing their economy, improving people’s livelihood and further advancing their global competitiveness. (Xinhua) ■

Highlights from Premier Li Qiang’s news conference

Premier Li Qiang meets reporters at home and abroad at a news conference on March 13 at the end of the annual meeting of the National People’s Congress.

Here are some of the highlights:

On new government’s focus

- People’s aspirations for a better life is the ultimate goal
- To focus on promoting high-quality development
- To continue to deepen reform, opening up

On economy

- Redoubling efforts to reach 2023 GDP growth target
- Full confidence in China’s economic outlook
- Institutional strength is an advantage for China’s economic development

On Hong Kong & Macao

- The central government will fully implement the policy of One Country, Two Systems

On private sector

- Continue to support private enterprises according to market-based, law-based standards

- Private enterprises to enjoy better environment, broader space for development

On employment

- Continue to pursue an employment-first strategy and increase government support to boost employment
- Rich supply of human resources remains China’s notable strength

On COVID-19

- China’s COVID-19 response completely right, highly effective
- Adjusted and improved COVID response measures good for nation, medical services will be strengthened

On Taiwan

- Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Straits are members of one family
- Early restoration of normal exchanges across Straits requires joint efforts

On rural revitalization, food security

- Rural revitalization drive will focus on the ecological, social and cultural aspects of the countryside apart from promoting economic growth
- Food security well guaranteed

On opening-up and China-U.S. ties

- Opening-up is a basic state policy for China, and no matter how the external situation may evolve, the country will stay firmly committed to pursuing the policy
- China-U.S. consensus needs to be translated into policies, actions
- China and the U.S. can and must cooperate

On governance

- Premier spells out four key tasks to strengthen governance
(chinadaily.com.cn)



VCG

China targets faster, quality growth amid push for recovery, modernization



Tourists enjoy themselves at an observation deck at Daxi Village of Yongtai County, southeast China's Fujian Province, on February 24. Ancient villages in Yongtai County have been attracting many tourists as plum trees are in blossom. *Jiang Kehong*

China aims to achieve a faster economic growth of about 5 percent with better development quality in 2023, as the world's second-largest economy gathers steam to build up recovery momentum and push ahead with its modernization drive.

The projected target, higher than the 3-percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth recorded last year, is one of the key objectives for development laid out in the government work report delivered by then Premier Li Keqiang to the National People's Congress (NPC) annual session on March 5.

The world is closely watching for new policy moves on China's development as national lawmakers and political advisors convened for the first annual Two Sessions since the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of Chi-

na (CPC) in October 2022. Meanwhile, the country's quick recovery from COVID-19 has raised hopes for wider global growth, adding to the event's significance.

Delivering steady and quality growth is the key to realizing the CPC's grand blueprint for building a great modern socialist country by mid-century.

"It is imperative to maintain reasonable long-term economic growth while ensuring better quality and efficiency, and to sustain our miraculous achievements of fast economic growth and long-term social stability," a separate report submitted by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) on March 5 said, regarding the 20th CPC National Congress vision of increasing the country's per capita GDP to be on par with that of a mid-level developed country

by 2035.

The growth target of about 5 percent “is necessary to ensure stable growth, employment and prices,” according to the NDRC report on the implementation of the 2022 plan for national economic and social development and the 2023 draft plan.

“It will be a positive signal to the market and will bolster confidence, guide expectations, expand employment, improve living standards, and prevent and defuse risks while pursuing development,” the NDRC report said.

This year’s GDP target is also consistent with the growth potential of the current Chinese economy, and with the capability of resources and production factors to support the economy, according to the report.

“For China, 2023 is a year of economic comeback,” said Liu Shouying, dean of the School of Economics at Renmin University of China.

While the annual GDP target is an appropriate growth pace required to stabilize expectations and economic expansion, it also indicates that the Chinese economy will continue to focus on high-quality development, Liu said.

Reviving growth

China’s economy is staging a steady recovery, with marked improvement in consumer demand, market distribution, industrial production and business expectations, the premier said, noting that the economy is demonstrating vast potential and momentum for further growth.

The recovery can be seen and felt in the busy streets, crowded cinemas and restaurants, and shopping sprees both online and in stores. The latest official data showed that manufacturing activity has returned to the highest level in more than a decade, foreign investment growth rebounded and monthly new bank lending surged beyond expectations.

While acknowledging past achievements, Li cautioned of difficulties and challenges confronting the economy, including rising uncertainties in the external environment, insufficient domestic demand, and risks and hidden dangers in the real estate market.

It is important to “give priority to ensuring stable growth, employment and prices” this year, Li told lawmakers. In 2023, China aims to create about 12 million new urban jobs, with a surveyed urban unemployment rate of about 5.5 percent, according to the government work report. Other annual objectives include keeping the consumer price index increase at about 3 percent and grain output above 650 million tons.

In addition, the government work report unveiled a raft of measures to shore up growth this year, including a projected deficit-to-GDP ratio of 3 percent, 0.2 percentage points higher than the 2022 level, and 3.8 trillion yuan (about 549.8 billion U.S. dollars) of special purpose bonds to be allocated to local governments.

The report also called for making the prudent monetary policy targeted and forceful, noting that the M2 money supply and aggregate financing should increase generally in step with nominal economic growth to support the real economy.



A local farmer dressed up in traditional Tibetan costume pilots an agricultural machine at a spring plowing ceremony held in Changga Village, Linzhou County of southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, on March 16. *Zhang Rufeng*

Moreover, to expand domestic demand, China will prioritize the recovery and expansion of consumption, the report said, noting that urban and rural resident incomes will be boosted through multiple channels.

“China’s economy will turn for the better on the whole and its growth rate is more likely than not to reach a normal level,” said economist Yu Miaojie, president of Liaoning University and an NPC deputy.

International institutions and investment banks have raised their predictions for China’s growth. In late January, the International Monetary Fund lifted its forecast for China’s growth in 2023 to 5.2 percent, up from 4.4 percent.

Quality matters

While giving weight to economic growth, the Chinese government will not seek growth at all costs. Instead, it wants a greener and more efficient economy. Li once again underscored efforts to pursue high-quality development, outlining policy priorities such as accelerating the modernization of the industrial system and promoting the transition to a green development pattern.

China aims to reduce energy consumption per GDP unit by about 2 percent this year and “will strive for better results in actual work,” according to the NDRC report. It also unveiled the objectives for continued discharge reductions of major pollutants, stronger control over the consumption of fossil fuels and steady improvements in the natural environment.

On boosting the country’s technological strength, Li urged pooling quality resources and making concerted efforts to achieve breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields. He also called for efforts to make traditional industries and small and medium-sized enterprises more advanced, smarter and more eco-friendly.

Amid severe challenges resulting from rising protectionism and COVID-19 flare-ups in the past few years, China has avoided overreliance on investment as a means of boosting economic growth, but stayed focused on helping market entities overcome difficulties and achieve growth.

“We have taken decisive measures to step up macro policy support while refraining from adopting a deluge of strong stimulus policies that would eat into our potential for future growth,” Li said.

High-quality development is deemed “the first and foremost” task in China’s modernization endeavor. President Xi Jinping has stressed that instead of taking GDP growth as the sole criterion for success, China is now focusing more on improving the quality and efficiency of growth.

As part of better development quality, China has seen increased spending on research and development in the past five years, with reduced energy intensity and carbon emissions, according to the government work report.

“A modern China should be one with high-quality development,” said Han Baojiang, director of the economics department of the National Academy of Governance and a national political advisor.

