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中华人民共和国第十三届全国人民代表大会第三次会议



2020 NPC SESSION

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The Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress kicks off at the Great Hall of the People on May 22. *Bi Nan*



中华人民共和国第十三届全国人民代表大会第三次会议

正：张德江主持
副：李源潮主持
第三届全国政协



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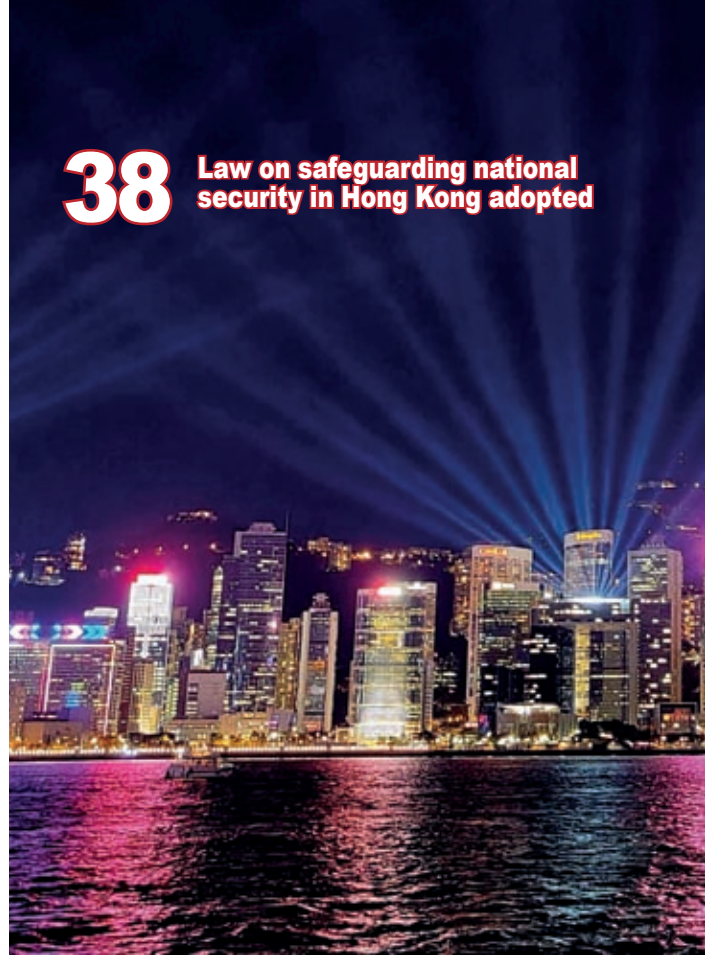
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President Xi and the people



President Xi Jinping arrives for the opening meeting of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 22. *Li Xueren*





President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, takes part in a deliberation with deputies from the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region delegation at the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on May 22. *Huang Jingwen*

‘What is people first?’ Xi points to how China saves lives at all costs

“What is people first?” President Xi Jinping asked, before offering his own answer while speaking with lawmakers at the National People’s Congress (NPC) annual session on May 22.

“So many people worked together to save a single patient. This, in essence, embodies doing whatever it takes (to

save lives),” he said.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, is a deputy to the 13th NPC.

During his deliberations with fellow deputies from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, “people” was a keyword. Xi

“China has the full confidence and capability to win the battle against the virus with concerted efforts,”

referred to a deputy’s story from earlier that morning. Luo Jie, from Hubei Province which was hard hit by COVID-19, told reporters how medical workers in his hospital spent 47 days in saving an 87-year-old COVID-19 patient.

“About 10 medical workers meticulously took care of the patient for days, finally saving the patient’s life,” Xi said. “I’m really impressed.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, health workers around the world have realized that the elderly are the most difficult to treat and require the most sophisticated medical resources. China has given every patient equal treatment irrespective of their age or wealth.

In Hubei alone, more than 3,600 COVID-19 patients over the age of 80 have been cured. In the provincial capital Wuhan, seven centenarian patients were cured.

“We mobilized the best doctors, the most advanced equipment and the most needed resources from around the nation to Hubei and Wuhan, going all out to save lives,” Xi said, noting that the oldest patient cured was 108 years old.

“We are willing to save lives at all costs. No matter how old the patients are or how serious their condition have been, we never give up,” Xi said.

Xi joined political advisors and lawmakers on May 21 and 22 in paying silent tribute to the lives lost to COVID-19 as the top political advisory body and the national legislature opened their annual sessions.

This year’s government work report said China’s economy posted negative growth in the first quarter of the year, but it was “a price worth paying” to contain COVID-19, since life is invaluable.

“As a developing country with 1.4 billion people, it is only by overcoming enormous difficulties that China has been able to contain COVID-19 in such a short time, while also ensuring our people’s basic needs,” the report said.

Epidemic response is a reflection of China’s governing philosophy. The fundamental goal of the Party in uniting and leading the people in revolution, development and reform is “to ensure a better life for them,” Xi said.

The nation’s average life expectancy was 77 years in 2018, more than double that in 1949, when the People’s Republic was founded.

Chinese people are not just living longer lives, but also better lives, with more material wealth and broader choices to pursue individual dreams. All rural poor will bid farewell to poverty this year as part of the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Xi added that the Party’s long-term governance rests on “always maintaining a close bond with the people.”

“We must always remain true to the people’s aspiration and work in concert with them through thick and thin,” Xi said. (Xinhua) ■



Fei Dongbin

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Mayor of Ulanqab

“The General Secretary asked us for details about our poverty alleviation work in recent years. In particular, he asked whether the epidemic had caused people to return to poverty. His unwavering support gives us full confidence in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects with the rest of the country.”



Huo Zhaoliang

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Head of the Xilingol League

“We must shoulder the important historical mission of ecological development, keeping the land green, the sky blue and the water clear. We will not relax in building a crucial ecological security corridor in north China.”



Huhbaater

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Professor at Inner Mongolia Agricultural University

“The General Secretary listened attentively to my report on the prevention and control of animal epidemic diseases. I could sense that he cares about the people whole-heartedly.”



Mei Hua

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Principal of Yimin Primary School in the Ewenki Autonomous Banner in Hulunbuir

“The General Secretary has always advocated a strong bond with the people. As a deputy from the local level, his call resonates with me. Thanks to the targeted poverty alleviation policy, living conditions for herdsmen in remote areas are much better now.”

Courtesy of Huang Jingwen, Xie Huanchi

Xi emphasizes fortifying public health protection network



President Xi Jinping (center), also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, joins a deliberation with deputies from Hubei Province at the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing on May 24. *Huang Jingwen*

President Xi Jinping emphasized the fortification of the public health protection network while participating in deliberations at the annual session of the National People's Congress on May 24.

He made the remarks during discussions with lawmakers from central China's Hubei Province, where he stressed reforming disease prevention and control system; boosting the epidemic monitoring, early warning and emergency response capacity; perfecting the treatment system for major epidemics; and improving public health emergency laws and regulations.

Xi commended the vital contributions and enormous sacrifices made by the people in Hubei and its capital city of Wuhan in fighting against COVID-19, and expressed his sincere appreciation.

Noting the continued spread of the virus overseas, clusters of cases in some domestic areas, sporadic cases in Hubei and daily increases of new asymptomatic infections, Xi urged continued efforts to forestall both imported cases and do-

mestic resurgences to ensure that the hard-won progress in epidemic containment is not lost.

Xi said the most imperative task for Hubei is to spare no efforts to coordinate COVID-19 prevention and control, and economic and social development, while paying close attention to addressing possible "post-epidemic syndromes."

China's public health and medical service systems played key roles in dealing with the epidemic, but some weak links and inadequacies were also exposed, Xi said, urging prompt efforts to remedy them.

Noting that prevention is the most economical and effective health strategy, Xi emphasized the importance of more targeted and effective measures and the fulfillment of responsibilities for reporting infectious disease and public health emergencies.

The key to epidemic monitoring and early warning lies in timeliness and accuracy, Xi said, calling for improving the monitoring mechanism for diseases of unknown causes and abnormal health incidents, and establishing a smart multi-



point trigger system for early warning, among others.

Xi ordered strengthening capacity building to deal with major epidemics and organizing drills and training.

He also spoke of the need to build infrastructures including national medical centers and regional medical treatment centers, and boost the system of public health laws and regulations.

Xi called for adopting the philosophy of full lifecycle management throughout the entire process of urban planning, construction and management; faster development of a public health system that fits into the country's rapidly-advancing urbanization and densely-populated cities; and consistent efforts to improve the rural living environment.

He stressed promoting and upholding practices such as wearing masks, socially distancing, sorting garbage and making online appointments for hospital visits, which have become social norms in China. (Xinhua) ■



Zhang Wenxi

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Hubei Province
Secretary of the Party branch of Chenyu Village
in Wuhan

“The Party branch at the primary level plays a key role in the fight against COVID-19. Thanks to the joint efforts of Party cadres and villagers, there are no confirmed or suspected cases in my village.”



Yu Cheng

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Hubei Province
Lecturer with the Wuhan Second Light
Industry School

“General Secretary Xi Jinping was very concerned with our wellbeing during the epidemic. People in Wuhan asked me that if I had the opportunity to meet him. I want to extend my gratitude to the General Secretary on behalf of the teachers and students at our school.”



Luo Jie

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Hubei Province
President of Taihe Hospital in Shiyan

“The General Secretary’s speech pointed a clear direction for reform of the disease prevention and control system, and the improvement of the major epidemic treatment system.”



Song Qingli

Deputy to the 13th NPC from Hubei Province
Farmer from Hefeng County

“When the General Secretary heard that farmers’ per-capita income in my county had increased to 12,140 yuan (\$1,735), he nodded. I believe he could relate to our happiness. Now our income is guaranteed and we don’t have to worry about returning to poverty because of the epidemic.”

Courtesy of Huang Jingwen



Li Zhanshu (center), a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, joins deputies from Jiangxi Province in group deliberations at the Third Session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on May 22. *Ding Lin*

Chinese leaders attend deliberations at annual legislative session

Senior leaders called for more efforts to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects on May 22, while attending deliberations at the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC).

Li Zhanshu, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji and Han Zheng – members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee – gave their complete support to the government work report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang at the session.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, joined deputies from Jiangxi Province in group deliberations, asking legislators to review well and improve on the draft Civil Code, which will be the first basic law defined as a “code” of the People's Republic of China, once adopted.

He also said establishing and improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to safeguard national security is completely consistent with China's Constitution and the Basic Law of the HKSAR, and will be fully supported by all Chinese people, including Hong Kong compatriots.

Wang Yang, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, told deputies from Sichuan Province to counteract the impact of COVID-19 and ensure a victory in the fight against poverty.

Wang Huning, secretariat member of the CPC Central Committee, underscored efforts to promote the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, boost the development of Xiongan New Area and make sound preparations for the 2022 Winter Olympic, while participating in deliberations with deputies from Hebei Province.

Joining deputies from Heilongjiang Province for deliberations, Zhao Leji, secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, stressed strengthening supervision over the implementation of major decisions and arrangements.

Vice Premier Han Zheng, during deliberations with deputies from Shaanxi Province, underlined efforts to coordinate epidemic containment and economic and social development, take more measures on deepening reform and expanding opening up to solve difficulties facing development and create more room for the development of market entities. (Xinhua) ■

Vitality of Chinese democracy never more evident

The annual session of the National People's Congress concluded on May 28, showing firm determination to achieve development milestones and making key progress in protecting civil rights and safeguarding national security.

The week-long session adopted the milestone Civil Code and a decision to make national security laws for Hong Kong. The annual Two Sessions also included the meeting of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the national political advisory body.

In a year of unprecedented challenges and crucial significance in the nation's development, these major political events built consensus, boosted confidence and solidarity, and pooled wisdom to enable the country to resolutely advance toward its set goals while overcoming all difficulties and obstacles.

As the Communist Party of China (CPC) leadership steers the nation through these hazardous times, the vitality, strength and wisdom of Chinese socialist democracy have never been more evident.

During the Two Sessions, which are major platforms for Chinese people's democracy and consultative democracy, the term "people first" reverberated among nearly 3,000 national lawmakers and more than 2,000 political advisors.

