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President builds faith in rural revitalization

By AN BAIJIE
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President Xi Jinping's important speech on rural revitalization has boosted the confidence of the deputies to the National People's Congress and encouraged them to engage in the revitalizing agenda.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said on Thursday that the rural revitalization strategy is the leading agenda for government work on agriculture, rural areas and rural residents.

Local authorities should have a profound understand-

ing of the strategy's importance and necessity and implement it earnestly, Xi said as he joined a panel discussion with lawmakers from Shandong province at the top legislature's annual session.

Zhuo Changli, an NPC deputy for Shandong, said she was deeply impressed by Xi's famil-

ilarity with rural life and the living conditions of farmers.

"He knows everything about rural life, including farmland, plants, the differences in toilets in southern China and northern China, weather, folk customs and so on," said Zhuo, who is also the founder of a housekeeping

company called Sunshine Elder Sister in Jinan, the capital of Shandong.

"When General Secretary Xi talks about rural revitalization strategy, we people in the masses have always been in his heart," she added.

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Anti-graft results reflect resolve

By ZHANG YAN
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As part of the sweeping campaign against corruption since late 2012, 120 former officials at or above vice-ministerial level were investigated for graft in the past five years, compared with 30 in the previous five years, according to the top procuratorate.

A total of 254,419 officials were investigated for duty-related offenses, such as bribery or dereliction of duty, from 2013 to 2017, up by 16.4 percent compared with 2008 to 2012, Cao Jianming, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, said in a work report to the top legislature on Friday.

National lawmakers said the achievement reflects the central leadership's strong determination to eradicate corruption, and they are expecting that ongoing reform of the national supervision system will further consolidate anti-corruption efforts.

Among the "tigers" felled by the anti-graft campaign were Zhou Yongkang, a former member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee; Sun Zhengcai, former secretary of the Chongqing Municipal Committee of the CPC; and Ling Jihua and Su Rong, former vice-chairs of China's top political advisory body, Cao said.

The court system has concluded graft cases involving 101 former officials at or above vice-ministerial level in the past five years, according to the work report of the Supreme People's Court delivered by Chief Justice Zhou Qiang to the National People's Congress on Friday.

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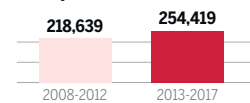
Chief Justice Zhou Qiang delivers Supreme People's Court Work Report to the 13th NPC in Beijing on Friday.



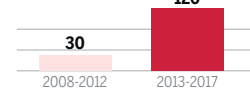
Procurator-General Cao Jianming delivers Supreme People's Procuratorate Work Report to lawmakers in Beijing on Friday.

INCREASE IN INVESTIGATIONS

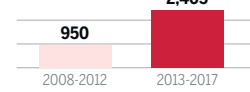
Number of officials investigated for duty-related offenses:



Number of officials investigated for corruption at or above vice-ministerial level



Number of officials investigated for corruption at department chief level, a level lower than vice-ministers



Source: Supreme People's Procuratorate CHINA DAILY



Deputies of the 13th National People's Congress attend the second plenary meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday. PHOTOS BY XU JINGXING / CHINA DAILY

Agenda

Saturday

- **8:45 am:** Five national political advisers, including Huang Runqiu, vice-minister of environmental protection, and Liu Qiangdong, chairman and CEO of JD.com, hold news conference on improving people's livelihoods.
- **10:45 am:** Wan Gang, minister of science and technology, meets with media.
- **3 pm:** Xiao Yaqing, chairman of the State-owned Assets Supervi-

sion and Administration Commission, talks about reform and development of State-owned enterprises.

- **Morning:** NPC and CPPCC group discussions on work reports of Supreme People's Court and Supreme People's Procuratorate
- **Afternoon:** NPC continues group discussions on work reports of top court and top procuratorate. CPPCC National

Committee holds plenary meeting; some national political advisers make public speeches.

Sunday

- **10 am:** Commerce Minister Zhong Shan meets with media.
- **5:30 pm:** Shen Chunyao, head of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, holds news conference on amendment to the Con-

stitution.

- **Morning:** NPC group discussions on final draft of amendment to the Constitution
- **Afternoon:** National legislators attend plenary meeting of NPC and vote on amendment to the Constitution. Zhang Dejiang, chairman of 12th NPC Standing Committee, presents work report of the committee to all deputies.
- **The CPPCC takes a day off.**

Curbing debt leaves room for opening-up

By CHEN JIA
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China's once-expanding debt has been curbed under tightened governing measures and regulations, leaving more space for further financial opening-up and reforms, said Zhou Xiaochuan, the central bank governor, on Friday.

"We have entered a stage of stabilizing and gradually reducing the leverage level" after financial regulators cracked down on portions of the shadow banking business, Zhou, governor of the People's Bank of China, said at a news conference during the ongoing first session of the 13th National People's Congress.

Given the regulatory improvements and risk reduction, steps

toward other financial reforms would be "faster and larger", including pushing forward the yuan's internationalization and lowering market access barriers in the financial sector, he said.

Improvement of the financial regulatory framework, targeted at prevention of systemic risks in a more efficient way, should be part of overall financial reform, said Zhou, adding that the central bank will play a more important role in the restructured regulatory system.

In November, the country established a new financial regulatory body, the Financial Stability and Development Committee, under the supervision of the State Council, China's Cabinet. The committee is expected to better coordinate supervision functions



Zhou Xiaochuan, central bank governor.

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among banking, securities and insurance regulators while fixing loopholes by issuing unified rules.

Premier Li Keqiang, in the Government Work Report he delivered on Monday, said the nation's "prudent monetary policy will remain neutral, with easing or tightening only as

appropriate". While the report did not include the annual growth target for M2, the broad measure of money supply, or expected credit growth, he said, "We need to make sure that the valve of aggregate monetary supply is well under control, we maintain moderate growth of M2 money supply, credit and aggregate financing, and ensure a reasonable, stable level of liquidity."

Yi Gang, vice-governor of the central bank, said at the news conference on Friday that indicators including market interest rates and the level of excess reserves could be used to measure the liquidity situation as M2 gradually becomes weaker as a measure of real economic growth.

The country's new yuan-de-

nominated loans in February stood at 839.3 billion yuan (\$132.5 billion) — 326.4 billion yuan less than in the same period a year earlier, marking a significant decline from a record-high 2.9 trillion yuan in January, central bank data showed.

Zhu Haibin, chief China economist with JPMorgan Chase & Co, said, "We look for financial and corporate deleveraging efforts to continue in 2018, with further moderate slowing in overall credit growth."

He said he expected no change in benchmark interest rates this year. However, if there's a surprising increase in inflation with growth momentum holding up well, or rising inflation along with market expectations for more aggressive rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve, "the likelihood of a policy rate hike cannot be excluded."

Xi, Trump confer over Kim meeting

US leader says push for dialogue has proved to be the correct stance

By ZHANG YUNBI
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President Xi Jinping has told US President Donald Trump that China hoped Washington and Pyongyang will begin contacts and dialogue as soon as possible to achieve positive outcomes.

Xi made the comment in a phone conversation with Trump, and they had an in-depth exchange of views on the current situation of the Korean Peninsula and China-US relations, Xinhua News Agency reported on Friday night.

The planned summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was announced on Thursday by Republic of Korea national security adviser Chung Eui-yong, who was in the US capital to brief officials on the DPRK-ROK talks held this week.

Xi told Trump that China also hopes all parties involved can show more goodwill, avoid actions that may affect and disturb the improving situation on the Korean Peninsula, and strive to maintain the current positive momentum.

The positive changes taking place are conducive to getting the peninsula's denuclearization process back on track for settlement through dialogue, and are also in line with the direction outlined by United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding the DPRK, Xi said.

Xi hailed Trump's proactive willingness to seek a political settlement of the peninsula issue.

Trump said that the US-DPRK high-level meeting, if held, would be a good thing for all parties, and he hopes the DPRK nuclear issue could be resolved eventually.

The stance upheld by Xi — that the US should have a dialogue with the DPRK — is correct, Trump said.

The US is very grateful to and attaches great importance to the important role of China on the peninsula issue and is willing to maintain close contacts and coordination with China, Trump added, according to Xinhua.

Xi said China is firmly committed to achieving the denuclearization of the peninsula, maintaining its peace and stability and upholding the idea of solving the issue through dialogue and consultation.

As long as all parties stay committed to the direction of political and diplomatic settlement, progress will surely be made in taking the peninsula issue in the direction expected by the international community, Xi said.

The two heads of state also exchanged views on China-US relations, Xinhua said.

Xi noted that he has been in close contact with Trump this year, and they both agreed that the working teams of both sides should work in the spirit of having no time to lose.

It is hoped that the two sides will work together on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit, focus on cooperation and manage and control differences, promote win-win economic cooperation and push for greater progress of bilateral relations in the new year, Xi said.

Trump congratulated China on the successful convening of its annual two sessions. He said the US attaches great importance to US-China ties and bilateral cooperation.

Xi thanked Trump for his greetings and said the successful convening of the two sessions in China will provide a positive impetus for China's development as well as the development of China's relations with countries including the United States.

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China urges reversal of steep new US tariffs

By ZHONG NAN
and LIU ZHIHUA

China urged the United States on Friday to revoke its decision to impose immediate, steep tariffs on imports of foreign steel and aluminum products, which the Ministry of Commerce said would seriously disturb global trade.

China's move came after US President Donald Trump signed two proclamations on Thursday to levy a 25 percent tariff on steel and a 10 percent tariff on aluminum while

offering potential exemptions for Canada and Mexico. Trump said the penalties may "go up or down depending on the country, and I'll have a right to drop out countries or add countries".

Wang Hejun, head of the trade remedy and investigation bureau of the Ministry of Commerce, said the US

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Looking ahead

Events coming up in the next few days

Arbor Day hopes to branch out tree awareness

Arbor Day falls on Monday. Arbor means tree in Latin and the day is dedicated to planting and looking after trees. Many Chinese cities will invite members of the public to attend tree planting and trimming events to raise green awareness. In Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, the government has offered 23 designated areas in parks or other public places for people to "adopt" trees. A special certificate will be offered to the "adopters". Special bus routes will be open from Saturday to May 10 for springtime city tours.

Sanya marathon, and other events, to be held on Sunday

The Phoenix Coast — 2018 Hainan Sanya International Marathon will be held on Sunday. Traffic control measures in the city will be enforced. There will be a full marathon, together with a half and a mini run. The province's capital Haikou will hold a mini marathon on the same day, along with a 10-km and a 5-km event.

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China: Nine key tasks for 2018 in Government Work Report

Premier Li Keqiang delivered the annual Government Work Report on Monday at the opening meeting of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress. According to the report, China will continue to pursue stable economic growth this year, setting its gross domestic product growth target at around 6.5 percent, and further open its economy to foreign investors. Visit our website for the nine key tasks proposed in the Government Work Report.

Culture: Fine ancient poems about spring's glory

As a winter chill still lingers, the longing for warm days has sprung up everywhere. Before the flowers are in full bloom, check our website for a collection of ancient poems depicting the revival of life during spring. The English translations used in this article are from Chinese translator Xu Yuan-chong's *300 Tang Poems*, published by China Intercontinental Press in 2012, and *300 Tang & Song Poems*, published by Hebei People's Publishing House in 2003.



Travel: Red as fire, wild azaleas bloom in Yingjiang

Thousands of wild azaleas are blooming in Yingjiang, Yunnan province, enveloping the mountains in a brilliant shade of red. Some of the azaleas are over 1,000 years old. The flowers will keep blooming until the end of March, drawing many visitors to the region to photograph this wonder of nature.



People: Scientist named UNESCO women laureate

Scientist Mee-Mann Chang made the list of five laureates for the 2018 L'Oreal-UNESCO Women in Science Awards, an initiative to promote greater gender equality in science, the UN agency said on Thursday. At a ceremony scheduled for March 22 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Orga-

Australian and Chinese writers to visit eight cities

Four Australian writers will join Chinese writers Yu Hua, A Lai and Zhang Yueran in a series of literary events in eight Chinese cities from Thursday to March 24. The Australian writers include Man Booker Prize winner Richard Flanagan, as well as three Stella Prize winners — Charlotte Wood, Alexis Wright and Fiona Wright.

Show celebrating Silk Road to open in Beijing

The curtain will rise on a show celebrating the beauty and culture of the Silk Road in Beijing. *Sailing the Silk Road* will be performed in the National Centre for the Performing Arts from Thursday to March 17, as one of its world tour stops. The show premiered at the Baalbeck International Festival in July 2016. Celebrating the encounter of cultures and tales of heroes, the show features more than 100 artists and performers from China, India, Iran and Italy.



nization "will recognize five leading women scientists and shine a spotlight on 15 talented young female scientists". This year, the organizers "have recognized five exceptional female scientists," and among them is Chang, a professor at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Palaeoanthropology and a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. She was nominated for "her pioneering work on fossil records leading to insights on how aquatic vertebrates adapted to life and land," UNESCO said.