“Only by placing equal emphasis on growth and quality, and creating a strong synergy for high-quality development can we build a solid economic foundation for Chinese modernization,” Han said. (Xinhua) ■

Main projected targets for 2023 development

The government work report was adopted on March 13 at the first session of the 14th National People’s Congress. The report proposes the main targets for development in 2023 as follows:

- GDP growth of about 5 percent
 - about 12 million new urban jobs
 - surveyed urban unemployment rate of about 5.5 percent
 - CPI increase of about 3 percent
 - growth in personal income that is generally in step with economic growth
 - steady increases in both the volume and quality of imports and exports
 - a basic equilibrium in the balance of payments
 - grain output of over 650 million metric tons
 - continued reductions in energy consumption per unit of GDP and in the discharge of major pollutants, with priority on controlling fossil fuel consumption
 - steady improvements in the quality of the eco-environment
- (Xinhua)



The opening meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 5. Wang Yuguo

Zhao Leji elected chairman of 14th NPC Standing Committee

Zhao Leji was elected chairman of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee at the First Session of the 14th NPC on March 10.

Zhao Leji is of Han ethnicity and was born in March 1957 in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. He began working in September 1974 and joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in July 1975. He graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Peking University, where he majored in philosophy. He received a graduate education at the Central Party School.

Zhao is currently a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 20th CPC Central Committee. (Xinhua) ■

Newly-elected vice chairpersons and secretary-general of the Standing Committee of the 14th NPC make a public pledge of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 10. *Zhai Jianlan*



Zhao Leji makes a public pledge of allegiance to the Constitution at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 10. Zhao was elected chairman of the 14th NPC Standing Committee on March 10 at the third plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC. *Ding Lin*





Zhao Leji (R, front) shakes hands with Li Zhanshu, chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, at the third plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 10. Zhao was elected chairman of the 14th NPC Standing Committee at the NPC's annual session on March 10. *Li Xueren*

The ceremony for newly elected state leaders to pledge allegiance to the country's Constitution is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 10. *Liu Jinhai*



Zhao Leji attends deliberations at annual legislative session

Joining the deliberation with deputies from the Sichuan Province delegation on March 5, Zhao Leji, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, called on the National People's Congress (NPC) legislators to thoroughly study and implement the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress and contribute to building a modern socialist country in all respects.

Zhao said the NPC deputies should uphold the overall leadership of the Party, particularly the centralized, unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, and follow Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as their guides to action.

The NPC deputies, representing the interests and will of the people, should exercise state power in accordance with

the law and improve their ability to perform their duties, Zhao said, urging them to keep the people uppermost in their minds.

Moreover, in two separate deliberations with NPC deputies from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions (SARs) on March 7, Zhao stressed that reality has proven that the policy of One country, Two systems is a great innovation of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

He said the policy has proven to be the best institutional arrangement for ensuring sustained prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao after their return to the motherland, adding that it must be adhered to over the long term.

Zhao called on the two SARs to better integrate themselves into China's overall development, break new ground in pursuing their own prosperity and development, and play a greater role in realizing national rejuvenation. (NPC) ■



Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, joins deputies from Sichuan Province in a group deliberation at the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing on March 5. Yue Yuewei



Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, joins deputies from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in a group deliberation at the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing on March 7. *Liu Weibing*

Zhao Leji, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, joins deputies from the Macao Special Administrative Region in a group deliberation at the first session of the 14th NPC in Beijing on March 7. *Gao Jie*



People's congress system displays tremendous vitality, strength



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, delivers a report on the work of the 13th NPC Standing Committee at the second plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 7. *Li Tao*

The people's congress system was brought into full play over the past five years and displayed tremendous vitality and strengths in practice, according to a report submitted to the National People's Congress (NPC) on March 7.

The system serves as China's foundational political system, underpinning the governance system and capacity, read the work report of the 13th NPC Standing Committee at the end of its five-year term.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, presented the report to a plenary meeting of the first session of the 14th NPC, noting that a highlight of the work was adopting the amendment to the Constitution at the First Session of the 13th NPC in 2018. Since then, the Standing Committee has ensured the implementation of the Constitution and the upholding of its authority and sanctity.

As part of the efforts, the Standing Committee revised the Electoral Law and submitted the draft revisions of the NPC Organic Law to the legislature for deliberation in order to optimize the organizational and electoral systems of people's congresses and their operating mechanisms.

The draft amendment to the Legislation Law submitted to the ongoing annual session for deliberation is expected to improve the legislative system and mechanism, and enhance the quality and efficiency of legislation.

In addition, the top legislature maintained the constitutional order in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) by enacting the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR and adopting a decision on improving its electoral system, which have fully demonstrated that the central government exercises overall jurisdiction over the SAR and provided a strong legal foundation for a new stage for Hong Kong.

In promoting high-quality development, the Standing Committee formulated a raft of laws, including the milestone Civil Code, along with the Foreign Investment Law and the Hainan Free Trade Port Law, which were both enacted to support a new round of high-standard opening up.

Legislative work in environmental protection was stepped up to promote ecological advancement with the Prevention and Control of Soil Contamination Law, the Prevention and Control of Environmental Noise Pollution Law and the Wetland Conservation Law formulated over the past five years.

With these legislative efforts, the Standing Committee improved the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics and made good laws to promote development and ensure good governance, Li said.

During the five-year period, the national legislature enacted 47 laws, revised 111 and passed 53 decisions on legal questions and other major issues.

Regarding oversight, the report said that over the past five years, the Standing Committee heard and deliberated the first comprehensive reports on the management of state-owned assets, the first report on financial work and the first work report by the National Supervisory Commission. It conducted the first special inquiries into the work reports of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, thus ensuring that the powers of all state organs and their employees were subject to oversight and checks.

Moreover, while carrying out inspections into law implementation, the Standing Committee introduced third-party evaluations and adopted various measures, such as random inspections, unannounced visits, big-data analysis and questionnaire surveys. During law implementation inspections concerning environmental protection, nearly 900,000 questionnaires were gathered, according to the report. The Standing Committee also delegated local people's congresses nationwide to carry out inspections.

Meanwhile, it set a plan for the legislative work for this year, adding that it will draw up the legislative plan for the next five years, enhance oversight over state-owned asset management and step up deputy training. (Xinhua) ■

China champions peace, development, confronts ‘jackals, wolves’ head on

China pledged its commitment to global peace and development, as well as its readiness to confront “jackals or wolves” head on to defend its sovereignty, security and development interests at a press conference on March 7.

Foreign Minister Qin Gang stated China’s commitment to an independent foreign policy of peace and a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up on the sidelines of the annual session of the National People’s Congress.

Qin emphasized China’s opposition to decoupling, the severing of industrial and supply chains and unilateral sanctions, saying the country firmly opposes hegemony and a Cold War mentality.

China champions an open and inclusive world economy, and the building of a community with a shared future for humanity, offering more Chinese insight and solutions to help



Foreign Minister Qin Gang attends a press conference on China’s foreign policy and foreign relations on the sidelines of the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 7. *Cai Yang*



A China-Europe freight train loaded with 1,300 tonnes of flour from Kazakhstan arrives at Xi’an International Port in Xi’an, northwest China’s Shaanxi Province, on January 13. *Li Yibo*

meet humanity's common challenges, he said.

New type of international relations

Qin said China pursues coordination and sound interactions among major countries and promotes a new type of international relations. In terms of major-country relations, Qin stated that China-Russia ties are characterized by strategic mutual trust and good neighborliness, serving as a model for a new type of international relations.

This relationship "is not a threat to any country, nor is it subject to any interference or discord sown by any third party," Qin said. "The more unstable the world becomes, the more imperative it is for China and Russia to steadily advance their relations.

Regarding China's relations with the United States, Qin said China "pursues a sound and stable relationship," which should be determined by common interests and shared responsibilities and by friendship between the Chinese and American people, rather than by U.S. domestic politics or hysterical neo-McCarthyism.

"The U.S. claims that it seeks to out-compete China and does not seek conflict. Yet in reality, its so-called competition means to contain and suppress China in all respects and get the two countries locked in a zero-sum game," Qin said.

He added that the U.S. rhetoric of "establishing guardrails" and "not seeking conflict" simply means China should

Chinese modernization is characterized by peaceful development and is not pursued through war, colonization or plunder.