The CPC has always followed a people-centered approach. Through legally established procedures, its stances take the form of the will of the country, and its key decisions and people's aspirations are transformed into concrete plans and actions.

During the NPC session, 506 motions and about 9,000 proposals were received from deputies, a vivid example of how they reflect the voices of the people.

Chinese democracy has also set an example of protecting people's lives, health, rights and interests as showcased by the country's ability to contain COVID-19 in such a short time through a people's war, while giving full play to the institutional strength of mobilizing resources for accomplishing major undertakings.

The epidemic was behind postponing the Two Sessions, normally held in March, due to efforts to control its spread and save lives. The convening of the sessions in May was a direct result of the fact that the country had turned the tide in its fight against COVID-19 through arduous efforts.

The miraculous lifting of over 90 million people out of poverty over the past seven years and the imminent elimination of absolute poverty this year are concrete manifestations of the strength and effectiveness of democracy in China.

The system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation is an important contributor to democratic decision-making and problem-solving. The ruling CPC has cooperated with non-Communist parties, which build consensus, formulate proposals and participate in discussing and handling state affairs.

With a stronger common will, the Two Sessions have boosted the national morale for fulfilling the country's development goals to meet people's aspirations for a better life. In addition, China will continue striving to build a community with a shared future for humanity through deepening cooperation with the rest of the world. (Xinhua) ■



Deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) walked out of the Great Hall of the People after the closing meeting of the Third Session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on May 28. *Xing Guangli*

Special period, innovative gathering





Sessions postponed and shortened

The 2020 annual sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature—postponed from March—kicked off on May 22 and 21, and was shortened to eight days due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

By postponing the Two Sessions, China had a wider window to fight COVID-19, identify how to minimize the impact of the epidemic on development and prepare policies to boost growth more precisely. *Shen Hong*



Masking up

Deputies and other attendees strictly followed the requirement to wear masks during the sessions.

All meeting halls, cafeterias, elevators and restrooms were equipped with well-designed ventilation systems. *Xinhua*

A silent tribute

Attendees pay a silent tribute to the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for fighting against COVID-19 and compatriots who have lost their lives to the epidemic during the opening meeting of the Third Session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on May 22. *Wang Yuguo*





Dialogue in the 'cloud'

Press conferences were shared via video links; cloud meetings become the new normal. Online conference rooms were set up where NPC deputies were housed for interviews via the "cloud." *Chen Yehua*

Asking questions

Journalists raise their hands to ask questions during a press conference of the Third Session of the 13th National Committee of the CPPCC through a video link in Beijing on May 24. *Xing Guangli*





Talking to the media

Cao Jincui, spokesperson of the delegation of Jilin Province to the National People's Congress (NPC), talks to the media on the delegation's deliberation outcome and deputies' suggestions at a press conference during the Third Session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on May 27. *Xinhua*

Fang Yan, a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress from Hubei Province, takes questions from the press at a video interview room in Beijing on May 20.

Against the backdrop of epidemic prevention and control, video interview rooms were set up to facilitate cloud communication between deputies and reporters. *Wu Yu*

Streaming deliberations

NPC deputy Li Wei (center) speaks during deliberations with the delegation from Shandong Province at the Third Session of the 13th NPC in Beijing on May 23.

Other deputies and attendees listen and participate in the discussion during the meetings via smartphones. *Wu Yu*

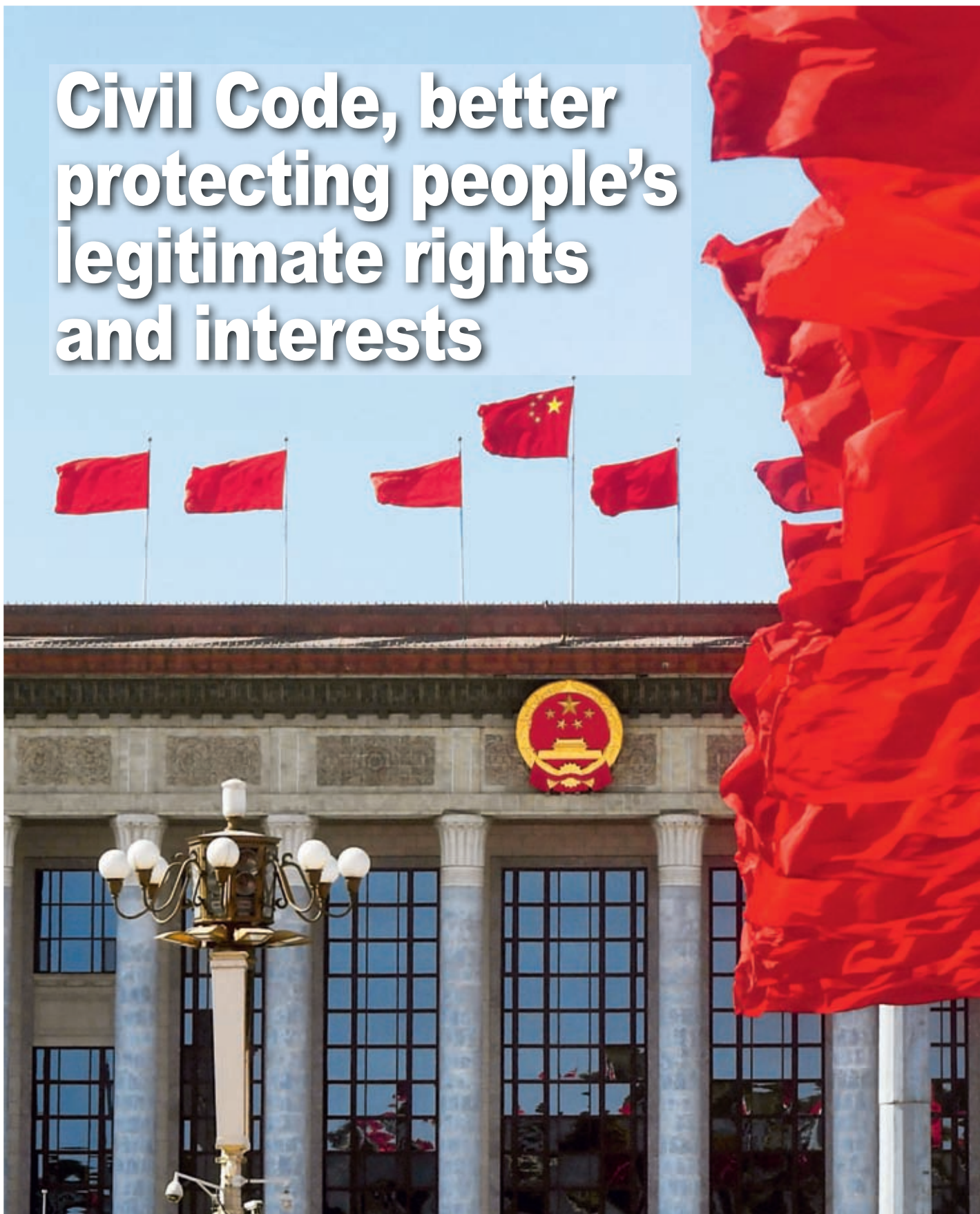


Health packets and robots

Health packets were prepared for deputies, journalists and staff members during the Two Sessions. The package included disinfectant wipes and other epidemic prevention items, as well as a leaflet on epidemic prevention tips.

Disinfection robots were used at the living quarters of the deputies. *Zhang Xiaobo*

Civil Code, better protecting people's legitimate rights and interests





The Great Hall of the People, May 27. Li He

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, emphasized full recognition of the promulgation and implementation of the country's newly adopted Civil Code, as well as better protection of the people's legitimate rights and interests in accordance with law.

Xi made the remarks on May 29 while presiding over a group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on the effective implementation of the Civil Code.

He called on the whole Party to effectively promote the implementation of the Civil Code in order to better advance the law-based governance of the country and the building of a socialist country based on the rule of law, and to better protect people's rights and interests.

Noting that the Civil Code is the first law to have "code" in its title since New China was founded in 1949, Xi said it marks a major achievement in developing socialist rule of law in the new era.

The Civil Code systematically integrates the civil legal norms developed by long-term practices during more than 70 years of New China, drawing upon the Chinese nation's fine legal culture stretching back more than 5,000 years and humanity's achievements in building law-based civilizations, Xi said.

Party and state organs at all levels should take into account the stipulations of the Civil Code while carrying out relevant work, without violating the legitimate civil rights of the public, including personal and property rights, Xi added.

Relevant state departments should step up the institutional building of laws and regulations related to the Civil Code, Xi said, noting that the code should serve as an important scale plate for administrative decision-making, management and supervision.

Xi also stressed the strengthening of work in civil trials, and supervision and guidance in key areas that involve the protection of property, personality and intellectual property rights, as well as ecological and environmental protection.

Highlighting the importance of giving full play to the roles of legal organizations and professionals, including law firms and lawyers, Xi also called for the incorporation of the Civil Code into the national education system. (Xinhua) ■



Decades efforts to enact Civil Code

A Chinese civil code has been a long cherished wish of generations of civil law scholars

By Yuan Yuan and Ge Lijun

The closing meeting of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 28. Ding Haitao

Jin Ping, a 98-year-old retired law professor from Southwest University of Political Science and Law in Chongqing Municipality in Southwest China, is the last surviving expert to have participated in the first three attempts to draft a civil code in China.

The three bids, in 1954, 1962 and 1979, didn't get enacted for various reasons, while the fourth undertaking, launched in 2001 with participation from some of Jin's students, also failed in its mission.

The Civil Code, anticipated for decades, finally came to life and was adopted at the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) on May 28, and will take effect on January 1, 2021.

Jin said he was "overjoyed" at the news during an interview with Xinhua News Agency, adding that it was a "blessing" for him to see his lifelong goal come to fruition.

The code was adopted one day before Jin's birthday. "It is a landmark achievement in China's law-making history," Jin said. "This is the best birthday gift ever."

A long process

To formulate a Chinese civil code had been a long cherished wish of generations of civil law scholars over the past few decades.

Sun Xianzhong, a research fellow at the Law Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a deputy to both the 12th and 13th NPC, was an arduous promoter of compiling a civil code.

"The current civil law system is a patchwork of fragmented legislation," he told the reporter. Since 1980, China has successively promulgated a series of separate laws including the Marriage Law, the Adoption Law, the Contracts Law and the Property Law, which for a long time have served as the basis for judicial practice in civil cases.

The General Principles of the Civil Law, enacted in 1986 as the foundation for the civil law system, could hardly meet the demands of a fast developing society, Sun explained. After in-depth fieldwork, he found that among its 156 articles, less than 20 could be applied to modern society. The other articles have either been replaced by separate laws or left behind.

Some articles in the General Principles even contradict other laws. For example, Article 136 states that the limitation on action concerning sales of substandard goods without proper notice shall be one year. However, Article 45 in the Product Quality Law states that the limitation for action for damages arising from a defective product is two years.

"There are gaps and inconsistencies that exist among the separate laws," Sun said. "To set up an overarching framework for civil rights to refine the country's basic legal system has become an urgent issue for the Chinese law-making community."

In 2013, the first year he served as an NPC deputy, Sun took the lead and submitted a proposal for compiling a civil code. In 2014, he submitted the same proposal. That same year, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee called for progress in drafting a unified civil code.

Jin was excited by the news. "This was a turning point in China's civil law history," he said. "I was very confident that the Civil Code would be compiled successfully this time."

Shortly afterward, a two-step strategy was adopted. The NPC would first enact the General Provisions of the Civil Law, which would be followed by a review of each section of the civil code by the NPC Standing Committee. Finally, the General Provisions would be combined with the drafts of individual sections to form a draft Civil Code, which would be submitted to the NPC for final deliberation.

In March 2015, the NPC Standing Committee set up a special work group for the drafting. In June 2016, it deliberated on the first draft of the General Provisions of the Civil Law, and on March 15, 2017, the General Provisions was passed at the annual NPC session, marking a milestone in the progress toward a full-fledged civil code.

In addition, president Xi Jinping presided over three meetings of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in June 2016, August 2018 and December 2019, listening to the report of the NPC Standing Committee and providing important instructions.

In April 2017, the compilation of the six specific sections of the civil code was launched, while in late 2019, the complete draft made its debut after the General Provisions was combined with the six draft sections and opened to the public for consultation.