Society: Man with cerebral palsy behind success

Over the past 11 years, Hong Runhao and his volunteer team have tutored 870 migrant workers' children and left behind children in Daowai District, Harbin, capital city of Heilongjiang province. Hong, 34, was born with cerebral palsy and his father abandoned the family when he was only 2 years old. In July 2006, despite the physical and language challenges caused by cerebral palsy, he began to organize a volunteer team to help those in need of help.



Exhibition: Ancient tomb relics on display in Shaanxi museum

A collection of 798 cultural relics dating back to the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC-256 BC) are on display at a museum in Shaanxi province. The artifacts were unearthed from a massive complex of tombs in Liangdai village, which is close to the Yellow River and famous for its history and culture. The discovery predates the nearby Terracotta Army by more than 300 years. Some of the tombs are believed to be that of a ruler of a vassal state in the Zhou Dynasty and his wife who lived more than 2,800 years ago. The 70-plus tombs in the area were excavated between 2005 and 2009, and more than 26,000 artifacts including jade, gold and bronze items were unearthed.



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Mobike boosts the green cycle in Kenya

NAIROBI — John Kinyanjui has a sound grasp of the health and environmental benefits of cycling and has encouraged his young peers to embrace this activity that is slowly gaining traction in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi.

The finance major, in his early 20s, is currently an intern at the United Nations Offices in Nairobi where a bike-sharing model was launched recently to ease movement of staff members and visitors in the sprawling compound.

Speaking to Xinhua after a bicycle ride, Kinyanjui said he looked forward to the elevation of non-motorized transport in Nairobi and beyond to help tackle mounting air pollution.

"Riding a bicycle is good for our health and environment. At least we are able to stretch, and boost our physical fitness. We are also able to reduce carbon emissions and traffic congestion through cycling," said Kinyanjui.

Kinyanjui was among dozens of UN staff members, schoolchildren and visitors who rode on state-of-the-art bikes donated by China's Mobike in the compound that

houses major UN agencies. Erik Solheim, the executive director of UN Environment, said Mobike had donated 100 bicycles to support the novel bike-sharing scheme that is expected to promote green transport in rapidly growing African cities.

"This is a great moment for us because we would like to lead by example. Bike-sharing is already available in Europe, the United States and China. I would like to see it spread in Africa," Solheim said.

He added that supportive infrastructure, enactment of new policies and legislation is key to promoting cycling in African cities grappling with traffic congestion and air pollution.

Expatriates stationed at the UN offices in Nairobi welcomed the launch of the bike-sharing scheme, terming it a milestone in green transport that has eluded many African cities.

Stefanie Holzwarth, an associate human settlements officer at the United Nations Human Settlements Program, said a bike-sharing scheme is long overdue to help boost environmental

health in Nairobi and adjacent towns.

"I am excited that we have a bike-sharing scheme at the UN compound. I love cycling and it is all about sustainable mobility," Holzwarth said. "The UN is now a showcase for sustainable transport."

The German noted that cycling is not only time-saving but can also reduce carbon emission in cities significantly.

"There is a huge focus on low carbon transport globally," Holzwarth said, adding that non-motorized transport will advance the green agenda and human health in Africa.

Kenya also hailed the launch of the bike-sharing scheme at the UN compound in Nairobi, saying it motivated them to embrace low-carbon mobility and save the environment from rampant pollution.

Wycliffe Lumbasi, a messenger and cycling enthusiast, said availability of custom-made bicycles donated by Mobike will ease his movement in the UN compound.

"These bikes are fast,

strong and have a unique color. Kenyans should ride them to cut down on diesel consumption that is responsible for air pollution in Nairobi," said Lumbasi.

Violet Nkatha, an English teacher at Nairobi's Milimani Primary School, agreed that cycling should be popularized to address the endemic traffic congestion and air pollution in the Kenyan capital.

"The launch of a bike-sharing model is a very good idea and will help us tackle pollution and traffic jams that have impacted negatively on school-going children in Nairobi," Nkatha said.

Joy Mutheu, a 13-year-old pupil at the school, located in an upscale Nairobi suburb, is optimistic that greater numbers of people cycling will transform lives.

"I think we have a good opportunity to enjoy biking from home to school and escape the travails of long hours in traffic," Mutheu said, adding that gridlock that is endemic in Nairobi has affected the mental health of pupils.

— XINHUA

A moment in time: Delivering convenience



YU WENGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY

The internet has speeded up daily life and connections, not least food delivery services. By clicking on smartphones, you can have your favorite dishes delivered to your door. And big data and cloud computing ensure the quickest delivery routes.

Back in 1993, a restaurant worker (above) delivers a meal in a basket to a customer's house after picking up a phone order in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province.

In January, food is delivered (right) in Jinan, Shandong province. Delivery motorcyclists in yellow, blue and red uniforms are a common feature in Chinese cities.



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weather

TRAVELER'S FORECAST
LOW/HIGH TEMPERATURES, IN DEGREES CELSIUS, AND EXPECTED CONDITIONS

City	Temp	Cond	City	Temp	Cond				
Beijing	-1/4	S	-3/12	S	Shanghai	2/14	S	6/16	S
Changchun	-13/-4	C	-17/1	S	Shenyang	-8/3	S	-8/10	S
Changsha	6/19	C	9/18	C	Shenzhen	11/21	S	13/23	C
Chongqing	10/22	C	14/20	O	Shijiazhuang	2/14	C	4/7	S
Dalian	0/8	S	1/9	S	Suzhou	0/14	C	1/7	S
Fuzhou	6/17	C	7/21	C	Taipei	11/21	C	15/26	C
Guangzhou	7/21	S	9/22	S	Taiyuan	-1/18	C	0/19	S
Guilin	7/23	S	9/22	C	Tianjin	1/8	S	0/12	S
Guiyang	5/18	C	6/15	Sh	Urumqi	0/14	S	3/16	S
Haikou	13/22	C	17/24	C	Wuhan	4/18	C	8/18	C
Hangzhou	2/17	S	5/20	S	Xi'an	4/18	C	7/19	C
Harbin	-15/-7	C	-24/-4	S	Xiamen	8/19	S	10/21	S
Hefei	4/17	S	6/19	C	Xining	-8/15	C	-7/17	S
Hohhot	-4/13	S	-1/16	S	Yantai	0/11	C	-1/15	S
Hongkong	13/20	S	15/21	C	Yinchuan	1/18	S	2/21	S
Jinan	8/17	S	7/20	S	Zhengzhou	4/19	C	6/19	C
Kunming	8/21	S	9/22	C	Zhuhai	12/19	C	14/20	C
Lanzhou	2/19	S	2/21	S					
Lhasa	-2/10	O	-1/10	Sn					
Lijiang	5/17	Sh	5/17	C					
Macao	12/18	C	14/20	C					
Nanchang	6/18	S	10/19	C					
Nanjing	2/16	C	5/20	C					
Nanning	10/24	S	12/23	S					
Qingdao	3/8	S	4/10	S					
Sanya	17/27	C	19/28	C					

City	Temp	Cond	City	Temp	Cond				
Abu Dhabi	19/36	C	22/38	C	Buenos Aires	18/29	S	16/26	S
Bangkok	23/33	C	25/34	S	Caracas	26/26	D	26/26	S
Colombo	24/32	D	24/33	O	Chicago	-4/1	S	-2/0	C
Dubai	23/33	C	24/34	S	Houston	18/22	D	20/24	D
Hanoi	13/24	S	13/26	S	Las Vegas	7/15	O	10/16	D
Islamabad	13/27	C	13/29	C	Los Angeles	14/15	O	14/16	D
Jakarta	26/31	D	25/31	D	Mexico city	15/17	C	14/16	S
Karachi	21/34	C	18/34	C	New York	1/2	S	1/2	C
Kuala Lumpur	24/30	D	25/29	D	Ottawa	-2/0	Sn	-4/1	Sn
Manila	24/32	D	25/31	D	Rio De Janeiro	25/27	D	26/28	D
Mumbai	21/36	S	21/35	C	San Francisco	8/11	D	11/13	D
New Delhi	17/32	S	16/32	S	Sao Paulo	19/22	D	18/22	D
Pyeongyang	-3/9	S	-4/8	S	Vancouver	4/6	D	3/7	S
Riyadh	14/31	O	16/28	S	Washington	0/0	S	0/0	S
Seoul	1/9	C	1/10	S					
Singapore	24/28	D	24/28	O					
Sydney	18/24	D	17/25	S					
Teheran	10/12	C	8/11	C					
Tokyo	9/11	C	5/14	D					
Wellington	14/18	S	14/21	S					
Yangon	22/36	D	22/33	D					

Legend: C Cloudy, D Drizzle, Du Dust, F Fog, H Haze, O Overcast, R Rain, Sh Shower, S Sunny, Sn Snow, St Storm, T Thunderstorms



TWO SESSIONS

Courts curb environment crimes

Top judge says greater efforts made to build a 'beautiful China'

By CAO YIN
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With China sparing no efforts to fight pollution in recent years, courts across the country have handled a rapidly rising number of environment-related lawsuits in the past five years, according to the nation's top court.

The Supreme People's Court, in its work report released on

Friday, said the number of criminal environmental cases heard by courts nationwide between 2013 and 2017 increased by 65.6 times compared with the period from 2008 to 2012.

The report was delivered by Zhou Qiang, president of the top court, and submitted for discussion to the first session of the 13th National People's Congress.

Though the exact figure was not released, earlier data from the top court also points to this sharp rise. In 2014, for example, courts filed 1,188 environment-related criminal cases, while in 2016, they concluded 19,000 criminal cases related to environmental and ecological damage, up by 18.8 percent year-on-year.

"We've made greater efforts to protect the environment and ecology, contributing to building a beautiful China," Zhou said.

The number of people investigated for environment-related

crimes has also increased, according to the work report of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, which also was delivered on Friday.

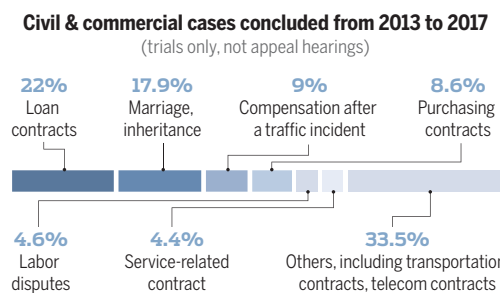
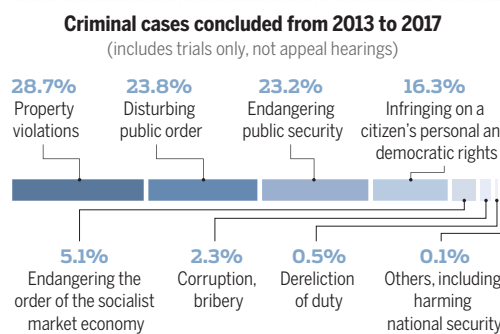
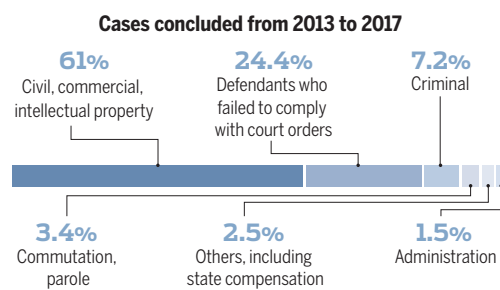
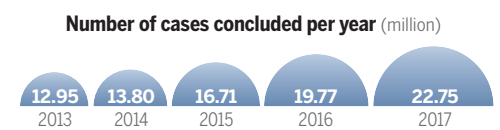
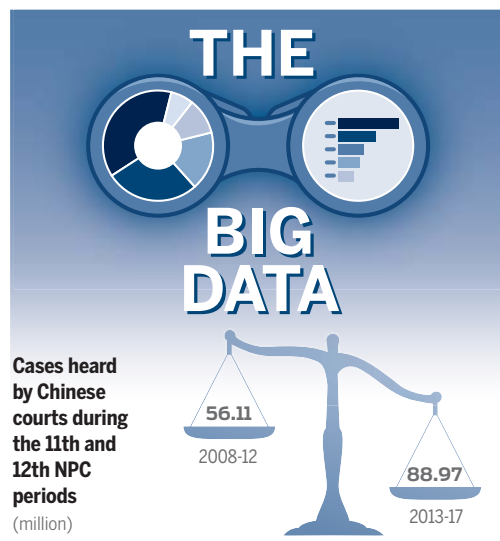
Around 137,000 people were charged in the past five years with crimes involving air, water or soil pollution, and importing foreign waste, as well as illegally occupying farmland, destructive mining and illegal lumbering, up by 59.3 percent from the previous five-year period, said Cao Jianming, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

Experts said stronger legisla-

tion and law enforcement in the environmental sector is behind the sharp increase.