Chinese peacekeepers march at a medal parade ceremony in Hanniyah Village, southern Lebanon, on July 1, 2022. Liu Zongya

not respond in words or action when slandered or attacked. "That is just impossible," he said.

"If the U.S. does not hit the brake but continues to speed down the wrong path, no amount of guardrails will prevent derailing and there will surely be conflict and confrontation," Qin warned.

In response to a question about the Ukraine crisis, Qin said China chooses peace over war, dialogue over sanctions and cooling down the situation over fueling the flames, and calls for calm, reason and dialogue among the parties involved.

He reiterated that China has not provided any weapons to either side of the conflict and always makes its judgments independently, based on the merits of the issue. "There seems to be an invisible hand pushing for the protraction and escalation of the conflict," using the Ukraine conflict to serve a certain geopolitical agenda, Qin commented.

He also expressed China's hope that Europe will achieve true strategic autonomy, as well as lasting security and stability, stating that China is willing to work with Europe to uphold "true multilateralism" and deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership.

Regarding the U.S. "Indo-Pacific Strategy," Qin said its real purpose is to "encircle China," warning that such an attempt will only disrupt the ASEAN-centered open and inclusive regional cooperation architecture and undermine the overall and long-term interests of countries in the region.

Qin noted that China always treats Japan with goodwill and hopes for friendship and good-neighborliness. "Yet, should some people from the Japanese side choose a beggar-thy-neighbor approach rather than partnership and even take part in a new Cold War to contain China, bilateral relations will only suffer new wounds when the old ones are yet to be healed," he said.

During the press conference, Qin noted that developing countries account for more than 80 percent of the global population and more than 70 percent of global economic growth. "People in developing countries are entitled to better lives, while developing countries are entitled to greater representation and a louder voice in international affairs," he said.

Chinese path to modernization

According to Qin, Chinese modernization serves as an important source of inspiration for the rest of the world, particularly for developing countries, adding that the Chinese path to modernization fits in well with China's national conditions and its success "proves that every country has the right and ability to choose its own path and hold its future firmly in its own hands."

Chinese modernization is characterized by peaceful development and "is not pursued through war, colonization or plunder," he said, calling it "a new path different from Western modernization." The right of every country to pursue a modernization path tailored to its national reality should be respected, Qin added.

Meanwhile, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a high-quality public good initiated by China, has benefited the world. Over the past decade, the BRI has brought nearly a trillion U.S. dollars of investment, established over 3,000 cooperation projects and created approximately 420,000 jobs



Foreign Minister Qin Gang attends a press conference on China's foreign policy and foreign relations on the sidelines of the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 7. *Cai Yang*

in countries along the routes, and has helped lift nearly 40 million people out of poverty.

In response to allegations that the BRI can lead to debt traps, Qin said that China should never be accused of creating so-called debt traps, noting that multilateral financial institutions and commercial creditors account for over 80 percent of sovereign debt in developing countries.

Qin expressed his belief that as China accelerates high-quality development, promotes high-standard opening up and fosters a new development paradigm, it will surely bring new opportunities to all countries.

Confronting 'jackals or wolves' head on

At the very heart of China's core interests, the one-China principle is the bedrock of the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and "the first red line that must not be crossed in China-U.S. relations," Qin said. He urged the United States to stop containing China by exploiting the Taiwan question and return to the fundamentals of the one-China principle.

The real threats to peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits are the separatist forces seeking "Taiwan independence," he said, noting that the one-China principle serves as a solid anchor and the three China-U.S. joint communiques serve as genuine guardrails.

"Mishandling of the Taiwan question will shake the very foundation of China-U.S. relations," he warned. No country has the right to interfere in Taiwan affairs, since resolving the Taiwan question is China's own business, he said, emphasizing that "one should never underestimate the firm resolve, strong will and great capability of the Chinese government and people to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Responding to another question, Qin said that so-called "wolf warrior" diplomacy is just a narrative trap fabricated by those who either know little about China or its diplomacy, or have a hidden agenda that disregards the facts.

"There is no shortage of kindness and goodwill in China's diplomacy, but in the face of 'jackals or wolves,' Chinese diplomats have no choice but to confront them head on to protect the motherland," Qin said. (Xinhua) ■



IPR protection sees major progress

By Cao Yin

VCG

Innovators in China have been given stronger protection over the past five years, thanks to greater judicial efforts in the intellectual property rights field, the country's top court and top procuratorate said.

From 2018 to 2022, Chinese judicial authorities strengthened protection of IP rights to facilitate innovation-driven development, with harsher punishments for IP right infringements, according to work reports of the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Supreme People's Court.

The reports were submitted on March 7 to the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, for deliberation.

In terms of improving legal services for innovation-driven development, courts across the country intensified IP protection of key technologies and emerging and major industries, Zhou Qiang, president of the SPC, said while briefing national lawmakers on the SPC report.

According to the report, judges heard a number of cases involving high-tech areas such as 5G communication, new energies, new materials and high-end equipment manufacturing.

Data showed that courts across the country concluded more than 2.19 million IP cases between 2018 and 2022, up 221.1 percent compared with the previous five-year period.

Given frequent public complaints that penalties for IP infringements were too low, courts nationwide increased punitive damages against violators. The amount of compensation awarded in IP infringement cases in 2022 rose by 153 percent compared with 2018, the report said.

Over the past five years, an IP court was established at the Hainan Free Trade Port in Hainan Province, adding to three

such courts in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong province. The four courts were set up to handle the rising number of IP cases.

Procuratorate organs nationwide also attached great importance to IP protection. Offices specializing in tackling IP cases have been established in procuratorial agencies in 29 provincial-level regions, according to the SPP work report delivered by then Procurator-General Zhang Jun.

Prosecutors also worked with the China National Intellectual Property Administration and the National Copyright Administration to jointly solve major or influential IP cases, the SPP report said.

Data showed that 13,000 offenders were prosecuted in 2022 over breaches of trademarks, patents, copyrights and business secrets, a 51.2 percent rise from 2018.

Chinese judicial authorities have also improved the capacity of the justice system to handle cases involving foreign entities over the past five years, to better serve the country's high-level opening-up.

According to the SPC report, courts nationwide concluded 95,000 foreign-related commercial cases and 76,000 maritime cases from 2018 to 2022, with a total of 10 special courts established to handle international commercial disputes.

With an impartial, efficient and transparent maritime justice system, more foreign entities have chosen Chinese courts to settle their disputes, it said.

During the same period, Chinese prosecutors also endeavored to protect the legitimate rights of litigants from home and abroad while handling more than 20,000 foreign-related criminal cases, the SPP report added. ■

State Council institutions reform a crucial step in China's governance modernization

The reform of China's State Council institutions is an important step in enhancing the capacity and efficiency of governance, so as to accomplish new tasks in building a modern socialist country amid a complicated global environment.

The reform plan, which was submitted to the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress for deliberation, focuses on solving some difficult problems of public concern and will have a major impact on economic and social development. The plan was passed at the third plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress on March 10.

The reform emphasizes various important areas in China's modernization drive, such as science and technology, financial supervision, data management, rural revitalization, intellectual property rights and elderly care.

It aims to deepen institutional reform in key areas in order to make the Communist Party of China (CPC) authority over socialist modernization more sound in institutional set-up, optimized in functional allocation, refined in institutional mechanisms and more efficient in operational management.

The restructured Ministry of Science and Technology will strengthen its management duties in strategic planning, institutional reform and resource coordination, improving the new-type national mobilization system while optimizing the management of technological innovation.

Sci-tech innovation lies at the heart of China's modernization drive and must be supported by a sound system. Amid international sci-tech competition and external containment and suppression, it has become even more urgent for China to rectify its sci-tech leadership and administration system, so as to better coordinate forces to make breakthroughs in core technologies and accelerate greater self-reliance and strength in the field.

The revamped National Financial Regulatory Administration, to be set up on the basis of the current banking and insurance watchdog, will strengthen supervision, risk management and prevention, to ensure the stable and healthy development of the financial market and better protect people's financial interests.