Zhang Yesui, spokesperson for this year's NPC session, said on May 21 that in the Civil Code's compiling process, the NPC collected 10 rounds of public opinion online and

The Civil Code finally came to life and was adopted at the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress on May 28, and will take effect on January 1, 2021.

- General Provisions
- Property
- Contracts
- Personal Rights
- Marriage and Family
- Inheritance
- Torts
- Supplementary Provisions

It has a total of 1,260 articles.





Li Zhanshu (center), chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, presides over a chairpersons' meeting of the 13th NPC Standing Committee in Beijing on June 9. During the meeting, Chinese lawmakers studied a speech by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, on the effective implementation of the country's newly adopted Civil Code. *Rao Amin*

received over 1 million pieces of advice and suggestions from some 425,000 people. In addition, legislators went to many areas of China to investigate key issues.

Wang Liming, a law professor and vice president of Renmin University of China (RUC) said that the legislators listened intently to the opinions of all parties and improved relevant rules in a timely manner. Thus, the Civil Code submitted to the NPC for deliberation had been changed based on various opinions.

In February, Chen Haiyi, NPC deputy and chief judge at the Juvenile Criminal Tribunal of the Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court in Guangdong Province in Southeast China, submitted a proposal to the NPC Standing Committee on improving guardianship regulations because there were some children who couldn't get proper care while their parents were quarantined during novel coronavirus epidemic prevention and control.

To her delight, Chen found that her suggestion was included in the draft Civil Code, which had specific provisions concerning new problems such as emergency situations like pandemic prevention and control. The articles state that if the guardian is temporarily unable to perform guardianship duties and the person under guardianship is left unattended, primary-level authorities or the civil affairs department where the guardian resides shall arrange necessary temporary care.

Cradle to grave protection

As the first legislative package called a "code" since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Civil

Code, dubbed an "encyclopedia on social life" and the "encyclopedia of rights," consists of 1,260 articles in seven volumes, including almost every aspect of people's lives.

"The Civil Code protects people's rights to the fullest," Sun told the reporter. "It lays an important legal and institutional foundation for the modernization of the country's governance system and capacity."

"It comes at a time when Chinese society is experiencing a major transformation in its development," said Li Shenglong, vice president of Chongqing No.1 Intermediate People's Court. "Some of the code's articles concerning environmental pollution and management, and an aging population are noteworthy."

"One of the highlights in the Civil Code is the section dedicated to personality rights," Wang told the reporter. "This reflects the wisdom of China's judicial practice over the past few decades, and will undoubtedly increase the protection of ordinary Chinese people's rights."

The term "dignity of life" is introduced in this section. Yang Lixin, a law professor at RUC, defined it as the dignity of birth, life and death. With this provision, a person can choose to refuse or accept hospice care or painful hospital treatment.

The term "peace of private life" grants people protection from illegal intrusion through activities such as peeping, eavesdropping and spam emails. Data collectors have a duty to protect an individual's personal information and cannot obtain, disclose or conduct transactions of this data without individual consent.

The code also responds to issues arising from the develop-

ment of hi-tech and life sciences. For example, it lists human genes and embryos as fundamental rights that deserve protection and dictates that all medical and scientific research related to human genes and embryos follow strict rules, laws and regulations. This provision is considered to be a response to gene-editing experiments on babies conducted by a professor in life sciences in Shenzhen, Guangdong in November 2018.

The natural person's voice is also protected by the code as a right of personality. "With the development of artificial intelligence, the natural person's voice is more widely used on more occasions," Fang Yan, vice director of the Shaanxi Lawyers Association and an NPC deputy, said. "The Civil Code has adapted to the fast development of science and technology."

In the marriage law section, a cooling-off period of 30 days for couples ready to divorce has drawn wide attention. Couples who file for a divorce by agreement must wait 30 days to consider their decision. If they change their mind, they can withdraw their divorce application within the 30 days, but after the waiting period, those who still want to divorce will receive their official documents. Cases of domestic violence or divorce lawsuits are exempted.

The article has evoked many discussions. Jiang Shengnan, a writer and NPC deputy, suggested it be deleted. "Among ready-to-divorce couples, only 5 percent made the decision impulsively," she said. "The 30-day cooling-off period only leaves those who have given divorce careful consideration to suffer longer in a failed marriage."

Sun Xianzhong, who participated in the whole drafting process, said the article was added with thoughtful attention. "The 5 percent is no small number since the divorce rate has been steadily increasing in recent years," he said.

The new code also leaves some issues unresolved for legal professionals to continue working on. Shi Jiayou, a law professor at RUC, raised an example concerning the protection of personal information. For parties that have the right to collect personal data, the code fails to regulate how long they can keep people's information and under what circumstances they must delete the data.



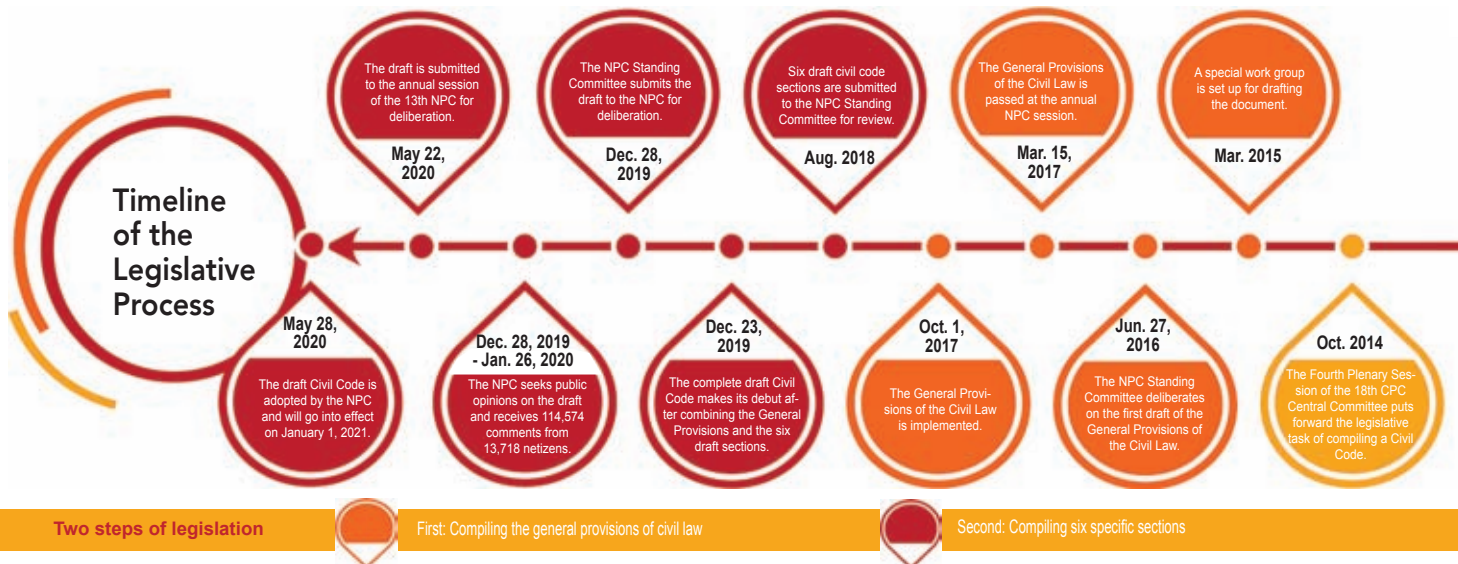
Civil Code of the People's Republic of China has been on the shelves in Shenyang on June 2. Yu Haiyang

"Some scholars say the Civil Code will provide a universal tool for judicial organs to settle civil disputes," said Qiao Xinsheng, a professor of law at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in Hubei Province. "But the complexity of civil relations and the emergence of new problems due to social changes require judicial organs to understand deeply the basic spirit of the Civil Code, combine Chinese traditions and culture with the moral and ethical standards of modern society and fully comprehend the specific legal norms of the Civil Code."

Jin, the nonagenarian, said that it is a good beginning, but still needs to be improved and updated so that it can serve the people better.

On May 28, right after the Civil Code was adopted by the NPC, a team was set up at Southwest University of Political Science and Law to popularize it in schools, communities and rural areas.

"It's no easy task to formulate a good law, and it's even more important to make sure it is understood by the public and enforced effectively," Jin said. (Beijing Review) ■



Five key points to understand Civil Code

By Liu Rui

The adoption of the Civil Code at the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress, means that the Chinese people now have a civil code of their own. It is the first law since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to bear the title "code," the first to contain more than 1,000 articles and the first with more than 100,000 Chinese characters.

Five key points will help people gain a better understanding of the voluminous Civil Code.

First, it is systemic. The codification of the Civil Code does not reinvent the wheel, nor is it a simple compilation of the large number of civil laws and civil norms of the past. It is a process of systemic integration. Codification essentially means a systemic process. As a critical step in structuring the legal system of the country, it lays an important legal and institutional foundation for the modernization of China's governance system and capacities.

Second, it is people-oriented. The core of the Civil Code is the people, meaning it is a law for the people, highlighting their rights. The code is an edifice of people's rights that houses personality rights, identity rights, property rights, claims, intellectual property rights, equity rights and so on.

One highlight is its emphasis on the protection of people's rights. It not only incorporates new types of civil rights, such as the right to residence and the right to privacy, but it also protects certain interests that are not identified as rights, such as an individual's personal data and voice. It clearly provides for the protection of the natural person's voice, with reference to the provisions applicable to the protection of the right to one's image.

The Civil Code effectively addresses people's concerns by lowering the threshold for decision-making by the general meeting of apartment owners, providing for the "co-signing" of joint debts between spouses and prohibiting sexual harassment.

Third, it draws on the quality outcomes of traditional Chinese culture and civil laws. Civil laws make up a vast and profound field with a long history that began with Ro-



Female workers study the newly adopted Civil Code at a company in Xingtai, Hebei Province in North China on June 24. *Li Jiwei*

The Civil Code is not a finished work, nor is it immune to changes; rather, it allows for future reforms and further development by leaving an interface for future laws.

man law and have a number of milestones, such as the Napoleonic Code and the German Civil Code. Many countries around the world have their own civil codes.

There is also a great variety of quality outcomes in civil law tradition and research in China, especially over the four decades since the country adopted its reform and opening-up policy. Valuable legislative and judiciary experience has also been accumulated throughout the past. All these have provided important references for the Civil Code.

Fourth, it is up to date. We are living in an age of information technology (IT). That is why it is important to regu-



late the information- and IT-related areas in the Civil Code, such as taking into consideration cases of rights violated on the internet, while improving regulations related to the formulation of electronic contracts.

We also value green development in the 21st century. Therefore, the Civil Code highlights ecological protection. This is the first time China's civil law includes the green principle, making it a first for a civil code in the world. The green concept is not only manifested as a principle but also as a series of specific provisions. For example, the implementation of a contract specifically requires the conservation of resources, the protection of the environment and new punitive compensation for ecological damage.

Fifth, it is open. The Civil Code contains 1,260 articles, which is very extensive, but it still falls short of meeting the needs of complex civil rights. For instance, China continues to deepen its reforms in the building and construction of rural areas, and new practices keep emerging in the context of big data and artificial intelligence.

Therefore, the Civil Code is not a finished work, nor is it immune to changes; rather, it allows for future reforms and further development by leaving an interface for future laws. ■

Opinions: Promoting implementation of the Civil Code

Deputy Yan Jianguo

Principal partner of Beijing Xinli Law Firm and member of Jiusan Society

To improve the relevant civil laws and systems, we should strengthen the promulgation of supporting laws and regulations; we should shore up the capability of relevant departments in seeking the rule of law within the framework of Civil Code, improve law enforcement and efficiency of judicial departments; We should popularize the Civil Code, so that it can truly become a "valuable book" that everyone can use when protecting their rights.

Deputy Liu Huaiping

Vice president of Chinese Society of Environmental Protection Industry

We should strengthen public interest litigation to better protect environment. Procuratorial organs or organizations regulated by law can use public interest litigation mechanism to claim rights, which reflects the original intention of the state to attach importance to environmental protection.

In order to achieve the consistency with the Civil Code in the field of environmental protection, the top-level design role of the code should be fully respected, and the coordination between laws and regulations should be properly handled.