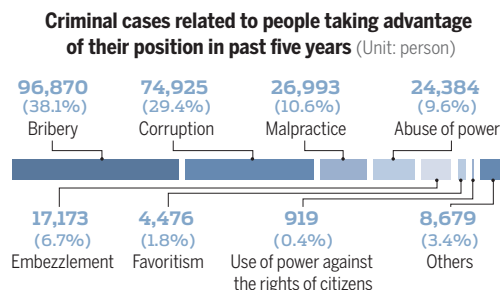
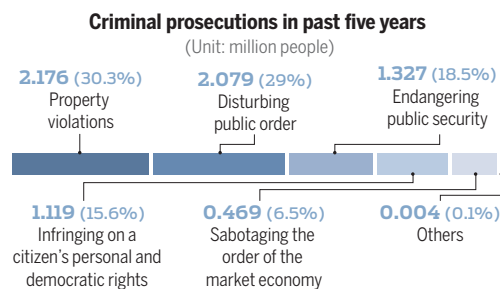
For instance, the revised Environmental Protection Law, effective since 2015, stipulates that polluters face a fine of up to 100,000 yuan (\$15,800) a day if they do not stop emissions after being warned, and there is no ceiling on the fine.

Zhou Guangquan, an NPC deputy, welcomed the progress that has been made, saying he is glad to see stricter environmental law enforcement in recent years.



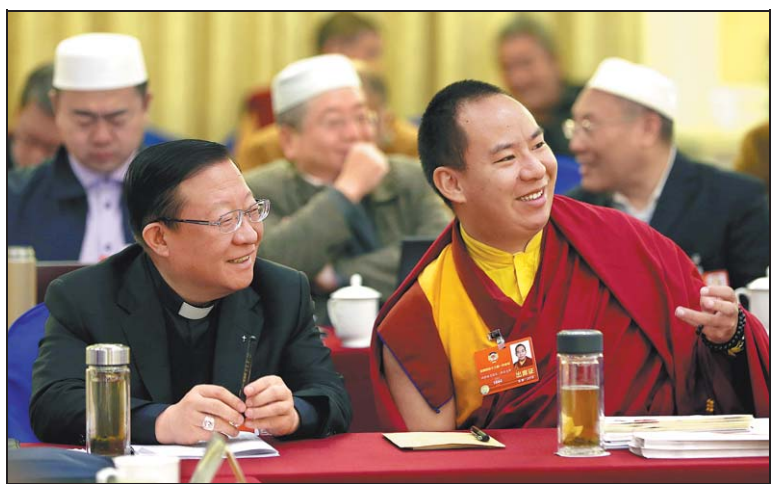
Big numbers from 2013 to 2017

- 1,598 gang-related cases concluded
- 24,000 illegal fundraising cases concluded
- 88,000 pollution cases concluded
- 42,000 cases of endangering food and drug safety concluded
- 694,000 cases of dangerous driving concluded



Sources: The Supreme People's Court & The Supreme People's Procuratorate

Meeting of faiths



Ma Yinglin (left), vice-chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, and the 11th Panchen Lama Bainqen Erdini Qoigyijabu, both members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, attend a panel meeting on religious affairs during the first session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee in Beijing. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Rural: Strategy's scope praised

From page 1

During the panel discussion, Zhuo spoke of the life and work of housekeeping employees, mostly from the rural areas. Xi asked her about the income of housekeepers and babysitters.

"It seems that everything is a family affair for him. He is really our great leader," Zhuo said after the discussion.

Zhang Xinwen, an NPC deputy and also director of Shandong's Development and Reform Commission, said Xi's

speech has boosted his confidence in building richer and stronger rural areas.

"General Secretary Xi has set requirements on six aspects of rural revitalization in such areas as industry, culture and human resources, and his instruction has great significance in guiding our work," he said.

Chen Xueping, an NPC deputy, said she felt that the Party and government have taken every aspect and detail, such as the renovation of rural toilets, into consideration in

implementing the rural revitalization strategy.

"It is very thoughtful of General Secretary Xi to consider these trivial things for the people," said Chen, who is also a painter for a real estate company in Jinan.

"I come from the rural area, and I feel good about the development of different aspects such as environmental protection in the past five years," she added.

Zhu Yue contributed to this story.

Report: Hard work to continue

From page 1

"We've maintained high pressure on graft and improved our judicial mechanism for handling job-related crimes," he said.

Prosecutors have also paid more attention to crimes related to offering bribes and accused 37,277 people of "hunting officials" — a term used to describe those who try to bribe officials. The number is up by 87 percent, Cao said.

Corruption at lower levels also has been resolutely targeted, as 62,715 corrupt grassroots officials were charged in the past five years, such as those in charge of local agriculture, housing demolitions, social welfare and poverty alleviation, he said.

"It's not an easy task, and I believe the campaign faced resistance in the beginning, but it carried on and has achieved impressive results," said Yang Fan, an NPC deputy

from Chongqing.

Cao said authorities this year will continue working hard, and with supervision commissions at all levels, to carry on with anti-graft work.

China is witnessing a fundamental change in the anti-corruption system as the NPC will review the country's first law on supervision starting on Tuesday. It will give a legal footing to supervisory commissions and detail how the commissions work, as well as their duties and obligations.

The law will bring all public officers, including civil servants and those working for public schools and medical institutes, under supervision, which means the fight against corruption will cover every public corner, said Ma Huaide, vice-president of China University of Political Science and Law.

Sharing offices and staff with disciplinary inspectors of the CPC, these supervisory com-

missions incorporate existing supervisory, corruption prevention and control agencies within governments and procuratorates to target graft more efficiently and effectively, he said.

Ding Zhaomin, an NPC deputy from Jilin province, said he believes the reform will better supervise those exercising public power and ensure the healthy development of Chinese society.

Chief Justice Zhou Qiang also said on Friday that courts have strengthened efforts against wrongful convictions in the past five years, with the aim of better protecting human rights and upholding justice.

Courts around the country overturned 6,747 criminal cases between 2013 and 2017, and pronounced 4,874 defendants "not guilty" over the period, he said.

Tan Yingzi contributed to this story.

Yao Ming wants to give fitness a sporting chance

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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Having seen the rise of mass sports participation as a lifestyle in urban China, political adviser Yao Ming is calling for more accessible sporting activities at the grassroots level to galvanize the momentum.

Once the backbone of China's national basketball program, Yao, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference since 2013, has shifted his focus from perfecting his skill sets on the court to providing suggestions and solutions as a political adviser.

How to maximize the positive influence of sports, especially through his game of basketball, in China's fast-paced society has always been high on his agenda since Yao joined the CPPCC.

More attention should be given to making sporting events more accessible for amateurs by organizing competitions and activities at the grassroots level, rather



Yao Ming joins a panel discussion during the first session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee in Beijing on Tuesday. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

"We have to bring down the threshold of sports participation for the general public."

Yao Ming, member of CPPCC National Committee and former NBA All Star

than just developing athletic prowess at the elite level, Yao said during the CPPCC annual meeting.

"We have to bring down the threshold of sports participation for the general public by making events and competitions much closer and easier to take part in," Yao told China Daily on Wednesday in Beijing.

"This will help more people adopt sports as a lifestyle while creating more business opportunities in the sports industry," said the former NBA All Star with the Houston Rockets.

With major international events to be held in China, such as the 2019 FIBA World Cup and 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, Yao urged sports governing bodies in the country to make the most of major events to take mass sports participation to new heights.

The basketball Hall of Famer has been doing his part as the new chairman of the Chinese Basketball Association.

After running some test events under the new CBA leadership last year, Yao will file a proposal to promote in primary schools this year a "mini basketball" program customized for children under 12 years old — smaller basketballs, lower rims and more accessible courts — to make the already popular sport more appealing to the juniors.

As part of a national soccer reform plan, the Ministry of Education introduced soccer-specialized education to 20,218 schools by the end of 2017, and the junior basketball project was expected to have a similar scale of campus promotion.

In addition to the school program, Yao said the CBA will also focus on working with sports associations in the country's energy, finance and public service sectors to integrate amateur basketball competitions into a more organized system.

Since being elected as the CBA chairman in February last year, Yao, the governing body's first chief drawn from outside government ranks, has been tasked with attracting investment and support to develop the association into a full-fledged nongovernmental organization with independent decision-making powers.

31,527 prisoners granted amnesty in the past five years

A total of 31,527 prisoners were granted amnesty across China in the past five years, a work report of the Supreme People's Court said on Friday.

Chinese courts have strengthened efforts to protect human rights in judicial practices, according to the

report delivered by Chief Justice Zhou Qiang at a plenary meeting of the ongoing annual session of the National People's Congress.

Death penalty decisions were strictly reviewed to make sure that death sentences only apply to an extreme-

ly small number of criminals for extremely severe offenses, it said.

The report noted that the Supreme People's Court has worked with the Ministry of Justice to enhance the legal aid system.

Cases involving minors have

declined for five consecutive years, according to the report.

Judicial subsidies totaling 2.67 billion yuan (\$420 million) have been granted to victims who failed to get compensation, it said.

2.67 billion yuan
in judicial subsidies were granted in the past five years.

XINHUA

4 TWO SESSIONS

Belt and Road Initiative 'open and inclusive'

China will continue to promote cooperation on development strategies of participating economies, as **Zhong Nan** reports.

The Belt and Road Initiative will continue to make Chinese and partner economies more competitive, narrowing development gaps between landlocked countries and coastal regions, officials and business leaders have said.

China will work toward building major international corridors and deepen cooperation on streamlining customs clearance in markets related with the Belt and Road Initiative, and expand industrial capacity cooperation with other countries, Premier Li Keqiang said in the annual Government Work Report delivered on Monday.

Under the government plan, China will continue to promote international cooperation on the initiative and complementarity between the development strategies and plans of participating economies.

"Facts have proved that China has become part of international efforts to pursue common development and prosperity for countries and regions that need to gain new growth momentum via what they have and are good at," said Xu Lirong, a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress and chairman of China COSCO Shipping Corp.

Xu said container throughput accounts for 75 percent of Shanghai Port's total business, of which container throughput from countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative accounts for 35 percent. This growth momentum has been encouraging, he said.

Trade among China and countries involved in the initiative amounted to 74 trillion yuan (\$1.2 trillion) in 2017, surging 17.8 percent year-on-year, data from the Ministry of Commerce show.

Breakthroughs were also made last year in free trade with countries involved in the initiative, with China signing agreements with Georgia and the Maldives, and officially launching free trade negotiations with Moldova and Mauritius. China has pledged to work for an early conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Vice-Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen said that the initiative is not an attempt by China to exert its economic and political influence globally.

Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the 13th National People's Congress this year, added: "The Belt and Road Initiative is a proposal for economic cooperation. It focuses on connectivity and aims at achieving win-win outcomes, hoping to create more opportunities for global economic growth and shared prosperity of all countries."

Zhang said the initiative is guided by the principle of pursuing shared benefits through consultation and collaboration, and all participants are equal partners in this process. It is an open and inclusive platform; it doesn't exclude or target any country, and is open to all those who are interested, he said.

"The initiative seeks to reinvigorate trading routes between China and others. It combines China's unparalleled strength in building infrastructure, manufacturing and service facilities in many of the economies involved in the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road," said Li Jianhong, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and chairman of China Merchants Group.

From a global perspective, Li said bilateral and multilateral projects for infrastructure and production capacity expansion have come to be the hallmarks of the initiative.

The launch of a series of big-ticket projects including the high-speed railway project in Indonesia, port expansion work in Greece and Djibouti, a railway linking China and Thailand, the Karachi expressway and a China-Belarus industrial park are all examples of the achievements under the initiative so far.

Many more such game-changing projects are in the pipeline: China will speed up the construction of railways, highways, telecommunications networks, power grids, ports, industrial cooperation parks and energy infrastructure, as well as help strengthen the rules and standards of



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

What they say



About 90 percent of the travel demand of Chinese tourists comes from destinations that are within three or four hours of flying time. These places are mostly Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian countries, especially Southeast Asian countries, which are fully involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Spring Airlines plans to further extend its flight network in the countries and regions related to the Belt and Road Initiative, and we will also expand our corporate business in the regions," he said.
Wang Yu, CPPCC National Committee member, chairman of Spring Airlines



It's a misinterpretation to regard China's Belt and Road Initiative as China's geostrategic tool, as the initiative is an open and inclusive platform and does not exclude or target any country. It is open to all those who are interested.

Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the 13th National People's Congress, vice-minister of foreign affairs



The Ministry of Finance will continue to consolidate what China has achieved in the financing sector by improving financial intermediation for economic growth. Under the framework of financing guidelines and the cooperation memorandum of understanding, a long-term, stable and risk-controllable financing system with sustainability and diversity should be established. We are now following the outcome of last year's Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to set up an international center for financing cooperation, turning the agreements reached at the forum into reality.
Shi Yaobin, NPC deputy, vice-minister of finance

countries involved in the initiative, according to the government plan.

Chinese companies are also working with foreign partners such as United Technologies Corp, Emerson Electric, Volvo Construction Equipment and ABB Group to develop infrastructure in various economies covered by the initiative.

German industrial giant Siemens plans to open a Belt and Road Initiative office in Beijing this year to further pursue the opportunities generated by the initiative.

Cedrik Neike, a board member of Siemens, said the company will ramp up a companywide effort to continue teaming up with Chinese EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) partners to jointly explore businesses in countries and regions participating in the initiative.

Siemens has joined forces with more than 100 Chinese EPC players in exploring more than 60 overseas

markets since 2016. Its partners include China National Petroleum Corp, the country's biggest oil producer, China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, and Power Construction Corp of China.

According to Neike, EPC contracts bagged by Chinese firms are worth around \$125 billion. The German company forecasts the cumulative potential over the next decade will reach over \$1 trillion.

Wang Chuanlin, another NPC deputy and general manager of China Tiesiju Civil Engineering Group, said many Chinese companies have already transferred their core business from EPC into new business models such as build-operate-transfer, and public-private-partnership for both public and private sectors in markets involved in the initiative.

Fang Qiuchen, president of the China International Contractors Association, which is based in Beijing and helps Chinese construction

companies expand overseas, said global cooperation in infrastructure, logistics and production capacity has great potential.

"China's partners, in the early stages of the initiative, are mostly emerging economies and developing economies in the midst of industrialization. They are characterized by fast economic growth and enormous potential for future development," Fang said.

China's outbound investment in economies participating in the initiative climbed to \$70 billion between 2014 and 2017, providing more than 200,000 jobs for local people, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The National Development and Reform Commission released a document on Monday that said it will promote the healthy and orderly development of the China-Europe freight train service this year, as well as continue to develop a

"digital Silk Road" and set up space information corridors.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission also announced this month that it will allow domestic and overseas companies to issue bonds on onshore stock exchanges to finance projects related with the initiative.

The Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges will carry out a pilot bond program. Government-backed institutions in economies involved in the initiative can also sell bonds in China, according to the country's top securities regulator.

Seven domestic and overseas companies have gained regulatory approval to issue bonds worth a total of 50 billion yuan (\$7.9 billion), and four of them have already raised 3.5 billion yuan through bond issuances, according to the regulator.

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PowerChina eyes bigger global footprint

By **ZHENG XIN**
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Power Construction Corp of China, the biggest hydropower designer and builder in the country, has vowed to work more closely with countries and regions participating in the Belt and Road Initiative through further investment in the energy sector and contribute to the overall progress of local economies.

The company, also known as PowerChina, envisages more than 1,400 projects in 57 countries and regions involved in the initiative, with contracts valued at more than \$600 billion. The 350 projects under construction have total contract value of about 300 billion yuan (\$47 billion).

PowerChina makes more than 50 percent of its gross profits from its international business.

In addition to water conservancy and hydropower construction, in which the company has 50 percent of global market share, it is also expanding to new energy infrastructure, EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) projects and investment in minerals.

1,400

projects are envisaged by PowerChina in 57 countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

"PowerChina will continue to provide the best power solutions to the world," said Yan Zhiyong, chairman of the company.

"In our overseas projects, we offer not only technologies and experience, but also lessons we've learned."

According to Yan, the company not only wants to reap immediate revenue overseas, but also to provide the most affordable and sustainable energy to emerging markets.

China's biggest international EPC wind power project, the Adama II in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for example, contains 102 turbines with a capacity of 1.5 megawatts each for a total installed capacity of 153 MW.

The project meets more than 20 percent of the Ethiopian capital's power demand, and is the second-largest wind power project on the African continent.

The wind power project has won strong support from the Ethiopian government and local residents; and the Ethiopian president praised the role played by the project in easing the power shortage in the country.

A thorough study before construction is needed to make sure the company provides power solution services for the whole country's energy supply instead of a single project, Yan said.

The company has been providing free power planning in regions and countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative for the past few years, as well as free training and disaster relief.

According to Yan, PowerChina has its own unique advantages and capabilities in understanding water and electricity, project designing and construction, investment and operations.

"Currently, we primarily invest in electricity, but in the future we will put more investment in new energy generation," he said.

"We also operate highways and are in real estate, and that's why we have stronger capabilities compared with ordinary construction companies and can better adapt to the needs of the modern market," he said.



TWO SESSIONS

Shanghai planning shoppers' paradise

By ZHOU WENTING
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Shanghai must compare favorably to the world's best cities if it expects to become a shopper's paradise like New York City, London and Tokyo, according to the city's most senior official.

The eastern Chinese metropolis will release a top-down development plan this year to create a world-class international hub for shopping, Li Qiang, Party secretary of Shanghai, said this week.

"Making 'Shop in Shanghai' a golden brand is part of the ongoing effort to open up further and undertake continual reform in the new era," Li said during a panel discussion of the Shanghai delegation to the ongoing session of the National People's Congress.



“Shanghai's mission is to represent China in international collaboration and competition, so it must be comparable to the world's best cities and have the highest standards.”

Li Qiang, Party secretary of Shanghai

"Shanghai's mission is to represent China in international collaboration and competition, so it must be comparable to the world's best cities and have the highest standards," he said, adding that shopping is in the city's genes.

More than 54 percent of global retailers have branches in Shanghai, making it third in the world behind only London and Dubai, according to CBRE Group, a commercial real estate and investment firm based in Los Angeles.

More than 90 percent of renowned high-end brands have a presence in Shanghai, with many using the city as their China or Asia-Pacific headquarters.

"There is hardly an internationally known brand that cannot be found in one of our shopping malls," said Shang Yuying, director of the municipal Commission of Commerce. Yet, she said, Shanghai still trails other major cities.

A report released by MasterCard in September ranked Shanghai 19th in the world for overseas visitors who stayed for at least one night in 2016 — 6.12 million — far behind New York City, London, Paris and Tokyo.

The city should strive to create world-class shopping districts, an essential element for an international shopping hub, Shang said.

"Nanjing Road and Huaihai Road (in Shanghai's Huangpu district) are popular, but they can't compare with the likes of the Champs-Élysées in Paris or New York's Fifth Avenue in terms of global recognition," she said.

Gao Yun, Huangpu's Party secretary and an NPC deputy, said the two shopping areas will get a face-lift this year to make them more attractive to visitors.

Shang added that Shanghai should also protect and promote its traditional brands through innovation and global business strategies.



Guo Shuqing, chairman of the China Banking Regulatory Commission, checks the time as he greets journalists who waited for more than an hour on Friday for a group interview with National People's Congress deputies and ministerial officials on the sidelines of the ongoing legislative session in Beijing. KUANG LINHUA / CHINA DAILY

Watchdog warns of consumer debt

By JIANG XUEQING
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China must pay more attention to cutting its consumer leverage ratio due to rising risks in the financial sector from the rapid growth of household debt, according to the top banking watchdog.

The country has emphasized the need to cut corporate and government debt, but "we've noticed that the consumer leverage ratio also needs lowering", Guo Shuqing, chairman of the China Banking Regulatory Commission, said on Friday.

The term refers to the ratio of a household's total debt to its personal disposable income.

"Currently, people aren't highly alert to the problem

that individual and household loans for home purchases and investment have been growing at a rapid rate. It's very dangerous," Guo said on the sidelines of this year's session of the National People's Congress in Beijing.

"China has a high savings rate. It used to be a huge advantage, but we'll lose that advantage if borrowing grows faster than savings," he added.

His comments came on the same day that Pan Gongsheng, vice-governor of the People's Bank of China, said the central bank had also noticed that both home mortgage loans and the consumer leverage ratio were rising too fast.

In addition to deleveraging, Guo said regulators will step up efforts to restore market order and control cross-sector financial risks, with a

focus on shadow banking activities, such as interbank business and off-balance-sheet business.

The commission will also further regulate the trust business and online financing, both of which are weak links in the banking sector, he said.

Putting some off-balance-sheet lending into the framework of balance-sheet management is a "normal and beneficial" structural adjustment and will not have a major bearing on interest rates, Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the central bank, said on Friday.

China has strengthened financial regulations and broadened regulatory oversight to include products not counted on the balance sheets of financial institutions, such as so-called wealth

management products, to forestall financial risks.

Zhou said the adjustment is based on normal regulatory and accounting requirements and will not affect overall financial figures.

The rectification began last year and has already taken effect, according to authorities, which reported a sharp decline in interbank assets and liabilities. By the end of January, the volume of wealth management products was up by only 1 percent year-on-year.

Off-balance-sheet business had also shrunk, and the volume of trust loans and entrusted loans was decreasing.

"These changes tell us that the trend of bank funds flowing from the real economy to the virtual economy has been contained," Guo said.

No change in HK, Macao status, official says

By WILLA WU
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The central government's policies on Hong Kong and Macao will remain unchanged "beyond all doubt", a senior official said on Friday in response to concerns over the omission of some routine terms from the Government Work Report.

Delivering the report at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress on Monday, Premier Li Keqiang said the central government would continue to uphold the "one country, two systems" principle.

However, he did not use the routine terms "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong", "Macao people governing Macao" or "high degree of autonomy" when speaking about the two special administrative regions.

On Friday, Zhang Xiaoming, director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, said the central government would continue to implement the "one country, two systems" principle, as upholding it was listed as one of the fundamental policies formulated at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October for developing socialism with Chinese characteristics for the new era.

Being listed as part of basic policy means upholding the principle is a "long-term task", Zhang said, adding that he hopes people will not misinterpret the situation.

"The principle already includes the connotation that Hong Kong people govern Hong Kong, Macao people govern Macao and both regions have a high degree of autonomy," he said.

Work related to the two SARs is conducted with the emphasis on fully and faithfully understanding and implementing the "one country, two systems" principle, he said.

The principle has achieved great success and won wide recognition at home and abroad, Zhang said.

"Why would the central government change the policy, given that it has been a success and widely supported by people in Hong Kong, Macao and the Chinese mainland?" he asked.

Zhang said he sees promising prospects in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, a national-level issue that is receiving key attention from the central government.

He quoted President Xi Jinping, who spoke at a

meeting of the Guangdong provincial delegation to the NPC on Friday: "Development of the bay area must be well handled."

Zhang said he is confident about the bay area project and expects the area to become a world-class innovation and technology hub.

He Lifeng, minister of the National Development and Reform Commission, the top economic planner, called the bay area project a "millennium plan" when speaking with journalists on Friday, and said it should be more efficient, orderly and effective in the next stage.

It is necessary to plan well, especially in terms of industrial development, transportation and ecological environment, he said.

Carrie Qiu contributed to this story.

Science ship construction set to begin

Primary mission will be to survey oceans, atmosphere, ecosystems

By ZHAO LEI
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Hu Keyi, Jiangnan Shipyard's technical director

A major shipbuilder has unveiled plans to start the construction of China's biggest research vessel this year, with the project expected to take about two years to complete.

Work on assembling the ship will begin at Shanghai's Jiangnan Shipyard using a design from the Marine Design and Research Institute of China, Hu Keyi, the shipyard's technical director, said this week.

Both the shipyard and the institute are part of China State Shipbuilding Corp, a State-owned enterprise.

With a displacement of 6,800 metric tons, it will be the country's largest research vessel, said Hu, who noted that it will use an advanced podded propulsion system, giving it better mobility.

Upon completion, the ship will be loaded with modern scientific devices and high-performance computer servers, and will be capable of conducting surveys of water, the atmosphere, ecosystems and natural resources, he said.

The project was commissioned by Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, to be used in scientific expeditions and student training exercises.

Hu made the remarks on the sidelines of the ongoing session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. He is a member of the top political advisory body.

Wu Gang, the research ship's chief designer, said it will accommodate a great number of scientific instruments, including remotely operated submersible vehicles. The ship features a streamlined structural design, integration and compatibility of scientific apparatus, and fast information processing.

He added that the ship will be able to operate in rough seas and will consume less fuel than other ships of the same size.

Ma Jun, vice-president of Sun Yat-sen University, was quoted earlier by Nanfang Daily as saying that the ship will have room for 120 crew members and researchers and be capable of extended missions of up to 60 days.