Over the past decade, China has systematically and comprehensively restructured the functions of the Party and state institutions, thus providing a strong guarantee for historic achievements. The modernization of China's system and capacity for governance has significantly improved.

However, the new development phase, the new environment and the new strategic opportunities for development have made further reform all the more necessary. With continued reform and opening up, the institutional strength of Chinese socialism will become even more prominent, injecting more vitality into the Chinese socialist modernization drive. China's new development will continue to be a great boon to the world. (Xinhua) ■



Chinese State Councilor and Secretary-General of the State Council Xiao Jie explains a plan on reforming the State Council institutions to national lawmakers at the second plenary meeting of the first session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 7. *Sheng Jiapeng*

List of key officials of China's State Council endorsed by lawmakers at the 1st session of the 14th NPC

Premier: Li Qiang
Vice premiers: Ding Xuexiang, He Lifeng, Zhang Guoqing, Liu Guozhong
State councilors: Li Shangfu, Wang Xiaohong, Wu Zhenglong, Shen Yiqin, Qin Gang
Secretary-general of the State Council: Wu Zhenglong

Qin Gang, minister of foreign affairs
Li Shangfu, minister of national defense
Zheng Shanjie, head of the National Development and Reform Commission
Huai Jinpeng, minister of education
Wang Zhigang, minister of science and technology
Jin Zhuanglong, minister of industry and information technology
Pan Yue, head of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission
Wang Xiaohong, minister of public security
Chen Yixin, minister of state security
Tang Dengjie, minister of civil affairs
He Rong, minister of justice
Liu Kun, minister of finance
Wang Xiaoping, minister of human resources and social security
Wang Guanghua, minister of natural resources
Huang Runqiu, minister of ecology and environment
Ni Hong, minister of housing and urban-rural development
Li Xiaopeng, minister of transport
Li Guoying, minister of water resources
Tang Renjian, minister of agriculture and rural affairs
Wang Wentao, minister of commerce
Hu Heping, minister of culture and tourism
Ma Xiaowei, head of the National Health Commission
Pei Jinjia, minister of veterans affairs
Wang Xiangxi, minister of emergency management
Yi Gang, governor of the People's Bank of China
Hou Kai, auditor-general of the National Audit Office.

China to advance modernization with amended Legislation Law



Deputies to the 14th NPC cast their ballots at the fourth plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 11. *Wang Yuguo*

China's national legislature passed an amendment to the Legislation Law on March 13, aiming to promote high-quality development and guarantee good governance by improving the quality of legislation. The amendment was adopted at the closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) and went into effect on March 15.

The Legislation Law, considered a foundation of China's legal system, regulates how national laws, government regulations and local laws are shaped and which organizations hold the legislative power. It was first adopted in 2000 and amended in 2015.

Promote high-quality development

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in October 2022 called for efforts to build a great modern socialist country in all respects under the rule of law.

To that end, the amended Legislation Law adds a new general provision which states, "legislation should follow the

new development philosophy and ensure that the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts should be advanced through a Chinese path to modernization."

Observers say the amended law, which aims to improve the legislative system and mechanism to enhance the quality and efficiency of legislation, is expected to promote the country's high-quality development with high-quality legislation.

One of the changes is the expansion of the legislative power of cities with subsidiary districts. These cities were granted legislative power within a limited scope after the 2015 revision. The new amendment expands their legislative power to include affairs concerning primary-level governance and changes "environmental protection" to "ecological conservation."

"Expanding the legislative power of cities with subsidiary districts can better meet the actual demand of local authorities for innovative governance," said Li Zan, a deputy to the 14th NPC from southwest China's Sichuan Province.

In line with the country's coordinated regional development strategy, the amendment also adds provisions on regional legislation coordination, elevating the existing effec-

The amended law enshrines in the general provisions that whole-process people's democracy should be upheld and developed.

tive practices to the level of the Legislation Law.

On the first day of 2023, a document on the protection and utilization of the Grand Canal cultural heritage went into effect in Beijing and neighboring Tianjin Municipality and Hebei Province simultaneously. Through coordinated legislation in the region, Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei share the responsibility of protecting the Grand Canal culture.

Whole-process people's democracy

The amended law enshrines in the general provisions that whole-process people's democracy should be upheld and developed. In addition to existing rules ensuring transparency and people's participation in legislative work, such as soliciting public opinions and publishing relevant documents, the amendment enshrines the system of local legislative outreach offices, which has existed for years, to solicit opinions from the grassroots and people from all walks of life on draft laws and legislative work.

There are 32 local legislative outreach offices nationwide. Lawmakers have solicited public opinions on 142 draft laws and legislative work plans through local legislative outreach offices between 2015 and 2022, receiving more than 15,000 suggestions, with over 2,800 taken.

Enforcement of Constitution

The 20th CPC National Congress stressed that law-based governance and the law-based exercise of state power must begin with compliance with the Constitution, calling for efforts to give better play to the Constitution's important role in China's governance.

In the past five years, the NPC and its Standing Committee have ensured the implementation and publicity of the Constitution, including organizing activities to mark National Constitution Day and organizing ceremonies for newly appointed officials to pledge allegiance to the Constitution.

In this regard, the revision introduces new requirements for the constitutionality review system. In particular, it requires a bill's explanatory document to include opinions on constitutionality issues.

Jiang Fan, an NPC deputy and vice president of the Hunan Lawyers Association, said that codifying constitutionality review in the Legislation Law marks substantive progress in the constitutionality review system.

The amendment is conducive to upholding the authority of the Constitution as well as the unity, sanctity and authority of the socialist legal system, said Li Jing, another NPC deputy who is also president of the Tianjin High People's Court, adding that the newly amended law will continuously improve the capacity and level of governance in accordance with the Constitution. (Xinhua) ■



Wang Chen, vice chairman of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, explains the draft amendment to the Legislation Law at the opening meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC on March 5. Mao Jianjun

Whole-process people's democracy drives Two Sessions

On a sunny spring day in February, villagers and officials in Chitang village, Taojiang County in central China's Hunan Province, gathered in a tidy courtyard to discuss how to further expand the market for the village's main products: tea-seed oil and bamboo.

Gao Ya, secretary of Chitang's Communist Party of China (CPC) branch, listened carefully and noted the villagers' ideas. In March, she took their opinions to Beijing, about 1,300 km away, for the annual Two Sessions.

The recently concluded first sessions of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) and the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) offer a window into China's whole-process people's de-

mocracy, which involves a population of over 1.4 billion from 56 ethnic groups.

At the annual gatherings, over 5,000 national legislators and political advisers, ranging from farmers to state leaders, sit together in the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing to deliberate on bills or discuss state affairs, pool their wisdom and bring the Chinese people together to forge ahead.

"Whole-process people's democracy is the defining feature of socialist democracy, it is democracy in its broadest, most genuine and most effective form," President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, has said.



Sheng Hong (4th R), an NPC deputy and Party chief of a residential community in the Hongqiao Subdistrict, listens to comments and suggestions of a draft revision to the Charity Law at a civic center in east China's Shanghai, on February 7. Liu Ying

Grassroots voices heard

Gao, 33, was elected as an NPC deputy in January at the annual session of the Hunan provincial people's congress. Making her debut at the national legislature, she submitted suggestions on innovating the bamboo industry and improving the construction of forest roads. "We will focus on developing our special industries to make the villagers more prosperous," she said.

Shen Changjian, an NPC deputy from Linli County in Hunan, is focused on agricultural modernization. "We need to develop smart agriculture and deepen innovation in the seed industry," the 55-year-old vegetable grower told Xinhua.

An amendment to the Legislation Law was reviewed at the NPC session. The draft amendment had already been deliberated twice by the NPC Standing Committee, while opinions were extensively solicited and it was revised many times.

Sheng Hong, an NPC deputy and Party chief of a residential community in Shanghai's Hongqiao subdistrict, noted that some suggestions put forward by her community's residents had been included in the draft.

