

中国新闻

# NEWS FROM CHINA

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Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Counselor Jiang Yili met with Mr. V. Narayanasamy, Chief Minister of Puducherry.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Counselor Jiang Yili met with Ms. Kiran Bedi, Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Counselor Jiang Yili had dinner with some Ambassadors to India and their spouses.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Counselor Jiang Yili met with Mr. Syed Ahmed Bukhari and his family, the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Counselor Jiang Yili attended the Symposium in Memory of Professor Xu Fancheng.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Counselor Jiang Yili visited the Fo Guang Shan Educational and Cultural Centre.

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NPC & CPPCC Annual Sessions 2018

# XI JINPING UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED CHINESE PRESIDENT, CMC CHAIRMAN



**Xi Jinping takes a public oath of allegiance to the Constitution in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 17, 2018. Xi was elected Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China earlier Saturday at the ongoing first session of the 13th National People's Congress, the national legislature. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)**

Beijing March 17 (Xinhua) — Xi Jinping was elected Chinese president by a unanimous vote Saturday morning at the ongoing session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

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

Xi, 64, stood up and bowed, while

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Xi told the Party's 19th National Congress in the opening speech that socialism with Chinese characteristics had entered “a new era.”

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

He laid out a two-step approach

to future development: working to basically realize socialist modernization from 2020 to 2035; developing China into a great modern socialist country from 2035 to the middle of the century.

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

Gesang Zhoigar, an NPC deputy from Tibet Autonomous Region, was also deeply touched by the election. “Being one of more than 3 million people from Tibet, I have strong trust in Comrade Xi, the whole Party's core,

our nation's leader and the army's commander,” she said.

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

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

They all took oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

Lawmakers also adopted an institutional restructuring plan of the State Council.

## NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT XI STEERS CHINA TOWARD PROSPERITY



Beijing, March 18 (Xinhua) — As ceremonial music echoed throughout the Great Hall of the People, Xi Jinping took his place on the podium.

The music stopped as he reached a large red-bound copy of the country's Constitution.

The 64-year-old, in a dark suit, placed his left hand on the Constitution, raised his right hand to his temple and made a fist of solidarity.

"I pledge my allegiance to the Constitution," Xi began.

"[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 hard for a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful."

He bowed, and the nearly 3,000 National People's Congress (NPC) deputies reacted with a spontaneous burst of thunderous applause.

It was the first time a Chinese president had ever taken such an oath upon assuming office. The ceremony was watched by tens of millions of Chinese on television or on their smartphones.

On Saturday, Xi was unanimously elected as president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the PRC.

Xi first took over the presidency five years ago, pledging to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and

strive for great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

"In face of the mighty trend of the times and earnest expectations of the people for a better life, we cannot have the slightest complacency, or get the slightest slack at work," he said back then.

China has made historic achievements under Xi's leadership. The unanimous vote shows the strong support he enjoys among the people.

Nearly five months ago, Xi was re-elected general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee. The Party's 19th National Congress enshrined in the CPC Constitution Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

The thought was added into the country's Constitution at the 13th NPC session as a guiding principle of the state. People have high expectations for the years ahead. The blueprint laid out at the Party congress is being turned into action plan.

### **"HAPPINESS COMES OUT OF ARDUOUS WORK"**

Led by Xi, China is becoming strong.

The size of the economy has expanded to more than 82 trillion yuan (around 13 trillion U.S. dollars) from 54 trillion yuan over the past five years, growing by 7.1 percent a year on average. More than 66 million urban new jobs have been created.

The economy is healthier. Xi's supply-side structural reform worked. Consumption has become a major growth driver, contributing to 58.8

percent of economic growth last year, up from 54.9 percent five years ago. The share of service sector has climbed to 51.6 percent from 45.3 percent.

People live a more comfortable life. More than 68 million people escaped poverty. Personal income increased by 7.4 percent annually on average. Life expectancy reaches 76.7 years, leading developing countries.

The environment improves as strict rules on water, soil and air pollution control have been enforced. A remarkable change: over the five years, the number of heavily-polluted days in major cities was halved.

Xi made this happen through reform. He is regarded as the chief architect. In the five years, more than 1,500 reform measures were issued, affecting economic, political, social, cultural, environmental fields, national defense and Party building. Government red tape was cut. Foreign investment was made easier.

Xi has said happiness comes out of arduous work.

A week after the 19th Party congress, Xi took leading officials to the Party's birthplace in Shanghai and Zhejiang, a "roots-tracing" trip to remind cadres of the Party's original aspiration.

"The CPC seeks happiness for the Chinese people," Xi said in an NPC session panel discussion. "Whatever issues the people are unhappy about or dissatisfied with, we must work hard to solve them."

Xi's deep connection to the people was formed early in his life.



Son of a revolutionary leader, Xi, at the age of 15, joined numerous “educated youth” bidding farewell to urban life and heading to the countryside to learn from peasants.

Xi was sent to a small, isolated village in Shaanxi Province and stayed on for seven years. These formative years taught him the real situation on the ground and shaped his belief in pragmatic approach and the mass line.

In the following decades, Xi rose from the grassroots to the very top. His work experience in the military, a poor rural county, and wealthy coastal regions enriched his leadership skills.

Xi entered the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in 2007 and was elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee in 2012. He has become the core of the CPC Central Committee and the whole Party.

## **“BITE THE HARDEST BONES”**

In Xi’s view, for China to achieve the goals in the new era, the Party’s leadership over every area is the key.

To keep the Party clean, he launched an unprecedented anti-corruption campaign, investigating 440 senior officials — who held provincial or corps level positions or above, among others.

Overall, more than 1.5 million officials were punished.

“If we had not offended hundreds of corrupt officials, we would have offended 1.3 billion Chinese people,” Xi said.

While the campaign has built into

a crushing tide, Xi said it could not stop.

The action to “take out tigers” and “swat flies” continued after the 19th Party congress. Latest fallen high-ranking officials included former head of cyber-space administration Lu Wei, army generals Zhang Yang and Fang Fenghui, as well as former state councilor Yang Jing.

He also pushed forward the supervisory system reform, strengthening a centralized and unified leadership of the CPC over the graft fight.

Xi has called on officials in charge to “bite the hardest bones and catch the hottest potatoes” to tackle problems.

Xi is in the spotlight at the annual sessions of the NPC and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, commonly known as the “two sessions.”

He stressed adherence to a system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation, saying it was a new type of party system growing from China’s soil and contributed to the political civilization of humanity.

Political advisor and entrepreneur Yu Minhong couldn’t agree more. Yu is a member of the China Democratic League (CDL), one of the eight non-communist parties in China. But he is better known as the chairman of New Oriental, a leading education company.

For years, Yu has been helping poor rural students get proper schooling. His proposal for rural

teacher pay rises led to government policy change.

Ding Zhongli, chairman of the CDL Central Committee, said the ruling party and the non-communist parties cooperated quite well under the system, working toward a common goal of national development.

Fred Teng, president of the America China Public Affairs Institute, said through the multiparty cooperation system policymakers could draw the best policies and achieve the best results.

While joining lawmakers from Guangdong Province in a panel discussion, Xi highlighted development, talent and innovation.

Guangdong has been at the front-line of the reform and opening-up.

The year 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the drive, which resulted in consistent and fast economic growth for decades.

During an inspection to Jiangsu Province last December, Xi said more emphasis needed to be placed on the economy’s quality rather than speed and every industry, every enterprise should follow the change.

China is setting sail toward a modernized economy with Xi at the helm.

“Xi Jinping Thought on Socialist Economy with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” was raised at the Central Economic Work Conference last December.

The Wall Street Journal reported that China had made “Xiconomics” a

guiding principle, with a focus on innovation and high-quality growth.

Areas to deepen reform include public institutions, state-owned enterprises, industrial monopolies, property rights protection, taxation, finance, rural development, social security and ecology. A modernized economy is the goal.

At the “two sessions,” Xi’s speeches touched more fields than economy, from Party building, rule of law, poverty reduction to environmental protection, social governance and military-civilian integration.

Internet tycoon, Tencent chairman Pony Ma said Xi’s speeches were so rich that he took six full pages of notes.

“The general secretary said we should make innovation a powerful driver of quality development, and I think it is an insightful remark,” he said. “It will be a new opportunity for our innovative enterprises.”

Li Shumu, an NPC deputy and a village Party chief in the county of Yinan, Shandong Province, said farmers in his village feel encouraged as Xi has drawn a beautiful blueprint for the countryside.

Air force officer Liu Rui said the armed forces must firmly adhere to Xi’s order to make combat capability the fundamental criterion to judge their work.

## CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANITY

People are curious about what changes Xi will bring to China and the world.

The three years to 2020 are crucial. China aims to complete building a moderately prosperous society by then. Extreme poverty will be history.

Looking further ahead, China aims to basically achieve modernization by 2035 and build a great modern socialist country by the middle of the century.

Realizing this “Chinese Dream” of national rejuvenation requires policy continuity and hard work.

On top of that, China needs an authoritative, centralized, unified leadership.

With more than 89 million members, the CPC is driving China toward new economic and social advancement, blazing a brand new trail of socialism.

The year 2018 marks the 200th birthday of Karl Marx and the 170th anniversary of the issuance of “The Communist Manifesto.”

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is considered the latest adaptation of Marxism to the Chinese context.

A miracle is unfolding — for the first time in human history, a billion plus people are crossing the threshold of modernization together. Challenges like material shortage and wealth gap will be overcome. People will feel much more fulfilled, happier and safer.

Shen Jilan, 89, is a witness to the profound changes over time.

Born a farmer in rural Shanxi Province, Shen was first elected to the

NPC in 1954 and was re-elected for 12 times in a row.

The octogenarian likes to compare her annual commute to the Great Hall of the People over time. In 1954, she spent four days on the back of a donkey, a truck bed and then a train to reach Beijing. Today, the capital is just three hours away by high-speed train.

China is indeed on a high-speed train, one that moves toward the full development of human potential, as envisioned by Karl Marx. This explains China’s growing relevance to the world. After all, it is exploring a path to advance humanity.

This year’s “two sessions,” like the 19th Party congress, attracted worldwide attention.

Analysts credit China’s growing influence to the country’s system and Xi’s charisma.

China is an economic powerhouse for the world. At more than 30 percent, China’s annual contribution to world economic growth is bigger than that of the United States, Japan and the eurozone combined.

China accounts for more than 70 percent of poverty reduction worldwide. It sends the largest group of peacekeepers among the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and makes the second largest contribution to the UN peacekeeping budget.

China raised the Belt and Road Initiative and other major proposals to champion global governance, free trade and an open global economy.

On March 9, Xi had a phone



conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump. They discussed the situation on the Korean Peninsula and bilateral relations. Trump said President Xi was right to insist on a dialogue between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The U.S. side highly appreciates and values China's significant role in resolving the Korean Peninsula issue, and is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China over the issue, according to Trump.

Xi-style diplomacy is highly praised for building a new type of major country relations and a "community with a shared future for humanity."

Vladimir Petrovsky, a senior researcher at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said a feature of the major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is that China raised non-confrontational proposals, which did not lead to clashes but

contributed to improving the existing international order.

In the past few months, Xi held talks with Trump on bilateral ties, the China-U.S. cooperation on regional and international levels. Key progress has been achieved, consensus reached.

Xi maintained close high-level exchange with Russia, pushing for all-round cooperation in all fields and closer communication and coordination on international affairs.

After the 19th Party congress, Xi received French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Theresa May, and presidents of the Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Gambia and Panama.

He visited Vietnam and Laos. At the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Da Nang, Xi called for an economic globalization that is more open and inclusive, more balanced, more equitable and beneficial to all.

In December, Beijing held the

CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting, attracting over 600 representatives of nearly 300 political parties and organizations from more than 120 countries. Xi told them that people around the world should be one family, open arms, understand each other and build a community with a shared future.

He has told Chinese diplomats that the CPC considered it a key mission to both work for Chinese people's happiness and make a greater contribution to humanity.

Afghan political analyst Ghulam Dastgir said a community with a shared future was the common pursuit of people around the world and that in pushing for that goal China could create more opportunities for the world and make it thrive.

At the Great Hall of the People, with Xi elected as president, history has opened a new chapter.

## LI KEQIANG ENDORSED AS CHINESE PREMIER

Beijing, March 18 (Xinhua) — Li Keqiang was endorsed as Chinese premier Sunday at the ongoing first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), the country's national legislature.

Nearly 3,000 NPC deputies voted to approve the premiership nomination of Li, by newly-elected President Xi Jinping.

Li was officially appointed

premier after President Xi signed a presidential decree.

Li then took an oath of allegiance to the country's fundamental law.

"I pledge to be allegiant to the Constitution of the PRC, safeguard the Constitution's authority, fulfill my legal obligations, be loyal to the country and the people, be committed and honest in my duty, accept the people's supervision and work for a

great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful," he said.

This is the second term for him on the post. In 2013, he became the seventh premier since the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949.

Li, born in 1955, joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in

1976 and graduated from Peking University with law and economics degrees.

After working as provincial leaders in Henan and Liaoning provinces, he was elected to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in 2007 and appointed vice premier in 2008.

He was reelected to the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in 2012 and 2017.

In a government work report delivered on March 5, Li called on the people to rally even closer around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core, be enterprising and work hard.

At Sunday's plenary meeting, the deputies also voted to decide on vice chairpersons and members of the Central Military Commission of the PRC, and elect director of the national supervisory commission, president of the Supreme People's Court, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and members of the 13th NPC Standing Committee.



## PREMIER LI KEQIANG MEETS THE PRESS

The First Session of the 13th National People's Congress held a press conference on 20 March 2018. Premier Li Keqiang met with Chinese and foreign reporters and answered their questions at the invitation of Mr. Zhang Yesui, Spokesperson for the NPC session. The press conference was also attended by Vice Premiers Han Zheng, Sun Chunlan, Hu

Chunhua and Liu He.

Premier Li Keqiang presented the newly-appointed vice premiers and thanked members of the media. He then opened the floor to questions.

**Bloomberg:** This year is the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening. Over those 40 years, China has enjoyed unprecedented economic

growth and hundreds of millions of people have been pulled out of poverty. But it's becoming increasingly clear that China is entering a new era, where problems are going to become more complicated and the model of reform and opening is also changing, highlighted by the restructuring of the government departments and the





revisions of the Constitution that were passed by the National People's Congress this year. I wanted to ask you what will the biggest difference be between reform and opening in this new era versus the past, especially when it comes to foreign investment and trade?

**Premier Li:** Opening-up has been instrumental to China's economic and social transformation in the past 40 years. It has driven China's reform agenda, promoted its development and delivered real benefits to the Chinese people. In his speech at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos last year, President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's commitment to uphold free trade and pursue opening-up as a fundamental policy. If there's anything that's going to be different

from the past, it will be that China will open even wider to the world. With the Chinese economy so integrated into the global economy, closing China's door will only hinder our own progress.

China will continue to open up; indeed, there is still broad space to do so. China's import tariffs are at the medium level internationally. We are committed to bringing them down still further, particularly for high-demand consumer goods. For instance, we aim to adopt zero tariff for the much needed anti-cancer drugs.

On the other hand, China runs a deficit in trade in services. Further opening of the services sector will entail a cost, but it will make the sector more competitive. We plan to widen

access to elderly care, health care, education and financial services. We will ease or lift the cap on foreign ownership in some sectors. We will also make the manufacturing sector fully open. There will be no mandatory requirement for technology transfer, and intellectual property rights will be protected.

The negative list for inbound investment will be shortened and access continuously widened this year and in the coming years. We aim to merge the three laws governing foreign investment into one law, and fully honor our commitment to foreign investors of pre-establishment national treatment.

As for your question about how the constitutional amendment and institutional reform is going to

impact China's opening-up, now that both proposals have been adopted at the NPC session, we will faithfully observe the amended Constitution and follow through on institutional reform. This will only reinforce our commitment to the fundamental policy of opening-up.

I can see from some media reports that opinions are divided on market openness in China. Let me make this clear. Our goal is to gradually create a level playing field in a market of 1.3 billion consumers for both Chinese and foreign-invested enterprises of all types of ownership.

This will provide Chinese consumers with more options and stimulate the upgrading of Chinese products and services and that of the overall economy. This said, China's opening-up will be an incremental process. Yet, what may look like a modest step can sometimes yield enormous benefits. For example, five years ago we simplified the procedure for getting passports and traveling overseas. As a result, the number of outbound trips made by Chinese citizens surged from 70 million to 130 million last year, most of them being visits for tourism and shopping. In making sense of China's opening-up, one needs to pay attention to the concrete steps in specific areas, but more importantly take a panoramic and long-term view. I also want to emphasize that opening needs to work both ways. It's like rowing a boat: if only one of the two oars people is giving it their best, the boat will just keep turning on the spot. They'll only move forward if both are working in the same direction.

**China Daily:** During this year's

"Two Sessions", some delegates expressed the view that the government should pursue the reform of its own functions with the same determination as in pursuing GDP growth in the past. At the same time, we have also heard some complaints suggesting that the government-imposed transaction cost in China remains high, and it is still difficult for the people to get things done. So I would like to ask you, Mr. Premier, what more steps will the new government take to streamline administration and delegate powers? And what will the government do to enhance compliance oversight? Are there any specific goals in this area?