The vessel will help the university explore biological and mineral resources, geological conditions and other aspects of the South China Sea, he said.

Jiangnan Shipyard is currently building the *Dongfanghong 3*, a 5,000-ton research and training ship for Ocean University of China in Qingdao, Shandong province. It will be the college's fourth research ship.

China operates more than 50 research vessels, most of which are managed by the State Oceanic Administration.

Taiwan voices



Huang Zhixian, president of the All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots and a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, presides over a plenary meeting of the Taiwan delegation in Beijing on Friday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Proposed law aims to curb insulting of heroes, war victims

By WANG KAIHAO
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More than 30 political advisers from the worlds of art, culture and entertainment have backed a proposal calling for a law to safeguard China's "national dignity".

The move comes after a series of incidents in which young Chinese people have been accused of disrespecting victims of the Nanjing Massacre by visiting memorials and other historic locations dressed as imperial Japanese soldiers.

"Making fun of a national disaster or people's pain challenges the bottom line of justice and human nature," He Yun'ao, a member of the National Committee of the 13th Chinese People's Political



He Yun'ao, history professor at Nanjing University and CPPCC National Committee member

Consultative Conference, said during a group discussion on Thursday.

He, who is a history professor at Nanjing University in Jiangsu province, proposed drafting a law to deter such behavior. His motion was supported by other members, including Hong Kong movie star Jackie Chan.

According to official statistics, more than 300,000 people were killed in just six weeks after Japanese troops captured Nanjing on Dec 13, 1937.

This week, a man from Shanghai was detained for the second time in two months for offensive remarks online about those who lost their lives.

The 35-year-old, identified only as Meng, was held for 15 days in February for saying in a WeChat group that the massacre victims had deserved their fates. This month, he was detained for another eight days for recording a video outside the Memorial Hall for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre to insult the netizens who reported him.

Also in February, two men wearing costumes designed to look like imperial Japanese military uniforms took selfies in front of a historic battlefield site in Nanjing.

Four men in similar outfits

also posed for pictures in August outside Sihang Warehouse, a Shanghai landmark where Chinese soldiers held off invaders for days during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45).

Each incident resulted in a public outcry, yet current law defines such actions as disturbing public order, which carries a maximum punishment of 15 days in detention.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi denounced those who carry out such stunts as "scum" at a news conference on Thursday.

He Yun'ao, the history professor, said: "We must bring people's voices to the two sessions. Desecrating war heroes and excusing the Japanese forces' atrocities is a mockery

to Chinese people's lasting resistance against the invaders. It insults our national dignity. I'm not targeting the individuals but looking for reasonable solutions."

Insulting the national flag, anthem or emblem are now crimes in China, and He said his proposed law would give "national dignity" equal status.

"We still need more solid legal references when talking about how to punish those who publicly promote fascism or Japanese militarism, or who insult revolutionary martyrs and national heroes," he added.

Actor and director Zhang Guangbei was among the political advisers who backed the proposal. To show his support, he quoted a line from his best-known

role, as general Chu Yunfei in *Drawing Sword*: "National interests should come above all else."

TV director Zheng Xiaolong added that the unrealistic portrayals of combat in some recent Chinese productions made the war eight decades ago look like a game and had negatively influenced viewers' perceptions.

Feng Yuanzheng, an actor from Beijing People's Art Theatre, also endorsed the proposal and said the issue reflected problems in education.

"Offenders cannot be explained away as naive," he said. "It will harm our country if the young generation blindly admires foreign cultures. There should be rules to let people know where the red line is."

6 TWO SESSIONS

PERSPECTIVE

Academic eyes boost to China-UK ties

Meetings will offer an opportunity to enhance exchanges, collaboration

By **WANG MINGJIE**
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China's annual two sessions in Beijing are expected to further strengthen China-UK ties and enhance people-to-people exchanges and collaboration, according to Julian Beer, deputy vice-chancellor of Birmingham City University.

Beer said President Xi Jinping's visit to the UK in 2015 was a highlight in Sino-British relations and symbolized

the closeness between the two countries.

These links were fostered under former prime minister David Cameron, who described 2015 as a "golden year" in relations.

"These relationships have reached a significant point over the past two years, and this will undoubtedly continue through more intensive Sino-British people-to-people exchanges," Beer said.

Beer hopes that current and future leaders of both countries will continue to acknowledge the positive impact on

the relationship that the two countries can have. Xi recently articulated the future path through what Beer described as the Chinese way, which he believes will "provide lanterns to guide their journey".

Birmingham City University has already welcomed many students and staff members from China and sent staff members and students to its Wuhan campus in Hubei province.

Following the Brexit vote, he said, the UK will need to rethink how the country can work with partners across the globe once it leaves the European Union.

Despite the challenges ahead, he thinks Brexit also presents a clear opportunity for the UK to expand its work-



Julian Beer, deputy vice-chancellor of Birmingham City University

ing relationships with major economies such as China.

"This type of work will be vital to ensure that our workforces retain and improve

the right mix of investment, innovation, new skills and experience they need to thrive," he said. "While we may lose the strong ties we have with some countries, we do also have opportunities to look into how we can develop and improve partnerships elsewhere."

Beer noted that the strength

of the Chinese arts scene and creative industries has been growing significantly over the past few years, something that is shown by the growth and success of China's film industry.

He said: "The creative and arts industries are perhaps a new area where the UK and China can begin to share knowledge, expertise and skills to develop new ties for the future. The combined prowess of British and Chinese intellectual property and design working in tandem to shape and influence both culture and industry could be very powerful."

The UK and China are renowned for their manufacturing industries, and that is

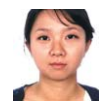
always likely to be central to the relationship between the two countries, according to Beer.

"Particularly in the key automotive sector, the growth of partnerships and the sharing of expertise between our two countries can only be a positive thing," he said.

"Our industries and business leaders must capitalize on the relationships that are already in place, as well as expanding to take more opportunities to visit one another and ensure that this continues."

Beer said he is confident that China will see many new opportunities come out of the two sessions and will seek to build on that.

Younger deputies take new approach



Cui Jia
Reporter's log

Among the deputies to the 12th National People's Congress, there were only two who were born in the 1990s. Five years later, more young people from the post-90s generation have been elected as national legislators as their roles in Chinese society have become increasingly important.

"I have been asked many times by reporters about my plans as a representative from the post-90s generation. But does age really matter?" asked Cui Jiuxiu, 26, before I had a chance to put a question to her.

Cui, who is from Shandong province, is a community officer in Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. She took up her position in the distant city in 2014 after graduating from a university in Shandong.

She is popular among Xinjiang deputies because she can speak the Uygur language fluently, something even many Xinjiang officials can't do, despite working in the region much longer than Cui. "It is an advantage of being young — we learn new things fast," she said.

Deputies from the post-90s generation have their ways of finding out what people think about and what they really need.

"Most of the residents from my community are Uygurs. They love to teach me the Uygur language and I love to see them laugh when I make mistakes. I want them to know that I want to be a part of their community and they can talk to me about anything," Cui said.

Li Jinlian, 25, an NPC deputy from the Yunnan delegation, said that apart from being a college graduate with determination to lift fellow villagers out of poverty, her cheerful personality and strong willingness to communicate with others might be why she was elected.

Like Cui and Li, many new deputies to the 13th NPC from the post-90s generation come from the grassroots — small communities, villages, local care homes and startup companies, for example.

Growing up after China implemented its opening-up policy, those from the post-90s generation have benefited from a better education than previous generations and now have broader views. What's more, they can adapt to new things and changes faster.

"I use social media to connect with young people in my community. Sometimes they can open up more on social media rather than talking to me face-to-face," Cui said.

Deputies from the post-90s generation have their ways of finding out what people think about and what they really need. More important, they are not shy about voicing their ideas.

As Cui said, being young is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Without doubt, the country needs their wisdom to build a better China.

What they say

An important part of our work in 2018 is to promote winter sports on campuses across the country. We will select and build primary and secondary schools specializing in winter sports training nationwide based on our experiences promoting school-based soccer programs over the past three years. The goal is to involve as many students as possible in winter sports competitions leading up to the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and beyond.

Wang Dengfeng, director of the physical education, health and arts department of the Ministry of Education, during a panel discussion

Hainan province has great potential to become a key aviation hub for the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. More efforts are needed to improve airport infrastructure and improve the efficiency of using airspace resources. In particular, the company will accelerate the expansion of the second phase of Hainan Meilan Airport.

Liao Hongyu, chairman of HNA Infrastructure Co, NPC deputy

Heilongjiang has topped the nation in food production for seven consecutive years, serving as the bedrock supporting China's food security. This is because the province has more than half the nation's total reserve of highly fertile black soil. It is key to accurately evaluate the soil, rigorously curb soil pollution and use new means from engineering, biotechnology and agricultural science to protect this strategic resource.

Wang Jinhui, director of the rural work office of Heilongjiang province, NPC deputy

What Chinese science and technology should do is astound the world, and it should be shown in Shanghai's quest to become an international hub of science and technology innovation. We must know the difference between groundbreaking technologies, the imported technologies we can replace and the technologies that were already commenced overseas that we are chasing.

Wang Zhigang, vice-minister of Science and Technology, during a panel discussion.

China has two imbalances in the allocation of medical resource. One is between urban and rural areas and the other is between different regions. There are two national children's medical centers, and they are located in Beijing and Shanghai. We should have one such center in the western area to help enhance overall medical capacity for children in China's less-developed regions.

Li Qiu, director of Chongqing Children's Hospital, NPC deputy

PEOPLE IN THE NEW ERA

Dedicated teacher strives to represent rural education

By **HU YONGQI**
and **SHI BAOYIN**

As a newly elected deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, Li Ling from Henan province is working to represent rural education and kids living in less-developed areas.

As the principal of Li Ling Hope Primary School in Dongxin district in Zhoukou, Li suggested that the government should invest more in rural areas to strengthen local education and attract talented people.

Many people leave their villages to earn a living in cities, leaving old people and children behind, Li said. She said rural education is the foundation for revitalizing rural areas, and rejuvenation of rural areas should start with rural education. "My father is a teacher and I admired him for imparting knowledge to his students. So I made a wish to become a teacher like him when I was little," Li said.

When she was studying to be a teacher, Li realized that many children in her village dropped out of school for a number of reasons — some because they lived a long way from the school and some simply because they had been left behind by their parents and there was no one to encourage them to attend.

In 2002, after graduating from college, the 20-year-old decided to build a primary school for left-behind children, aiming to reduce the number of school dropouts.

The endeavor required her to start from scratch as she



NPC deputy **Li Ling** plays with her students at Li Ling Hope Primary School in Zhoukou, Henan province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

had no funds to run the school.

Her parents were supportive from the outset. "Of course I supported her when she made the decision," said her father, Li Bingxing, who has been a middle school teacher for about 40 years.

Although her title is principal, Li worked as a laborer when the school was being built, getting up and starting work before the sun rose with her father, mother and brother.

When the new school was completed, Li was faced with a debt of more than 80,000 yuan (\$12,700), but as the number of children attending the school has increased, stronger government support and private donations have helped to keep it running.

"In the first few years, students got very dirty during breaks because the playground was not reinforced with concrete. Their clothes were covered in dirt," said Fan

Zhaoying, a teacher at the school. "Now the kids are cleaner as the facilities have been improved."

To enrich students' extracurricular activities, Li decided to build a small library. Once again, a lack of funds meant she had to put in extra effort. In the summer of 2009, she went to the provincial capital of Zhengzhou and used a tricycle to purchase secondhand books, which was all she could afford, gain-

ing her popularity online.

More government support and social donations came to her aid. And now students can enjoy reading in their spare time in the library.

"I am grateful to everyone for their contributions and plan to speak louder for kids in rural areas now that I am a deputy," Li added.

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Farsighted policies prepare nation for future challenges

The main issues being considered by this year's two sessions are those that are most urgent for China's development.

High on the agenda is promotion of high-quality, stable growth, Premier Li Keqiang said in his annual Government Work Report.

Li also said China will continue to carry out the three critical battles — forestalling and defusing major risks, targeting poverty alleviation and controlling pollution. These are tasks that touch on areas such as house prices, educational reform, medical care and industrial modernization.

Much progress has been made in those areas and plans are to continue that reform work, which should pay dividends in the future.

Yet, there are other challenges that many countries will face that also require a farsighted approach. Among them are a graying population and the future of labor in the age of artificial intelligence.

These are incredibly complex issues that are resistant

to quick fixes. They involve long-term, global trends with a great degree of uncertainty mixed in. They also are likely to play off each other in unforeseen ways.