Deputy Jiao Xin'an

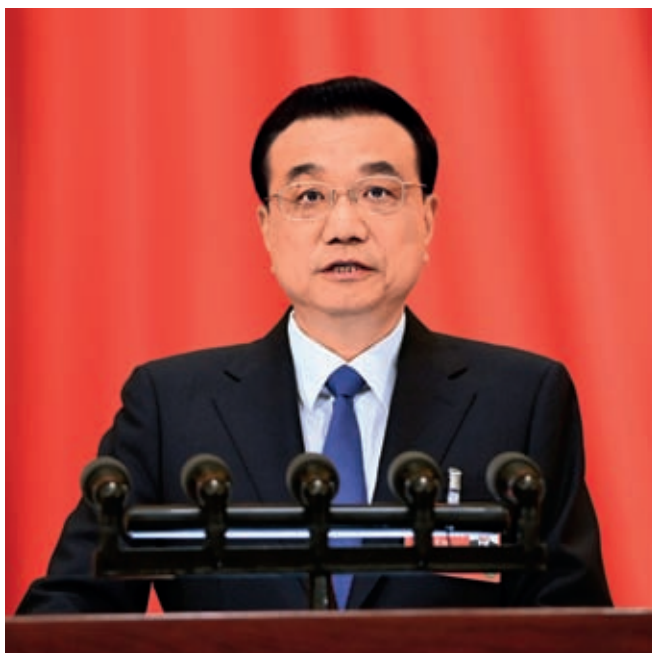
President of Yangzhou University

It is necessary to bring the Civil Code into the higher education system to improve the awareness among college students and better promote the implementation of the Civil Code.

To publicize Civil Code knowledge among the grassroots people, college students can organize lectures or participate social practice to inform the Civil Code to the public in simple language.

Colleges and universities can carry out in-depth researches on the implementation of the Civil Code.

China firm on achieving development goals for 2020



Premier Li Keqiang delivers the government work report at the opening meeting of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 22. *Shen Hong*

China will work to achieve its development goals of winning the battle against poverty and completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects this year, although it set no specific economic growth target for 2020, according to the government work report submitted to the national legislature for deliberation on May 22.

The decision to drop a specific growth target was made because the country faces some factors that are difficult to predict in its development due to the great uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the world economic and trade environment, Premier Li Keqiang said while delivering the report at the opening of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress.

"Not setting a specific target for economic growth will enable all of us to concentrate on ensuring stability on six fronts and security in six areas," Li said.

The six fronts refer to employment, the financial sector, foreign trade, foreign investment, domestic investment and expectations. The six areas are job security, basic living needs, operations of market entities, food and energy security, stable industrial and supply chains, and the normal functioning of primary-level governments.

"We must focus on maintaining security in the six areas in order to ensure stability on the six fronts. By doing so, we will be able to keep the fundamentals of the economy stable," he said. "Maintaining security will deliver the stability needed to pursue progress, thus laying a solid foundation for accomplishing our goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects."

China will give priority to stabilizing employment and ensuring living standards, with the report unveiling detailed targets, policies and measures.

China aims to add over 9 million new urban jobs in 2020, while keeping the surveyed urban unemployment rate at around 6 percent. The country will ensure the elimination of poverty among all rural residents living below the current poverty line and in all poor counties.

China plans to set its fiscal deficit above 3.6 percent of its GDP, which will result in a deficit increase of 1 trillion yuan (\$141 billion) against last year. It will also issue 1 trillion yuan of government bonds for COVID-19 control.

The country will further cut taxes and fees for enterprises with the aim of reducing corporate burden by over 2.5 trillion yuan (\$357 billion), while stepping up financial support for stable business operations.

"At present and for some time to come, China will face risks and challenges like never before," Li said. "However, we have unique political and institutional strengths, a strong economic foundation, enormous market potential and hundreds of millions of smart and hardworking people."

"If we face challenges head-on, boost confidence in development, create strong impetus for growth, and preserve and make the most of this important period of strategic opportunity for our development, we will, undoubtedly, be able to make it through this challenging time," he said. "The horizon for China's development is full of promise."

China will redouble its efforts to minimize the losses resulting from COVID-19, and keep its policies forceful and sustainable.

"We have both the resolve and the ability to accomplish the targets and tasks set for this year," Li assured. (Xinhua) ■

Unique advantages

How does China transform its institutional advantages into governance effectiveness?

By Lu Yan

The Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) held its second plenary meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 25.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, delivered a work report summing up the Standing Committee's work over the past year, highlighting decisions to confer national medals and honorary titles, and grant special pardons to some convicted criminals, along with an NPC draft decision to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to safeguard national security.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Standing Committee has acted promptly and performed its lawful duty while rigorously implementing the decisions and plans of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, Li said.

The Standing Committee issued a decision to completely ban the illegal trade and consumption of wildlife, arranged for the enactment and revision of laws to strengthen the system

of legal guarantees for public health, and actively reached out to the public to clarify epidemic prevention and control laws in response to public concerns, among other actions.

Effective responses to major challenges and risks, as well as breakthroughs made, demonstrate that the people's congress system is vital and boasts enormous advantages.

"We must remain committed to upholding and improving the people's congress system, and constantly enrich its practical nature and contemporary relevance. By doing so, we can translate our institutional strengths into effective national governance and use the people's congress system to ensure that our nation's destiny remains firmly in the hands of our people," the report stated.

The Constitution's authority

As China's fundamental law, the Constitution represents the most concrete embodiment of the will of the Party and the people. In 2019, the NPC Standing Committee worked to ensure the full implementation of the Constitution in all aspects



Chairman Li Zhanshu (second from right) learns about the construction of local legislative liaison stations and outreach offices in Qingxiu district of Nanning, South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on July 12. *Li Tao*

of state governance.

Under the leadership of the CPC and in accordance with constitutional stipulations, the Standing Committee decided to confer national medals and titles of honor on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), with President Xi Jinping signing a presidential order.

The nation's highest honor was awarded to 36 prominent figures who have made outstanding achievements during the development of the PRC, as well as six foreigners who have contributed greatly to cooperation and exchange between China and other countries.

"It was the first time that a ceremony was held to award multiple national medals since the current Constitution went into effect," said Fan Peng, an NPC deputy from Gansu Province in northwest China, adding that he believed that the honor demonstrates the importance of forging social values by promoting heroes and goodness. It is also a vivid interpretation of the effective implementation of constitutional law and fully reflects constitutional authority.

On May 28 at its Third Session, the 13th NPC adopted the NPC Decision on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The decision, consisting of an introduction and seven articles, represents a major move to uphold and improve the system of institutions under the policy of One Country, Two Systems, maintain law-based governance in Hong Kong and protect the HKSAR's constitutional order as defined in the Constitution and the Basic Law that complements the fundamental interests of all Chinese people, including those in Hong Kong.

According to the report, the Standing Committee conducted inspections regarding constitutional compliance, and recorded and reviewed normative documents in accordance with the law.

A total of 1,995 administrative regulations, local statutes and judicial interpretations, and 33 local laws from special administrative regions (Hong Kong and Macau) were submitted for the record in 2019. The Standing Committee examined 138 suggestions on review work from citizens and organizations, the report said.

Through review, the Standing Committee compelled relevant bodies to correct 506 normative documents that conflicted with the Constitution or other laws, thus safeguarding the unity, sanctity and authority of the country's legal system.

Resolving people's concerns

According to the report, China's legislative work in the past year showed that since socialism with Chinese characteristics entered into a new era, the country's legislative work must meet the new requirements for the development of the cause of the Party and the state, uphold a people-centered philosophy and ensure that the Party's propositions are translated into the will of the state through legally stipulated procedures.

For instance, China enacted the Resource Tax Law, revised the Law on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution Caused by Solid Waste and the Forest Law, and formulated the Law on Promoting Basic Medical and Health Care, among others, demonstrating the country's constant efforts to legislate in a more well-conceived, democratic and law-based



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, delivers a work report of the 13th NPC Standing Committee at the Second Plenary of the Third Session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 25, 2020. Zhai Jianlan

manner.

Over the past year, the Standing Committee continued to exercise proper and effective oversight, and put the focus on ensuring that administrative, supervisory, judicial and procuratorial powers were exercised properly and in accordance with the law.

With a view to ensuring that the people benefit more fully and fairly from reform and development, the Standing Committee advanced oversight work on solving problems of immediate concern to the people in terms of environmental protection, education and the development of the cultural industry, among others.

Cao Liqiang, an NPC deputy from Shanghai, said that innovations have been made in oversight methods, with the effectiveness of the oversight mechanism constantly improved. For example, in terms of improving ecological protection, the Standing Committee combined inspections and special inquiries regarding the enforcement of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Water Pollution.

Performance of duties

NPC deputies are members of the highest organ of state power. By respecting the rights of its deputies, the Standing Committee shows respect for the rights of the people, and by ensuring that deputies lawfully perform their duties, it guarantees that the people remain masters of the country.

With this in mind, the Standing Committee formulated 35 measures for strengthening and improving work related to NPC deputies in an effort to support and guarantee the law-based performance of their duties.

In the past year, mechanisms for members of the Standing Committee to be in touch with deputies were improved, and special committees and working committees were encouraged to remain in closer contact with deputies.

“We improved mechanisms for deputies to participate in the work of the Standing Committee and special committees, with 74 participating in law enforcement inspections, 73 in budget review and oversight, and 298 in meetings of the Standing Committee in a non-voting capacity,” Li said.

Moreover, closer ties between deputies and the people were fostered. Local people’s congresses were encouraged to arrange for NPC deputies to attend activities organized by liaison offices and nearby local legislative offices.

According to the report, local people’s congresses at all levels have established 228,000 liaison offices, thereby setting up a platform covering both urban and rural areas that help deputies perform their duties by providing a foothold in local communities to foster closer communication with the people.

In addition, the Standing Committee organized research projects and inspection tours for 1,830 deputies, which resulted in 91 reports. It continued to channel training resources toward primary-level deputies and organized training programs over the year that drew more than 1,900 attendees. Total attendance in centralized training has surpassed 3,200 since the First Session of the 13th NPC in 2018, with essentially all primary-level deputies involved in study sessions on matters pertaining to their duties.



Chairman Li Zhanshu (center) presides over a symposium to hear NPC deputies’ opinions and suggestions on the draft work report of the NPC Standing Committee in Beijing on January 20. *Li Tao*

Yang Lianying, an NPC deputy from Yunnan Province in southwest China, said that the measures are in accordance with today’s reality and are very “down to earth.” ■

Main tasks for the coming months

Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress
Highlights Main Tasks Ahead in a Work Report
Delivered at the Third Session of the 13th National People’s Congress
May 25, 2020

In 2020, our Party will lead the people in fulfilling the first centenary goal. Facing a challenging and complex international environment as well as formidable tasks for advancing domestic reform and development and ensuring stability, the NPC must come to terms with numerous new developments and demands in its work. The Standing Committee must hold high the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and fully implement the guiding principles of the Party’s 19th National Congress and the second, third, and fourth plenary sessions of its 19th Central Committee. We must boost our awareness of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership. We must strengthen our confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must resolutely uphold General Secretary Xi Jinping’s core position on the Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, and resolutely uphold the Central Committee’s authority and centralized, unified leadership. We must uphold the unity between the leadership of the Party, the position of the people as masters of

the country, and law-based governance. We must focus our work on modernizing China’s governance system and capacity for governance, on coordinating efforts to implement the five-sphere integrated plan and the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, and on securing decisive success in our efforts to win the fight against poverty and build a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We must support the coordinated advancement of epidemic prevention and control and economic and social development, remain committed to the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability, carry out our duties and functions in accordance with the law, and strive to make new progress in our work.