**Premier Li:** You asked a very important question. The transformation of government functions was high on the agenda during our first term. We saw the effort to streamline administration, delegate powers, and improve compliance oversight and government services as pivotal to getting the relationship between the government and the market right, which will further stimulate market vitality and public creativity. I'm happy to say that our efforts have paid off, and these measures have become an effective means for further reforming government functions and for unleashing and developing the productive forces.

In my discussions with them during this year's "Two Sessions", many delegates raised the hope that in pursuing supply-side structural reforms, the government will focus more on improving the business environment and making it easier for people to get things done. These

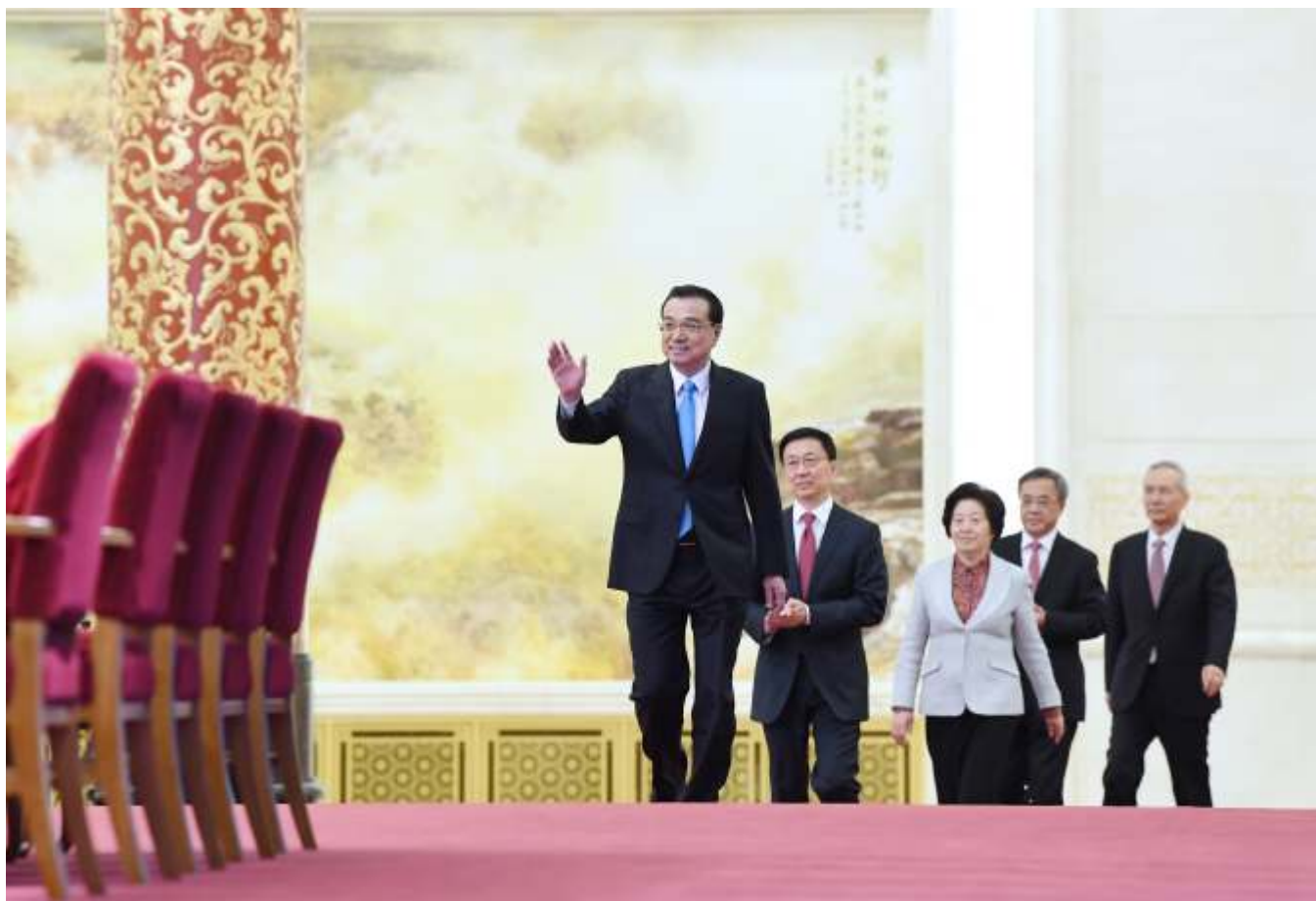
voices represent the high expectation of market entities and our people for further reforms. The issues they raise may seem small, yet they bear on major policy decisions. We must heed this call by tackling the root of the problems and pushing for breakthroughs in areas most closely related to the market and to the lives of our citizens.

As we say in Chinese, every single detail counts in the accomplishment of big tasks. Going forward, these are the 6 things we plan to do. We'll cut the time it takes for opening a business by another half; we will reduce the time required for reviewing a project application by another half; we will put in place, at the national level, an e-platform for accessing government services; we will work to see that our people can get things done in one office, without the need for a second trip; and we will ensure that any requirement for certification that has no basis in law or regulations will be abolished.

Thanks to our efforts in recent years, we have significantly cut the time required for opening a business in our country. But it still takes 22 days on average, whereas it takes maybe less than a day in a developed country. And it takes even longer for one to get a construction permit in China. So with regulatory streamlining and further tax and fee cuts, we are making profound adjustments to government functions. This is like moving the government's own cheese.

Any regulatory streamlining can only serve its purpose when supported with enhanced compliance oversight, which helps to





enforce market order. All acts of malpractice involving cheating, making or selling fake or substandard goods, or running unlawful monopolies, will be dealt with in strict accordance with the law and banned from the marketplace, as they are the enemy of fairness and innovation and go against social ethics.

We believe that a vibrant market and care for the people should go hand in hand. Compliance oversight should not cause undue inconveniences to average citizens. In this round of government institutional reform, for example, we have decided to merge the various market regulatory bodies in order to slim down the ranks of officials who deal with market entities on a daily basis and exercise unified law

enforcement.

The first reporter who asked a question mentioned government institutional reform. One part of it is to combine the state and local tax offices at and below the provincial-level. This actually reminds me of a recent discussion I had with a group of scholars. One of these experts had been doing some local research, and discovered that if you sit and eat in a restaurant, the local tax office collects business tax. But if you order takeaway, the state tax office collects VAT. So he asked a tax officer: what if I stand and eat in the doorway of the restaurant? Who collects the tax then? The officer replied, "That's just nitpicking for the sake of it." But actually it's true that this kind of problem exists.

In recent years as you may know, we have introduced the reform to replace business tax with value added tax. This has enabled the sharing of tax revenues and provided the foundation for the merging of tax authorities at the central and local levels to avoid duplications that burden businesses. So all in all, our regulatory rollback and compliance oversight will contribute to a more energized market and the creation of a level playing field. I should also add that vested interests will be dealt with in the enhanced compliance oversight process.

Nothing is too small for us to do if it delivers concrete benefits to our people. The ultimate purpose of all reform measures and endeavors of the government is to serve the common good, be results-oriented,

and benefit the people. In this regard, the government will further reform itself to foster a better business environment for market players, and make it easier for our people to access government services. In so doing, this government will rise up to all challenges and press ahead against all odds.

**Yonhap News:** There have been significant developments on the Korean Peninsula recently, with an inter-Korean summit planned for next month, the DPRK indicating willingness to denuclearize, and the US President agreeing to meet with the North Korean leader. Under such circumstances, I would like to ask, Mr. Premier, what does China expect from the settlement of the Korean nuclear issue and what role is China prepared to play to this end? Will China push forward the Six-Party Talks to resolve the nuclear issue?

**Premier Li:** We welcome the recent deescalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula. China supports all efforts that are conducive to the resolution of the Korean nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation. China will continue to do all it can to take forward the denuclearization process and uphold peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that all parties will show sincerity and take concrete actions to get the nuclear issue back to the track of negotiation and strive for new progress towards denuclearization and peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We believe this serves the interests of all parties and the world at large.

The Korean Peninsula is in China's close neighborhood. China's

own interests are at stake. So you can well imagine how concerned we are with the situation there.

**CCTV:** We have seen cases of private business people who are reluctant to make new investments out of concern for the safety of their property. Some are even trying to transfer their assets overseas. We have also heard complaints from private businessmen about the inaction or arbitrary behaviors on the part of some government officials. Premier Li, what will your government do to resolve this problem?

**Premier Li:** Since reform and opening-up, we have remained committed to unswervingly consolidating and developing the public sector and unswervingly supporting and developing the non-public sector. It is fair to say that businesses of all types of ownership, private as well as state-owned, have made important contributions to the historic progress of the Chinese economy in the past few decades. Nowadays, private businesses account for about half of the tax revenues. They also contribute 80% to employment and create 90% of new urban jobs. It's true that private investment has been less than robust due to factors such as the weak protection of property rights. We are paying high attention to addressing this issue.

Protecting property rights is the cornerstone of our socialist market economy and is crucial to the nurturing of the productive forces. Hence it has been a high-priority item on the government agenda, and every effort has been made to tackle the problems our people have

encountered in this area. For example, at last year's press conference I was asked about the potential effect of the expiration of land use rights for residential homes. I responded by pledging automatic renewal of the rights and the protection of all such transactions. I also called for amending the relevant law to reflect this policy. Since then, we have also reaffirmed the extension of the current rural land contracts by another 30 years. These are examples of our efforts to protect property rights through means of law, which is a good indication of our commitment to the rule of law.

Let me emphasize that contracts must be honored and not treated as scrap paper. Continuity is essential to good governance. New officials must not be allowed to disavow obligations undertaken by their predecessors; those who have done so will be duly punished. Last year, some property rights cases which were poorly adjudicated were redressed. These actions are meant to send a signal to the society of our resolve to ensure that all property owners and investors, regardless of the type of ownership, will have peace of mind as long as they operate within the confines of the law.

**Lianhe Zaobao of Singapore:** With China's economic rise, some critics have been saying that China is increasingly using its money and market as political tools to try to influence other countries' foreign policies or make some sort of political infiltration. How would you respond to that? Should the world feel worried about China's rise and its strategic expansion?





**Premier Li:** In recent years, China's economic growth has contributed some thirty percent to global growth. This has been conducive not only to global economic recovery but also to world peace. More trade and more cooperation mean more negotiations, and that helps to keep conflicts away. The Chinese believe that one must not do to others what one does not like to be done to himself. We always value peace. We are resolute in upholding China's territorial integrity and will never give up a single inch of our own territory. In a similar vein, we will not take or occupy an inch of others' land. What we pursue is a road of peaceful development.

Our development so far has been achieved in a peaceful international environment. Going forward, a

peaceful international environment remains what China needs for attaining modernization. Let me emphasize two points:

One, China will not seek expansion. As a developing country, China has no intention of pursuing expansion. Even if it grows stronger in the future, its development will continue to defy the logic which predestines a rising country to hegemony. What China wants is to develop relations with all other countries and regions on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. Together, we can build a community with a shared future for mankind.

China's business cooperation with other countries follows market principles and business rules. In

pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we have sought shared benefits through consultation and collaboration. China's assistance within its capacity to some other developing countries, especially underdeveloped countries, has never come with political strings. It has nothing to do with political influence. In some areas, the international community may want China to assume a greater role. Well, China is ready to fulfill its due international responsibilities commensurate with its status as a major developing country. Yet, it would be a misunderstanding to see China playing such a role as seeking strategic expansion.

My second point is that we will continue to focus on managing China's own affairs well. As Chinese

Premier, I am fully aware that my country is still confronted with many difficulties and challenges, including many pressing livelihood issues. We in the government must deal with these challenges on a daily basis. We travel and make friends around the world in order to foster a peaceful and stable environment, internationally and in our neighborhood, and create more win-win opportunities for China's development. We know clearly this is what we should continue to do.

**People's Daily:** Mr. Premier, in your government work report you said that fairer and fuller employment should always be a highlight of high quality development in China. At the same time, however, college graduates, laid-off workers from cutting overcapacity and demobilized military personnel continue to face difficulty in getting jobs, which means daunting challenges in ensuring employment in the next five years. What do you plan to do to tackle this problem?

**Premier Li:** Whether the government is doing a good job in employment is best judged by our people. I don't think anyone would be able to cover it up if we fall short on job creation. Let me first address what we plan to do on the employment front this year, as this year's performance will be a good indicator of what is to come in the next five years.

In recent years, with the Chinese economy operating within a proper range, some 60 million new urban jobs have been generated, ensuring relatively full employment in China. This has been a big achievement. Employment is of paramount importance for each and every family,

and nothing is more depressing for it than zero employment of its members. A college graduate would not have a future if graduation means joblessness. We must put ourselves in their shoes. Governments at all levels must always put job creation high on their priority list. In this year's government work report, for the first time, we incorporated surveyed urban unemployment as a projected target, to better reflect the employment situation in both urban and rural areas. This is the government putting pressure on itself.

In urban areas, we expect to see some 15 to 16 million new entrants to the job market this year. Our minimum target is to generate another 11 million new jobs and we will work towards the goal of 13 million in actual practice. We have been able to do that in the past several years and there's no reason for us not to hit that mark this year. Moreover, we have some 280 million rural migrant workers. They have worked hard to pave roads and build skyscrapers in the cities, making great contribution to China's development. Getting migrant workers employed is an important part of China's urbanization process and a big source of their income. This year, we expect to see some three to four million rural migrant workers coming to the cities, the government must endeavor to fulfill its responsibility in providing job opportunities for these people.

This year, there will be 8.2 million college graduates, another record high number, and five million graduates from secondary vocational schools. In addition, there will be some one million demobilized military personnel and workers laid off in the

cutting of overcapacity. We must make every effort to ensure their employment. In particular, there should be no zero employment families. We must also explore new channels for creating jobs, not least by fostering new growth drivers, which have a proven track record of job creation in the past few years. Fairly full employment will also be a major wealth generator. Just imagine, how much wealth will be created by China's 800 million-strong labor force out of its 1.3 billion population. This will also offer a huge opportunity for international markets.

**NBC News:** Premier Li, there is increasing concern that China will displace the United States as the world's leader and a lot of talk about a trade war as punishment for what critics describe as unfair trading, industrial policies over an authoritarian, state-led economic model of China. So Mr. Premier, in your view, what measures can be taken to address America's concerns and prevent a trade war? Do you still believe that dialogue can resolve what looks like an imminent threat? And what can China do in the event of a trade war? Would you, for example, use China's vast foreign exchange reserves and massive holding of American debt? Thank you.

**Premier Li:** Indeed, there has been much talk about an emerging trade war between China and the United States recently. We believe a trade war does nobody any good. No one will emerge a winner from a trade war. War is essentially the antithesis of trade, and trade disputes should be resolved through negotiation, consultation and





dialogue. What we hope is that cool heads and rational actions will prevail instead of emotions or impulses holding sway. A trade war should best be avoided.

Last year, China-US trade reached 580 billion US dollars. This is achieved through observing business rules and market principles. Otherwise, such a big volume of trade would be unthinkable. A large trade deficit, either with the United States or any other country, is not what China goes after. We want to see a basically balanced trade. Otherwise, it would not be sustainable.

Just now I listed some further steps of opening-up China is going to take covering services, manufacturing and products. US businesses may well seize these opportunities. At the same

time, we hope the United States will ease restrictions on exporting high-tech and high value-added goods to China. The associated intellectual property rights will be fully protected. We hope this important measure for balancing China-US trade will not be passed over. Otherwise a good opportunity would be missed.

China has vast foreign exchange reserves. We have been making diversified investments of these reserves on the basis of market principles, and China will remain a responsible long-term investor. The relationship between China and the United States is one between the world's largest developing country and largest developed country. Our economies are highly complementary. A stable China-US relationship is in the interest of both countries and the

whole world. Any worry about China's greater development is unnecessary.

**China News Service:** Mr. Premier, we have noticed that recently some mandatory steps have been taken against certain Chinese insurance and financial companies. Will this happen again in the future? Does this mean that new risks are building in China? And will they set off systemic financial risks?

**Premier Li:** Let me make it very clear as a person who holds responsibility in this area: China has the capability to forestall systemic financial risks and I do not foresee such risks. This is because the fundamentals of China's economy remain strong, and its financial system is in good shape. That said, as China's GDP exceeds 80 trillion yuan



with 250 trillion yuan of assets in the banking sector, our financial system is not risk free.

Just as a proverb goes, gathering clouds may bring rain and tall trees catch the wind. I recall that at the press conference a couple of years ago, I pointed out that both the capital adequacy ratio and provision coverage ratio of Chinese commercial banks are fairly high and above international standards. Let me add here that the required reserve ratio stands at about 15 percent, which is equivalent to us having some 20 trillion yuan stashed away against risks.

This year, we have taken the initiative to cut the budget deficit to GDP ratio, supported by the sustained momentum of steady growth and higher than expected tax revenues. Last year, the central government had a surplus revenue of 250 billion yuan, and we have yet to dig into that amount of money. The first two months of this year saw a double digit increase in China's fiscal revenues. So we are confident about meeting all the major economic and social development targets this year.

Going forward, we plan to further cut the deficit ratio. But this does not mean we will change our proactive fiscal policy, for this year will see considerable increase in the fiscal spending relative to last year. Our ability to cut the deficit ratio shows our confidence in the health of our economy and is also meant to make provisions for global uncertainties and emerging risks at home.