It is clear that these challenges, which are likely to have their greatest effect in the future, already are on the radar of the Chinese leadership. As concern grew in the past few years about a low birthrate, the country implemented a universal second-child policy in January 2016.

Last year, more than 8.82 million babies were born to families that had one child, up by 1.67 million from 2016.

Still, the National Bureau of Statistics reported that the 17.23 million births recorded in 2017 were down by 630,000 compared with 2016. That followed an initial rise in the overall birthrate in 2016, the first year of the second-child policy.

With the average life span of Chinese growing longer as healthcare and quality of life improve, the concern is that over the long term, there could be a shortage of working-age people to support



Matthew Prichard
Expert's view

them and to keep the economy humming. In China, incentives are under discussion, from expanding the availability of maternal care to financial incentives.

What makes the problem stubborn is that incentives haven't moved the needle much in other Asian nations such as Japan and Singapore where the problem is even more acute. It is resistant to quick fixes because of socioeconomic factors such as a drop in women of childbearing age and family economic concerns that are a disincentive to having children.

It is unclear how this issue might interact with another issue that is being debated in advanced economies. With Japan facing a picture of ever-tightening manpower shortages, The Japan Times said, "The private sector, for its part, is urged to respond by beefing up investments in manpower-saving technolo-

gies, including those featuring artificial intelligence."

China Daily reported late last year on Beijing's intensified efforts to push AI on the heels of the nation's ambitious plan to build a 1 trillion yuan (\$158 billion) AI core industry by 2030, which is expected to stimulate as much as 10 trillion yuan in related business.

Certainly in the shorter term, technology can ease a shortage of workers. In 2015, Changying Precision Technology Co in Dongguan opened an unmanned factory in which the labor — making cellphone modules — was provided by computer-controlled robots. It would have taken 650 workers to do what the robots were doing.

Such technology can also generate jobs for those that design and service robots, but fear has been expressed in North America and Europe that smart robots will replace so many human jobs so quickly that resulting unemployment could be a threat. As the Brookings Institution noted last year, such well-known public fig-

ures as Tesla's Elon Musk have argued for dramatic new policy responses such as universal basic income.

While some say such concerns are overblown, there is no doubt that changes in the workplace are accelerating, and the relationships between labor, well-being and self-worth are being reexamined.

There are several hopeful signs of how China is trying to ready its population for a changing future, including the emphasis on high-quality growth and poverty alleviation. One is the release of a guideline by central government authorities late last year to encourage a favorable environment for entrepreneurship. Also, in the past several years, the government has moved to bolster vocational education.

While it's certain that the future will present new challenges, China's efforts to get ahead of the curve will undoubtedly serve it well.

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Pollution expected to engulf the capital

By **JIANG CHENGLONG**
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The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is expected to see heavy air pollution for a week, starting on Friday, because of unfavorable conditions for the dispersal of pollutants, according to the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

The concentration of PM2.5 will climb to 200 micrograms per cubic meter or higher in central and southern parts of the region, it said.

The capital is likely to see moderate to heavy air pollution through Thursday. Some areas in Shanxi, Shandong and Henan provinces will also be affected, it said.

Air pollution will peak from Sunday to Wednesday, when conditions turn even more unfavorable. Another one or two bouts of smog may strike the region again later this month, the ministry said.

PM2.5 refers to dangerous particulate matter with a diameter of less than 2.5 microns that can enter the bloodstream via the lungs.

The air pollution is created by the convergence of coal burning in the ongoing heating season in the northern part of the country with the restart of factory production after Spring Festival, taking the discharge of air pollutants to a very high level, the ministry said.

It also said the structures of industry, energy consumption

and transportation in the region have not been changed completely, so heavy air pollution is likely to happen when unfavorable meteorological conditions exist.

The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is prone to air pollution in March because of the normal high humidity and stable atmosphere, said Chai Fahe, senior researcher at the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences.

The ministry noted that the region has been hit in March by heavy air pollution for three consecutive years.

It said it will pay close attention to the situation and provide solutions for local governments in time to reduce pollution's effect on people's health. A national joint research center on air pollution will look into the causes of the current pollution and make the results public.

Bad air is expected to be dispersed by rain and a cold weather front around March 16.

Recent research has found that the 28 major cities in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cluster discharge 10 percent of all sulfur dioxide and volatile organic compounds, as well as 15 percent of nitric oxide and primary particulates, though they cover no more than 3 percent of the country's territory. Coal burning, industrial production and vehicles are major contributors to PM2.5 in the region as well.

Hou Liqiang contributed to this story.

A Jones for jade



An antiques merchant displays jade pieces at the 2018 Hangzhou Collectible Fair in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Friday. The fair drew around 400 sellers and collectors. It will last through Sunday. LI ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Regulation to protect nature reserves' ecology

Golf courses, power plants and mines among banned projects

By **LI LEI**
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A regulation banning the construction of new facilities in the country's national nature reserves will take effect on April 15. Banned projects include golf courses and power plants, according to the State Forestry Administration.

The provisional regulation was published on the administration's website on Thursday.

New projects within the country's national nature reserves are subject to government approval under existing law. But the new regulation sets out more explicitly what cannot be built in the reserves, and imposes stricter controls on location and construction to minimize ecological risks.

According to the docu-

ment, golf courses, real estate developments and clubs are banned, as are photovoltaic, thermal and wind power installations.

Commercial mining projects, as well as geological exploration facilities for mineral resources that are not in short supply, are not allowed. Facilities that could lead to pollution or damage to natural landscapes and resources are banned as well.

The new regulation also raises the bar for those seeking approval to build facilities in the reserves, with the forestry administration requiring applicants to submit documents proving that their projects must cut across or occupy the reserve, along with several alternative plans for comparison and an evaluation of the possible ecological risks.

Xu Jiliang, a professor at Beijing Forestry University,

“Research has shown that large numbers of projects have been approved in nature reserves as a result of a lack of standards and detailed rules, raising ecological risks.”

Xu Jiliang, a professor at Beijing Forestry University

said the new rules supplement existing laws and regulations and have great ecological significance.

“Research has shown that large numbers of projects have been approved in nature reserves as a result of a lack of standards and detailed rules, raising ecological risks,” he said.

But the rules exempt amenities needed for people who live in the reserves. Those projects are subject only to local authorities' direction and oversight.

Xu said the exemption is crucial for the more than 10 million people living within nature reserves.

“The exception is in line with poverty relief policies and makes room for the inhabitants of reserves to improve their lives,” he said.

The rules also urge nature reserve managers to strengthen supervision over construction and to monitor ecological risks. Problems should be reported to the forestry administration as soon as possible, it says.

According to the Ministry of Environmental Protection, 5.9 million square meters of illegal buildings were demolished in national nature reserves over the past year, with more than 1,100 officials held accountable.



Tourists have fun with snow in the Jiuzhaigou scenic area in Sichuan province on Thursday. The tourist site was closed for seven months following an earthquake in August. ZHANG LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Jiuzhaigou reopens following earthquake

By **HUANG ZHILING**
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Jiuzhaigou, a scenic valley on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage list in Sichuan province, which was rocked by a magnitude-7.0 earthquake in August, wowed groups of tourists who were among the first to visit after a partial reopening on Thursday.

As heavy snow blanketed the scenic area before the opening, Jiuzhaigou became a wonderland for many who find snow a rarity.

Wu Fuwei, a 58-year-old woman, was one of 767 visitors entering the scenic area. More than 20 years ago, she and two sisters visited Jiuzhaigou for the first time.

“I have visited it many times since. But it's the first time I have seen snow,” she said.

The snow was a great surprise and bonus to visitors from northern parts of the country who have not seen even a snowflake this year.

He Du, a 37-year-old from Beijing, was on business in Chengdu when she learned early this month that Jiuzhaigou would partially reopen.

“I entered my name for a tour group because I wasn't able to visit Jiuzhaigou last summer,” said He, a magazine editor.

She and her husband and daughter were in Chengdu ready to head for the valley in their SUV on Aug 8 when a magnitude-7.0 earthquake shook the area.

Located in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture in Sichuan, Jiuzhaigou means “nine-village valley”.

It is named after the nine Tibetan villages on the eastern edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Visitors are drawn by its 108 alpine lakes and by the Tibetan and Qiang culture.

Twenty-five people died in the earthquake, and 493 were injured. Some of Jiuzhaigou's scenic wonders were also damaged. Following the disaster, the scenic area was closed temporarily.

As it has not snowed meaningfully in Beijing for a full year, He considers her trip to the wintry wonderland in Jiuzhaigou a reward for the delay caused by the earthquake.

“I will ask my husband to bring our daughter to Jiuzhaigou during her summer vacation. But unlike last summer, they will have to join a tour group,” He said.

For the remainder of this year, people can visit Jiuzhaigou only if they join a tour group. No individual visitors will be allowed to enter the scenic area because reconstruction of quake-damaged facilities is underway and will not be finished until 2020.

Before the earthquake, a visitor could get off a vehicle at any desired site to linger or take pictures. Another vehicle would then carry the person elsewhere.

In 2018, one must use a single vehicle to view all the open sites, and then leave, according to Jiuzhaigou's administrative bureau.

FROM THE GRASSROOTS

Ancient ink craft struggles for longer life

By **CHENG SI**
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The knowledge needed to produce the traditional Huizhou inkstick is on the brink of extinction because of a lack of raw materials and trained craftsmen.

Listed as a national intangible heritage in 2006, the Huizhou inkstick, also known as *huimo*, is included as one of the Chinese traditional Four Treasures of the Study, the other three being brush, paper and ink stone.

Acclaimed for its quality, the Huizhou inkstick is mainly produced in the counties of Jixi and Xiuning, and in Huangshan city in southern Anhui province, which was once referred to as Huizhou.

The fine craftsmanship, material and technique for producing *huimo* are strict. In old times it was made in 11 steps, including inkstick airing and decoration, while the modern recipe reduces the number of procedures to eight, featuring the collection of turpentine soot and the making of a mold.

“The fine-grained soft Huizhou inkstick can express the quintessence of Chinese calligraphy and brush paintings with its long-lasting color, just like the eyes of a person conveying glowing



Wang Yunqian, a craftsman at Wang Aijun's workshop, takes a finished inkstick out of a mold. CHENG SI / CHINA DAILY

inner contentment,” said Qian Xinjiang, a member of the Anhui Calligraphers Association.

But the popularity and convenience of using carbon-black ink poses a major challenge to the market for the traditional inkstick, Qian said.

Wang Aijun, an inheritor of the national intangible heritage, has been dedicated to the production and research of *huimo* in Jixi for more than 30 years, ever since he joined a local production workshop as an apprentice in 1984 at age 19.

“Genuine *huimo* can only be produced by hand, and the whole manufacturing process is painstaking,” he said. “Collecting turpentine soot, for

example, requires the craftsman to stay in a closed and oxygen-deficient environment to collect the soot in incomplete combustion, which is a great challenge to the fitness and willpower of the worker.”

The 53-year-old craftsman is actively involved in researching the ancient method of making *huimo*, while introducing new ideas, such as adding traditional Chinese medicines to change the color of the ink and make it more colorfast.

Xu Zichao, who wrote *Huimo Chronicles* with support from the Jixi government, said *huimo* can be dated to the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties, and reached its greatest populari-

ty in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

However, there are no more than 200 skilled inkstick carvers and craftsmen in Jixi county, and most of them are elderly.

“Making the inkstick requires the spirit of craftsmanship,” Wang said. “The job is unattractive to the young generation. The working environment is stuffy and kind of dirty, which makes young people recoil from it.”

Wang, who owns an inkstick production company, has secured the cooperation of the Jixi government in building a *huimo*-themed cultural park to help promote the traditional treasure. It includes a museum, an experience hall and exhibition halls for Chinese traditional calligraphy and brush painting. The cultural park has attracted an investment of 160 million yuan (\$23.5 million), with an 8 million yuan grant from the local government. It is scheduled to open to the public in May.

Cheng Mubin, director of the Jixi Cultural Center, said: “We are optimistic about the future of *huimo* as we combine the development of the traditional craft with tourism. Talent and innovation are also emphasized to bring new life to the ancient national treasure.”

Briefly

JIANGSU Nanjing Massacre survivor, 90, dies

Yang Xiuying, a 90-year-old survivor of the Nanjing Massacre, died in Nanjing on Thursday, the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders announced. Yang was born on July 30, 1928. On Dec 13, 1937, the first day of the six-week Japanese rampage that claimed the lives of more than 300,000 people, her father, Yang Bingrong, was guarding a house with her uncle when they encountered a group of Japanese soldiers. Her father was stabbed to death while her uncle had a narrow escape. Yang moved to a refugee camp at Ginling College with family members. In her later testimony about the massacre, she said Japanese soldiers went to the camp to search for women. Her two sisters had to hide, and she witnessed many people being killed by the soldiers.