In November, at the legislative outreach office set up in Hongqiao by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, 45 suggestions regarding the draft amendment to the Legislation Law were collected through seminars and online solicitation, which were then directly delivered to the commission, according to Sheng. "The outreach office acts as a direct link between ordinary people and China's top legislature," she said.

In China, the growing participation of ordinary people in national and local democratic decision-making is taking place in various forms. The people's congress system, China's fundamental political system, guarantees that the people are the masters of the country, which is the essence of socialist democracy.

Of the 2.77 million new-term deputies to people's congresses at all levels, 2.62 million at the county and township levels were directly elected by the country's more than 1 billion voters.

Seeking broad consensus

The deputies to the 14th NPC made up a broad cross-section of people, with every region, ethnic group and sector of society having an appropriate number of representatives. Of the 2,977 deputies, 497 were workers and farmers, while the total number of deputies from the primary level was considerable.

The Two Sessions reveal much about China's democratic model, compared with the West, it weighs the representation of the Chinese people, according to an article published on the website of Mexico's Canal 6 television.

In China, electoral democracy and consultative democracy are advanced in a coordinated manner. The extensive, multilevel and institutionalized development of consultative democracy boasts many channels, which can achieve the greatest possible convergence of interests.

The 14th CPPCC National Committee set up a new group for members from environmental and resource-related circles. The move will give full play to the CPPCC's role as a spe-



Deputies to the 14th NPC leave the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 13. *Chen Yichen*

The people's congress system guarantees that the people are the masters of the country, which is the essence of socialist democracy.

cialized consultative body and is conducive to strengthening democratic oversight and advancing ecological conservation.

Setting up the new group is "a robust measure to advance the modernization of harmony between humanity and nature, which is one of the five features of Chinese modernization," said Pan Biling, a national political adviser and president of Xiangtan University in Hunan.

The handling of suggestions and proposals made by national lawmakers and political advisers embodies the effectiveness of China's democracy. Last year, offices and departments of the State Council, China's cabinet, handled 8,721 suggestions from NPC deputies and 5,865 proposals submitted by CPPCC National Committee members, accounting for 94.8 percent and 95 percent of the total number of suggestions and proposals, respectively.

Meanwhile, dynamic and pragmatic consultations in various forms at the grassroots level contribute to good governance. At a consultation early this year in a community in Hengshui, a city in north China's Hebei Province, residents raised problems such as leaks in the roofs of storage rooms and a lack of fitness facilities.

"These things may seem trivial, but they are related to people's sense of happiness," said Wang Lansuo, a retired worker. "Here everyone speaks openly to resolve the issues through discussion."



Vocational trainer Yang Denghui, also a deputy to the 14th NPC, walks around the campus of Guangdong Machinery Technician College in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, on February 14. *Deng Hua*

Living better lives

Fan Yun, a national legislator and chairperson of Shanghai Fushen Appraisal and Consulting Group, shared two stories about performing her duties, which have brought her a sense of accomplishment over the past five years.

The first was a suggestion concerning the platform economy, which contributed to the release of national anti-monopoly guidelines in the sector. The second was her speech during an annual NPC session, which attracted the attention of the government. It was about a remote mountain village in east China's Anhui Province, which she had visited many times to conduct research.

Eventually, a paved road was built to connect the village with the outside world, fulfilling the wish of generations of villagers, who improved their living standards by developing homestays and the tea industry.

Whether democracy is good or not depends on whether it ensures people lead better lives. Whole-process people's democracy ensures that development is for the people and by the people, and that its fruits are shared by the people.

In the past five years, various State Council departments have adopted more than 18,000 suggestions and proposals from national lawmakers and political advisers. Subsequently, more than 7,800 policy measures were introduced that provided solutions to a large number of problems related to reform and development, as well as people's urgent needs.

"China's democracy is definitely not a sham, nor a decoration, but a truly effective democratic political system with Chinese characteristics," said Fan, who has served as an NPC deputy for 15 years.

Moreover, democratic supervision is an important part of whole-process people's democracy. For example, since 2018, the NPC Standing Committee has focused on prominent problems in the field of ecological and environmental protection, carrying out law-enforcement inspections for five consecutive years. In 2022, enforcement inspections of the Yangtze River Protection Law were conducted, promoting better protection of China's longest waterway in accordance with the law.

Yang Huifang, a national legislator and a teacher at a special education preschool center in Quzhou County of Hebei, is concerned about the mental health of "left-behind" seniors and children in rural areas and hopes that institutionalized support for these groups can be provided at the grassroots level. She believes that although China's modernization improves the overall level, attention should be paid to improving the quality of life among vulnerable groups.

Jean Christophe Iseux von Pfetten, chairman of the Institute for East-West Strategic Studies in the United Kingdom, once took part in a municipal-level CPPCC session as a specially invited member in Jilin Province. Based on his personal experience, he affirmed that China's democratic practice is devoted to solving practical problems. (Xinhua) ■

NPC deputies submit over 270 motions

By Cao Yin

A total of 271 motions raised by deputies have been handed in to the first session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature, as of noon on March 7, an official said.

Of the motions, 268 are related to legislation and three focus on supervision, Fu Wenjie, deputy head of a group responsible for handling motions at the session's secretariat, told media on March 11.

Some motions call for building a high-level socialist market economy and improving high-quality growth by formulating a few new laws, including those on digital economy, business environment and modern logistics, with amendments to a few current laws, including the Insurance Law and the Consumer Protection Law, according to a report of the secretariat.

It said that a number of deputies submitted motions to the NPC to strongly guarantee and promote livelihood through legislation, such as by making laws concerning nursing services for senior citizens and amending the Minor Protection Law to give more support for children.

To step up green development and increase cultural self-confidence, some motions also focus on formulating laws on farmlands, natural areas and national parks, with revisions to the Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics and the Intangible Heritage Law, it added.

Besides the formal motions, Fu said that the secretariat

Of the motions, 268 are related to legislation and three focus on supervision.

has also received more than 8,000 suggestions from NPC deputies as of noon on March 10.

"Nearly half of them were raised by those from grassroots areas, including workers, farmers and technicians," Fu said.

The suggestions cover various aspects of the country's development, concerning innovation system improvement, digital construction, rural revitalization, environmental protection, disease control and healthcare management, according to him.

He said that all the suggestions and motions this time were handed in, registered and handled via an information platform that specially helps deputies in duty performance.

Highlighting the significance of implementing the whole-process people's democracy, he added that relevant departments will carefully review and deal with those motions and suggestions, with increased communication with the deputies to ensure their voices are heard. ■



Staff members arrange the original copies of motions in Beijing on March 11. Among the 271 motions raised by the 14th NPC deputies, 268 are related to legislation and three focus on supervision. *Han Haidan*

NPC deputy from mountain village makes inroads



Ma Huijuan, a deputy to the 14th NPC *Li Xiaojian*

Ma Huijuan is a grassroots writer and deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC). Originally from the countryside of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Ma recalls how the poverty-alleviation policy has changed her life over the decades.

Ma dropped out of school to help her parents make ends meet in a small mountain village in the Xihaigu area of Ningxia in the autumn of 1996. The then 16-year-old girl thought that she would never have a chance to escape the mountain village in her lifetime.

However, things began to change for the better, following a poverty alleviation survey in Xihaigu by Xi Jinping, then deputy secretary of the Fujian Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and head of the Fujian leading group for paired-up assistance to Ningxia, in April 1997.

Xi was distressed by the impoverished living conditions of the local people and was determined to promote paired-up assistance between the two regions, which are more than 2,000 kilometers apart. Over the past 26 years, Xi has visited Xihaigu four times, making great efforts to alleviate poverty and support the region's development.

"I didn't expect that more than 20 years later, I'd become a deputy to the NPC, sitting in the Great Hall of the People as a representative of Ningxia to exercise State power. This era has given me a new life," Ma said.