True, some serious irregularities and evasion of regulation in the

financial sector have occurred. The relevant authorities have taken resolute measures to deal with the pockets of risks to prevent them from further spreading. When a blister needs bursting, it should be burst. Otherwise, a small problem may escalate and entail moral hazards. In dealing with these cases, we have taken care to protect the lawful rights and interests of our consumers, and have gained further experience in this area. We will continue to resolutely tackle such cases should they arise in the future.

In this round of institutional reform, we have decided to merge the insurance and banking regulatory bodies to plug possible loopholes. At the same time we do face another old problem of illegal fund raising. The government will keep up the fight against such illegal activities. I would also like to advise all investors not to buy into the lies of those illegal fundraisers who'd have you believe a bamboo basket will hold a gallon of water.

**RIA Novosti:** Mr. Premier, two years ago I asked you at the press conference about the China-Russia relationship being close politically but lukewarm economically. It seems that this is still how some people would describe the China-Russia relationship today. Russia just held its presidential election and will soon form a new government. As Chinese Premier at the start of a new term, what actions do you hope the new Russian government will take to enhance the business ties between the two countries, and what will the Chinese government do? What political message would you like to convey to Russia?

**Premier Li:** On the evening of the 19th, President Xi Jinping and President Putin had a telephone conversation and President Xi congratulated his Russian counterpart on his re-election. Recent years did see a slide in China-Russia trade because of the changing landscape of global trade and the downturn in commodity prices. However, that slide was reversed last year and our trade registered an over 20% growth year on year. Between our two large economies, trade now exceeds US\$80 billion. I believe there is still much untapped potential in China-Russia trade. We can work together to bump it up to, say, US\$100 billion, by exploring new mechanisms and unlocking potential. What I would like to say to the Russian people is that China and Russia are each other's biggest neighbors. The steady growth of the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between China and Russia serves the interests of both countries and the world at large.

**EBC of Taiwan:** In recent years, due to various reasons, cross-Straits relations have encountered some serious challenges with uncertain prospects. My question is, under such circumstances, what will the mainland do to uphold the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and promote the well-being of people on both sides?

**Premier Li:** The peaceful development of cross-Straits relations serves the well-being of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and we will continue to go down this path. We have been working on ways to ensure that our fellow countrymen

and women from Taiwan will enjoy the same treatment as mainlanders when they come to work, live or study on the mainland, because we are members of the same family, and we both belong to one and the same China. That said, any attempt, proposition or activity for “Taiwan independence” must not be tolerated, and we must not allow any external forces to play “the Taiwan card” to cause difficulties for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and for cross-Strait relations. We are willing to have dialogue and consultation with all political parties and groups on Taiwan which subscribe to the one-China principle to discuss all issues that concern people on both sides. We should work together to uphold the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and eventually achieve China’s peaceful reunification. We believe herein lies the fundamental interests of our nation.

**Guangming Daily:** Mr. Premier, the reform of China’s healthcare system has made good strides in recent years, but often a major illness can still land a family in severe difficulty. What steps will the new government take to address the problem of illness-induced poverty?

**Premier Li:** In the past few years, we have made enormous efforts to improve the basic health insurance system. A medical insurance safety net, the largest of its kind in the world, has been put in place to treat both minor and serious illnesses. This being said, some families living in poverty or those who have difficulty accessing quality medical resources do face the kind of problems that you mentioned. A lot of such cases are reported in the new media.

China is a vast country; we still have some thirty million people living in poverty. The Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core gives high priority to poverty eradication and has made the pledge of winning the fight against poverty. Among the impoverished population, many are pushed or have fallen back into poverty because of a serious disease. The government, while improving the basic healthcare system, has given greater attention to the treatment of serious diseases. We have adopted some innovative measures; for example, we have complemented basic health insurance with commercial insurance schemes. By harnessing the law of large numbers, such an arrangement has produced an amplifying effect of the insurance funds and extended the coverage of serious disease insurance to 17 million people last year.

This year, we plan to do more. We will raise central government subsidies for basic medical insurance schemes, and half of the increase will go to serious disease insurance. Our aim is to cover at least 20 million people and more types of serious diseases in the insurance program. What’s more, we will encourage the development of telemedicine and healthcare consortiums to make quality medical resources more accessible at the community level.

During my inspection trip on the eve of this past Spring Festival, I dropped in on a poor family and met an elderly woman there who was seriously ill. Although she had insurance coverage, the family still found the treatment unaffordable. Their plight is still vivid in my memory. A Chinese saying compares

a major illness to a mountain falling down. When such an illness strikes, it is our hope that the family will still find protection. That’s the very purpose of us having major illness insurance program and other similar mechanisms.

**TBS:** This year marks the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty. Mr. Premier, when you met Foreign Minister Kôno in January, you have said the relationship is warming up but there are still some cold parts left. If so, what more should both sides do for the relationship to fully recover? And in the upcoming occasion of trilateral summit including South Korea, would you intend to accept the invitation for your first official visit to Japan and will that be the start of the reciprocal visits by the two countries’ leaders?

**Premier Li:** We have seen signs of improvement in China-Japan relations lately. Prime Minister Abe has invited me on several occasions to visit Japan. In an atmosphere of continuously improving ties, I would be ready to positively consider paying an official visit to Japan while attending the China-Japan-ROK Leaders’ Meeting there in the first half of this year.

Improvement of China-Japan relations requires not just the right atmosphere, but also vision and commitment. Exchange of visits at the leadership level will help get this relationship back on the track of steady development, but we must look to consolidate the foundation of China-Japan relations rather than just make a one-time deal. There needs to be sustained, steady progress of this

relationship. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. It's important to honor the spirit and the consensus reached in the four Sino-Japanese political documents including the Treaty of Peace and Friendship. If we have seen a spring in China-Japan relationship, we must also watch out for any possible return of chills. We need to work together for the sustained, steady development of this relationship. That is what is expected of Japan.

**Xinhua News Agency:** The Internet Plus model has been widely used in recent years and there is a boom in the sharing economy. Meanwhile, in this process some problems have cropped up, and their development may face some hurdles in the future. How do you see the situation, Mr. Premier? And what will the government do to promote further development of the Internet Plus model?

**Premier Li:** In recent years the Internet Plus model has played an important role in promoting the steady growth of China's economy, like a new sail being installed on the big ship riding the wave of a new round of global technological revolution. Transformed government functions have helped to energize the market. Consumption has become the biggest driver of China's development, and there has been a fundamental change in China's economic structure. All this interconnected progress, together with the new drivers, has enabled the Chinese economy to defy repeated predictions of a hard landing and sustain a sound momentum of economic growth.

The Internet Plus model has not just fostered new drivers of growth, but also provided the largest platform for the sharing economy, giving opportunity for our people to pursue their own entrepreneurship and make innovations. It has made a big difference in China's economic and social development and profoundly changed the way we work and live. In this context, technological professionals, business people or the average person can all tap into their unique potential and have the opportunities to prove their talents.

As a new phenomenon, the Internet Plus may also have its own problems. In this process, we need to maximize its benefits while taking care to address its possible downsides. In exercising regulation over new things, we believe the government needs to adopt a prudent yet accommodative approach. We should neither shut them down once problems occur, which would be the easier thing to do, nor allow the Internet Plus model to become a hotbed for cheating and manipulation. We should guard against both of these risks.

As the next step, we will adopt more measures to encourage the growth of this model. For example, Chinese internet companies tend to get listed overseas. What we plan to do is to improve the conditions for them to return to the mainland markets. We will also create conditions in keeping with the law for our mainland high-tech or innovation companies to get listed on the mainland markets. We need to further develop the Internet Plus model by applying smart technologies to education, health care, government services and other

services sectors to promote fast and sound growth of the digital economy and the sharing economy. We need to both follow existing patterns and think out of the box in developing these models.

**Phoenix TV of Hong Kong:** Mr. Premier, in your government work report this year, you said efforts will be made to develop the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, support Hong Kong and Macao in integrating their own development into overall national development and further enhance the mutually beneficial cooperation between the mainland and these two regions. But some people in Hong Kong feel somewhat worried whether this will undercut Hong Kong's unique role, or affect the implementation of "one country, two systems", or even blur the line between the two systems. How would you respond to that?

**Premier Li:** We want to build the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area into a world-class city cluster with the three places drawing upon each other's comparative strengths; otherwise this Greater Bay Area would not be competitive internationally. The outline for the development program is being formulated and will be adopted for implementation. For people from Hong Kong and Macao who come to work or live on the mainland, especially in Guangdong, we will gradually introduce the same treatment for them as mainlanders in terms of housing, education and transportation, among others. We would also like to share such opportunities with people from Taiwan.



We encourage Hong Kong and Macao to integrate their own development into overall national development. In this process, we will continue to observe the principle of “one country, two systems” under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong, the people of Macao administer Macao, and both regions enjoy a high degree of autonomy. As there can be mutually beneficial cooperation and common development between different countries, there is even more reason for the three places which belong to one and the same country to do so. Under the guidance of the “one country, two systems” principle, we are confident that these three areas will draw upon each other’s strengths and work together in building a new and strong region of vibrant growth.

**China Radio International:** Mr. Premier, given the aging of the Chinese population, quality and inexpensive old-age care is woefully lacking. It was also reported last year that a Chinese province ran behind its pension payouts, raising concerns about similar problem in other provinces. How should this problem be addressed and what will the government do to ensure adequate old-age support for the over 200 million senior citizens in China?

**Premier Li:** It’s already lunch time, and your question is also about a livelihood issue. We must ensure that old-age pensions will be paid in full and on time. The problem that you described did happen in certain provinces last year. I made a point of

raising the issue of pension payouts each time I visit old industrial bases or hold discussions with the delegates during this year’s Two Sessions. The difficulties that some provinces face are mainly due to the decline in their fiscal revenues at the time of local economic downturn. But they have taken multiple steps to address the issue, such as putting to better use state-owned assets or adjusting the structure of government expenditure. The central government has also provided some funding support for this.

Despite the difficulties faced by some provinces, at the national level, we are capable of making pension payment in full and on time. As of the end of last year, the balance of China’s pension insurance funds for urban workers stood at over 4.1 trillion yuan, and we had more revenues than expenditures. We also have 1.8 trillion yuan in social security fund as a strategic reserve, which is still increasing. So we are fully capable of ensuring full and timely payment of pension benefits nationwide.

We will continue to pursue reform in this area. This year, we plan to establish a central system of pension fund provisions that can be transferred to provinces in case of need. The initial contribution rate for all provinces will be three percent, which means each province will contribute three percent of their funds to the central provision to be used to fill the shortfalls that some provinces may face. In addition, we will use some of the state-owned asset proceeds to replenish the national social security fund to make it safer and more profitable. These

measures will help to deliver stronger old-age support to the senior people in China. We should give people confidence in the future. Think about it, if decades of hard work cannot earn one a decent retirement life, our future generations will lose faith in us.

We should never see senior people as a liability, though. There are still so many things that they can do and a retired life can also offer tremendous business opportunities and turn out to be an important industry. That said, we will never shirk the government’s due responsibility in extending adequate old-age support.

Just now the moderator said this is going to be the last question. I recall that previously we also addressed several questions related to people’s livelihood. Under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, we will continue to put people first. The efforts made by a people’s government boils down to the purpose of serving our people’s well-being and improving their lives. We will continue to take strong measures to ensure people’s basic living needs, address their pressing concerns, make more quality resources available, and deliver more concrete benefits to our people.

**Chutian Metropolis Daily:** Mr. Premier, how much will the personal income tax threshold be raised?

**Premier Li:** We will start the relevant process expeditiously and the procedures will be handled in accordance with law.

# CHINA'S NATIONAL LEGISLATURE CONCLUDES ANNUAL SESSION

Beijing, March 20 (Xinhua) — The first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) concluded Tuesday morning.

President Xi Jinping and NPC Standing Committee Chairman Li Zhanshu addressed the closing meeting.

Other Chinese leaders including

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

Lawmakers adopted the supervision law and resolutions on the government work report, and the work reports of the 12th NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme

People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

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

President Xi signed a presidential decree to promulgate the supervision law.



Chinese President Xi Jinping makes a keynote speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 20, 2018. (Xinhua/Yao Dawei)



President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders attend the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 20, 2018. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)

## CHINA'S TOP POLITICAL ADVISORY BODY CONCLUDES ANNUAL SESSION

Wang Yang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), presides over the closing meeting of the First Session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 15, 2018. (Xinhua/Pang Xinglei)







The closing meeting of the First Session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 15, 2018. (Xinhua/Yan Yan)



The closing meeting of the First Session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 15, 2018. (Xinhua/Yan Yan)





Members of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) sing the national anthem at the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 15, 2018. (Xinhua/Pang Xinglei)



Journalists work at the closing meeting of the First Session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 15, 2018. (Xinhua/Xing Guangli)



Members of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) walk out of the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the first session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee in Beijing, capital of China, March 15, 2018. (Xinhua/Xing Guangli)

## CHINA'S MASSIVE CABINET RESTRUCTURING PLAN ADOPTED

Beijing, March 17 (Xinhua) — China's national legislature on Saturday adopted a massive cabinet restructuring plan to make the government better-structured, more efficient, and service-oriented.

Approved at a plenary meeting of the ongoing first session of the 13th National People's Congress, the plan will create an immigration administration, an agency to coordinate foreign aid, a combined banking and insurance regulator, ministries of veterans affairs, emergency management, natural resources, among others.

Briefing lawmakers earlier this

week, State Councilor Wang Yong said the restructuring would strengthen the government's roles in economic management, market supervision, social management, public service, ecological and environmental protection.

According to Wang, the cabinet will have fewer entities at ministerial or vice-ministerial levels.

"It focuses on the needs of development and meets the people's expectations," he said.

The move is seen as a continuation of the previous seven rounds of cabinet restructuring since

the early 1980s.

The latest restructuring is considered as part of a broader plan of the Communist Party of China to deepen the reform of the Party and state institutions.

"The reform comes at a crucial time," Chen Xi, a senior Party official, said in an article recently published in the People's Daily.

It will support the efforts in the next three years in building a moderately prosperous society and lay a foundation for building a great modern socialist country by the middle of the century, Chen said.







# LANDMARK TWO SESSIONS SET COURSE FOR “NEW ERA”



Beijing, March 20 (Xinhua) — As the curtains closed on the annual two sessions Tuesday, China is setting sail in the “new era” with a detailed chart, steered by a remarkable helmsman and a competent team.

The first sessions of the 13th National People’s Congress and the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference are the first high-profile national political events held since the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress

last October, a landmark Party congress that revealed the roadmap for China’s rejuvenation.

“It will be another Long March to materialize the blueprint,” said newly-elected President Xi Jinping at the closing meeting of the annual legislative session, calling for greater efforts to make outstanding achievement in the new era.

The historic two sessions expedite the country’s march to its rejuvenation. China not only

conventionally unveiled specific targets and priorities for this year’s development, but also set a new state leadership and government to realize its ambitions.

Under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with comrade Xi Jinping, who was re-elected president unanimously, at the core, such pledges will be fulfilled to benefit China and the world.

The economic target is GDP growth of around 6.5 percent for



2018, unchanged statistically from last year but different in essence. Gone are the days when double-digit growth was the norm. China has made it clear that it intends to pursue high-quality development powered by greener and more sustainable engines such as consumption and services.

The projected GDP expansion rate will still be one of the fastest worldwide, lending new steam to the recovering global economy.

China rolled out a sweeping cabinet restructuring plan to cut bureaucracy and improve governance efficiency, introduced a nationwide supervisory commission network to toughen the fight on corruption, and most importantly, amended its fundamental law to enshrine “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New

Era” as the guiding principle for the country’s rise.

These reforms will help China to achieve “socialist modernization” basically by 2035, and become a “great modern socialist country” by the middle of the century, a key goal in the Chinese Dream.

The world should rest assured that China’s ambitions are not hegemonic.

“The Chinese people’s sincere wish and practical action to contribute to the peace and development of humanity should not be misinterpreted, nor should they be distorted,” Xi said.

China has no plans to dominate the world. Its rise might “alarm” certain countries, but it will be good

news for the world at large. The country’s success story offers other countries and regions new philosophies of growth and governance.

The year 2018 marks the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx’s birth as well as the 170th anniversary of the publication of the Communist Manifesto. This Western-originated philosophy has taken root in China and been adapted constantly to meet China’s changing needs.

Whatever coinages are thrown at China’s political and growth model, the effectiveness and efficiency of Socialism with Chinese characteristics cannot be denied.

It has helped hundreds of millions of Chinese people grow rich and the country become strong.



“History has proven and will continue to prove that only socialism can save China and only by adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics will we realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” Xi said.

The world, especially the West, should be open-minded about China’s formula for growth.

Cold War-era thinking is outdated and could only hinder the world’s irresistible course into a new era. Being stuck with a zero-sum mentality risks plowing the globe into a “Thucydides Trap,” a scenario without winners.

For the world, China’s development is mutually beneficial in nature.

The country’s burgeoning

middle-income population, at around 400 million now, offer a growing consumer market for overseas firms. Increasingly affluent Chinese are ready to pay for high-quality products, services and unique experiences, fuelling imports and globe-trotting trips.

China has decided to completely open up its general manufacturing sector to overseas investors this year, while market access to sectors like telecommunications, medical services, education, elderly care and new energy vehicles will also be expanded.