Since the start of this year, all work of the Standing Committee has proceeded in an orderly fashion in accordance with the Central Committee’s overall plans. In the coming months, we will focus our efforts on the following main tasks:

First, ensuring full enforcement of the Constitution. We will see that procedures and mechanisms for interpreting the Constitution are well implemented, and make progress in constitutional compliance inspection. We will build up our system and capacity for recording and reviewing normative documents, rigorously implement the Measures for Recording and Review of Regulations and Judicial Inter-

pretations, enhance the functions of the national digital platform for recording and reviewing these documents, and take greater initiative to conduct general reviews and targeted reviews. We will promote public awareness of the Constitution, and organize pledges of allegiance to the Constitution and activities for National Constitution Day. Remaining committed to upholding law-based governance in Hong Kong and Macao, we will work to safeguard constitutional order in the two special administrative regions as stipulated in China's Constitution and the basic laws, refine the system for interpreting the basic laws by the NPC Standing Committee, establish a sound legal system and effective enforcement mechanisms at the national level for safeguarding national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and accelerate related legislative initiatives. We will maintain our principles and policies on work related to Taiwan, uphold the one-China principle, resolutely oppose and restrict separatist forces seeking "Taiwan Independence," and promote the peaceful development of cross-strait relations on the basis of the 1992 Consensus.

Second, strengthening legislative work in key areas. Facing extremely onerous tasks on the legislative agenda this year, we must balance quality and efficiency, give better play to the leading role of people's congresses in legislation, endeavor to make our legislation more thoughtfully designed and precisely targeted, and follow through with every piece of legislation put forward. To promote high-quality development, we will formulate the Yangtze River Conservation Law, the Law on Promoting Rural Vitalization, the Futures Law, and the Hainan Free Trade Port Law, and revise the Patent

Law. To improve systems for ensuring people's wellbeing, we will prioritize legislation on public health. We will revise the Law on Animal Epidemic Prevention, the Wildlife Protection Law, the Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law, the Emergency Response Law, and the Vocational Education Law, and formulate the Social Assistance Law, the Law on Support for Veterans. In the realms of national security and social governance, we will formulate the Bio-Security Law, the Law on Protection of Personal Information, and the Data Security Law, pass Amendment XI to the Criminal Law, and revise the Administrative Penalty Law, the Law on Administrative Review, the Public Security Management Penalty Law, and the Law on the People's Armed Police Force. To accelerate the creation of a system of laws for extraterritorial application, we will formulate the Export Control Law and revise the Anti-Money Laundering Law, the Law on the People's Bank of China, the Law on Commercial Banks, and the Insurance Law. To improve the system of institutions through which the people exercise their role as masters of the country, we will revise the Organic Law of the NPC, the NPC's procedural rules, the Electoral Law, and the National Flag Law. We will work to effectively publicize and enforce the Civil Code. In response to the need to deepen reforms on all fronts, we will ensure that legislative work relating to decisions regarding authorizations and reforms is well executed. All in all, we will endeavor to accomplish the major legislative tasks set by the CPC Central Committee and those with a bearing on overall economic and social development.

Third, exercising oversight in accordance with the



392 deputies to the 13th National People's Congress attend the eighth study courses in Shanghai from July 5 to 8, 2019. Su Dongyang

law. We will improve oversight systems and mechanisms to ensure full implementation of the CPC Central Committee's decisions and plans and effective enforcement of the Constitution and the law. We have put 29 oversight tasks on our agenda centered on major Party and state work plans. Focusing on issues including building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, making progress in the three critical battles against poverty, pollution, and potential risk, taking effective steps to stabilize employment, the financial sector, foreign trade, foreign investment, domestic investment, and expectations, and implementing tasks to maintain job security, basic living needs, operations of market entities, food and energy security, stable industrial and supply chains, and the normal functioning of county-level governments, we will hear and deliberate 16 work reports on topics such as implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy, and further intensify the review and oversight of government budgets and final accounts and the oversight over the management of state-owned assets. We will review the decisions made by the Standing Committee and the enforcement of six laws, including the Wildlife Protection Law, the Law on the Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution, the Charity Law, the Anti-Unfair Competition Law, the Law on Guaranteeing Public Cultural Services, and the Law on Promoting Agricultural Mechanization. We will conduct special inquiries on prevention and control of soil pollution and the rectification of prominent problems discovered through audit, and launch five research projects on issues including compilation of the 14th Five-Year Plan, activities to foster ethnic unity and progress, and reform of the social insurance system. Our decisive success this year in winning the fight against poverty and building a moderately prosperous society in all respects will go down in the history of the Chinese nation and the history of all humanity. The Standing Committee must focus its oversight work on these grand strategies, and contribute to completing the first centenary goal on schedule.

Fourth, supporting deputies in performing their duties in accordance with the law. We will improve systems for maintaining contact with deputies, implement specific measures for strengthening and improving work related to NPC deputies, and maintain good communication between the Standing Committee and deputies and between deputies and the public. We will help deputies pursue self-improvement, enhance their theoretical competence, and foster political integrity, so that they can better perform their duties. We will do a better job at receiving, handling and giving feedback on proposals and suggestions put forward by deputies, implement mechanisms for responding to and resolving the issues raised in their suggestions, and tighten follow-up oversight. We will expand and improve deputies' participation in the work of the Standing Committee, special committees, and working bodies of the NPC Standing Committee, earnestly solicit their input, and act on their advice when appropriate. We will coordinate inspection and research activities for deputies, and provide them with more targeted and effective study and training programs. We will also move faster to establish digital platforms for deputies to perform their duties.

Fifth, actively carrying out work on international exchanges. We will leverage our unique strengths with regard to foreign exchanges, and serve the overall diplomatic



On June 28, 2019, the 11th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) held a joint inquiry into a report on the enforcement of the Law on Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. Cai Zhongguang, a deputy to the 13th NPC, asks questions. Ma Zengke

work of the Party and the state. We will enhance high-level exchanges, and let NPC special committees, bilateral friendship groups, and working bodies of the Standing Committee play an active role in international exchanges. We will also steadily advance mechanism-based exchanges, actively participate in multilateral cooperation between parliamentary bodies, and strengthen exchanges on legislation in the public health sector, thereby growing China's relationships with other countries and boosting pragmatic cooperation across all fields.

Sixth, enhancing self-improvement of the Standing Committee. We will consolidate and further the outcomes of the educational campaign on the theme of staying true to the Party's founding mission, and thoroughly study and implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. We will earnestly execute the CPC Central Committee's eight-point decision on conduct and the detailed rules for its implementation, improve our conduct in our work, maintain close ties with the people, and carry out in-depth research. We will refine our deliberation procedures and working mechanisms. We will step up theoretical research on the people's congress system, and perform better on press-related work and public communications. We will give full play to the role of the special committees of the NPC, and take solid steps to develop its administrative bodies. In the interest of implementing the CPC Central Committee's major policies, decisions, and plans, we will strengthen contact with local people's congresses and enhance the effectiveness of our work overall.

We are now at the cusp of achieving the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, with the bright prospect of national rejuvenation spurring us forward. Let us rally closely around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, unite and forge ahead with great determination, make diligent efforts to live up to the great trust that has been placed in us, and work hard to uphold and improve the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, modernize China's governance system and capacity for governance, achieve the two Centenary Goals, and realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation! ■

China to advance modernization of judicial system

By Jiang Zhuqing

People's courts at various levels in China will further advance the modernization of the judicial system and its capacity, according to the work report by the Supreme People's Court (SPC) submitted on May 25 to the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress.

Reforms of the judicial accountability system and civil proceedings will be deepened, said the report, while efforts will be made to advance the building of smart courts and internet-based judicial work.

China has pushed forward judicial openness, livestreaming 6.96 million court trials, with 23.7 billion views, statistics showed.

As of April, 91.95 million written judgments had been published on the official website China Judgments Online and the judicial process information of about 29 million cases was released online to parties involved, said the report.

The annual work report was given by SPC Chief Justice Zhou Qiang, and showed how China tackled the most patent disputes in the world within the shortest trial period. Some of the cases involved global internet and technology giants, including Apple, Qualcomm, Huawei and Samsung.

The World Intellectual Property Organization published judicial cases on intellectual property (IP) rights in China, showing that it hears the most IP cases, especially patent cases, and that it is one of the countries with the shortest trial cycle for such cases.

In 2019, Chinese courts concluded a total of 418,000 IP-related cases, giving stronger support to IP rights holders and enforcing punishments for violators, the report showed.

In addition, courts concluded 12,639 cases related to gang

crimes, involving a total of 83,912 people. Chinese procuratorial organs prosecuted 30,547 people for organizing, leading and participating in mafia-style gangs in 2019, up 194.8 percent year on year, said a report by the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP).

Procuratorial organs across the country prosecuted 11,003 people for crimes such as infringement on trademarks, patent rights, copyrights and trade secrets, up 32.2 percent year on year, according to the SPP report.

Moreover, China prosecuted 50,800 people in 2019 for environment-related crimes, including damaging the environment and smuggling waste, up 20.4 percent year on year, it said.

A total of 69,236 public interest litigations in the environmental domain were handled in 2019, up 16.7 percent, the SPC report stated.

Moreover, the number of people in China prosecuted for severe violent crimes, including homicide, rape and arson, among others, dropped by an average annual rate of 4.8 percent over the past two decades, it said. The figure plummeted from 162,000 in 1999 to 60,000 in 2019, reflecting China's continuously improving public security.

Thanks to a national-level IP court, difficult technical patent disputes have been solved more quickly and the quality of case hearings has also improved, Luo Dongchuan, an SPC vice president, said in an exclusive interview during this year's Two Sessions.

The IP court, which was opened in Beijing in January 2019, "has played a bigger role in protecting IP rights and has provided a solution with Chinese characteristics for handling complicated patent cases," Luo said. ■



Zhou Qiang, president of the Supreme People's Court (SPC), delivers the SPC work report at the Second Plenary of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 25. Yue Yuewei



Zhang Jun, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP), delivers the SPP work report at the Second Plenary of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 25. Yue Yuewei

China expects positive GDP growth despite pandemic impacts

Premier Li Keqiang said on May 28 that China is expected to achieve positive economic growth this year if security in six key areas is ensured.

The six areas refer to job security, basic living needs, operations of market entities, food and energy security, stable industrial and supply chains, and the normal functioning of primary-level governments.

Li highlighted efforts to maintain security in the first three areas while addressing a news conference after the conclusion of the annual National People's Congress session.

China has set no specific target for economic growth this year due to great uncertainties. Instead, it has made practical plans to ensure more than 9 million new urban jobs, give full play to over 100 million market entities, and improve people's livelihoods.

Vitality and wellbeing

Not setting a specific GDP growth target does not mean that economic development is not important, Li said. "Our decision is designed so that economic development delivers more real gains to our people and to pursue higher quality development."

The policies and measures will provide vital relief to businesses and revitalize the markets, with a particular focus on maintaining jobs and protecting people's livelihoods, as opposed to undertaking large infrastructure construction projects, he said.

"This is due to the fact that major changes have taken place in China's economic structure, with consumption becoming the primary growth driver and micro, small and medium-sized companies providing over 90 percent of all jobs in China today," said the premier.

Li added that money invested in the people will be able to generate new wealth, help protect and preserve tax sources, and make public finance more sustainable.

"We will do our utmost to keep China's economic growth stable, while at the same time we must ensure that all measures taken are well calibrated," he said.

Outmaneuvering difficulties

COVID-19 has taken a heavy toll on the global economy in a way rarely seen before, Li said. "Since China's economy has become deeply integrated into the global economy, it is simply impossible for it to stay immune to the impact."

The country will implement targeted measures instead of massive stimulus to boost economic growth, Li said. "We have repeatedly said that we will not flush the Chinese economy with liquidity. We didn't do it before and we won't do it now."



Journalists attend a press conference given by Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing, where he took questions from reporters via video link after the closing of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress on May 28. *Liu Jinhai*

"Just as water is important to fish farming, sufficient liquidity is important to economic development," Li said. "But excessive liquidity will induce froth in the marketplace where some people may attempt to muddy the waters and fish for arbitrage."

The country reserves policy space on the fiscal, financial and social security fronts, among others, and is in a strong position to quickly introduce new measures should the situation call for it, Li said.

China will be able to fulfill its tasks and goals for the year and complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, he said.

Big open market

Keeping China's economic fundamentals stable will contribute to the entire world, and the country will remain a positive force driving global economic recovery and growth, Li said.

It is impossible for any country to achieve further development with its doors closed, therefore, China will keep to its opening-up policy and will not waver in this commitment, he said.

In addition, China, a huge market for the world, is prepared to boost imports, Li said, noting that measures to provide relief and revitalize the market are expected to further spur consumption.