Ma recalled that all the households in her village were successively moved to a village in Hongsibu Town, Wuzhong City in central Ningxia, a place with better ecological environment. The relocation opened a new "window" for Ma and completely changed her life. It also helped turn her dream of

being a writer into a reality.

The life of Ma and her family continued to improve after they contracted a piece of farmland and started doing some odd jobs. Starting from 2010, Ma began to write essays about the life of her family and neighboring villagers and their efforts to promote rural development and vitalization, uploading them on social media platforms.

Her prose, novels, and reports have been published on various platforms, such as People's Daily and Prose Digest, and have attracted much attention. Her books, such as *The Whispers of Streams and Winds* and *Hope Grows in the Earth*, are popular with readers.

In 2018, 38-year-old Ma was elected a deputy to the 13th NPC. Coming from a once poverty-stricken village, the farmer-turned NPC deputy has maintained her pristine nature and kept close contact with fellow villagers. She has continued to voice their concerns and expectations through suggestions at the NPC annual sessions.

"The lives of villagers in Hongsibu have undergone tremendous changes over the past 20 years and there are good experiences that can be shared," Ma said, recommending that it be made a national demonstration area for resettlement and prosperity promotion.

In the past six years, the lawmaker has submitted a number of suggestions on upgrading community-level medical services, enhancing the protection of traditional folk culture, and strengthening the cultural education of adults.

She said that thanks to the suggestions submitted by the Ningxia delegation in 2018, the Yinchuan-Xi'an high-speed railway was officially opened to traffic at the end of 2020, and the subsidy policy on returning farmland to forests was extended, bringing tangible benefits to local villagers.

In 2023, Ma was elected a deputy to the 14th NPC. Over the past six years as an NPC deputy, Ma has met lawmakers from all walks of life and has joined them in voicing the aspirations and appeals of various groups for a better life at the annual sessions.

As her performance of duties continues as an NPC deputy, Ma feels more keenly the superiority and vitality of the system of people's congresses in China. "My story is not a legend as some people might say. It is a reflection of the superiority of the socialist system under the CPC leadership," she noted.

"As long as you have made achievements in the country's development, our Party and country, and the system of people's congresses will give you a chance to shine, to participate in and witness the development of the country," she added.

"The system of people's congresses is the most direct platform for implementing the Party's original aspiration and mission of seeking happiness for the people and rejuvenation for the nation," said the NPC deputy from Ningxia. (NPC) ■

Visually impaired deputy amplifies the voices of people with disabilities



Wang Yongcheng, an NPC deputy from east China's Fujian Province, speaks at a panel discussion during the First Session of the 14th NPC in March.

Wang Yongcheng, a blind deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) from east China's Fujian Province, has been committed to making the voice of visually-impaired people heard and securing the full support of the public for blind massage.

Wang, also president of the Fujian Association of Persons with Visual Disabilities, lost his eyesight at the age of 19 in an accident.

Supported by his family, Wang decided to acquire a technical skill. Later, he began to study braille and went to central China's Henan Province to learn massage therapy.

During his travel to and time in Henan, Wang often took buses in the wrong direction, went to wrong places and even fell into rivers. However, it was the kindness of others that helped him through all the difficulties.

In 1995, Wang returned to his hometown and opened a massage center in Sanming City of Fujian. In the early days, he often provided free massage services for people in surrounding areas and helped to ease their pain and discomfort.

Wang said that thrill and excitement ran through him when others called him "doctor" for the first time. It was at that time that he realized his potential to do something for others and society.

Their recognition gave Wang additional confidence and encouragement to further improve his massage skills.

The expansion of his massage business quickly created employment opportunities for dozens of people with visual disabilities.

With the support of the Sanming Disabled Persons' Federation, Wang launched a massage training session for the blind and started to impart his professional knowledge and skills to more people in 1996.

In 2009, Wang founded the Fujian Cross-Straits Blind Massage Training Center. So far, the center has provided

free technical training to over 6,000 people and helped them shake off poverty and lead independent lives.

Meanwhile, Wang has closely followed national strategies on poverty alleviation and rural revitalization and built a paired-up assistance partnership with Yongyue Village in Sanming, which is a provincial-level poverty-stricken village.

Over 1.3 million yuan (\$188,739) has been invested into the program to help the village improve its infrastructure and aid local disadvantaged people in leading a better life, which was highly praised by the Fujian Department of Civil Affairs.

As a newly-elected NPC deputy, Wang said he will strive to be a bridge between the blind and the rest of society and to speak for them in the fulfillment of his duties.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012, the country has further intensified its efforts to guarantee the basic rights and interests of people with disabilities, comprehensively improve their livelihoods, and enhance their sense of fulfillment, happiness and safety, Wang noted.

He added that over 20 laws and regulations have stressed the protection of the rights and interests of the disabled and that fiscal subsidies at all levels have put more emphasis on infrastructure and special allowances for them.

Nevertheless, the predicament faced by the disabled hasn't yet been fully understood by some members of society and some of their special needs haven't received due attention from the public.

Therefore, Wang has been working on deepening the understanding and exchanges between the blind and other members of the public and making their voices heard.

Statistics show that as of the end of 2022, over 3,000 visually-impaired people worked in medical institutions nationwide, and that they had run over 600 massage therapy centers across the country. However, the requirements of electronic registration for medical personnel and the filing system for opening traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) clinics have made it difficult for the blind to verify their professional certificates and get the licenses for their TCM clinics.

Wang brought a wide range of advice from the blind to the first session of the 14th NPC in Beijing. His suggestion received a warm response from the National Health Commission and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine and helped accelerate the revision of the regulations on medical message services provided by the visually impaired.

Moreover, Wang also advised that the Ministry of Education introduce large-font textbooks for students with visual impairment in regular schools.

The lawmaker said that he will closely follow the guiding principles of the first session of the 14th NPC, make favorable policies of the Party and the country better known by people with disabilities, and help solve their difficulties. (NPC) ■

NPC deputy safeguards well-being of grassroots workers



Li Feng, a deputy to the 14th NPC *Zhang Chi*

Li Feng, a purchasing manager at Shanghai Panda Machinery (Group) Co Ltd, said that advocating for grassroots workers is his eternal responsibility as a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), and shared that he has started a new round of actions as a reelected lawmaker.

"NPC deputies should keep their eyes open to spot problems," said Li, who has been engaged in grassroots work and was once honored as a model individual of migrant workers in Shanghai. Li said that over the past five years, as a deputy to the 13th NPC, he has submitted more than 10 suggestions on coping with problems and difficulties in people's livelihoods, such as security for children in distress, social security for the flexibly employed, and the renovation of old residential communities.

"I am a migrant worker myself and I truly understand migrant workers," said Li. During his surveys, Li learned that some children of migrant workers face difficulties in personal safety and development, due to family economic hardships, physical disabilities, or a lack of effective guardianship.

To help solve problems that may affect the healthy growth of the children and impact social harmony, Li submitted the suggestion on establishing a security mechanism for children in difficult circumstances for two consecutive years. To his relief, his suggestion received attention from relevant departments, and more policies have been introduced in succession, from central to local governments, to support children

in troubled conditions.

Li said that working at the grassroots level, the difficulties and problems he has met are often common to such groups as migrant workers. People at the grassroots may not understand some national policies very well or do not know how to express their opinions, and it is the responsibility of NPC deputies to help voice their concerns, he added.

Li has also been concerned about the protection of the rights and interests of people in the new employment models. During his research, Li has found that although the employment model of trans-provincial labor outsourcing is more flexible and produces more job opportunities, there are many potential problems.

Some migrant workers, such as ride-hailing drivers and express delivery workers, work in Shanghai, but cannot enjoy the local social security benefits because they pay for their social security in their home regions. Since they are not contract employees, they can only be paid by the hour or from orders through outsourcing companies. The management of some outsourcing companies was not standardized and there was a lack of effective channels safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the workers.

Last year, Li and other deputies jointly submitted suggestions on standardizing flexible employment models for outsourcing companies, including optimizing relevant laws and regulations, smoothing channels to protect the rights and interests of outsourced workers, and establishing trade unions that can provide services for outsourced workers and flexibly employed individuals in a timely manner.