The development of China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative will see more roads and railways built to accelerate cross-border exchanges on more fronts, consolidating a new platform for fresh sources of global economic growth and shared

prosperity for other countries.

Even bolder steps are expected to be taken to open China’s market wider this year as the country marks the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening-up drive, a “game-changing” move, as the government work report termed it, in making China what it is today.

China’s rejuvenation might also be a game-changer when it comes to shaping a Western-dominated international community into a more balanced, stable and prosperous world.

The misleading “China threat” argument is losing ground in the new era. China must seize the day; the world must seize China’s opportunities.

## External Affairs

# XI JINPING HOLDS TELEPHONE TALKS WITH PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN OF RUSSIA

On March 19, 2018, President Xi Jinping held telephone talks with President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Xi Jinping congratulated Russia on the successful holding of the presidential election as well as Vladimir Putin on his re-election as President of Russia. Xi Jinping pointed out that Mr. President’s successful re-election is a right choice made by the Russian people. It is believed that under Mr. President’s leadership, the Russian people will

definitely continue focusing their attention and energy and forging ahead in unity, so as to constantly make new achievements in national development and construction. At present, both China and Russia are at a crucial period of national development and rejuvenation. This year is the first year for China to implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and also marks the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening-up. Compared to previous

years, the “Two Sessions” of China this year bear greater significance. In addition to the election of new state organs and leaders of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, important proposals such as constitutional amendment and draft supervision law were discussed and a new round of institutional restructuring of the State Council has started. Such gestures are conducive to better uniting and encouraging the Chinese people to strive for realizing the

Chinese Dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. I fully agree with the important ideas on such areas as Russia's national construction, improvement of the people's livelihood, and scientific and technological innovation Mr. President proposed in the recent State of the Union address. It is believed that both China and Russia will stick to their own development paths in the predetermined direction and make new achievements.

Xi Jinping stressed that China and Russia are comprehensive strategic partners of coordination that stand together through thick and thin. I have met with Mr. President for many times, and we have jointly led China-

Russia relations to withstand the test of the international vicissitudes and reach the best period in history. As China and Russia are both major countries in the world, China is willing to continue joining hands with Russia to intensify connections, deepen cooperation, and jointly draw blueprint for the development of bilateral relations in the next stage, in a bid to lead China-Russia relations into a new era.

Vladimir Putin once again congratulated Xi Jinping on his election as Chinese President. He expressed that this important decision of China's National People's Congress (NPC) once again proves the high prestige of Xi Jinping and the

support for him from all the Chinese people. The series of decisions made by the NPC of China will further promote the development of China and are completely correct. Russia congratulated and firmly supported them. Thanks to Xi Jinping's promotion in person, the current Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is at the highest level in history. Russia cherishes the friendship with China, and is willing to work with China to intensify high-level exchanges and deepen bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

## **XI JINPING HOLDS TELEPHONE TALKS AT REQUEST WITH CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL OF GERMANY**

On March 17, 2018, President Xi Jinping held telephone talks at request with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

Congratulating Xi Jinping on his election as Chinese President, Angela Merkel expressed that the new German government is committed to continuously developing closer relations between Germany and China, and stands ready to strengthen high-level exchanges and institutional dialogues with China in a bid to boost cooperation in various fields. Germany has always supported the Belt and Road Initiative and regarded it as a strategic bridge for Eurasia, as well as stands ready to contribute to the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative through project

cooperation. Germany supports deepening Europe-China relations, and stands ready to strengthen cooperation with China within the G20 and other multilateral frameworks, so as to jointly safeguard multilateral order.

Xi Jinping congratulated Angela Merkel on her re-election as Chancellor of Germany. Xi Jinping pointed out that both China and Germany are major countries and important stabilizing forces in the world. Bilateral relations have achieved high-level development within the framework of the all-round strategic partnership. I have noticed that the new German government continues regarding China as a priority of its diplomacy in Asia.

China also attaches great importance to developing its relations with Germany. China and Germany should set an example of win-win cooperation, enhance strategic docking, jointly well plan for mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields in the next stage and push forward cooperation within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, in a bid to achieve common development. China and Germany should continuously lead China-Europe relations, and play constructive roles in promoting China-Europe strategic mutual trust and boosting China-Europe cooperation. China and Germany should become impellers for new-type international relations, and be dedicated to maintaining economic

globalization and multilateralism. Both countries should support free trade, oppose trade protectionism, strengthen cooperation within the G20 and other multilateral cooperation, jointly maintain and improve the international order and the economic governance system as well as maintain and build an open world economy. China and Germany

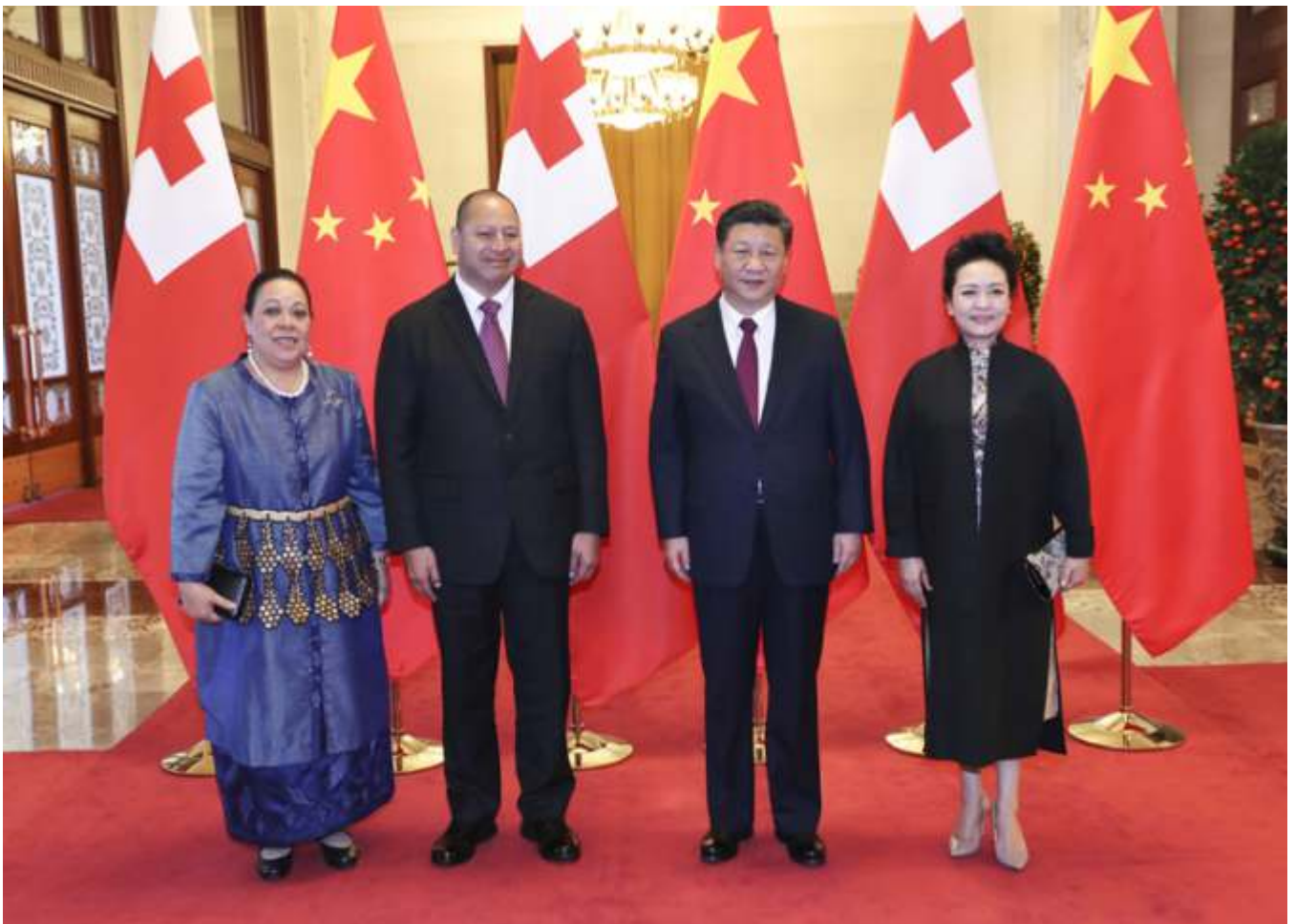
should also become cooperation partners transcending ideological differences. China and Germany are partners, not rivals. One side's development will bring opportunities to the other side rather than challenges. As long as the two sides adhere to equality and mutual respect, understand and accommodate each other's core interests and major

concerns, stick to focusing on cooperation as well as properly control and handle differences, China-Germany relations will enjoy long-term and stable development.

Leaders of the two countries also exchanged views on issues of common concern, including the international trade order.

## XI JINPING HOLDS TALKS WITH KING TUPOU VI OF TONGA

– THE TWO HEADS OF STATE AGREE TO PUSH CHINA-TONGA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR NEW AND GREATER DEVELOPMENT





On March 1, 2018, President Xi Jinping held talks with King Tupou VI of Tonga at the Great Hall of the People. The two heads of state agreed to push China-Tonga strategic partnership for new and greater development at a new starting point in history.

Xi Jinping welcomed King Tupou VI to pay a state visit to China on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and conveyed his sincere condolences to Tonga over the recent damage it had suffered from a severe cyclone. Xi Jinping pointed out that King Tupou VI came to China in the capacity of foreign and defense minister 20 years ago to sign the Joint Communiqué between China and Tonga on Establishing Diplomatic Relations and made historic contributions to establishing and developing China-Tonga relations. It is hoped that the royal family of Tonga would continuously play a positive role in advancing the development of China-Tonga relations.

Xi Jinping stressed that China and the Pacific Island countries, including Tonga are good friends and good partners with the same fate, common destiny and shared development. It is put forward at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that China will promote the building of a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. The Congress stressed that China will adhere to the correct viewpoint of righteousness and benefit and the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith, and strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries. The concepts and principles mentioned above will open up broader prospects for China-Tonga relations and bilateral

cooperation.

Xi Jinping pointed out that China and Tonga should reinforce exchanges at high level and across various levels, increase political mutual trust as well as continue supporting and understanding each other on issues concerning respective sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity. Both countries should expand dialogue, exchanges and cooperation between government departments and legislative bodies, deeply tap potential, actively expand practical cooperation in various areas and jointly advance cooperation under the “Belt and Road” framework, in a bid to achieve win-win and shared development. China knows well that Tonga, as a small developing island country, faces special challenges in its economic and social development. China is willing to continue providing Tonga with economic and technological assistance within its capability without attaching any political conditions. Instead of unilaterally offering assistance and simply providing the “blood-transfusion” mode of aid, which is like giving the country fish, China teaches Tonga “how to fish”. China would fulfill all the promises it has made to the letter to let local people gain more sense of fulfillment from China-Tonga cooperation. China is ready to enhance South-South cooperation on climate change with Tonga and intensify exchanges and cooperation with Pacific Island countries.

Tupou VI congratulated on the successful convening of the 19th CPC National Congress last year, and expressed that President Xi Jinping is a visionary and wise leader. Tupou VI believed that China would score even greater achievements under President Xi Jinping’s leadership. Tonga attaches great importance to developing friendly relations with China, sincerely appreciates the long-term and precious support and

assistance provided by the Chinese government and people for the country’s economic and social construction, and also thanks China for providing disaster relief assistance immediately after Tonga was hit by a recent cyclone. The country agrees with China on the important proposition to build a new type of international relations and stands ready to make joint efforts with the Chinese side to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Tonga firmly adheres to the one-China policy, and stands ready to intensify friendly cooperation with China in such fields as trade, infrastructure construction and tourism as well as under the “Belt and Road” framework. It is hoped that China could help Tonga to achieve greater development and address the challenges posed by climate change. Tonga supports the deepening of cooperation between Pacific Island countries and China.

After the talks, the two heads of state jointly witnessed the signing of bilateral cooperation documents in such fields as economic and technological cooperation, human resources development and education. Both sides also issued the Joint Press Communiqué between the People’s Republic of China and the Kingdom of Tonga.

Prior to the talks, Xi Jinping held a welcoming ceremony for Tupou VI at the North Hall of the Great Hall of the People. President Xi Jinping’s wife Mme. Peng Liyuan, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and State Councilor Yang Jiechi, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress Zhang Ping, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference Chen Xiaoguang and others were present.

# LEADERS OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES WARMLY CONGRATULATE XI JINPING ON HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF CHINA

On the morning of March 17, 2018, after the announcement that the First Session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress elected Xi Jinping as President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), leaders of various countries sent telegrams or messages to President Xi Jinping immediately in succession, expressing warm congratulations.

Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong-un of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) expressed that he sincerely congratulated Xi Jinping on his election as President of the PRC and Chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission. He wished that under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) with Xi Jinping at the core, the Chinese people will make greater achievements in the building of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. He believed that the DPRK-China relations will develop in a direction that conforms to the common interests of the people of the two countries.

President Tran Dai Quang of Vietnam expressed that he was glad to hear that Xi Jinping was elected as President of the PRC and Chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission on the First Session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress. He would like to extend the warmest congratulations to Xi Jinping. He believed that as the core

of the leadership of the CPC Central Committee, President and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Xi Jinping will lead the Chinese people to successfully realize the goal of building China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful and make significant contributions to peace, stability and prosperity of the region and the world at large. The party, government and people of Vietnam attach high importance to developing good neighborly friendship as well as comprehensive cooperative relations with China and regard them as the strategic choices and top priorities of Vietnam's foreign policy. It is believed that Xi Jinping will continue caring for and guiding all levels and departments to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two parties and countries and constantly expand and improve the cooperation between the two countries in various fields, so as to promote Vietnam-China comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership for sustained, stable, healthy and in-depth development.

President Bounngang Vorachith of Laos expressed that he firmly believed that under the wise leadership of the CPC with Xi Jinping at the core, the building of socialism with Chinese characteristics will make comprehensive, tremendous and historic achievements. China will surely be built into a great modern

socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful. He wished that traditional friendship between the two parties, countries and peoples as well as the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership will develop in a constant and in-depth manner, bloom and yield fruits under the guidance of the spirit of "good neighbors, good friends, good comrades and good partners".

President Mamnoon Hussain of Pakistan expressed that Xi Jinping's election shows that the Chinese people are full of confidence in his wise leadership. China has made remarkable development achievements over the past five years, which not only promoted China's international status and image, but also brought great changes to people's life. Xi Jinping's outstanding contributions to world peace and development are widely praised. Mamnoon Hussain believed that under the wise leadership of Xi Jinping, the great Chinese nation will continue marching forward, and realize the goal of national rejuvenation. Pakistan and China are all-weather strategic cooperative partners, and both sides will continuously commit to comprehensively enhancing bilateral relations to benefit the two peoples.

President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea (ROK) wished

that China could realize the Chinese Dream at an early date under the leadership of Xi Jinping, so as to make greater contributions to peace and development in the Northeast Asian region and the world at large. Moon Jae-in really appreciated that Xi Jinping sent special envoys to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, making it a grand event of peace and harmony for the Korean Peninsula, the Northeast Asia and even for the people in the whole world. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of ROK-China strategic cooperative partnership. Moon Jae-in expressed the willingness to make joint efforts with Xi Jinping to open up the first year for bilateral relations to move towards maturity and enter a new era.

Emperor Akihito of Japan expressed that on the occasion of Xi Jinping's election as President of China, he would like to extend sincere congratulations. Emperor Akihito wished Xi Jinping good health and China prosperity.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan expressed that 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship, as well as the 40th anniversary for China to carry out the reform and opening up policy. Over the past 40 years, China has achieved remarkable development, and the two countries have extensively conducted cooperation. Shinzo Abe hoped to take this year as an opportunity to push forward Japan-China relations for further improvement and elevate it to new development stages.

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom of Maldives expressed that Xi Jinping's election is the full recognition of the great development

achievements China has made under Xi Jinping's leadership in the past five years, and reflects the people's firm confidence in him to lead China in realizing the two centenary goals and the Chinese Dream. Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom believed that under the wise leadership of Xi Jinping, China will make greater development achievements, and bring more opportunities for various countries in the world to realize common development.

President Abdul Hamid of Bangladesh expressed that under Xi Jinping's leadership, China's great cause of promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind has achieved significant achievements. He deeply believed that Bangladesh-China relations will be consolidated and deepened.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh stated that under Xi Jinping's wise and visionary leadership, China has achieved remarkable achievements. Bangladesh expects to strengthen Bangladesh-China cooperation in various fields.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan noted that Xi Jinping's election has fully demonstrated the Chinese people's high affirmation of Xi Jinping's great contributions to safeguarding national interests. Under Xi Jinping's wise leadership, China will be bound to constantly make new and greater achievements in the process of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. It is believed that under the joint efforts of both sides, Kazakhstan-China comprehensive strategic partnership will continue maintaining high-level development.

President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus said that under Xi Jinping's

brilliant leadership and guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the Chinese people are marching firmly and unswervingly towards the goal of realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. He wished that the Chinese people will enjoy lasting peace and prosperity, and that Belarus-China friendly relations will continuously keep moving forward.

President Giorgi Margvelashvili of Georgia expressed that Xi Jinping's brilliant leadership will certainly bring greater development and create more well-being for the Chinese nation. It is believed that Georgia-China traditional friendship and cooperation will be further deepened.