To facilitate foreign investment, China will further implement the foreign investment law, shorten the negative list for foreign investment, further open up the service sector and improve the business environment.

"We hope that people will stay optimistic about investing in this big market," he said. (Xinhua) ■



Journalists attend a press conference given by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing via video link on May 24. *Xing Guangli*

Calling for international cooperation to tide over darkest hours

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi underlined the significance of international cooperation and solidarity in fighting COVID-19 on May 25 to tide over the darkest hours.

At a press conference, Wang said that the novel coronavirus is the common enemy of humanity. "Cooperation and solidarity are the most powerful weapons to prevail over the epidemic," he stressed.

So far, the pandemic has claimed over 300,000 lives and

affected more than 7 billion people in over 210 countries and regions.

The fight against 'political virus'

However, the "political virus" created by some politicians who lose no chance to attack and smear China, is now spreading in the United States, Wang said on the sidelines of the annual National People's Congress session.

Some politicians have ignored basic facts and made up countless lies and conspiracy theories concerning China. Such lies have recently been compiled into a list and posted on the internet, he added.

"The longer the list, the more it says about how low the rumormongers are willing to go and the more stains they will leave on history," Wang said. His stern message came at a time when some US politicians have launched repeated attacks against China's epidemic response, unjustly blaming China for their own porous response, and filing unwarranted lawsuits for so-called compensation.

"I want to say here: Don't waste any more precious time, and don't ignore lives," Wang said, expressing sympathy for the United States, which has the highest number of infections of all countries. "We sincerely hope that the American people will get over the epidemic as soon as possible," he said.

Having claimed so many precious lives, COVID-19 serves as a stark reminder that countries must rise above differences in geography, race, history, culture and social system, Wang said.

Joint actions to reboot economy

As the pandemic batters the global economy, China called for cooperation and communication to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

The United States and China should begin coordinating and communicating about macro-policies as soon as possible to reduce the impact of the disease on both economies and the world economy, Wang said.

The global economy is projected to contract by 3 percent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, said the IMF in its World Economic Outlook in mid-April.

Wang called on countries to stand "shoulder to shoulder" and seek positive cycles of mutual success, dismissing narratives of a "an elimination race" where there is only one winner.

On Sino-Russian relations, Wang said China will stabilize cooperation in energy and step up collaboration with Russia in emerging sectors such as e-commerce, biomedicine and the cloud economy.

Regarding relations with Europe, Wang said the two sides will explore mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas of connectivity, environmental protection, the digital economy and artificial intelligence.

Hailing China-Japan-Republic of Korea cooperation as a model of virus combat, Wang advocated raising the level of regional economic cooperation by upholding free trade, cutting tariffs, opening up markets, and tapping new growth engines in health, intelligent manufacturing and 5G.

To help countries in Africa tackle the grim situation, China pledged to reduce debt obligations for African countries and provide further support to those countries in an extreme predicament, Wang said.

Confidence and determination

Guided by the notion of "a community with a shared future for humanity," China has mounted the largest global humanitarian operation in decades.

China has shipped medical supplies to nearly 150 countries

and four international organizations to meet their immediate needs. It has exported 56.8 billion masks and 250 million protective suits, among other material assistance.

"China is not a savior, but is willing to be a friend to those in need and a sincere partner," Wang said.

Though the virus is profoundly changing the world, it will not reverse the trend of globalization, nor will it undermine China's resolve in advancing international cooperation.

Responding to a question on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Wang said the impact of COVID-19 on BRI cooperation is "temporary and limited," and that it will eventually be strengthened.

During the past seven years, China's goods trade with BRI countries surpassed \$7.8 trillion and its direct investment in those countries was over \$110 billion.

"By aiming for high-standards, people-centered and sustainable progress, we will make the Belt and Road a model of development, cooperation and health for all engaged," he said.

"The darkest time will pass, the light is ahead," Wang said. (Xinhua) ■

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHINESE FM'S PRESS CONFERENCE
TWO SESSIONS 2020

COVID-19
The unwarranted lawsuits against China over COVID-19 have ZERO basis for fact, law or international precedence.
China is open to the international science community to identify the source of the virus.

WHO
The tendency of WHO reform should be to support WHO rather than weaken it.
Those who smear WHO will only end up getting themselves dirty.

Hong Kong
No external interference in Hong Kong affairs will be tolerated. HK's national security law will not affect the city's high degree of autonomy.

Taiwan
China urges the US not to make any attempt to challenge China's red line on the Taiwan question.

China-US
Some US political forces are hijacking China-US relations. Efforts should be made to stop the dangerous practice.

China-Russia
China and Russia have forged an impregnable fortress against the "political virus."

China-Japan-South Korea
China-Japan-South Korea joint epidemic response sets example for world.

China-Europe
China-Europe interaction should be positive cycle enabling mutual success.

China-Africa
China stands by Africa in fighting COVID-19 pandemic.

China-ASEAN
Each crisis makes China-ASEAN ties closer, cooperation deeper.

South China Sea
It is totally nonsense to claim that China is using COVID-19 to expand its presence in the South China Sea.

Korean Peninsula
North Korea has made positive moves in easing the tension on the Korean Peninsula, but received no tangible response from the US.

Afghanistan
US troops should retreat from the country appropriately without adding problems to other countries in the region.

GLOBAL TIMES Editor and Graphics: Globaltimes.cn Source: Xinhua

Answering concerns, sharing stories

Corridor interviews during the annual session of the 13th NPC enable the general public to pick the brains of attendees on national issues

By Lu Yan

Before sharing his story during a live broadcast of a corridor interview at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Luo Jie, a National People's Congress (NPC) deputy, had been fighting COVID-19 on the frontline for months in one of the hardest hit areas in China.

The 53-year-old president of Taihe Hospital in Shiyan, Central China's Hubei Province, was in Beijing attending the annual session of the 13th NPC, China's top legislature, which opened on May 22.

Drawing on his professional experience, Luo offered suggestions concerning public health emergency response. Through arduous efforts, China has attained decisive results in the fight against COVID-19. Since the novel coronavirus is extremely dangerous, frontline doctors and nurses went all out to save every single life, Luo said.

More than 3,600 COVID-19 patients over the age of 80 have recovered in Hubei, seven of whom were centenarians, Luo told reporters. "We value every life with our whole heart." He also took the opportunity of the live broadcast to express his gratitude to those who have helped the people in Hubei.

"Tens of millions of people in Hubei will never forget the medical workers who came from across the country to save

lives day and night. We are also grateful for every mask and every protective suit sent from around the world," he said.

Luo was among about 3,000 national lawmakers and 2,000 political advisors who gathered in the capital for the Two Sessions, the annual sessions of the NPC and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the top political advisory body.

Responding to concerns

Corridor interviews got their name because they usually take place in corridors leading to the main hall of the Great Hall of the People before or after plenary meetings of the NPC and the National Committee of the CPPCC.

Although this year's Two Sessions were shortened, lawmakers and political advisors still took questions from reporters on the sideline of the meetings, mostly via video link in light of the current COVID-19 epidemic.

Luo was joined by deputies from all walks of life – from primary-level community workers to janitors to lawyers and ministers. Their experiences offered a glimpse into how the country's lawmakers fulfill their duties as NPC deputies.

This year, six ministers were invited to answer reporters' questions on public concerns during two corridor interviews on May 22 and 25.

On foreign trade and capital, Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan told the press on May 25 that China will beef up efforts to maintain stable foreign trade and investment as the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a heavy blow to the world economy.

As foreign trade companies have encountered unprecedented difficulties caused by COVID-19, Chinese authorities have supported them with policies in taxation, financing, insurance, industrial chains and supply chains, Zhong said, adding that the country will work to energize foreign trade entities and further improve its business environment.

To ensure stable foreign trade, China will expand its opening up with such efforts as easing market access and shortening the negative list for foreign investment, Zhong said.

On the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Minister of Industry and Information Technology Miao Wei quoted this year's government work report, noting that all tax and fee reduction policies must be fully implemented for businesses so that they can sustain themselves and ensure success in the future.

In response to this year's epidemic prevention and control situation, the Central Government has introduced about 90



Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan gives an interview via video link after the Second Plenary of the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 25. Jin Liangkui



Deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) are interviewed via video link before the Second Plenary of the Third Session of the 13th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 25. *Jin Liangkui*

policies on finance, taxation, social security and energy use, among others, greatly facilitating the development of SMEs and helping them overcome immediate difficulties, Miao said.

Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu vowed that China will not relax its environmental protection in the next five years. "We will not lower requirements on ecological and environmental protection in the face of difficulties, nor will we loosen environmental supervision or thresholds," he said. "We will continue to improve ecological and environmental quality by reducing pollutant emissions and vigorously promoting ecological protection and restoration,"

Finance Minister Liu Kun said that there's still room for the Ministry of Finance to limit government spending, with Central Government spending further reduced and non-emergency and discretionary expenditures cut by more than 50 percent. But he assured that the normal operations of government organs will not be affected.

"The government should be thrifty and make sure the people can live a well-off life," Liu said, adding that China will increase the scale of its fiscal deficit to provide more subsidies and tax reductions to the business sector in order to offset the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy.

According to official statistics, China's annual amount of tax and fee cuts in 2019 totaled 2.36 trillion yuan (\$330 billion). The country aims to reduce the corporate burden by more than 2.5 trillion yuan (\$353 billion) this year, Liu said.

Responsibilities fulfilled

Shi Liping, an NPC deputy of the Miao ethnic group in Southwest China's Guizhou Province, has always regarded the national campaign to fight poverty as her priority concern, especially as China makes its final push toward poverty

elimination and the completion of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the end of this year against the backdrop of epidemic prevention and control becoming a regular practice.

A folk craftsperson of the traditional Miao embroidery, Shi said the craft has created jobs for half a million Miao women. In addition, statistics showed that Guizhou relocated 1.88 million people from inhospitable areas in 2019. "We have built 100 anti-poverty Miao embroidery workshops in the re-settlement sites," Shi said.

NPC deputy Zhu Guoping, a community worker in Shanghai, shared her experience of getting local residents involved in contributing to law revision. "I made my cellphone number public to the residents and led my colleagues on door-to-door visits to listen to their voices and help them solve problems," Zhu said in front of the camera.

According to Zhu, her community has participated in the revision of 35 laws, including laws on domestic violence and protection of minors, with 610 opinions provided.

During China's annual legislative session, national lawmakers deliberated on a draft civil code, which was later approved and is expected to further improve China's basic legal system and rules of conduct in the civil and commercial fields. In addition to a general provision and a supplementary provision, the 1,260-article draft has six parts on property, contracts, personality rights, marriage and family, inheritance and tort liabilities.

The draft was prepared after extensive suggestions were solicited from the public. Xiao Shengfang, an NPC deputy and head of the Guangdong Lawyers Association, made 170 suggestions on revisions since 2014, when the decision to compile the civil code was announced.

Considered "an encyclopedia on social life," the civil code concerns every aspect of people's lives, Xiao said. "I'm glad that some of my suggestions were accepted." ■

Law on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong adopted



Chinese lawmakers voted on June 30 to adopt the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The law was passed unanimously at the 20th session of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC). President Xi Jinping signed a presidential order to promulgate the law, which went into effect on the same day.

With 66 articles divided into six chapters, the law clearly defines the duties and government bodies of the HKSAR for safeguarding national security. It also outlines four categories of offenses, namely secession, subversion, terrorist activities and collusion with a foreign country or external forces to endanger national security, and their corresponding penalties.

According to the law, the Central Government will set up

an office in the HKSAR for safeguarding national security. The HKSAR will establish a committee for safeguarding national security, which is under the supervision of and accountable to the Central Government. The committee, to be chaired by the HKSAR chief executive, will have a national security adviser designated by the Central Government. The Hong Kong police force will also set up a department for safeguarding national security, according to the law.

After the law was passed, the NPC Standing Committee consulted with its HKSAR Basic Law Committee and the HKSAR government and adopted by a unanimous vote on the afternoon of June 30, a decision to list the law in Annex III of the HKSAR Basic Law.

The newly-adopted decision stipulates that the law shall be applied locally in the HKSAR by way of promulgation by the region. The law went into effect in Hong Kong at 11:00 pm on June 30, upon its promulgation by the HKSAR gov-



Night view of Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong, South China on June 12. Wang Shen

ernment in the gazette.

HKSAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam said in a statement that the HKSAR government welcomes the passage of the law. "I am confident that after the implementation of the national security law, the social unrest which has troubled the people of Hong Kong for nearly a year will be eased and stability will be restored, thereby enabling Hong Kong to start anew, focus on economic development and improve people's livelihood," she said.

Wide support

The law came after prolonged social unrest and escalating street violence plunged Hong Kong into the gravest situation since its return to the motherland in 1997. Rampant activities carried out by "Hong Kong independence" organizations and violent radicals as well as blatant interference by external forces have disrupted Hong Kong residents' daily life and threatened their safety.

Addressing the closing meeting of the NPC Standing Committee session, Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said the unanimous passage of the law and the decision reflected the common will of the Chinese people including Hong Kong compatriots.

Stressing that national security, social stability and the

"I am confident that, the social unrest which has troubled the people of Hong Kong for nearly a year will be eased and stability will be restored,"



Hong Kong residents celebrate the passage of the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region at Causeway Bay, Hong Kong in South China on June 30. Wang Shen



The National People's Congress voted on June 30 to pass the law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. *Liu Weibing*

order of the rule of law are the premises for the development of Hong Kong, Li said the legislation represents the aspirations of the people and an irresistible trend of the times.

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council voiced firm support for the law in a statement, calling it a “milestone” event that will usher in a turning point for Hong Kong to end chaos and bring back order.

In a separate statement, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR said the promulgation and implementation of the law on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland is an event worth celebrating for all Chinese people, including Hong Kong compatriots.

Nearly 2.93 million Hong Kong residents signed a petition earlier in support of the national security legislation during an eight-day campaign that began on May 24.

Sword and guardian

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council said in its statement that for a tiny number of people endangering national security, the law will be a “sharp sword” hanging over their heads.

But for the vast majority of Hong Kong residents, including foreigners, the law will be a “guardian” that protects

“The social unrest which has troubled the people of Hong Kong for nearly a year will be eased and stability will be restored,”

their rights, freedom and peaceful life, said the office.

According to the law, people convicted of national security crimes could face up to life imprisonment. Convicted criminals will be disqualified from running for public office, while people in public office who are found guilty of national security crimes will be removed from their posts.

The law will apply to acts committed after it goes into force for the purpose of conviction and imposition of punishment, according to its provisions.

Upon promulgation, the law will resolutely and effectively safeguard national security and ensure that the One Country, Two Systems cause is steered in the right direction, said top legislator Li Zhanshu.

The law will vigorously uphold the constitutional order and the order of the rule of law in the HKSAR, forestall and deter external interference, and safeguard Hong Kong's fundamental, long-term and current interests, he said. (Xinhua) ■

NPC adopts decision to create national security law for Hong Kong

China adopted Hong Kong national security laws after a related decision was adopted during the national legislature session on May 28. The decision allows the Central Government's national security organs to set up agencies in Hong Kong as needed.

Deputies to the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) voted overwhelmingly to approve the decision at the closing meeting of the NPC annual session. Rounds of applause erupted in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing when the decision was passed.

The NPC Decision on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to Safeguard National Security consists of an introduction and seven articles.

The decision was made to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, uphold and improve the One Country, Two Systems policy, safeguard Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, and guarantee the legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong residents, the introduction states.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said the decision "serves the fundamental interests of all Chinese people including Hong Kong compatriots."

HKSAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam welcomed the move and said the HKSAR government will fully cooperate with the NPC Standing Committee to complete relevant legislation as soon as possible.

National security like air

The legislative move came after prolonged social unrest and escalating street violence plunged Hong Kong into the gravest situation since its return to the motherland in 1997.

Hong Kong witnessed rampant activities carried out by "Hong Kong independence" organizations and violent radicals as well as blatant interference by external forces.

Presenting the draft to the NPC, senior legislator Wang Chen said increased notable national security risks in Hong Kong have become a prominent problem.

There are apparent "weak links" in Hong Kong's existing legal system and enforcement mechanisms in safeguarding national security, said Wang, Vice Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee.

Efforts must be made at the state level to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security, he said.

"National security is like air. Without it, no one can survive," said Witman Hung, an NPC deputy from the HKSAR. "The NPC decision comes at the right time."

Purview of central authorities

Alan Hoo, Chairman of the Basic Law Institute in Hong Kong, said national security legislation is a state legislative power whether a country has a unitary or federal system. National security laws can be found in both common law and continental law systems. Hong Kong, he said, cannot remain unguarded.

In an online article on the issue, Secretary for Justice of the HKSAR government Teresa Cheng said national security is a matter of national interest that concerns the whole population of China and falls squarely within the purview of the central authorities.

Cheng stressed that it is fundamental to recognize that the

central authorities hold the ultimate responsibility for national security in all local administrative regions.

Tiny number of 'troublemakers' targeted

The decision states that the country will prevent, stop and punish acts and activities endangering national security. The country will also resolutely oppose the interference in Hong Kong affairs by any foreign or external forces in any form and will take necessary countermeasures.

Tam Yiu-chung, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, said the legislation does not target ordinary Hong Kong residents but "a tiny number" of people suspected of endangering national security.

Illegal activities particularly mentioned include splitting the country, subverting state power, organizing and carrying out terrorist activities, as well as foreign and external forces interfering in Hong Kong affairs.

The law-based freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly enjoyed by Hong Kong residents will not be disturbed, their daily lives will not be affected, and their property will continue to be protected, Tam said.

One Country, Two Systems unchanged

Under One Country, Two Systems, Hong Kong, as a special administrative region of China, has a high degree of autonomy and retains its own capitalist system and lifestyle.

Speaking to the press after the legislative session, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said One Country, Two Systems is China's basic state policy and the decision is designed for its steady implementation.

Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority Eddie Yue said the legislation will not bring any change to the fundamentals of Hong Kong's monetary and financial system.

The free flow of capital and free convertibility of the Hong Kong dollar will continue to be safeguarded by the Basic Law of the HKSAR, Yue said.

In addition, the legislation will not change Hong Kong's legal system. "Under the Basic Law, judicial independence is guaranteed, and this will continue as before," said Grenville Cross, former director of public prosecutions of Hong Kong. (Xinhua)



The Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress opens in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 22. Liu Weibing

One Country, Two Systems policy safeguards Hong Kong's prosperity and stability

NPC Legislative Affairs Commission spokesperson elaborates on the HKSAR national security law

By Jiang Zhuqing

China's top lawmakers voted unanimously to enact a draft law to safeguard national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) at the 20th session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee on June 30. President Xi Jinping signed a presidential order issuing the law.

The decision was made at a three-day session of China's top legislature, which emphasized improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR, while maintaining its high degree of autonomy under the principle of One Country, Two Systems.

The legislation, which defines the specific criminal activities that threaten national security, is reasonable, necessary and in line with the Constitution, according to some Hong Kong deputies to the NPC. It is also justified because its political and legal legitimacy can stand the test of time, and won't change the way people live in Hong Kong or deprive the legitimate rights they enjoy under the One Country, Two Systems policy and the Basic Law, observers said.

The law was included in the Annex III of the Basic Law of the HKSAR, took effect on June 30 at 11:00 pm and gives detailed descriptions of four categories of crimes and penalties, namely acts of secession, subversion of state power, terrorist activities and collusion with foreign or external forces to endanger national security, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Under the law, the Central Government will establish a National Security Office in HKSAR to deal with national security affairs. The office will have ultimate juridical power, the "final say" on national security-related cases and absolute law enforcement power during times of urgency and necessity.

The legislation serves as a guardian of prosperity and stability in Hong Kong by plugging loopholes in its legal system, said Shen Chunyao, director of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, at a press conference on July 1.

"The law can effectively protect national security, and prevent and punish crimes that endanger national security in relation to the HKSAR," said Shen. "It effectively stops the loopholes in the HKSAR in relation to establishing a framework to protect national security."

The legislation serves as a guardian of prosperity and stability in Hong Kong by plugging loopholes in its legal system.

Upholding One Country, Two Systems

Enforcement of the law is of far-reaching significance to upholding and improving the One Country, Two Systems policy, Shen noted, adding that it is also important to ensure national sovereignty and security, as well as Hong Kong's long-term stability and prosperity.

Officials said the law is an important step in taking corrective action regarding the unrest in the HKSAR, dismissing allegations from some countries that insist on interfering in China's internal affairs.

The law is a landmark for upholding and improving the institutional framework of the One Country, Two Systems under new circumstances. It will effectively safeguard national security, lasting peace, stability and prosperity in Hong Kong, and ensure the steady and sustained development of the cause of the One Country, Two Systems in Hong Kong.

Central Government's jurisdiction

Judicial independence means that judges are not subject to any interference while hearing cases, but the jurisdiction and trial rights of the courts will be subject to review, said Zhang Yong, a vice director of the Legislative Affairs Commission, at a symposium held in Hong Kong on June 23, in response to a question about whether the national security law affects judicial independence.

Hong Kong's capability and means to maintain national security are limited, particularly when it comes to foreign or external forces, as well as complex factors such as national defense, Zhang said. In some cases only the Central Government has the power and the capability to manage this, so it is necessary for it to retain jurisdiction to prevent serious consequences due to Hong Kong local government's inability to perform its duties.



Hong Kong residents sing the national anthem at The Peak Galleria. Wu Xiaochu

If Hong Kong effectively assumes its responsibility for maintaining national security, there is no need for the Central Government to exercise its jurisdiction, he added.

The Central Government reserves the right of jurisdiction to avoid unrest that endangers the country, and it is up to the NPC Standing Committee to decide on the most extreme circumstances where a state of emergency may be declared in Hong Kong, Zhang said.

Regarding the disputes over trials by judges in national security cases, Zhang said that many judges in Hong Kong have foreign passports and that there is no one-size-fits-all ban on these judges on hearing such cases. It will take into account the actual situation in Hong Kong, while at the same time the appointment of judges to handle national security cases by the chief executive will avoid the dual loyalty of the judges and will not affect judicial independence.

Such a legal arrangement mirrors the Central Government's respect for Hong Kong's common law system. The legislation, which does not seek to punish those who have previously uttered questionable words and conducted separatist deeds, shows the Central Government's thoughtful consideration Hong Kong. Observers believe the arrangement will reassure and encourage local residents to look forward rather than getting stuck in the past.

Any judge who has endangered national security through words and deeds shall not hear cases related to national security, the law notes. And the appointment of a designated judge shall be terminated if he or she is involved in acts and speeches that endanger national security. Judges appointed to handle national security cases have a one-year tenure.

Trials shall be conducted in public, according to the law, however if it is inappropriate for public hearings in cases involving state secrets or public order, the press and the public will be prohibited from observing all or part of the proceedings, but decisions shall be announced publicly, the law states.

The law is already proving to be a powerful deterrent, leading some infamous secessionist leaders in Hong Kong such as Joshua Wong, Nathan Law and Agnes Chow to announce their withdrawal from their anti-government group hours before the legislation was officially enacted. Demosisto, an organization founded in 2016 to conduct secessionist work, also announced it was disbanding its headquarters and members in Hong Kong.

During the annual sessions of the NPC and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the top political advisory body, held in May, many national lawmakers and political advisors proposed that the NPC Standing Committee formulate relevant laws for the HKSAR to safeguard national security in accordance with the new law as soon as possible, advance relevant institutional building and ensure the effective implementation of relevant laws in the HKSAR.

The decision adopted by China's top legislature on the national security law for Hong Kong fully embodies the aspirations of NPC deputies, said Zang Tiewei, a spokesperson of the Legislative Affairs Commission, on May 28.

It also reflects the common will and fundamental interests of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, including Hong Kong compatriots, he added.

"The decision is significant in upholding and improving the One Country, Two Systems institutional policy, safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, maintaining Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, as well as protecting the legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong compatriots," Zang said. He urged all state organs, localities and sectors, including the HKSAR, to earnestly implement the law.

"Moving forward, the NPC Standing Committee will do its job to develop relevant legislation, unwaveringly implement the requirements and spirit of China's Constitution, the Basic Law of the HKSAR and the NPC decision, and ensure the steady and enduring growth of the cause of One Country, Two Systems," he added.