Over the past five years, Li has studied how to effectively perform the duties of an NPC deputy and participated in various duty performance activities. He attended several special training sessions each year in order to enrich and expand his knowledge base.

"Now, I am familiar with such fields as intellectual property rights dispute resolution and the judicial protection of minors," Li said, adding that he now has a better understanding of China's system of the people's congresses. Li's performance of duties over the past five years has broadened his vision, and also gained him many unforgettable memories.

"Nowadays, people in my company like to call me 'Deputy Li', and fellow workers from other enterprises usually call me to share their opinions," said Li. The NPC deputy is proud to serve as a bridge between the government and the people and to be trusted by people of all backgrounds.

He said that he will continue to pay attention to the urgent and difficult problems of great concern to grassroots workers, speak on their behalf, and put forward more high-quality suggestions. (NPC) ■

A construction worker's pathway to the nation's top legislature

By Lu Yan



Zou Bin, a deputy to the 14th NPC Yang Keja

Five years ago, when Zou Bin first spoke to the media as a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC), he was nervous. Standing in front of journalists at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, the venue for the full sessions of the NPC, China's top legislature, the then 23-year-old felt overwhelmed.

This year, Zou, reelected to serve from 2023 to 2028, is much more poised and confident.

"I will continue to be a voice for all frontline construction workers, helping to address their concerns and improve their work and life," Zou said.

From rural worker to world champion

Born into a family of construction workers in a village in Xinhua County, Hunan Province, Zou began working as an apprentice bricklayer 200 km away in Changsha, the provincial capital. Despite the daily pain from his physical exertions, Zou persisted in perfecting his skills, and it was this dedication and attention to detail that have seen him excel in his career. In two years, Zou became a fully qualified bricklayer and reached the first major turning point of his life.

In April 2014, when working at a construction site of China Construction Fifth Engineering Division Corp. in Changsha, Zou's employer asked if he was willing to participate in a worker skills competition held by the company. Zou took the offer and ended up winning first place in his age group. In July that year, he entered and won a national skills competition and then began receiving national training in preparation for international competitions.

In 2015, Zou won a Medallion for Excellence in bricklaying at the 43rd WorldSkills Competition, held in Brazil, setting a

record for China in this field.

"Winning the world competition changed not only my life, but also my attitude toward my career and bricklaying," Zou said. The experience helped him gain a better understanding of what craftsmanship is. "It was way more than a means for making a living," he said.

When he returned to work, Zou was recruited as a construction quality controller for China Construction Fifth Engineering Division Corp. He was also given the chance to share his skills and stories with his colleagues and other people across the country at various seminars, inspiring more workers to improve their skills and become craftspeople.

People's representative

In 2018, the Hunan Provincial People's Congress elected Zou to represent the province at the 13th NPC. NPC deputies, who serve five-year terms, represent a broad cross-section of their communities, and steps are taken to ensure each region, background and ethnicity are adequately represented. In his first term, Zou was one of the youngest among the more than 100 deputies representing Hunan at the NPC.

Deputies bear decision-making responsibilities as well as the responsibility to deliver suggestions from their communities. As a national-level deputy, Zou has the responsibility of drawing suggestions from his constituents in Hunan for submission to the NPC.

"What should I do to help migrant workers nationwide?" is a question Zou has often asked himself as an NPC deputy. To gain insights into the opinions and concerns of rural construction workers, he has visited many regions around the country to consult with them.

"From our talks, I have found that workers' desire for professional training is increasing, as they are becoming less contented with being mediocre and are looking for opportunities to grow in their careers," Zou said. With this in mind, he has made suggestions to the NPC on increasing vocational training and holding more competitions for workers, which are platforms for them to demonstrate their skills and gain professional recognition.

Now at the start of his new term, Zou says his suggestions for this year's NPC session also focus on the cultivation of high-caliber construction workers. He believes that government, industry and educational institutions should join hands in this endeavor. "Companies and schools should jointly create curricula focusing on practical skill training that caters to the job market," he said. "After completing training, migrant workers should also receive support in landing a job."

"This is an era in which everyone has the opportunity to shine," he said. ■

‘Woman power’ shines at China’s Two Sessions

Holding a replica of a newborn panda in her hand, Hou Rong stood under the spotlight at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, speaking about her decades-long efforts to protect the cute and fuzzy species.

The first time the panda researcher artificially fed a cub in 1995 is etched in her memory. “Despite being such a tiny, fragile creature that can’t see or hear, it made a startling sound as if expressing a strong desire to survive,” she recalled, adding that she has since developed a heavy sense of responsibility from her work.

Hou, a national lawmaker, is in Beijing for the Two Sessions, which refers to the annual meetings of the National People’s Congress (NPC), the top legislature, and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the top political advisory body.

Women lawmakers and political advisors like Hou play an essential role in pooling wisdom to fuel the country’s development at this important annual event in China’s political calendar. Women made up over a quarter of national legislators at the 14th NPC, according to official data.

As a veteran NPC deputy, Hou has submitted 31 suggestions and 10 motions on topics ranging from the protection of giant pandas and wildlife genetic resources to biodiversity conservation and the harmonious co-existence of humanity

and nature.

Hou noted that “80 percent of the motions played a positive role in the formulation and revision of relevant laws and regulations.”

After about 30 years of efforts by Hou and her colleagues, the number of pandas in the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding has increased from 18 in 1994 to more than 230 currently. But Hou said that their ultimate goal is to put pandas back into the wild, while ensuring that they survive and reproduce naturally.

As China gathers steam for building a great modern socialist country, issues such as high-quality development, intellectual property protection, rural revitalization, environmental conservation and the protection of women’s and children’s rights have been widely discussed among the women legislators and political advisors.

For the fifth consecutive year, Dong Mingzhu, chairwoman of home appliance giant Gree Electric, has been elected an NPC deputy. “I will bring to the meeting some motions related to the protection of intellectual property rights and high-quality development,” she said.

“Innovation is the key to the development of a company, as well as the driving force behind the tremendous achievements China has made over the past decade,” Dong added.

Today, the company boasts 35 internationally leading

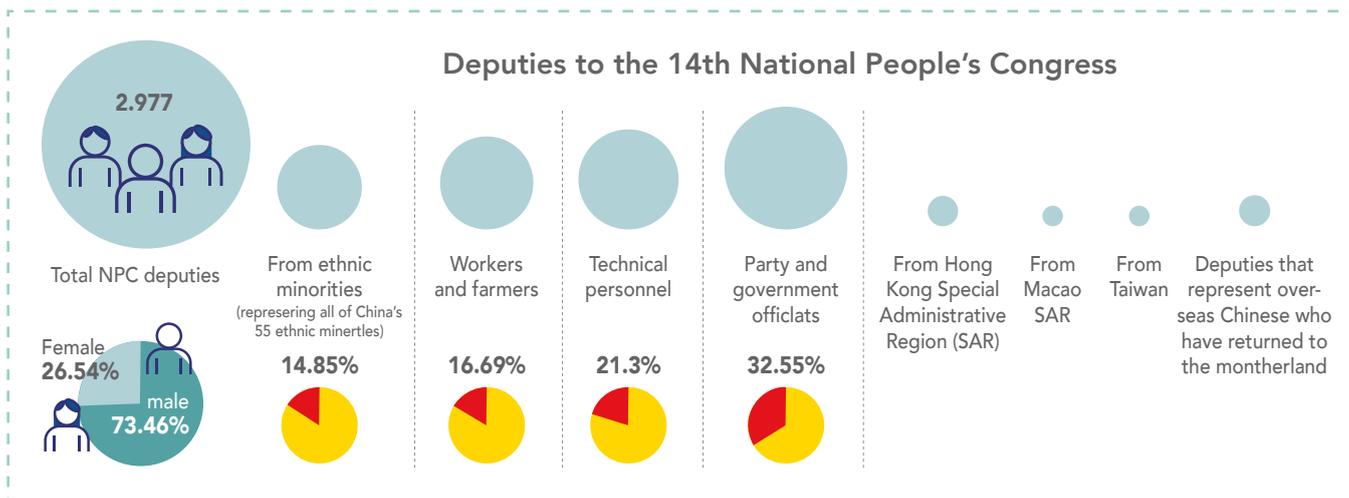


Hou Rong (2nd R) visits Copenhagen Zoo in Denmark to learn about the construction of Panda House on February 25. (Courtesy of Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding)



Hou Rong (1st R, front) checks the physical condition of giant panda on February 25. (Courtesy of Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding)

Deputies to the 14th National People's Congress



technologies, with more than 100,000 patents filed, and its products and services have been sold in more than 180 countries and regions.