President Paul Biya of Cameroon wished Xi Jinping a full success in the process of fulfilling this noble mission. He expressed the willingness to work with Xi Jinping to strengthen the existing and special friendly cooperative relations between the two countries.

President Hage Geingob of Namibia stated that under Xi Jinping's leadership, China's economy and society develop rapidly and the national construction has achieved remarkable progress that has amazed the world. China has embarked on the journey of building a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.

President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria said that Xi Jinping's election has fully reflected that the Chinese people fully trust and are fully confident about Xi Jinping's vision and wisdom displayed in



domestic and international affairs. He believed the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation this September will achieve a great success, thus elevating the partnership between Africa and China to new stages.

President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe expressed that Xi Jinping, as a leader with integrity and courage to assume responsibilities, has won the wholehearted support of the Chinese people, who have expressed their confidence in Xi Jinping with their concrete actions. It is believed that under Xi Jinping's leadership, the PRC will certainly become more prosperous and strong.

President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali said that Xi Jinping's election as Chinese President by the National People's Congress of China is the full recognition of Xi Jinping's excellent capability in state governance and administration and of his noble virtue of serving the people. He expressed the willingness to work together with Xi Jinping to continue making unremitting efforts to strengthen Mali-China friendly cooperative relations.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine expressed that Xi Jinping's successful election manifests that the Chinese people and the CPC are full of confidence in Xi Jinping's brilliant leadership and grand planning for the future. It is believed that Xi Jinping will lead the Chinese nation to achieve great rejuvenation and promote international peace and justice.

President Alexander Van der Bellen of Austria said that Xi Jinping shoulders heavy and lofty responsibilities in the position of President. China has scored great achievements beyond imagination since its implementation of reform and opening-up. There is no other country in the world that could achieve such remarkable development in such a short period of time. He wished that China will continue forging ahead on the path of success under Xi Jinping's leadership.

President Aleksandar Vucic of Serbia expressed that the CPC is a political party with courage and responsibility. He spoke highly of Xi Jinping's decisiveness, boldness and commitment. He firmly believed that the Chinese people will certainly

realize the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation, and that China's rejuvenation surely will be conducive to safeguarding world peace and stability and benefiting people of all countries in the world.

Governor-General Rodney Williams of Antigua and Barbuda expressed that Xi Jinping is a leader with tremendous charisma and outstanding talent. He wished that China will make greater development achievements under Xi Jinping's leadership.

In addition, Secretary General Rashid Alimov of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) expressed in his message that today's China has played an increasingly important role on the world stage. The "Belt and Road" initiative and the concept of "a community with a shared future for mankind" proposed by Xi Jinping are spoken highly of and well received by the international community. He firmly believed that the SCO Qingdao Summit to be held this June will certainly achieve fruitful results.

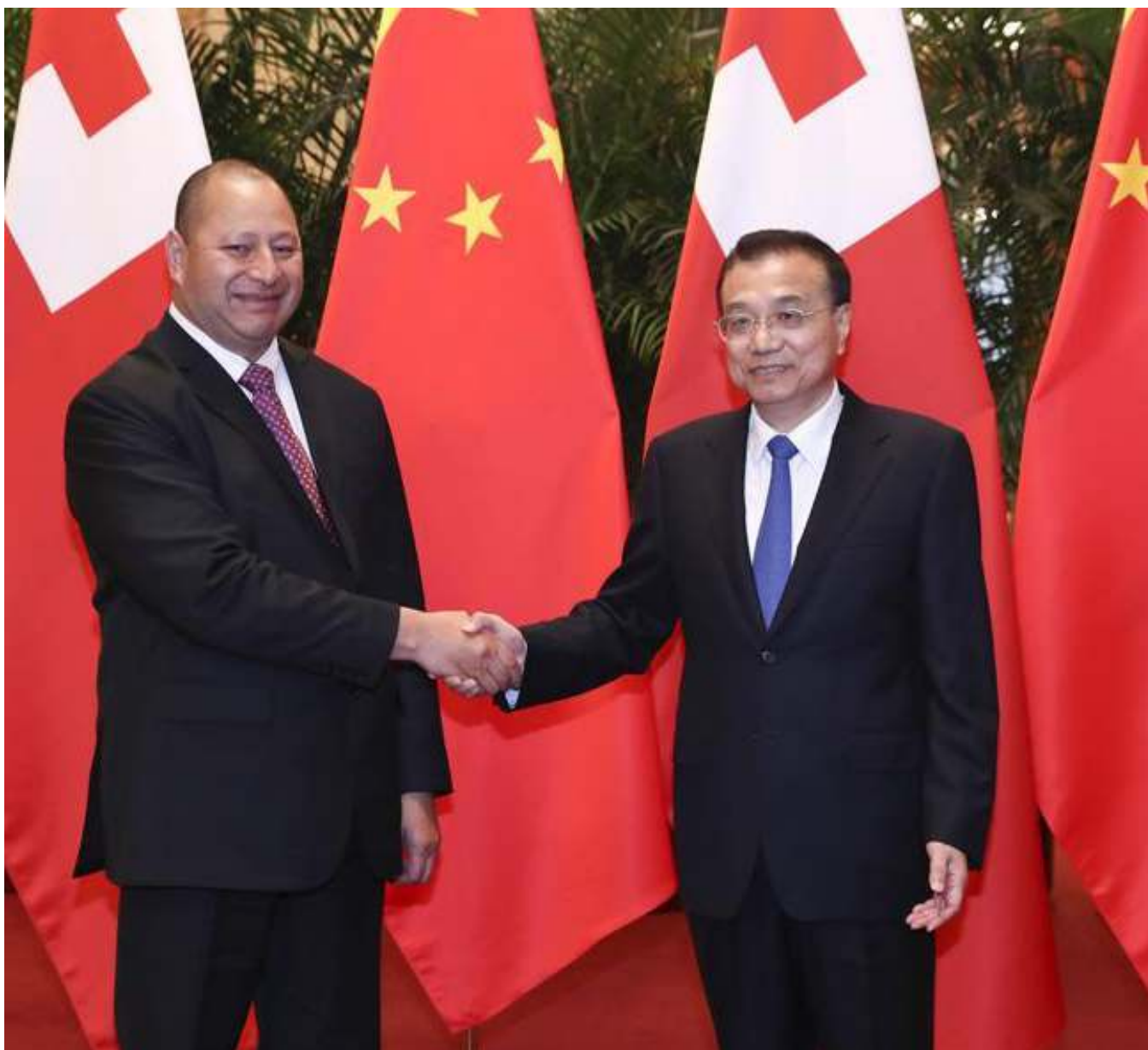
## LI KEQIANG MEETS WITH KING TUPOU VI OF TONGA

On the afternoon of March 1, 2018, Premier Li Keqiang met at the Great Hall of the People with King Tupou VI of Tonga, who was in China for a state visit.

Li Keqiang expressed that Tonga is a good friend and partner of China

in the region of the Pacific Island countries. President Xi Jinping and Your Majesty held fruitful talks, vigorously promoting the development of bilateral relations. China appreciates Tonga's firm adherence to the one-China policy, and stands ready to take the 20th

anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Tonga as an opportunity to consolidate political mutual trust, better integrate the "Belt and Road" initiative with Tonga's development strategies, expand practical cooperation in various fields and



enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, so as to constantly elevate bilateral relations to new highs. China supports Tonga in the construction of major production projects, infrastructure and projects related to people's livelihood. China is ready to carry out exchanges on agricultural technology with Tonga, and also welcomes Tonga's high-quality agricultural and fishery products to enter the Chinese market.

Li Keqiang extended his condolences over the severe cyclone disaster in Tonga not long ago, believed that the Tongan people can overcome difficulties and rebuild their homes, and reaffirmed that China is willing to provide assistance within its capability.

King Tupou VI expressed that although Tonga and China are far away from each other, yet bilateral relations enjoy sustained, stable and sound

development since the establishment of diplomatic relations 20 years ago. Tonga unswervingly adheres to the one-China policy and stands ready to continuously deepen political mutual trust between the two sides, expand economic and trade cooperation as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and strengthen cooperation in such fields as education, infrastructure, agriculture and food, in a bid to better realize mutual benefit and win-win results.

# FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI MEETS THE PRESS



On 8 March 2018, the First Session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress held a press conference. Foreign Minister Wang Yi answered questions on China's foreign policy and external relations.

**Wang Yi:** Dear members of the press, good morning. At the outset, I wish to extend festive greetings to all women, particularly the female journalists in this room. I also wish to thank the press, Chinese and foreign, for having shown understanding and support for China's foreign policy and external relations. Everything we have accomplished, you have played a part.

Thank you! Now I am ready to take your questions.

**People's Daily:** Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has made unprecedented progress in its foreign relations, which is widely praised across the country. Following the 19th Party Congress, what will be the highlights of China's diplomatic agenda this year?

**Wang Yi:** Under the outstanding leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping

at its core since the 18th Party Congress, we have traveled on a road of major-country diplomacy that reflects China's distinct vision, style and values. Producing historic accomplishments, our diplomatic efforts have been instrumental to upholding national sovereignty and interests, and to facilitating domestic reform and development. Last October, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized in his report to the 19th Party Congress that China will work with other countries to foster a new type of international relations and to build a global community with a shared future. This



is the aim of China's major-country diplomacy in the new era.

The year 2018 kicks off efforts to implement the decisions of the 19th Party Congress. Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, we in the diplomatic service will take new steps and make new strides. The main highlights of China's diplomatic calendar will include the following four events we are going to host:

First, the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, which will take place in Hainan this April and focus on reform and opening-up. In this 40th anniversary year of reform and opening-up, we will review China's successful experience and sketch new possibilities for reform and opening-up in the new era.

Second, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, which will take place in Qingdao this June and focus on revitalizing the Shanghai Spirit. The expanded SCO will rededicate itself to the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust and benefit, equal-footed consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development. The summit will set the SCO on a new journey of consolidation and growth.

Third, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit, which will take place in Beijing this September and focus on the Belt and Road Initiative. A great opportunity for our African brothers and sisters to participate fully in the BRI, the Summit will give new impetus to the China-Africa comprehensive strategic partnership.

Fourth, the first China International Import Expo, which

will take place in Shanghai this November and focus on further market opening. China will embrace the world with open arms and enormous market potential. All will be welcome to access and benefit from the new opportunities of China's development.

China's diplomatic agenda for 2018 are unfolding even as we speak. In the new era, we will work even harder to see that China will enjoy a better environment for development and make greater contributions to human progress.

**Reuters: What role does China have to facilitate direct talks between North Korea and the United States? Does China believe that the US needs to withdraw its military forces in South Korea?**

**Wang Yi:** This is the hottest topic right now. Seizing the opportunity of the PyeongChang Olympics, the DPRK and the ROK have had a succession of interactions and achieved a rapid thaw in their relations, reversing the long-standing chill on the Korean Peninsula. The recent developments may seem baffling to some people, but are actually within the bounds of reason. During the Winter Games, the DPRK did not conduct any nuclear or missile test and the US and the ROK suspended their joint exercises targeting the DPRK. This proves that China's "suspension for suspension" proposal was the right prescription for the problem and created basic conditions for the improvement of inter-Korean relations.

The Korean Peninsula issue has finally taken an important step in the right direction. China fully commends and supports the efforts made by the

two Koreas. To return the Peninsula to peace and stability and the nuclear issue to the track of dialogue, these initial steps must be followed up by corresponding and concerted efforts by the parties. To this end, we call on the parties, particularly the US and the DPRK, to engage in dialogue sooner rather than later. We encourage all to follow the dual-track approach of remaining committed to the goal of denuclearization and working actively to establish a peace mechanism on the Peninsula. The parties' legitimate security concerns, including those of the DPRK, can be addressed in exchange for and in tandem with progress towards denuclearization. This is China's long-standing position and also the vision set forth in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Of course, it takes more than one cold day to freeze three feet of ice. Despite light at the end of the tunnel, the journey ahead won't be smooth. History has reminded us time and again that whenever tensions subsided on the Peninsula, the situation would be clouded by various interferences. Now is a crucial moment for testing the sincerity of the parties. Every effort must be made for peace, and the opportunity must be seized. It falls to all parties to bear in mind the imperative of peace and the well-being of people in the region. All must demonstrate political courage and make a political decision to expeditiously carry out all necessary and useful engagements, both bilateral and plurilateral, and to do their best to restart dialogue and negotiation for the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue. China will continue to make unremitting efforts for this outcome.

**China Central Television: In**



**the last five years, President Xi has been fully engaged in China's foreign policy. His personal diplomacy has enhanced China's standing and international influence like never before. How do you see the role and impact of the diplomacy conducted by President Xi as head of state?**

**Wang Yi:** Head-of-state diplomacy as the highest form of state-to-state interaction plays a pivotal role and has irreplaceable strategic value. Since 2012, President Xi Jinping has been the chief architect of China's distinctive major-country diplomacy. He was personally involved in the planning and conduct of head-of-state diplomacy, which by all accounts has been brilliant. To date, President Xi has visited 57 countries in different parts of the world and received more than 110 foreign heads

of state. These important visits and meetings go a long way towards deepening the world's understanding of China, enhancing China's profile and influence, and facilitating the solution of many global problems. President Xi's leadership and charisma has earned him – and his country – many good friends among foreign leaders who represent a diverse range of cultures and social systems.

In the year ahead, President Xi will host the four diplomatic events I mentioned earlier, and he will also attend the BRICS Summit in South Africa, the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Papua New Guinea and the G20 Summit in Argentina. We believe that President Xi's personal diplomacy will make a positive and responsible contribution to the well-being of his people, the interests of

China and the welfare of the world. It will write a whole new chapter of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

**Bloomberg: The US says it will use all available tools to prevent China from undermining international competition. Will China respond in kind?**

**Wang Yi:** Let me first reiterate China's policy towards the United States. China and the US are agreed that we share broad interests and important responsibilities for global peace, stability and prosperity. Our two countries are to carry out broad-based cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit, manage our differences on the basis of mutual respect, deepen mutual understanding and friendship

between our people, and work together to address major regional and global challenges. We ought to work for the sustained, healthy and steady growth of our relations.

Cooperation is the main thrust of China-US relations. Our people enjoy close and extensive exchanges. According to the latest Gallup poll, more than 50 percent of Americans have a favorable view of China, the highest rate in nearly three decades. I hope people will pay more attention to such positive things. As the largest developing country and developed country, China and America working together will benefit not just our own countries, but also the whole world. If there is any competition between us, which is natural, it has to be healthy and positive. We may have competition, but we don't have to be rivals. Instead, we should strive to be partners.

China is determined to stay on the path it has chosen, and China's development and revitalization is unstoppable. This is the consensus of the international community. Some Americans allege that China will replace America's role in the world. This strategic conclusion is fundamentally wrong. China is on the path of socialism with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Its success is underpinned by its commitment to peaceful development and win-win cooperation. China's path is completely different from that of traditional powers and, as such, is commended and welcomed by a growing number of countries. The truth is, the more China develops, the more contribution it can make to the world. China is on a long march to modernization. It has no need or intention to displace America. China and America must respect each other,

combine our strengths and pursue win-win cooperation on the basis of the three joint communiqués and our common understandings. China-US relations have gone through a lot in the past few decades, but dialogue and cooperation has always carried the day. It is the wise thing to do; there can be no alternative.

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

**China Daily: We hear a view that China has abandoned its long-standing policy of non-interference in favor of a more interventionist approach. Are we seeing a new trend in China's foreign policy?**

**Wang Yi:** As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China takes seriously its responsibility for maintaining international peace. Even in the 1950s, we made an important contribution to the peaceful settlement of the Indochina issue. Today, China is in a much better position to help resolve various regional and international issues. We are ready to play our part; indeed, the world expects no less from us.

In helping to settle various flashpoints, we follow a distinctly

Chinese approach. There are things we will do and there are things we won't do. Put simply, our approach is at once peaceful, justifiable and constructive. First, we prefer a political settlement of disputes through dialogue and negotiation, and firmly reject the use of force. Second, we respect other countries' sovereignty and wish, and never meddle in their internal affairs. Indeed, we firmly reject imposing one's own view on others. Third, we do our best to be fair and objective and proceed from the merits of the matter. We firmly reject pursuing private ends. Our approach is rooted in traditional Chinese culture and our successful diplomatic practice. In keeping with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, it shows the right way and provides a good example for resolving conflicts and challenges in the world.

**RIA Novosti: Russia's presidential election is scheduled for 18 March. What do you think the result is going to be? How does China view the prospects of China-Russia relations?**

**Wang Yi:** The presidential election is of vital importance to Russia and its people. We note that President Putin has overseen important strides in Russia's development and he has strong support from his people. We trust the Russian people will again make the right choice and advance steadily towards national revitalization. The Russian people are resilient, principled and resistant to pressure. Our best wishes for Russia and the Russian people!

We have great confidence in the future of China-Russia relations. Our confidence comes from the strong





friendship and trust between our presidents, which is fundamental to the further growth of our relationship. It also comes from the deepening of our cooperation in so many fields, our firm support for each other's core interests, our close coordination on international affairs and the growing exchanges between our two societies. In short, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is as unshakable as a mountain. I ask you to convey this to our friends in Russia: the sky is the limit for Sino-Russian cooperation, and we must continue to make the relationship even better than it already is.