GANSU Tourism helps 500 poor villages

Gansu province plans to lift 500 villages out of poverty by helping them develop rural tourism over the next three years, government sources said on Friday. The provincial government will allocate funds and offer preferential policies to villages in the underdeveloped Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Linxia Hui autonomous prefecture, Tianshu Tibetan autonomous county and another 18 counties to help them develop rural tourism. To meet the goal of lifting 20 percent of the poor population out of poverty through rural tourism by 2020, the province will also build new roads and construct or renovate 1,000 toilets.

HENAN Gene offers path to more corn

Chinese scientists have found a gene that can help grow bigger grains of corn to raise yields. The gene, called *ur2*, is crucial to the growth of grains, according to research by Henan Agricultural University and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences. The finding promises to help increase corn yields and lay a foundation for related studies in crossbreeding, said Tang Jihua, head of the research team. The research results were published in the journal *New Phytologist*.

BEIJING Film on China a box office hit

Amazing China, a 90-minute documentary recording China's achievements over the last five years, has become the country's all-time highest-grossing documentary. Released on March 2, the documentary had brought in 176 million yuan (\$27.78 million) at the box office as of Thursday. The number surpassed that of the previous record holder, *Twenty-Two*, a documentary about “comfort women.” The China achievement documentary introduces a series of major developments the country has made since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, including building the world's largest radio telescope — the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope, or FAST — and the world's largest maritime drilling rig, the Blue Whale 2. Rated 9.6 by viewers on Maoyan, a major Chinese film database platform, the film's box office is expected to exceed 376 million yuan.

COMMENT

OPINION

中国日报

China Daily

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China respects DPRK decision to ease tensions on peninsula

An official from the Republic of Korea dropped a bombshell on Thursday by announcing that US President Donald Trump has agreed to meet Kim Jong-un, top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, by May, and that Pyongyang will refrain from conducting nuclear or missile tests.

"Kim Jong-un talked about denuclearization with the South Korean Representatives, not just a freeze," Trump tweeted following the ROK National Security Adviser Chung Eui-yong's announcement.

Since no sitting US president has ever met with a DPRK leader, a meeting between Trump and Kim will mark a breakthrough and should be welcomed by all countries, including China.

Given such dramatic developments on the Korean Peninsula, Chinese people, the whole world, actually, are wondering about how China will respond. China should remain — in fact, it has remained — calm in the face of such a positive development.

And it will never feel "marginalized" because denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and restoring peace and stability there are China's top goal that outweighs anything else, including its ties with the two Koreas and the power games being played in the Asia-Pacific region. It should be composed also because any turbulence on the peninsula caused by Pyongyang's nuclear activities would pose a potential security threat to China, its north-eastern region in particular.

China has restored its ties with the DPRK to normal state-to-state relations, and bilateral economic ties are mainly based on equality and mutual benefit, although the two sides are still linked by an ideological bond. China's influence on the Korean Peninsula, if any, is based on its enhanced strength and geographical location. China's ability to sway the configuration of international sanctions also makes it a key party to the Korean Peninsula issue.

However, China is not the dominating party in the issue, as it doesn't directly decide the attitude of any of the other parties involved.

China's efforts to break the stalemate in the Korean nuclear issue have paid off, as the latest development is exactly what China has been painstakingly working for. China proposed the "dual-suspension" approach (the DPRK suspending its nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the United States and the ROK suspending their large-scale military drills) as a way to ultimately resolve the issue, and such a scenario has finally emerged.

Besides, China's "dual-track approach", which suggests denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula through a peace mechanism, has also gained ground. China has joined United Nations-led sanctions against the DPRK over the past two years, and objected to the proposed extreme measures, such as maritime blockade against Pyongyang, as they could ignite a military conflict, and leave no room for resolving the peninsula issue through peaceful means.

As a major power, China does not need to worry about the DPRK possibly "seeking refuge in" the US, especially because for years it has been pushing for direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang and has all the reason to adhere to it now.

Also, China has no reason not to feel happy at a Trump-Kim meeting that would contribute to the process of denuclearization of the peninsula, as the eventual resolution of the peninsula nuclear issue will help China develop better ties with the DPRK.

Beijing respects Pyongyang's decision to defuse tensions on the peninsula, and will consistently support peaceful means to denuclearize the peninsula.

— GLOBAL TIMES

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Chen Weihua

Using Africa as a ploy to attack China futile

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's 27-minute speech at George Mason University, Virginia, on Tuesday before he embarked on a five-nation tour of Africa would have been fine had he cut it a bit short. Instead, he chose to accuse China of encouraging dependency using opaque contracts, predatory loan practices and corrupt deals to mire African countries in debt, undercut their sovereignty, deny them their long-term and self-sustaining growth.

Tillerson had also accused China of being a colonial power before his visit to Latin America a month ago only to be countered by Peruvian Trade and Tourism Minister Eduardo Ferreyros, who praised China as a good trade partner.

The same is true in Africa. After Tillerson landed in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa on Wednesday on the first leg of his Africa trip, he must have been surprised to see a sparkling light rail built by China Railway Group that has been operating since 2015, the year I visited and covered the African coun-

tries with huge economic potential. He should also have been struck by a 759-kilometer modern railway linking Addis Ababa with neighboring Djibouti, which started commercial operations on Jan 1 this year. More than 95 percent of the trade of landlocked Ethiopia passes through Djibouti.

When Tillerson said the United States sees a bright future in Africa, I thought he meant China, not only because I wrote that China views Africa with optimism, but also because BBC reported on Tuesday that Chinese construction companies have made significant improvements to long-neglected infrastructure in a number of countries.

China believes Ethiopia and many other African countries have the potential to repeat China's economic miracle while avoiding the mistakes it has committed in the past four decades.

One wonders whether Tillerson toured the Eastern Industrial Zone in Dukem just outside Addis Ababa, for there he would have seen how Chinese companies are contributing to industrial

modernization, training workers and creating tens of thousands of jobs, invalidating all his accusations against China.

David Dollar, a US Treasury emissary in Beijing during the Barack Obama administration and a former World Bank country director for China, has done extensive research on China in both Africa and Latin America. Asked about the accusations labeled against China by Tillerson recently and Hillary Clinton a few years ago, Dollar denounced them as "nonsense", saying it is hard to back them up with evidence and they were humiliating to African and Latin American countries.

Douglas Paal, director of the Asia program at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has just returned from a fact-finding trip to Africa. In a talk at the Brookings Institution on Wednesday, he praised China's economic activities on the continent, saying the African countries welcomed them. Paal, a China expert who served in the George H.W. Bush administration, termed Tillerson's speech on Tuesday as "terrible"; "an

impoverished speech conceptually and counterproductive tactically" that sets the "American policy in the wrong direction".

Tillerson's speech may have been aimed at distracting African countries from the offensive comment of US President Donald Trump against them in January, or Tillerson's deeds as chief executive of Exxon Mobil to push for deals in African countries that were widely denounced for being mired in corruption and ignoring human rights. African oil exports account for some 90 percent of US-Africa trade.

Whatever the motive, Tillerson's ploy is unlikely to succeed because of China's cooperative and positive activities in Africa. Of course, Africa would benefit much more if the US, instead of criticizing China, joined hands with China to tap the huge growth potential of the continent.

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Harvey Morris

Pulling the strings of Trump's trade war

It is an ominous sign that the White House adviser most closely associated with President Donald

Trump's latest assault on free trade is the author of *Death by China*, a 2011 diatribe that accused Chinese exporters of unfairly flooding US markets.

Trump stunned international markets on Thursday when he formally signed proclamations to impose a 25-percent tariff on imported steel and 10-percent on aluminum. Earlier he wrote on Twitter that "trade wars are good, and easy to win".

China, which is far from being the only exporting country in Trump's sights, has so far responded with restraint. Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, told journalists that China did not want a trade war with the US, "but if the US takes actions that hurt Chinese interests, China will not sit idly by".

In its initial measured response, Beijing sent the message that the United States should abide by multilateral trading rules and contribute to international trade and economic order.

A recent visit to the US by Liu He, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, was seen in the US as aimed at averting a trade war. Liu's message was that China wants cooperation and remains committed to reform and opening-up.

Neighbors of the US and its closest allies, from Canada to European Union countries, have generally delivered a

much more aggressive response to Trump.

Politicians in Canada, which sells most of its steel to the US, had described the tariffs as unacceptable although Canada and Mexico are initially exempted, pending the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. And the EU, faced with Trump's follow-up threat to slap new taxes on EU carmakers, is said to be already considering upping tariffs on leading US brands.

White House watchers have detected the influence of Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro, author of *Death by China*, behind the president's latest protectionist blast. The president's "trade war" rhetoric is seen as an indication that Navarro and other trade nationalists in the administration have won an internal battle with globalists such as Trump's adviser Gary Cohn, who heads the National Economic Council and has offered to resign.

The anti-Chinese tone of Navarro's 2011 book, and a related documentary



ZHU GENHUA / FOR CHINA DAILY

film the following year, was echoed by Trump during his election campaign in which the economist served as a policy adviser. He was rewarded with the post of director of the White House National Trade Council.

Navarro's accusations that China was "guilty" of currency manipulation and abusive trade policies were echoed in Trump's campaign speeches.

His book and the film both were criticized by some people, including those who expressed reservations about economic relations with China.

"There's an important political argument at the core of Peter Navarro's agit-

prop documentary, *Death by China*," Sam Adams wrote in the Los Angeles Times. "But it's drowned out by xenophobic hysteria and exaggerations so rampant it becomes impossible to tell light from heat."

Economics commentator Jonathan Pain said on the US channel CNBC that Navarro may have gained the upper hand in the clash with the pro-trade camp in the White House. "I think we are likely to see more surgical, and specific American trade measures or tariffs against Chinese goods," he said. "Navarro's" mindset and his opinion appears to have won the battle within the White House. It is very important that we understand the ramifications of that."

On the Fox News Channel, the president's favorite, Navarro was assuring viewers that he was at least an equal opportunity protectionist, insisting that not even close allies would be exempted from the tariffs on aluminum and steel.

Navarro's apparent rise has prompted speculation that he might soon be elevated to the post of assistant to the president. However, as the US' trade partners wait for further bombshells from the White House, globalists in the US are pushing back, reminding the president that, far from being a pushover, a trade war is the kind of conflict nobody can win.

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Wang Huiyao

Spy label on Chinese students will harm US

By labeling some Chinese students and scholars in the United States spies and subsequently holding a US congressional hearing on the issue recently, the US politicians are refusing to see the forest for the trees.

About 1.08 million overseas students are studying in colleges in the US, according to the Institute of International Education report issued in November. Of them 350,755 are Chinese students, accounting for 32.5 percent of all overseas students in the US. In addition, about 40,000 Chinese students are studying in US primary and middle schools.

Suppose Chinese families on average spend \$45,000 on each student's education, they would contribute about \$17.9 billion each year to the US economy, excluding the expenditure of those students and their relatives on air fare, tourism and other fields.

According to the 2017 Chinese Overseas Students Report, published by the Center for China and Globalization, an independent Chinese think tank that focuses on China-US relations and exchanges, Chinese students in US universities contributed \$11.43 billion, or 34.8 percent of the total overseas stu-

dents' contribution, to the US economy in 2016.

Chinese students and Chinese American scholars have also become a major source of human resources for US science and technology industries and other sectors. Chinese scientists, engineers, counselors, lawyers and professors are working in US universities, Silicon Valley and Wall Street. Some Chinese Americans have also excelled in US politics, with quite a few being elected to or selected for the posts of state governors, ministers, congressmen and ambassadors.

Besides, eight Chinese Americans have won the Nobel Prize in sciences while working in the US. And some Chinese have been trained and sent back to China by US multinational companies such as Microsoft, General Electric, Goldman Sachs and McDonald's as senior executives to expand their businesses, and thus increase the companies' profits.

Which means Washington has immensely benefited from Chinese students who study in America — nearly half of all Chinese students overseas in 2016 were in the US, according to Ministry of Education data.

China, too, has benefited from the stu-

dents who have returned from the US, as they have helped propel China's economic development and served as a friendship bridge between China and the outside world.

Therefore, those US politicians who use espionage and national security as a pretext to incite hatred against Chinese students and scholars will end up causing more harm to US interests than to Chinese businesses.

History shows that stereotype views against a race or group will only deter friendly communication between the US and other countries and fan extremism, creating greater risks for US security and interests. The US Congress has corrected one historical mistake, though, by passing a resolution in 2012 and apologizing for the discriminating laws against Chinese immigrants about a century ago.

We hope the US and China will accord priority to bilateral interests, and promote goodwill and understanding between the two peoples to safeguard their respective national security.