Rebuilding trust

The law states that the Committee for Safeguarding the National Security of the HKSAR, led by the Chief Executive of the HKSAR government, will not be within the scope of judicial review, while no organization, institution or personnel will interfere in its work, which will remain undisclosed.

The law established by China's top authority is deemed a state act, which can't be constrained by local laws in Hong Kong. Similarly, local authorities in Hong Kong do not have jurisdiction over Central Government agencies and can't legally challenge them, according to experts.

However, local legislation in the HKSAR requires those who take part in election campaigns in the region to take an oath of allegiance to the HKSAR and the Basic Law, which is further clarified in the new law. ■

Doctors on the frontline of the COVID-19 battle bring proposals to Two Sessions

By Yuan Yuan

Zhang Wei has fought two difficult battles in her career as a doctor. In 2003, she was selected to lead a team to combat the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in her hometown in Jiangxi Province in East China. Seventeen years later, she again served as the leader of a team of specialists fighting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the province.

President of the First Affiliated Hospital of Nanchang University in Jiangxi, Zhang is also a deputy to the National People's Congress (NPC). "This pandemic is more severe than the SARS one in 2003," Zhang said. "But our country is more experienced this time in dealing with these situations."

Deputies from the frontline of the battle were ready with their prevention and control proposals.

Acting quickly

When the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Hubei Province in central China detected cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in late December 2019, the National Health Commission (NHC) sent a working group



Zhang Wei (first from left), president of the First Affiliated Hospital of Nanchang University in Jiangxi Province and deputy to the National People's Congress, talks with a discharged patient outside the hospital on January 27. Peng Zhaozhi

and an expert team to the city to evaluate the response and conduct onsite investigations on December 31.

Two days later, the NHC came up with a set of guidelines on early detection, diagnosis and quarantine for the prevention and control of the viral pneumonia.

For Zhang, her previous experience with SARS made her more alert to the situation. In early January, she organized a team of experts at the hospital and after the NHC unveiled the first set of guidelines, launched an emergency plan for prevention and control.

She also submitted more than 10 suggestions to the province including setting up designated hospitals at provincial, prefectural and county levels. She recommended that for patients with severe symptoms, hospitals tailor treatment plans to each patient's condition and organize a medical team to monitor them. All her suggestions were adopted.

In addition, she submitted five suggestions to the NPC, including setting up public healthcare clinical centers and enhancing the combination of treatment and nursing care. "After going through SARS and COVID-19, every province, municipality and region should set up a public healthcare clinical center," Zhang said. "It can help us explore abnormal symptoms in advance and get ready ahead of time."

Public healthcare clinical centers can both serve during epidemics and normal times. "They perform functions such as infectious disease diagnosis and treatment, public health education and medical material reserve," Zhang said. "During an epidemic, they can carry out emergency treatment and scientific research."

Taking precautions

Hu Yu, president of Wuhan Union Hospital affiliated with the Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, had many similar ideas after fighting on the frontline for over 50 days.

In a provincial capital like Wuhan, there were not enough infectious disease hospitals to deal with the magni-

tude of the outbreak. Wuhan Union Hospital took the lead by opening a 24-hour fever outpatient service, since fever detection is an important part of screening for infectious diseases. On its first day, it received about 50 patients, but the number increased rapidly in the following days, creating long lines and extremely crowded conditions on a daily basis.

The hospital had to expand the area fivefold, and even then, it was still overloaded. At the peak of the epidemic, it received nearly 1,000 patients a day. The isolation ward also had to be expanded from one floor to three, yet still the number of beds couldn't meet the demand of the surging amount of confirmed cases.

"In the initial stage of the epidemic, we took some time to adapt ourselves to the situation," Hu said. He proposed that some hospitals enhance their technical force to treat patients with severe symptoms and strengthen the construction of comprehensive intensive care units. The extreme shortage of materials in the early stage also indicated that some adjustments need to be made in advance and preparedness for epidemic control is vital.

Hu suggested that hospitals set up branches in suburban areas which can receive patients with infectious diseases in emergency cases. Wuhan Union adjusted its construction design for a new branch in suburban Wuhan, which is now under construction. A new building specifically for infectious diseases has been added, thus the branch can better cope with future emergencies.

In addition, makeshift hospitals played an important role in accepting patients with minor symptoms, which gave Hu more inspiration. "Since venues such as stadiums were not designed for this purpose, in the beginning it took time to modify their functions to meet the medical demand," he said. "In the future, stadiums and classrooms can take this into consideration when designing their layout."

Hu has also shared his experiences and ideas with peers in foreign countries on video conferences. "Our country gives top priority to people's lives and covering medical costs for every patient," he said. "The government has also adopted a series of measures to ensure all these efforts are consolidated."

On March 5, the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council unveiled a guideline on deepening the reform of the insurance system. The goal of the reform is to set up a medical security system by 2030 that centers on basic medical insurance and is underpinned by medical aid.

A notice released by the NHC on May 13 included some of the rehabilitation therapies, including psychological treatment, in the chronic and idiopathic disease medical insurance catalog. As of May 20, many provinces had announced they would include nucleic acid test in medical insurance.

Creating resources

Yang Linhua, a deputy to the NPC and a doctor with the Second Hospital of Shanxi Medical University, said there are many opportunities for improvement through training. She said official figures showed that at the end of 2018, the number of certified doctors for every 1,000 people was 2.59 on average, while in developed countries the number is more than four.

The shortage was felt even more deeply during the epidemic. "Some of our doctors were sent to support Wuhan, some were sent to support other hospitals in our province," Yang said. "Only a third of the doctors remained in our hospital." Educational institutions are responding to the problem. This year, Shanxi Medical University is planning to enroll more postgraduate students to boost the number of future doctors.

Moreover, patients with other diseases were unable to get regular treatment, especially people with chronic diseases, while medical staff was sent elsewhere. "We should also make allowances for these patients to ensure they get timely treatment," Yang added.

In 2019, she set up a training base for rural doctors in Wuxiang County, Changzhi in Shanxi. During the epidemic, Yang and over 100 of these doctors launched medical services via WeChat, helping many locals with medical issues.

In 2012, Shanxi set up a remote consultation center at the Second Hospital, which played a key role in offering services to patients that couldn't manage to get to the hospital during the epidemic.

Currently, many hospitals in China have remote consultation centers, but some haven't played their due role. Yang suggested the NHC take more measures to activate these centers to benefit more people.

"Facilities in many hospitals have been updated but have not been put into full use," Xie said. "The cultivation of talent is of utmost importance now." (Beijing Review) ■

9,180 proposals handled by nearly 200 units with 9 priority topics

Deputies to the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC), China's national legislature, submitted a record high 9,180 proposals, according to data made public June 9.

A total of 472 proposals were on reforming the health-care system, while the number of proposals on epidemic prevention registered a 179-percent increase from last year, according to a meeting held on the handling of proposals, criticisms and opinions put forward by national lawmakers.

Wang Chen, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, urged everyone to follow a people-centered approach in handling the proposals, while addressing the meeting.

He lauded the high-quality proposals submitted by lawmakers and stressed the need to translate these proposals into concrete measures for deepening reform and advancing development.

The proposals will be handled by nearly 200 state organs and relevant departments. The NPC Standing Committee has set nine preliminarily priority topics, which are categorized into four aspects including improving the national public health emergency management system, and coordinating epidemic control and economic and social development. (Xinhua)

Immediately stop interfering in China's internal affairs

Top legislature strongly condemns US signing of bill on Xinjiang

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, on June 18 strongly condemned and resolutely opposed the signing of the so-called "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020" by the United States in disregard of stern representations from China.

The US move has grossly interfered in China's internal affairs and seriously violated international law and the basic norms governing international relations, the committee said in a statement.

To respect and protect human rights is an important principle set forth in China's Constitution and an important goal of China's endeavors to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects, according to the statement.

From 1990 to the end of 2016, thousands of terrorist attacks were launched in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Northwest China, causing substantial losses of innocent lives and damages of property, the statement noted.

The measures China has adopted to counter terrorism and extremism, including setting up vocational education and training centers, are in line with Chinese laws and the international community's shared expectations for counterterrorism, the statement said.

Over the past more than three years, not a single case of terrorist attack occurred in Xinjiang, which has, to the greatest extent, protected the rights to life of the 25 million people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, it noted.

"This is the best embodiment of respecting human rights, which has been endorsed by the Chinese people and widely supported by the international community," said the statement.

In the name of human rights, however, the United States has maliciously attacked China's counterterrorism and deradicalization efforts, attempting to destroy the favorable situation of stability and development in Xinjiang, according to the statement.

"It is a typical double standard on counterterrorism," it said.

Xinjiang affairs are part of China's internal affairs that brook no external interference, the statement said.

"We urge the US side to immediately stop its interference in China's internal affairs and its wrongdoings that have seriously damaged China-US relations," it said. (Xinhua)

NPC Foreign Affairs Committee rejects EU resolution linked to national security law

Spokesman of the National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee on June 20 strongly condemns and objects a resolution adopted on June 19 by the European Parliament.

The resolution calls for the European Union to bring China to the International Court of Justice in The Hague over China's decision to legislate a national security law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

You Wenze, spokesman of the National People's Congress Foreign Affairs Committee, said the resolution seriously distorted the facts and blatantly intervened in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs, under the pretext of protecting "human rights" and "Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy".

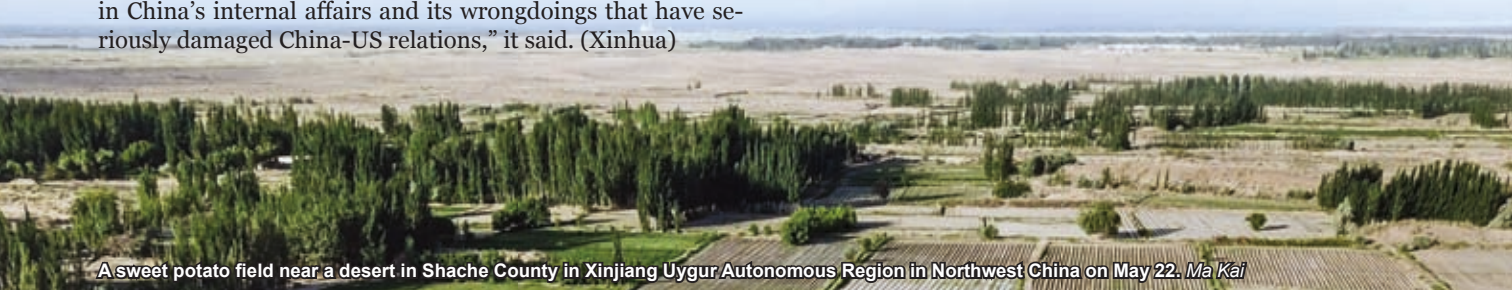
Since the unrest in Hong Kong in June last year, triggered by the amendment of the extradition bill, violent terrorist activities have been escalating, severely trampling the rule of law, social order, prosperity and stability, as well as the "One Country, Two Systems" principle in the region, You said.

In view of the grim situation faced by Hong Kong in safeguarding national security, the NPC Standing Committee, which is the country's highest legislation, has the right to establish and improve Hong Kong's legal system and enforcement mechanism to maintain national security from the state level, he said.

It aims to further improve the region's legal system, ensure the stability of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle and maintain Hong Kong's long-term prosperity, he added.

You said national security is closely related to sovereignty and territorial integrity and therefore is of the Central Government's concern in any country. China taking necessary measures to safeguard national security in accordance with the Constitution and Hong Kong Basic Law is part of the country's internal affairs and is in line with the Central Government's policy toward Hong Kong.

The legislation only targets very few acts that seriously endanger national security and will protect the legitimate rights and interests enjoyed by Hong Kong people. It will not restrict their human rights and freedoms or harm the region's high autonomy or "One Country, Two Systems" principle. (China Daily) ■



A sweet potato field near a desert in Shache County in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in Northwest China on May 22. Ma Kai



The Great Hall of the People, May 27. Xing Guangji

A nighttime photograph of Hangzhou, China. The scene is dominated by a large, ornate pagoda with multiple tiers and curved roofs, illuminated with warm yellow lights. In the foreground, a long, illuminated bridge with a traditional railing stretches across the frame. The background shows a body of water reflecting the lights, with a distant mountain range under a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

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