**Global Times: China's influence has been on the rise across the board. The 19th Party Congress gives Chinese people greater expectations about their**

**future. However, some in the world are again trying to paint China as a threat. How would you counter this claim?**

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

What are the facts? For years, China has been the leading engine of global growth. At more than 30 percent, China's annual contribution is bigger than that of America, Japan

and the Eurozone combined. China accounts for more than 70 percent of poverty reduction worldwide, a miracle in human history. As the largest source of peacekeeping personnel among the permanent members of the Security Council and the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, China is bearing a weighty responsibility for maintaining world peace. Not to mention that in the last five years, with its Belt and Road Initiative and other major proposals, China has come to the fore in championing global governance, free trade and an open global economy.

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

**Kazinform: Since its launch five years ago, the Belt and Road Initiative has made a lot of progress. However, some Westerners seem to harbor doubts about its transparency and conformity with international rules. What is China's response?**

Wang Yi: The Belt and Road is a transparent initiative launched by China. It follows the "golden rule" of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. Belt and Road cooperation aims to be equal-footed, inclusive and beneficial to all. The planning and implementation of BRI projects have been discussed by the participants in the open. No country is dominating the process; all parties have an equal say. There is no back-room deal; everything is transparent. There is no "winner takes all"; every project delivers win-win results.

Last May, the representatives of more than 140 countries participated in the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. The turnout is a clear vote of confidence from the international community. To date, more than 80 countries and international organizations have signed BRI agreements with China. A large number of BRI projects are well underway and adding needed momentum to the economic and social development of our partner countries. For example, China is building over a dozen power stations for Pakistan, the largest of which is supplying electricity to tens of millions of Pakistanis. When all of them are completed, power cuts and shortages will be a thing of the past in Pakistan. In Serbia, a Chinese enterprise bought a troubled steel mill and turned it around in less than a year, both saving more than 5,000 local jobs and helping to re-energize

the city in which the steel mill is located. In Greece, a Chinese group took over the operation of its largest seaport, ramped up the container volume and put it back in the same league as Europe's largest ports. China is also partnering with France to build a nuclear power plant in the UK, a stellar example of high-tech cooperation under the BRI.

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

**Beijing TV: Premier Li Keqiang emphasized in his government work report that 2018 will kick off efforts to put the decisions of the 19th Party Congress into action. It is the 40th anniversary of reform and opening-up, and a crucial year for securing a decisive victory in establishing a moderately prosperous society in all respects and for implementing the 13th Five-Year Plan. What will the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do in 2018 to facilitate China's development goals?**

Wang Yi: China still being a developing country, facilitating domestic development is part and parcel of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. Keeping in mind our new mission and what is expected of us, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will implement the decisions of the central leadership and be more active in facilitating domestic development.

We will adapt to the new landscape of high-quality development to create a more favorable environment for external cooperation, including "bringing in" and "going global", and for domestic development.

We will tackle the new challenges presented by the evolution of the principal contradiction facing Chinese society. To tell China's stories in a more compelling way, we will both upgrade the presentation of Chinese provinces and launch a new series on the major initiatives of reform and opening-up. For example, later this year we will host an event to present the Xiongan New Area to the world. In addition, the MFA has been and will continue to be fully engaged in poverty alleviation and do its bit for winning the nationwide battle against poverty.

We will meet the new requirements and leverage our diplomatic and consular assets across the globe to facilitate the Belt and Road Initiative and protect China's overseas interests.

All in all, in advancing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era, we aim to be not just the pacesetter of China's international engagement, but also a solid contributor to domestic development.

**The Paper:** This year marks the 15th anniversary of the strategic partnership between China and ASEAN. How will China take forward the relationship?

**Wang Yi:** As we celebrate the 15th anniversary, 2018 is of particular importance for the future of China-ASEAN strategic partnership.

The last 15 years have seen China-ASEAN cooperation go from strength to strength and bear rich fruits. For nine years running, China has been ASEAN's largest trading partner. Last year, our trade exceeded 500 billion dollars and two-way visits totaled 40 million, all of which brought real benefits to our combined population of nearly 2 billion. Indeed, China-ASEAN cooperation is the most successful and dynamic in the Asian-Pacific region.

In the year ahead, we will continue to give the highest priority to cooperation with ASEAN, upgrade our strategic partnership and build a more close-knit community of shared destiny. We have three priorities. First, we will work out a new blueprint of cooperation. The proposed China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 will lead to better coordination between the Belt and Road Initiative and ASEAN's development plans. Second, we will foster new highlights of cooperation. Cooperation will be broadened in the political and security, economic and trade, and social and people-to-people areas, with more projects and outcomes in the pipeline. Third, we will forge new platforms of cooperation. Efforts will be made to build a Lancang-Mekong economic development belt, establish a cooperation framework with the East ASEAN Growth Area, support ASEAN community-

building, and conclude the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership as soon as possible.

**The Straits Times:** The South China Sea is calm now, but there are still concerns over reports of China's continuing militarization of its islands in the South China Sea. Are the talks with ASEAN countries for a code of conduct likely to be completed this year?

**Wang Yi:** When it comes to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea, China's resolve is as strong as its commitment is deep. China's approach to the South China Sea issue is a responsible one that takes into account the interests of the Chinese people, the facts of history, the imperative of regional peace and the international rule of law. This position is firm and consistent.

With situation in the South China Sea turning for the better, China and ASEAN countries face a golden opportunity. We all agree to develop a code of conduct in the South China Sea to preserve its hard-won tranquility. Last week, our officials held an inaugural round of consultation on the COC text and made encouraging progress. At least three more rounds have been envisaged for the remainder of this year. China and ASEAN countries are willing and able to draft regional rules on our own, rules which will meet our region's imperatives and be adhered to by all.

There are also challenges in the South China Sea. Some outside forces are not happy with the prevailing calm and try to stir up trouble and muddle the waters. Their frequent show of force with fully-armed aircraft and naval vessels is the most destabilizing factor for peace and stability in our

region.

It is useful to heed the wisdom of a Chinese verse, "Green hills cannot stop the river flowing; to the vast ocean it keeps advancing." In the year ahead, China will work with ASEAN countries to seize the opportunity, broaden cooperation, prevent interference and overcome challenges. Cherishing what we have worked so hard to achieve, China and ASEAN countries will speed up the COC consultation, actively explore a mechanism of cooperation among the coastal states, and promote peace and cooperation in the South China Sea.

**China Global Television Network:** In 2018, for the very first time in 12 years, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation will once again be hosted by China. What outcome do you expect from that summit? I am also wondering how China stays true to its policy on honesty and amicability towards Africa in the new era?

**Wang Yi:** General Secretary Xi Jinping once made a powerful statement: "China and Africa are friends tested by adversity. Such friends must never be forgotten." So be assured: no matter how the world may change or what others may say, the profound friendship between China and Africa will remain unbreakable, and China's promise of sincerity, real results, friendship and good faith will remain true.

As Africa's brother and partner, China will always attach particular importance to the needs and interests of African countries. Africa's concerns are China's concerns, and its priorities are China's priorities. Africa faces the twin challenges of maintaining peace and security and



of promoting development and revitalization. In response to its needs, China will step up mediation in regional flashpoints. China will also enhance cooperation with African countries on unconventional security threats such as terrorism, piracy and natural disaster, and help them build capacity for ensuring their own peace and security.

In our new endeavor to build a global community with a shared future, Africa is an indispensable partner. China welcomes our African brothers and sisters to continue their ride on China's fast train of development. The FOCAC summit scheduled for September will bring together Chinese and African leaders again, 12 years after their last gathering in Beijing. They will discuss China-Africa cooperation in the new era and focus on jointly advancing the Belt and Road Initiative and turning China and Africa into a community with a shared future. By aligning the Belt and Road Initiative with the UN's 2030 Agenda, the AU's Agenda 2063 and the development strategies of individual African countries, we will give wings to China-Africa cooperation to help it soar to greater heights.

**Kyodo News: This year marks the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Will we see an exchange of visits between Chinese and Japanese leaders? How do you see the future of China-Japan relations?**

**Wang Yi:** In the recent period, Japan has adopted a clearer and more positive policy towards China, resulting in a precious improvement of relations. China welcomes this. If Japan does not prevaricate, flip-flop or backpedal, and instead comes to

terms with China's development and welcomes it, China will be willing to act in the same spirit and work with Japan to put our relationship back on the track of healthy and steady growth.

Forty years ago, China and Japan signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship. It codified the political principles agreed in negotiating the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations, including handling history correctly and following the one-China policy. The treaty also enshrined our joint desire to live in peace and friendship forever. As a saying goes, never forget why you started, and you can accomplish your mission. Forty years on, at another crucial juncture of history, we hope Japan will have political credibility and act accordingly to cement the political foundation of our relations and give effect to the political understanding that "China and Japan see each other as partners, not threats". I am hopeful that with the steady improvement of our relations, high-level visits will naturally come about, and peace and friendship will again be the dominant theme of China-Japan relations.

**Phoenix TV: What is China's view on the "Indo-Pacific strategy" pursued by the US, Japan, India and Australia? Do you see it as an attempt to "contain" China?**

**Wang Yi:** It seems there is never a shortage of headline-grabbing ideas. They are like the sea foam in the Pacific or Indian Ocean: they may get some attention, but soon will dissipate. Contrary to the claim made by some academics and media outlets that the "Indo-Pacific strategy" aims to contain China, the four countries' official position is that it targets no one. I hope they mean what they say

and their action will match their rhetoric. Nowadays, stoking a new Cold War is out of sync with the times and inciting block confrontation will find no market.

**Press Trust of India: Last year has been a very difficult one in India-China relations. How do you see India-China relations shaping up this year?**

**Wang Yi:** Despite some tests and difficulties, the China-India relationship continues to grow. In the process, China has both upheld its legitimate rights and interests and taken care to preserve the relationship. Chinese and Indian leaders have developed a strategic vision for the future of our relations: the Chinese "dragon" and the Indian "elephant" must not fight each other, but dance with each other. In that case, one plus one will equal not only two, but also eleven.

The international situation is experiencing its biggest change in a century. More and more far-sighted people have come to realize that as the largest two developing countries become modernized – each with a population of more than one billion – China and India must do everything to empathize with and support each other and to avoid mutual suspicion and attrition. In this sense, mutual trust is the most precious commodity in China-India relations. With political trust, not even the Himalayas can stop us from strengthening friendly exchanges; without it, not even level land can bring us together. Let me put this to our Indian friends: our shared understandings far outstrip our differences and our common interests far outweigh our frictions. China is willing and ready to inherit and take forward our traditional friendship and be a friend

and partner of the Indian people. I hope the two sides will be free from mental inhibitions and meet each other halfway. Let us replace suspicion with trust, manage differences through dialogue, and build a future through cooperation.

**China Radio International: The 11 countries that make up the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership are expected to sign it today, and the CPTPP may take effect next year at the earliest. What is your thought on this?**

**Wang Yi:** China is not a party to the CPTPP. However, China has been a strong advocate of trade liberalization and a key player of Asia-Pacific cooperation and economic integration. In 2014, China persuaded APEC economies to kick off in Beijing the process of establishing a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific. China has also been working actively for the conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a free trade pact that will cover more populations and involve more diverse economies than any similar initiative. China is positive about any open, transparent and inclusive arrangement that reinforces regional economic integration and a WTO-centered global free trade system, be it RCEP or CPTPP. We hope to see better communication, coordination and interaction between the various free trade initiatives in our region, so that they may complement one another, help resist trade protectionism and contribute to a more open global economy.

**Radio France: Do you think France could give a new direction to China-EU relations?**

**Wang Yi:** This year will mark the

15th anniversary of the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership. The year started with President Macron paying a state visit to China and Sino-French relations in excellent shape. Then the visit of Prime Minister May kicked off efforts by China and the UK to upgrade their “Golden Era” of relations. We hope at the end of the year, China-EU relations will be as strong as we have started it. We hope France will make a substantial contribution to the furtherance of China-EU cooperation. Global governance has emerged as a new dimension of such cooperation, China and the EU have a joint responsibility to safeguard the global free trade system, and negotiation needs to be speeded up to conclude a China-EU investment agreement.

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

**China News Service: Chinese people are speaking favorably of the consular assistance and protection they are getting, but they also expect more to be done. At the same time, there are appeals for a more rational understanding of consular service. What is your view?**

**Wang Yi:** Consular assistance and protection seems to be a must-have question at my annual press

conference. Indeed, it potentially concerns the interests and well-being of every Chinese and their family. Making a good job of it is the unshirkable responsibility of the foreign service.

Last year, as many as 130 million mainlanders traveled overseas. Given the growing magnitude of their consular needs, we adopted a people-centered approach and built a system for ensuring their safety which consists of six pillars, namely, legal provisions, institution building, risk assessment, early warning, awareness raising and emergency response. In 2017, the MFA handled more than 70,000 cases of consular assistance and protection, including evacuating Chinese tourists stranded by the erupting volcano on Bali, Indonesia and getting our nationals to safety from hurricane-ravaged Dominica. The 12308 consular hotline handled 170,000 calls, 100,000 more than in 2016. Prevention is the best protection. Last year, the MFA issued more than 1,000 travel advisories, which significantly reduced our citizens' risk exposure even before they traveled abroad.

As China develops and interacts more with the world, the social etiquette and civility of its citizens are being enhanced. Nowadays they are more inclined to protect China's reputation as well as their own rights. This new awareness has made our job easier.

In 2018, we will further improve the system for ensuring the safety of Chinese nationals abroad. Here I have three pieces of good news for you:

First, the MFA is working on draft legislation on consular protection and assistance. Public

consultation will begin after the close of the NPC and CPPCC sessions. We welcome your input and suggestions.

Second, in addition to a dedicated website, the WeChat version of 12308 and the “China Consular Affairs” account on Weibo, we will soon launch the 12308 smartphone app to make consular services more accessible to the people.

Third, as from tomorrow, our diplomatic and consular missions around the world will slash consular legalization fees by as much as two-thirds. The fee reduction is expected to save Chinese citizens and businesses more than 10 million yuan every year.

**TASS: What does China hope to accomplish at the Qingdao Summit it will host?**

**Wang Yi:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was born in China, and the Qingdao Summit will be the first one after the SCO admitted new members. We welcome the SCO back to China and expect it to embark on a new journey in Qingdao. China looks forward to working with other members to achieve three goals at the summit:

First, making the SCO more cohesive. The Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit and equal-footed consultation encapsulates the founding principle of our Organization. China will work with other members to uphold this spirit, enhance trust and solidarity, and build a more close-knit SCO community of shared future.

Second, making the SCO more effective. Our organization is driven by results-oriented, efficient and mutually beneficial cooperation.

China will work with other members to promote its all-round development, including developing a five-year outline for the implementation of the Treaty on Long-term Good-neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation, concluding or ratifying a number of resolutions or documents concerning our security, economic, environmental and cultural cooperation, and advancing Belt and Road projects in SCO member states.

Third, making the SCO more influential. Our Organization has a bounden duty to maintain peace and stability in our region and beyond. China will work with other members to help it meet international expectations, take a clearer stand on major international and regional issues, and play a more active role in regional cooperation and global economic governance.

To sum up, we will make the Qingdao Summit a new milestone in the development of the SCO and launch this new type of regional organization into a new era.

**China Review News: Following the example of Gambia as well as São Tomé and Príncipe, Panama decided last year to switch diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing. Will Taiwan face “an avalanche of ruptured diplomatic ties”, as its media have feared?**

**Wang Yi:** There is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inseparable part of China. This has been the consensus of the international community for decades. Adhering to the one-China principle and not having official ties with Taiwan has become a generally observed norm in international relations. It is obviously a correct

choice in line with the tide of history to establish diplomatic relations and carry out regular cooperation with the government of the People’s Republic of China, the sole legal representative of the whole of China. Such a choice would best serve the immediate and long-term interests of the countries and peoples in question. Of course it is the trend of the future, and no one can stop it.

The key to unlocking the cross-Straits stalemate lies in recognizing the 1992 Consensus and acknowledging that the two sides of the Taiwan Straits belong to one and the same China. The party that has locked the door must unlock it. The Taiwan authorities should return to the 1992 Consensus as soon as possible. This correct move will usher in a bright future for the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations.

**Agencia EFE: The United States warned Latin American countries about the growing Chinese influence in the region. What is your response?**

**Wang Yi:** China and Latin American countries are helping and supporting each other as fellow developing countries. Our cooperation does not target or seek to replace anyone, and China is not going to move anyone’s “cheese”, so to speak. China’s cooperation with the region has grown rapidly because it suits its needs, improves lives there and boosts its capacity for self-driven growth. During the last five years, President Xi has visited Latin America and the Caribbean three times, taking in ten countries. Our cooperation has deepened, expanded and moved up the value chain. China has become a key trading partner for many in the hemisphere. Chinese



businesses and investors have created more than 1.8 million local jobs. The Chinese saying “nothing, not even mountains or oceans, can separate those with a shared goal” aptly describes the state of our relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. The vast Pacific Ocean binds us together, making us partners in cooperation, whatever may stand between us.

**Xinhua News Agency: In his report to the 19th Party Congress, General Secretary Xi called for making all-round efforts in the pursuit of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, and for building a new type of international relations and a global community with a shared future. How do you envisage China’s distinctive major-country diplomacy going forward?**

**Wang Yi:** In his report to the 19th Party Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that the Communist Party of China will strive for both the well-being of the Chinese people and human progress.