Rural revitalization is another hot topic during the Two Sessions. Wei Qiao, an NPC deputy and a tech-savvy “new farmer” from east China’s Jiangsu Province, has devoted years to rural revitalization with her modern entrepreneurial skills and ideas.

“We have cultivated more than 20,000 mu (about 1,333 hectares) of rice, with each mu yielding 550 kg of grain,” Wei said, noting that by managing the fields digitally, work efficiency has greatly improved.

Wei added that she would continue to promote the building of digital eco-farms and lead more “new farmers” to join the development of modern agriculture.

Yang Yang, a council member of the China Disabled Per-

sons’ Federation and a CPPCC member, has been actively engaged in promoting barrier-free environment construction legislation in recent years.

“Hearing loss is a hidden disability that could be easily misunderstood. For us, this disability is like a glass wall separating us from people who can hear,” said Yang, who is hearing impaired.

“Over the years, hearing aids and information barrier-free environments have helped us move forward in China, and rehabilitation and integration education have delivered promising results,” she said, adding that many students with hearing disabilities are now able to attend regular classes and integrated education in ordinary schools.

“The ‘glass wall’ is being broken layer by layer,” Yang said. “We, who are illuminated by the ‘lights,’ can also become lights to illuminate others.” (Xinhua) ■



Hou Rong, a deputy to the 14th NPC and deputy director of the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, talks about the protection of panda and other wildlife during the NPC’s annual session, on March 9. *Ren Qingjin*



Wei Qiao, an NPC deputy from Jiangsu Province, speaks about her proposal concerning the digital construction of ecological farms at a panel discussion during the First Session of the 14th NPC, on March 9. *Li Xueren*



Yang Yang, a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), gives an interview ahead of the opening of the First Session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 4. *Cai Yang*



Wang Chao (C), spokesperson for the First Session of the 14th NPC, attends a press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on March 4. *Cai Yang*

NPC deputies represent all sections of society

By Cheng Si

Deputies to the National People's Congress are broadly representative, which is a good practice of China's whole-process people's democracy, said a spokesperson on March 4.

Wang Chao, the spokesperson of the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress, said at a news conference that the deputies come from diversified districts, sectors, and ethnic groups of the nation, and people from grassroots take a great share of all-level NPC deputies.

"For example, among 2.62 million county and township-level deputies, workers, farmers and technicians take up 52.53 percent of the county-level deputies, and 76.75 percent of township ones," he said.

According to him, among 2,977 deputies to the 14th NPC, 442 are from ethnic minority groups — with the nation's 55 ethnic minority groups all having their deputies, and 42 are

Deputies are in close contact with the public and get to know and voice people's concerns through surveys and field visits.

returning overseas Chinese. Also, the 14th NPC has 790 female deputies, accounting for 26.54 percent of the total and 497 deputies are front-line workers and farmers.

He said these deputies are in close relationship with the public and get to know and voice people's concerns through surveys and field visits, showing great vitality of the system of people's congress. ■



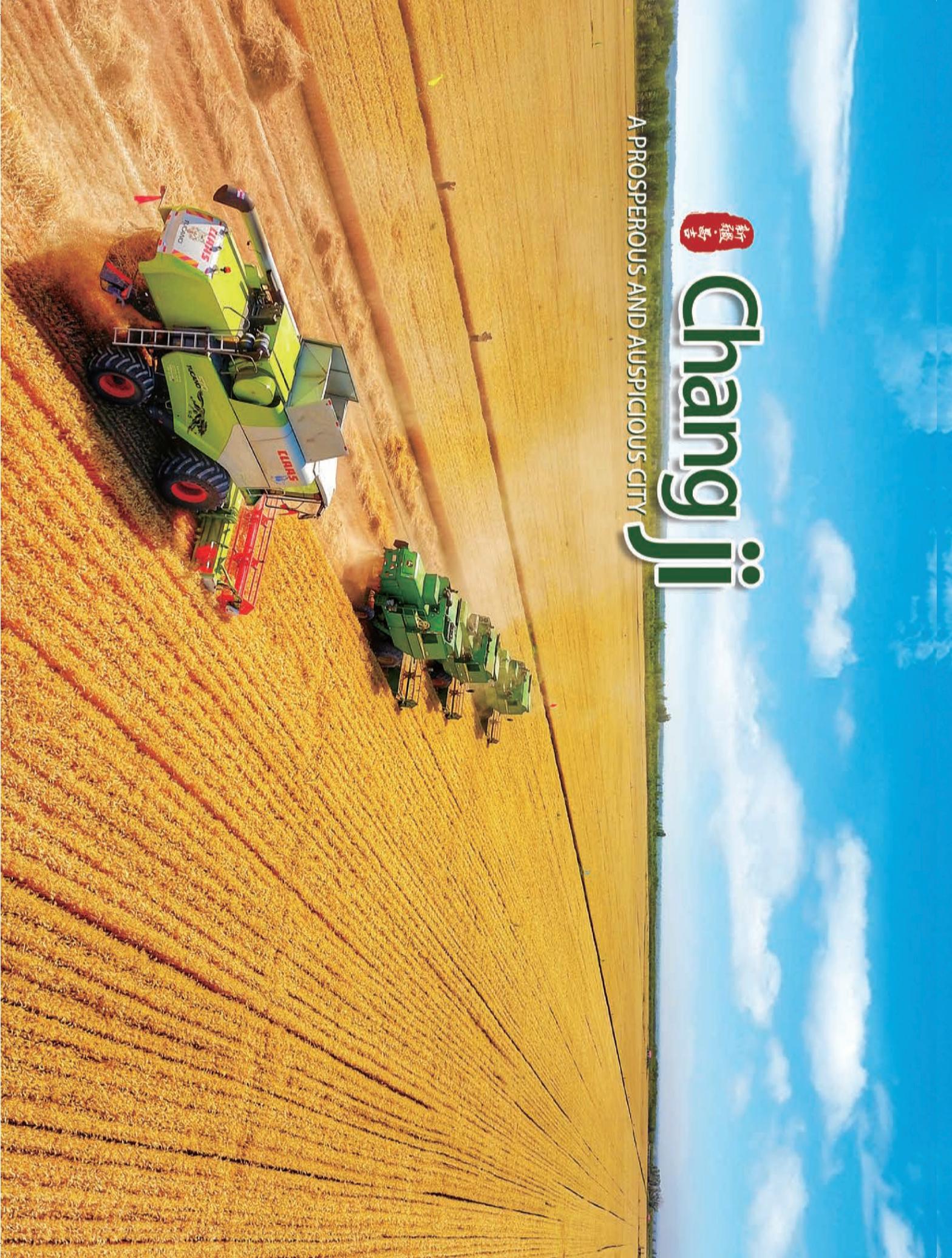
Deputies to the 14th NPC walk towards the Great Hall of the People for the opening meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 5. *Chen Yichen*



Deputies to the 14th NPC take a group interview ahead of the fifth plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 12. *Zhang Haofu*



Minister of Natural Resources Wang Guanghua gives an interview after the fifth plenary meeting of the First Session of the 14th NPC in Beijing, capital of China, on March 12. *Liu Jinhai*



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