To make new and greater contributions for humanity is our Party’s abiding mission.

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

We will have a broader mind. No matter what stage of development it reaches, China will stand for the equality of all countries, large or small, and will respect different civilizations and systems. China will put the greater good before its self-interest, and oppose the practice of the big and strong bullying the small and weak. China will stand up for small and weak countries, and help less developed

countries achieve better growth.

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

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

The press conference lasted two hours and was attended by nearly 600 Chinese and foreign journalists.

## WANG YI HOLDS TALKS WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ALAN PETER CAYETANO OF THE PHILIPPINES

On March 21, 2018, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing with visiting Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano of the Philippines.

Wang Yi welcomed Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano to visit

China again and noted that Alan Peter Cayetano is the first visiting foreign minister after the establishment of the new Chinese government, which fully demonstrated the importance of China-Philippines relations.

Wang Yi said that the current China-Philippines relations have

entered the best period in recent years. This is what mutual exchanges should be like between the two neighboring countries, which conforms to the common interests of both countries and the two peoples, and is in line with the development trend of the times and the common aspiration of all



countries in the region. From 2016 to present, the high-level exchanges between the two countries have become increasingly closer, and political mutual trust has been continuously strengthened, as well as cooperation in various areas has been fully restored and developed. The two sides have signed 40 cooperation documents with cooperation potential being rapidly released. Last year, the trade volume between China and the Philippines exceeded 50 billion US dollars, making China rise up as the largest trading partner of the Philippines. China's investment in the Philippines also increased by 67% compared to the previous year. It is

particularly worth mentioning that China-Philippines relations achieved two "one million" last year. First, China imported one million tons of tropical fruits from the Philippines. Second, one million person-times Chinese tourists traveled to the Philippines. The two "one million" have brought tangible benefits to the two countries, especially to the people of the Philippines. The reason why the relations between the two countries could achieve these results is the correct and powerful leadership of the two heads of state in the first place. President Rodrigo Duterte has reached a series of important consensus with President Xi Jinping

on the development of bilateral relations. China welcomes President Rodrigo Duterte to participate in the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference next month in China and believes his visit will further promote the development of bilateral relations.

Wang Yi noted that the most important experience of China-Philippines relations in recent years is to properly handle the South China Sea issue through dialogue and consultation, vigorously safeguard the overall situation of bilateral relations and create a sound atmosphere for expanding

cooperation between the two countries. Both sides agreed to continue upholding and maintaining this point. In the next step, China and the Philippines will focus on promoting the cooperation in following four aspects:

The first is to promote the “Belt and Road” cooperation. China and the Philippines face each other across the sea, and the Philippines has always been an important stop along the maritime Silk Road since ancient times. In the historical new era of the joint construction of the “Belt and Road,” the Philippines should be an important participant and beneficiary.

The second is to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation. The two sides will continue promoting the two major cooperation pillars of security and development and building the “third pillar” of people-to-people and cultural exchanges at the same time to consolidate the public opinion foundation of the two peoples as well as to provide a solid guarantee for the long-term and stable development of bilateral relations.

The third is to promote maritime

dialogue and cooperation. Both sides will give full play to the role of the bilateral consultation mechanism on the South China Sea and the maritime cooperation mechanism of coast guard to strengthen maritime dialogue, and actively and steadily promote cooperation in offshore oil and gas exploration through equal and friendly consultation, in a bid to turn the South China Sea dispute from the negative energy that hinders the development of bilateral relations into the positive energy that promotes friendly cooperation between the two countries.

The fourth is to promote cooperation in regional integration. China is the most solid supporter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the most active participant in East Asian cooperation. The Philippines will succeed as the coordinator for China-ASEAN relations this August. The two sides will make joint efforts to well implement the commemorative activities for the 15th anniversary of the establishment of China-ASEAN strategic partnership, so as to inject new impetus into regional integration. China is willing to increase its investment in East ASEAN Growth

Area, build a new platform for China-ASEAN cooperation, and support the construction of the ASEAN community with more concrete measures.

Alan Peter Cayetano conveyed the congratulatory letter from President Rodrigo Duterte to President Xi Jinping and warmly congratulated China on the successful convening of the “Two Sessions”. Alan Peter Cayetano expressed that President Rodrigo Duterte and the Philippine government attach great importance to the relations between the Philippines and China and support China’s “Belt and Road” initiative. He commended and thanked China for vigorously supporting the Philippines in maintaining domestic stability and accelerating development. The Philippine side is willing to intensify cooperation with China, actively implement the consensus of the two heads of state, deepen practical cooperation in various fields and actively promote maritime cooperation, so as to push forward the Philippines-China relations for sustained and in-depth development.

## China India Relations

# XI JINPING HOLDS TELEPHONE TALKS AT REQUEST WITH PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI OF INDIA

On March 20, 2018, President Xi Jinping held telephone talks at request with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India.

Narendra Modi first warmly congratulated Xi Jinping again on his election as Chinese President, and expressed that Xi Jinping’s election proves again that he enjoys the

support of the whole Chinese people. Both India and China are ancient civilizations with global influence. India is willing to work with China to intensify high-level exchanges,



deepen bilateral relations, and strengthen coordination and cooperation in international affairs, so as to boost the closer development partnership between the two countries for greater progress and promote global and regional peace and development.

Xi Jinping thanked Narendra Modi for his congratulations, and pointed out that the just-concluded “Two Sessions” of China have achieved a great success. The sessions elected new state organs and leaders of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, approved constitutional amendment and other important proposals, and launched the institutional restructuring of the State Council. China will further

deepen its reform and expand opening up. China, while realizing its own development, will make greater contributions to the common development and progress of the world.

Xi Jinping stressed that both as large developing countries and major emerging market economies, China and India are staunch forces to promote world multi-polarization and economic globalization. Over the past few years, I have met with Mr. Prime Minister for many times to determine that China and India will build a closer development partnership to push forward bilateral cooperation in various areas for substantial development. For a period of time, China-India relations have enjoyed a

momentum of positive development with the deepening of practical cooperation and increasingly active non-governmental friendly exchanges. China stands ready to make joint efforts with India to maintain such a sound momentum. I would like to enhance communication with Mr. Prime Minister on the overall, long-term and strategic issues in China-India relations as well as global and regional situation, so as to enhance political mutual trust between the two countries, provide important guidance for the development of bilateral relations and continue elevating the development level of China-India relations.

## **YANG JIECHI MEETS WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY VIJAY GOKHALE OF INDIA**

On February 24, 2018, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Councilor Yang Jiechi met in Beijing with Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale of India.

Yang Jiechi expressed that being important neighboring countries to each other and both as fast-growing emerging market economies, China and India have a lot of common

interests. The two sides should deepen strategic communication, beef up mutually beneficial cooperation and properly handle sensitive issues in line with the guidance of the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, so as to promote bilateral relations for sound and stable development and jointly contribute to the development and prosperity of the region and the world at large.

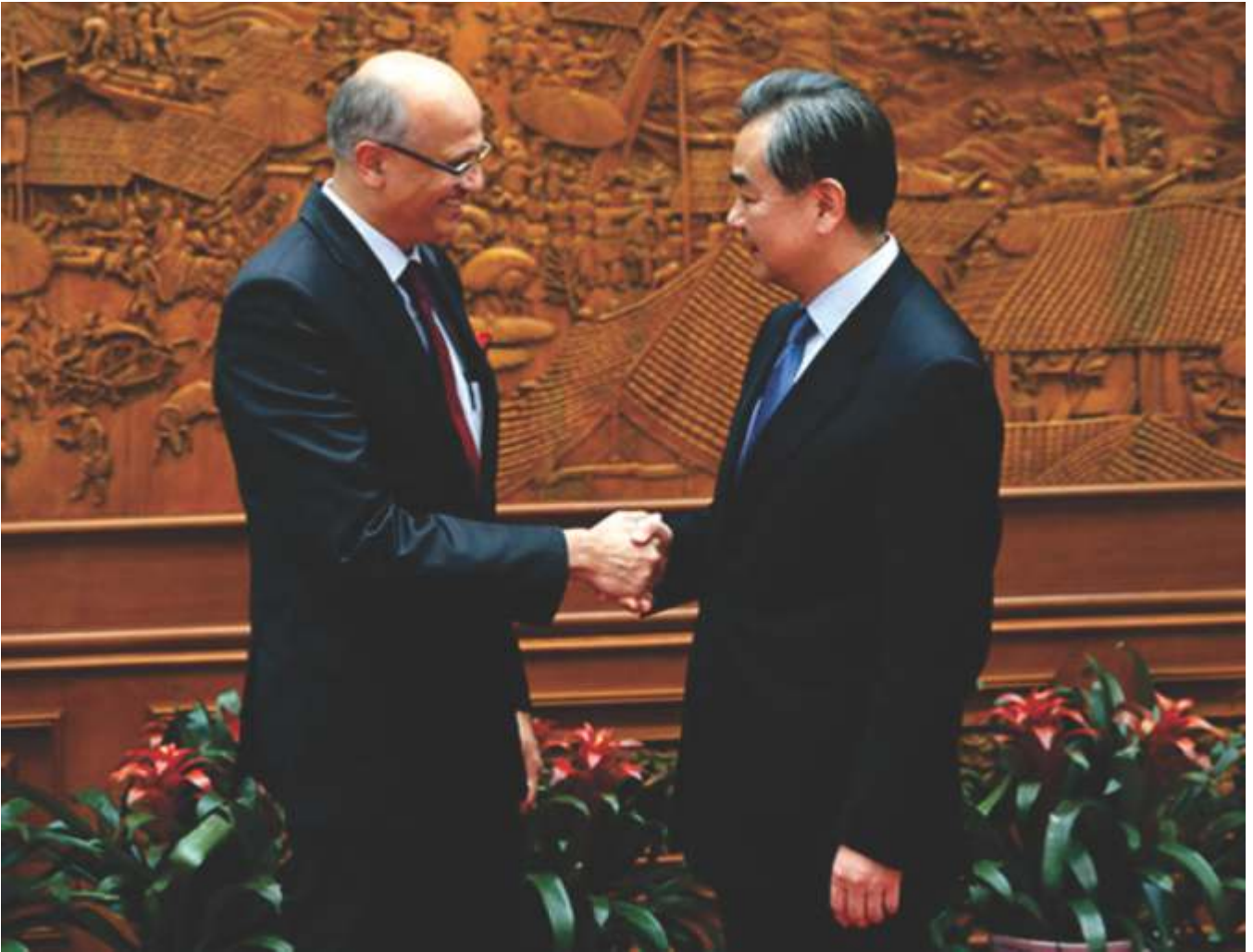
Vijay Gokhale said that India attaches high importance to relations with China and stands ready to, together with China, strengthen high-level exchanges, enhance strategic mutual trust, expand cooperation in various fields, and properly settle sensitive issues, in a bid to advance bilateral relations for constant and new progress.

## **WANG YI MEETS WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY VIJAY GOKHALE OF INDIA**

On February 23, 2018, Foreign Minister Wang Yi met in Beijing with newly-appointed Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale of India.

Wang Yi expressed that both as representatives of emerging market economies and major developing countries, China and India enjoy

irreplaceable commonalities. The two sides should increase strategic mutual trust and accelerate common development based on the political



consensus of the leaders of the two countries. It is hoped that India will handle sensitive issues with prudence and work toward the same goal of promoting healthy development of China-India relations.

Vijay Gokhale expressed that he

was very glad to pay a visit to China at the beginning of his tenure. India attaches high importance to developing relations with China and stands ready to make joint efforts with China to well implement the consensus of the leaders, strengthen strategic communication and

accommodate the core concerns of each other, so as to create sound environment and conditions for sustained and stable development of bilateral relations.

## CHINESE FM CALLS FOR MUTUAL TRUST WITH INDIA

Beijing, March 8 (Xinhua) — Foreign Minister Wang Yi Thursday called mutual trust “an issue that needs to be addressed urgently” between China and India.

“With political trust, not even the Himalayas can stop us from friendly exchanges. Without it, not even level land can bring us together,” Wang told a press conference on the sidelines of

the first session of the 13th National People’s Congress.

When China and India, the two largest developing countries in the

world, each with a population of more than 1 billion, become modernized, the two countries must do everything to empathize with and support each other, he said.

Chinese and Indian leaders have developed a strategic vision for the future bilateral ties, which is the

Chinese “dragon” and the Indian “elephant” must not fight but dance with each other, he said.

Stressing that shared understanding between the two countries far outstrips difference and common interests far outweigh frictions, Wang said China is willing

and ready to carry on traditional friendship.

He said he hopes the two sides will replace suspicion with trust, manage differences through dialogue and build a future through cooperation.

## VICE FOREIGN MINISTER KONG XUANYOU HOLDS CONSULTATION WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY VIJAY GOKHALE OF INDIA

On February 24, 2018, Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou held consultation with visiting Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale of India in Beijing. Both sides exchanged views on China-India relations and international and regional issues of common concern.

## REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR LUO ZHAOHUI AT THE SYMPOSIUM IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR XU FANCHENG

(Accord Hotel Pondicherry, 10 March 2018)

Mr. V. Narayanasamy, Chief Minister of Puducherry  
Professor Huang Xinchuan,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Namaste and Good Morning,

Today is a big day. I am delighted to be here to participate in today's seminar. For the first time, we are gathered to commemorate Prof. Xu Fancheng, one of the greatest scholars from China, who lived in Pondicherry for 27 years and 5 years in Shantiniketan, West Bengal. I would like to thank Pondicherry Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Pondicherry

Educational Collaboration Organization, Sri Aurobindo Ashram for proposing and jointly hosting this event with the Chinese Embassy in India.

I would like to appreciate the presence of Professor Huang Xinchuan, another prominent scholar from China, and a friend and colleague of Prof. Xu, who has not only made great contribution to China-India academic exchanges, but also personally invited Professor Xu Fancheng back to China in 1978. Professor Huang is over 90 years old. One of his famous works History of

Indian Philosophy is the text book for the student studying philosophy. My wife Dr. Jiang Yili and I are both his students. Let us give him a big hand.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Why are we here to commemorate Prof. Xu?

First, he was the first Chinese who introduced Sri Aurobindo to China. We know that in the modern history of India, there were three great men, namely Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Sri





Aurobindo. The first two men are well known in China. It was due to Professor Xu's contribution, China began to know Sri Aurobindo. Prof. Xu translated Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* and *Integral Yoga* into Chinese. He also translated *Fifty Upanishads*, *Bhagawad Gita* and *Shakuntala* from Sanskrit into Chinese. Besides, he also wrote books such as *Confucianism* and *The Corpus of Seng Zhao* in English, introducing China's ancient classics to the world.

Second, he was a bridge, linking the people of China and India. He is one of the Chinese scholars who lived in India for the longest period of time. He came to India at the age of 36 and return to China at 69. He really understands India, loves India and spreads India culture. Looking back into history, prominent masters like

Xu an Zang, Fa Xian and Bodhidharma travelled long distances between India and China. They left us with rich legacies. Tagore, Tan Yunshan, Xu Fancheng were pioneers to promote China-India cultural exchanges in modern times. Today as we are standing on the shoulders of the history, we should do better than our forefathers in cultural exchanges.

Third, commemorating him could help people to know more about Pondicherry. As a former French colonial territory, Pondicherry is a place where the Indian culture meets with the French culture. In the past you have embraced many foreigners like Xu Fancheng. Today the economic development and cultural prosperity of Pondicherry, as well as the world famous Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville, are attracting a lot of tourists. Pondicherry has

become a window for India's cultural diversity. A few days ago, a delegation from Dali visited India and held a tourism promotion session, which Chief Minister Narayanasamy attended. Dali and Pondicherry are exploring the establishment of friendship relations. Yesterday I discussed with the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Honourable Chief Minister about further strengthening cooperation on tourism, culture, education and economy and trade.

Fourth, commemorating him could further promote China-India friendship, a valuable legacy he has left us. In his times, people did what they should do. Professor Xu was a legend who made remarkable contribution to the friendship between our two peoples. Till the later years, Professor Xu still teaching







Chinese MA students doing research on Aurobindo. Tagore visited China twice, making huge waves in China's academic circles. India, under the suggestion of Mahatma Ghandi's advice, sent a medical team to China during the Second World War. We have the responsibility to inherit this spirit and legacy. In China today, there are a lot of scholars studying India culture, including religions, philosophy and Sanskrit literature. Prof. Huang Xinchuan and Professor Huang Xianian, two generations from the same family, devote themselves to India Studies.

Now we are delighted to see that this friendship continues to gain momentum. There are over 10,000 yoga centers in China. The Young people from China love the Darjeeling tea. The Secret Superstar

by Aamir Khan got another great box office in China after the Dangal. I am now working to make a co-production movie called The Legendary Bodhidharma.

As Chinese Ambassador, it is my job to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Of course, to promote political relations is also my job. And it is my priority.

Last year, our relations witnessed ups and downs. President Xi and Prime Minister Modi met in Xiamen last September. They agreed to turn over the page, make the Dragon and the Elephant dance together and make One plus One Eleven. Bilateral trade last year reached 88 billion US Dollars, increasing 20% compared with the year before. The friendly cooperation at the local level between

the two countries is flourishing. So far 15 twin-sister relations have been established between the provinces and cities of the two countries. There are over 20,000 Indian students studying in China. Among them, over 300 are at Dali University. Now China-India relations are at a key stage of stabilizing and improving, I am sure that with joint efforts more positive energy will be put into our relations. I hope that the academic circles of both countries could bring into full play their advantages to further contribute to the cause of China-India friendship.

We will never forget Prof. Xu Fancheng's contribution and we wish Prof. Xu continue blessing China-India relations.

Thank you.



# CHINA-INDIA BORDER AFFAIRS MEETING HELD IN NEW DELHI

New Delhi, March 23 (Xinhua) — The 11th round meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs was held here on Thursday and Friday.

The Chinese delegation was led by Yi Xianliang, the Director General of the Department of Boundary and Oceanic Affairs in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the Indian

delegation was led by Pranay Verma, the Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

The two sides reviewed the recent border situation and exchanged views on border control and boosting mutual trust, among others.

They vowed to continue enhancing communication and

coordination in a constructive manner, strengthen frontier defense exchange and cooperation, push forward the building of trust measures and properly handle the border issues so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas and create favorable conditions for the healthy and stable development of Sino-India relations.

# CHINA TRADE GROUP VISITS INDIA TO BOOST TRADE, PRAGMATIC COOPERATION

New Delhi, March 24 (Xinhua) — A trade promotion group organized by China's Ministry of Commerce is visiting India to strengthen economic and trade ties and pragmatic cooperation between the two countries.

The group, which arrived here Friday and will stay until Tuesday, is composed of officials from the Ministry of Commerce and more than 30 representatives from various sectors including textile, pharmaceutical, petrochemical industries as well as commercial trading, agriculture and others.

On Saturday in New Delhi, the Chinese side and India's Commerce

and Industry Ministry jointly organized the promotion of the China International Import Expo (CIIE), to be held in November in Shanghai, and the signing ceremony of India-China trade cooperation projects, according to a news release from the Chinese delegation.

During the signing ceremony, a total of 101 trade agreements were signed, the release said.

The economic and trade relations between China and India have maintained a rapid developing momentum in recent years, with bilateral cooperation bearing remarkable fruits, Chinese officials said at the ceremony.

Indian representatives said that the visit by the Chinese delegation provides a practical platform for promoting the economic and trade ties between the two countries, which shows that the Chinese government highly appreciates bilateral trade.

They expressed the belief that the visit will help promote win-win cooperation and further strengthen bilateral trade relations.

The Indian side also appreciated the promotion of the CIIE, saying many Indian enterprises are looking forward to participating in the expo as a first step to venture into the Chinese market.

# SPRING SCENERY ACROSS CHINA



People take photos of the blooming sakura in Jingning She Autonomous County, east China's Zhejiang Province, March 22, 2018. (Xinhua/Li Suren)



People have fun in the field of tulips in Lianxi District of Jiujiang City, east China's Jiangxi Province, March 22, 2018. (Xinhua/Hu Guolin)





Aerial photo taken on March 22, 2018 shows tourists viewing cherry blossoms on the foot of Wuanwei Mountain in Shaoxing City, east China's Zhejiang Province. (Xinhua/Weng Xinyang)



Women of Miao ethnic group do embroidery work outdoors at Kala Village of Longquan Township in Danzhai County, southwest China's Guizhou Province, March 21, 2018. (Xinhua/Kai Shangyu)





Oil recovery machine work among rapeseed flower fields in Haian County, east China's Jiangsu Province, March 22, 2018. (Xinhua/Xu Jingbai)



Photo taken on March 21, 2018 shows terraced fields in Malichang Township of Huayuan County in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, central China's Hunan Province. (Xinhua/Long Enze)





Photo taken on March 22, 2018 shows boats in the Taihu Lake and a weeping willow on the bank in Wuxi, east China's Jiangsu Province. (Xinhua/Pan Zhengguang)



A bullet train runs on the Yangxian section of Xi'an-Chengdu high-speed railway line in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, March 21, 2018. (Xinhua/Tang Zhenjiang)



# YOUTH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION COMPETITION HELD IN CHINA'S GUANGXI



A pupil shows a hanger she designed for people on trips during a youth science and technology innovation competition in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, March 23, 2018. (Xinhua/Zhang Ailin)



A pupil shows a mousetrap he designed during a youth science and technology innovation competition in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, March 23, 2018. (Xinhua/Zhang Ailin)



# BLACKNECKED CRANES ATTRACTED TO NAPAHAI NATURE RESERVE IN SW CHINA'S YUNNAN



Blacknecked cranes and other birds rest at the Napahai Nature Reserve in Shangri-la County, Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Diqing in southwest China's Yunnan Province, March 11, 2018. The integrated ecosystem of everglade in Napahai Nature Reserve attracts more than 300 blacknecked cranes every year to live through the winter. (Xinhua/Hu Chao)



Blacknecked cranes fly at the Napahai Nature Reserve in Shangri-la County, Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Diqing in southwest China's Yunnan Province, March 11, 2018. The integrated ecosystem of everglade in Napahai Nature Reserve attracts more than 300 blacknecked cranes every year to live through the winter. (Xinhua/Hu Chao)

# TIBET FOCUSES ON HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT THAT IS BENEFICIAL TO PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD



“The gross domestic product of Tibet in 2017 reached 131.06 billion yuan (20.71 billion US dollars), increasing by 10%, while the per capita income of rural residents has exceeded 10,000 yuan (1,580 US dollars),” said Qi Zhala (Che Dhalha), a deputy to the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC) and chairman of southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, at a plenary meeting held by

the delegation from the region to the 13th NPC on March 8, which is also open to media.

In recent years, Tibet has maintained a high-speed development, with the economy achieving double-digit growth rate for 25 consecutive years.

While developing rapidly, Tibet

has also attached great importance to the quality of development.

In response to a question from an Economic Daily reporter, Qi Zhala said that in order to achieve high-quality development, Tibet had to correctly manage the relation between state investment and social investment, and the relation between major projects and projects for



livelihood as well as other relations. He believes that managing these relations well will help solve several important contradictions that arise during development.

“Tibet’s high quality of development should benefit all rural and nomadic people,” Qi Zhala said.

In future, Tibet will focus on developing seven industries, including highland biotechnology, characteristic tourism, environmentally-friendly industries, clean energy, modern services, high-tech and digital industries, and border trade logistics.

“These industrial layouts are all based on people-centered development concept and built on foundations of strictly protecting the



environment, to ensure that Tibet’s development is not only the growth of GDP but also benefiting people’s

livelihoods and the environment,” Qi Zhala said.





# VOICES OF CPPCC MEMBERS FROM TIBET

“Like the rest of the country, Tibet has made historic achievements in its economic development. For five consecutive years, Tibet’s GDP has maintained double-digit growth rate, and employment in Tibet is stable. These tremendous achievements are a result of the high attention the country has paid to work in Tibet.”

—Sonam Nyima, member of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) from southwest China’s Tibet.

“As a new CPPCC member from Tibet, I plan to seriously study the spirit of the meeting. At the same



time, I will introduce the changes that have taken place in Tibet over the last few years, particularly the preservation and inheritance of traditional culture.”

—Menchang Norbu Sidar, member of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) from southwest China’s Tibet.

“Tibet’s economic development has been amazing in terms of major economic indicators, exceeding the national average of four percentage points and achieving double-digit growth rate. All of this is contributed to strong national support to Tibet. In recent years, developments and changes that local scholars and researchers had not thought possible have come true.”

—Thubten Khedrup, member of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) from southwest China’s Tibet.



# TIBET DESIGNATES GRAIN GROWING AREAS TO ENSURE OUTPUT



Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China has designated highland barley and wheat plantation areas to improve farming efficiency and ensure grain output.

According to the regional agriculture and animal husbandry department, a total of 27,667 ha. in Lhasa, Xigaze and Shannan will start integrated farming from April.

Jin Wencheng, deputy director of the department, said the plateau region lacks arable land. By designating the grain functional areas, the region can limit the use of good arable land only for growing staple grain, especially highland barley.



With an average elevation of 4,000 meters above the sea, the region depends on highland barley and yak as staple foods.

A total of 240,000 ha. arable land is expected to be included in grain plantation areas in the next three years.

The department will use satellite remote sensing technology to digitalize the information of the plantations so as to provide precision management of grain production, according to Donkyil, deputy director of the department.

Tibet achieved a grain output of 1 million tonnes last year, of which 800,000 tonnes were highland barley, the third bumper harvest in a row.

Reservoirs and water infrastructure have been built to ensure irrigation for the barley fields.



## LHASA ROLLS OUT 128 NEW ENERGY BUSES

Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet autonomous region, has put into use 128 gas-electric hybrid buses since the beginning of this year, increasing the total number of new energy buses to 312 in an effort to develop a clean energy transportation system, Xinhua News Agency reported.

New energy buses not only help reduce the difficulty of

transportation, but also help protect the blue sky and clear water of Lhasa, the city's public transportation operator was quoted as saying.

Lhasa has been stepping up its efforts in providing green public transportation since 2015. Apart from the buses, Lhasa government also collaborated with Ofo since last May to provide 3,600 sharing bikes in the urban

area. Also, 192 gas-electric hybrid taxicabs marked with the logo of "new energy" came into service in 2017.

"In 2018, Lhasa will invest more in new energy buses. By the end of this year, new energy buses are projected to take up 80 percent of all buses," said Cao Zhiming, chairman of board of Lhasa Communications Industry Group Co Ltd.





A new energy bus runs in front of Potala Palace in Lhasa, capital city of Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, March 12, 2018. [Photo/chinadaily.com.cn]



Passengers depart a new energy bus in Lhasa, capital city of Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, March 12, 2018. [Photo/chinadaily.com.cn]

# VISIT OF WORLD'S FIRST TIBETAN-LANGUAGE SEARCH ENGINE BREAKS 300 MILLION

It is reported that *Yongzin*, the world's first Tibetan-language online search engine, has seen more than 300 million visits, with an average of 3 million visitors daily.

*Yongzin* was started in April 2013 and was launched in August 2016.

Tseluo, who is responsible for the development of *Yongzin*, said that the search engine's current search product covers news, web pages, videos, music, and photo searches and includes a Tibetan-language

encyclopedia, library, and Q&A knowledge sharing platform, and the system's database has recorded data from 38 categories including Tibetan history, literature, religion, medicine, nature, and various dictionaries.

Before the *Yongzin* began operating, there was no Tibetan-language search function in any of China's major search engines. Foreign search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft's Bing only supported simple searches in Tibetan.

"Domestic Chinese internet users who visit *Yongzin* are mainly concentrated in northwest China's Qinghai, Gansu Province and southwest China's Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan," Tseluo said.

Overseas users have come from more than 70 counties and regions including the United States, Switzerland, France, Canada, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Bhutan.

## EDUCATION HAS CHANGED NOT ONLY MY OWN LIFE: KELSANG DEKYI

Kelsang Dekyi, a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress from southwest China's Tibet, was born in 1978, the beginning of an era in which she could rely on knowledge to change her destiny.

Kelsang Dekyi grew up in Gendang Village, Bangxin Township, Medog County, which was once a remote, poverty-stricken, and information-poor area.

She comes from a family with five members, including her father, mother, and two younger brothers. When she was seven years old, she began attending a private primary school. At that time, the school curriculum consisted of only Chinese,

Tibetan language, and mathematics. Because the teaching materials were incomplete and teachers were scarce, the dozen children used the first and second grade textbooks over and over.

"Our school building was very poor; teachers and students had to pick grass to cover the roof. The grass was taller than we were, so when we were walking back we'd often trip, and we often had our hands cut. However, if we didn't pick the grass, we couldn't cover the roof, and rainwater would leak into the classroom," Kelsang Dekyi recalled.

Since 1984, the central government began opening ethnic schools and Tibet classes (classes

made up of Tibetan students) in places like Beijing and Shanghai in order to strengthen the cultivation of educational talent from Tibet. The state also increased funding for education in Tibet.

In 1989, Kelsang Dekyi began to enjoy free education. With a stable learning environment, she studied particularly hard. In 2001, after graduating from an ethnic college, she was offered the opportunity to work in Lhasa, capital city of Tibet, but she turned it down to return to her hometown as a village teacher.

Kelsang Dekyi said, "My childhood, my memories, my faith, and my dreams were all in my hometown."



The Bangxin Township Primary School was no longer the same as it had been when she was a student.

It was located on a new school site and had new classrooms and dormitories, and there were nearly 100 students in four classes. The curriculum consisted of not only Chinese, mathematics, and Tibetan language, but also music, physical education, and art.

However, because local villagers' educational awareness was still weak, children were often absent from class or dropped out of school. For a long time, Kelsang Dekyi's main task was to go to the villages and persuade students to come back to school.

Around 2003, a 13-year-old student who was due to graduate soon, and one of the best students in the class, stopped coming to school. Kelsang Dekyi found the girl's mother, but only to be told, "My daughter is going to be married soon, so our family is preparing for her wedding." The family could not be made to understand, and the student

didn't come out to see her teacher. This was the first time that Kelsang Dekyi, a champion for education, came back empty handed.

But she refused to give up and returned the following day. The girl's family finally revealed their difficulties: "If a child goes to school, it is not easy for the parents to provide for him or her. We can't do that, we don't have the money to send our child to school."

Kelsang Dekyi felt relieved, and she said to the girl's parents, "The state, the government, everyone can help with school fees. I can also help with school fees. This girl is very smart and will be able to go far." In the end, Kelsang Dekyi brought the girl back to school. Today, that girl has not only graduated from university, she now also devotes herself to local education just like Kelsang Dekyi.

In 2013, with the opening of the Medog Highway, education in Medog underwent great changes.

There are currently 15 schools in Medog County with 2,096 students and 271 full-time teachers. The

primary school has an enrollment rate of 99 percent. Each student can receive 800 yuan (127 US dollars) per year in nutrition subsidies and is exempt from tuitions and charges in meals and accommodation, as the government provides another 3,580 yuan (566 US dollars) per year as subsidies for each of them.

"Education not only changed my life, but it has also changed the lives of the children who have grown up in the countryside like me. I feel especially fortunate to be able to do my part for the children's growth."

In 2018, Kelsang Dekyi was elected as a representative for the Tibet Autonomous Region People's Congress and National People's Congress. Before coming to Beijing, she went to villagers' homes to conduct research. When it comes to education, many villagers' mindsets have also undergone tremendous changes, because the children who have gone to school have helped them see that education is the path for the people of Medog to reach the rest of the world.





# A DAY IN LHASA



Sunlight on an early spring day and the sound of pilgrims' footsteps wake up the city of Lhasa, capital of Tibet Autonomous Region.

Consistent streams of people come to circumambulate the Potala Palace, a symbol of Tibetan Buddhism.

Rigzen Drolga and Sonam, a couple in their 70s, took an early bus ride Wednesday for their daily ritual. They had noodles for breakfast in a diner at the foothill of the imposing palace.

"Old people hardly oversleep. We

get up early, and coming to the palace is the most important thing to do every day," said Rigzen Drolga, the wife.

The early risers also include tourists who travel from afar. Zhang Zhongmin got up early enough to catch the first ray of light upon the golden rooftop of Potala Palace with his camera.

He and two friends arrived in Lhasa Tuesday from Shenzhen, a boomtown in south China's Guangdong Province.

"We came via the Sichuan-Tibet

highway. The scenery along the road to Lhasa is beautiful. I'm a little surprised that many towns along the road have quite a lot of people," he said.

Tibet has 115 national-level top-grade tourist attractions. In 2017, over 25 million people traveled to the plateau region.

Zhang plans to drive for another day to Nyingchi to experience the peach flower blossom festival.

As the day became brighter, streets in Lhasa became crowded. The old Pargor Street is bustling with commerce.

“The weather is getting warmer. Business will be good. It’ll be best in May,” said Lorang, a 19 year-old who sells Buddhist statues from Nepal.

Driver Dondrup Tsering parks his SUV near Pargor Street and waits for a passenger. He became a driver for ride-hailing platform Didi last month.

“I was a taxi driver for seven years before this. It is better to work through the online platform now. I make about 300 yuan (about 47

dollars) every day,” he said.

Khedrup, a courier, rides his electric scooter and wastes no time under a heavy workload. It is not yet 10:30 a.m., but Khedrup has already delivered about 100 packages. “There are so many packages today,” he said.

In Dzongyab Lukhang Park, however, nobody was in a rush.

Retiree Langre comes to the park every morning.

“I dance for at least an hour every day. It is good exercise, keeping me sharp for a whole day,” he said. A few hundred meters away, dozens of people performed shadowboxing exercises.

Vendor Dawa has sold pine and cypress branches at the park for several years. People buy the branches and put them in the stove for blessings.

“It is good business. My family depends on my earnings,” she said.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Xi Jinping - The Governance of China-II

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in 2012, the Central Committee with Xi Jinping as general secretary has led the whole party and the people of China in the drive to realize the Two Centenary Goals and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. In pursuit of these goals the country has upheld and developed socialism with Chinese characteristics, advanced the Five-point Strategy and the Four-pronged Strategy in a coordinated and integrated manner, and achieved historic progress in reform and opening up and socialist modernization. We have braved new challenges, blazed new trails, resolved long-standing and complex problems, realized long sought objectives, championed the causes of the CPC and the country, and brought Chinese socialism to the threshold of a new era.

We hope you will find this book useful.

Please email us first to reserve the book providing the serial No. Hope to hear from you in the coming future. Your comments and suggestions on NFC are also greatly welcome.

Editor

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