There are three ways such issues can be dealt with.

First, it is necessary to form a special panel, which will help the two sides to properly understand the role of students

and scholars in routine high-level social and cultural dialogue. Also, the two sides should exchange their concerns and listen to each other carefully before making efforts to resolve similar issues and improve mutual trust.

Second, related educational agencies in China should train the students and scholars before they leave for the US so that they can avoid the possible risks that come with studying or conducting research in the US and abide by US laws and rules.

Third, as the third-largest destination for foreign students, China should create more favorable conditions to woo more overseas students and scholars, especially those from the US, in order to make more Americans better understand China and thus become goodwill ambassadors of China in foreign countries.

The US and China should realize the exchange of students seeking higher education is a trend that boosts globalization and benefits both sides.

The author is founder and president of Beijing-based Center for China and Globalization, and vice-chairman of Western Returned Scholars Association.

TWO SESSIONS

Forex reserves to remain stable

PBOC says last month's fall due to fluctuations in global asset prices

By LI XIANG

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China's foreign exchange reserves will basically remain stable given the stabilizing economic growth prospects and the yuan's exchange rate, the central bank said on Friday.

Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the People's Bank of China, said the country's forex reserves have been affected by international asset prices but there have not been any major changes in China's balance of international payments.

The country saw its forex reserves fall in February to \$3.134 trillion, down \$26.98 billion from the previous month, following 12 consecutive months of rises, according to data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

"The value of the forex reserves moves in line with the price change of stocks and bonds in which they (forex reserves) are invested," Zhou said at a news conference on the sidelines of the annual session of the 13th National People's Congress. "But there have not been any major changes in China's balance of international payments and foreign exchange condition," Zhou said.

Pan Gongsheng, vice-governor of the central bank and head of the SAFE, said the recent rise of the dollar index and the decline of international bond and stock prices are the two main factors that led to the drop in China's forex reserves in February.

China has stepped up scrutiny of its foreign exchange market after the market experienced some big shocks, Pan said, noting that the regulator has adopted a macro pruden-



Zhou Xiaochuan (center), governor of the People's Bank of China, answers reporters' queries at a news conference on Friday on the sidelines of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Nation not in a hurry to develop digital currency, says central bank governor

China is in no rush to introduce a digital currency to prevent financial risks, the country's central bank governor said on Friday.

"The central bank has started to conduct research on new technologies, but the development of digital currency will be a prudent process. It will be fully tested before introducing to the public," Zhou Xiaochuan said at a news conference on the sidelines of the ongoing annual ses-

sion of the 13th National People's Congress.

He said the development of digital currencies was inevitable, but the government had a rather prudent view on whether the currency will be used for trading of virtual assets.

"We do not prefer speculative products that make people rich overnight. That is not a good thing," he said.

The central bank has been conducting research to issue

the country's own sovereign digital currency, a move in parallel with similar efforts in other countries. Some trials have been made with large commercial banks last year.

Virtual currency trading of any kind is presently not permitted in China, as the supervisory bodies are serious about the ensuing risks. The central bank banned initial coin offerings last year as part of the effort to prevent risks, said Zhou.

He said future regulatory perception toward innovative fintech products will be "dynamic", which means regulations will depend on the maturity of technology.

He said innovators should take cautious steps before introducing new products, and innovations should not go against the current stable financial order.

Wang Yanfei

tial approach on external debts and required banks to put aside risk reserve in forward settlement of foreign exchange.

The country has also stepped up crackdown on transaction fraud and illegal money changing through "underground banks" while increasing the verification on

the authenticity of cross-border payments, Pan said.

While China has basically exited countercyclical adjustments on capital outflows, Pan stressed that the country will maintain its policy consistency on supervision measures pertaining to cross-border capital movement.

China's export growth

rebounded to 44.5 percent year-on-year in February, the fastest pace in three years. Import growth fell to 6.3 percent year-on-year, resulting in a trade surplus of \$33.74 billion against market expectations of a deficit.

Zhao Yang, chief China economist at Nomura Securities, said in a research note

that the robust January-February trade data suggest that the yuan could be supported by a relatively benign flow backdrop and favorable global growth outlook in 2018, especially if the Chinese authorities manage to engineer a gradual and controlled deleveraging process to stabilize the economy.

Prudent policy will support housing sector

The country will maintain a prudent monetary policy to promote the development of the housing market, as risks in the sector remain under control, a vice-governor of the People's Bank of China, the central bank, said on Friday.

"Reasonable increases in housing loans are necessary to meet the demand for housing purchases. Repayment amounts for housing loans have risen, but it is still within a reasonable range from a long-term perspective," Pan Gongsheng, vice-governor of the PBOC, said at a news conference on the sidelines of the annual session of the 13th National People's Congress.

In 2017, housing loans increased by 4 trillion yuan (\$630 billion), up 22 percent year-on-year, compared to the 12.7 percent year-on-year growth of total yuan loans during the same period the previous year, according to Pan.

Risks remain under control in the sector, he said, citing the non-performance rate of housing loans that stayed below 1 percent, compared to 1.74 percent of the overall banking sector.

As for mortgage interest rates, he said the government will urge commercial banks to take a different approach in issuing housing loans, widening the interest rate spreads to meet market demand.

He added the government has noticed and will closely monitor some aggressive steps taken by some property companies and will strive to keep property markets stable.

Wang Yanfei

Briefly

EV sales to go up by 60% in 2018

The State Grid Corp of China has forecast a 60 percent increase in electric vehicle sales in China, which already accounts for the lion's share of EV sales worldwide this year. There were about 3.2 million EVs in the world by the end of 2017 and more than half of them, or 1.7 million, were in China, said Wang Min, executive vice-president of State Grid, in his address to the CERAWEEK, an annual energy conference organized by US business company IHS Markit, in Houston, Texas.

Shanghai economy up 6.9% in 2017

Shanghai's economy grew 6.9 percent in 2017, the municipal statistics bureau said. It kept pace with the country's GDP growth and was slightly higher than the 6.8-percent increase in the previous year. Shanghai's GDP reached 3.01 trillion yuan (\$475 billion) last year with the largest contribution from the tertiary sector, which made up 69 percent of the total.

Magneti starts work on Hefei unit

Italian automotive supplier Magneti Marelli started building a major research & development center and manufacturing plant for powertrain components on Thursday in Hefei, capital of East China's Anhui province. Magneti Marelli China Powertrain in Hefei, a new company, has been established for the project, which will produce components for injection for gasoline direct injection and multi-point injection engines, as well as throttle body and intake manifolds, according to the company. Based in the Hefei State High-tech Industrial Development Zone, the project will see a total investment of 1 billion yuan (\$158 million).

BOJ to maintain fiscal stance

The Bank of Japan on Friday opted to maintain its aggressive monetary easing program as it continues to work toward hitting its lofty 2 percent inflation target. The central bank's policy board members voted at the end of a two-day meeting to continue with its yield curve control comprising an interest rate of minus 0.1 percent. The BOJ also opted to keep its government bond purchases at the same level, which are aimed at steering the 10-year yield to around zero percent.

CHINA DAILY-XINHUA

As world awaits 5G, China already tapping 6G tech

By MA SI

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Researchers have already begun working to tap the potential of 6G — the sixth generation of mobile communication technology — even though 5G is still several years away from large-scale com-

mercial application, Miao Wei, minister of Industry and Information Technology, said on Friday.

"We have started research on the development of 6G from the end of last year or at the beginning of this year," Miao said on the sidelines of the ongoing first session of

the 13th National People's Congress.

The move highlights China's eagerness to prepare for cutting-edge technologies as the country aims to gain a lead in the global race toward a fully internet-connected world.

"As mobile communication

technology advances rapidly, it not only connects people with people, but links machines with machines as well as machines and humans. That is why we rush into the research on 6G. We want to prepare for such a world," Miao said.

On the subject of self-driv-

ing vehicles, another highly-anticipated application of technology, Miao said, "It would take a long time, such as eight to 10 years, before such cars are commercially used.

"Driving security is our primary consideration. If self-driving vehicles often

run into technological troubles, it is impossible to promote such cars," Miao said.

According to Miao, a more pressing issue is the replacement of workers with robots.

"That is an inevitable trend. We must prepare for such a shift," Miao said.

Consumer inflation rises in February

By XIN ZHIMING

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Consumer inflation rose in China during February, hitting the highest level in over four years, thanks to rising food prices during the Lunar New Year holiday and low temperatures, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Friday.

Analysts said the whole-year consumer inflation growth would be mild despite the surge in February, thus failing to pressure monetary policymakers to raise interest rates.

The Consumer Price Index increased by 2.9 percent in February from a year earlier, compared with 1.5 percent in January, the NBS said. It is the highest since November 2013, when the index rose by 3 percent year-on-year.

The high reading, which beats forecasts of most economists, has been caused by the low base effect and economic



Consumers choose fruits at a supermarket in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province. SI WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

activity pick-up during the week-long Spring Festival holiday, which fell in February this year versus January last year, as well as low temperature in many parts of the country, which disrupted normal transportation of some agricultural products, said Sheng Guoqing, a senior statistician of the NBS, in a statement.

Travel activity increases during the Lunar New Year holiday pushed up prices of transportation and tourism, with prices of air and coach tickets as well as accommodation rising strongly, Sheng said.

A large number of rural

laborers working in the cities choose to return to their rural home towns during the Lunar New Year holiday, leading to rising prices of labor, vehicle repair and maintenance and domestic services in the cities, Sheng said.

The seasonal factor suggests the strong rise in consumer inflation could be short-lived, analysts said.

"Extreme weather only affects short-term reading (of the CPI) and does not have an impact on the long-term trend," said a research note from China Merchants Securities. "As the effect of the Spring Festival holiday fades out, the

CPI is expected to fall in March," it said.

This year's consumer inflation would be mild on the whole and the highest monthly reading may not break the country's inflation control target of at most 3 percent for this year, said the China Merchants Securities note. Inflation will not be a factor driving monetary policymakers to raise interest rates, it said.

China's Producer Price Index, which measures factory-gate prices, rose by 3.7 percent year-on-year in February, down from 4.3 percent in January and slowing for the fourth consecutive month.

Tencent eyeing livestreaming edge with more investments

By CHAI HUA in Shenzhen, Guangdong

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Internet giant Tencent Holdings Ltd is looking to establish a clear lead over rivals in China's livestreaming market with latest investments of over \$1 billion in the industry's top firms.

YY Inc, a leading livestreaming social media platform in China, on Thursday announced that its subsidiary Huya Inc has secured series B financing from Tencent to the tune of \$461.6 million.

Though YY has a controlling stake in Huya, Tencent has got approval for purchase of additional Huya shares at fair market price to gain 50.1 percent of the voting power in Huya.

Earlier on the same day, Wuhan Douyu Network Technology Co Ltd, one of the biggest competitors of Huya, revealed its latest round of fundraising is also from Tencent and the amount is \$630 million. Douyu went online in 2014 and Tencent has participated its series B and C rounds of financing, which totals to 1.6 billion yuan

(\$252 million), but it is the first time that the technology firm is supporting Huya.

The livestreaming market is booming in China. Data from China Internet Network Information Center show that the industry's user base was 422 million by the end of last year and that for video game content is 224 million, up 50 percent from the numbers in 2016.

Huya and Douyu are the top two firms in terms of market penetration rate and daily active user volume, according to Shenzhen-based big data service provider Jiguang.

The two platforms account for 50 percent of the market share and the situation will be stable for a long time. Tencent's investment into the firms could "make the company become the dominant player in the livestreaming market, like it is in the video game market," Dong Zhen, an analyst with domestic consulting company Analysys, told China Daily.

He added these platforms could also bring in new users to Tencent's gaming products, further strengthening its position in the gaming sector.

Liu Jiehao, an analyst with research firm iiMedia Research, said Tencent's investment will bear fruit soon as Huya and Douyu are both planning to go public this year. Their estimated value is reportedly about \$2 billion each.

He believes "the key to win the competition in livestreaming platforms is quality and quantity of celebrity hosts," a resource that needs large capital support. "So the Tencent investment is significant for Huya's and Douyu's development."

Tencent will have a powerful impact in the livestreaming market in the short term, he said, but it is hard to say if other internet giants would utilize the same method to snatch celebrity hosts and rise rapidly.

In addition, he noted that another risk is that the government has been tightening policy supervision on the industry lately, so healthy content appears to be important. Technology information provider TMTpost said about 70 livestreaming platforms have been shut down in the first half of 2017.

Better infrastructure bestows good life to the people of Aba

Government projects transform far-flung autonomous prefecture and raise living standards

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture in Southwest China's Sichuan province has undergone fundamental changes in recent years, with the government investing heavily in infrastructure and housing in order to raise the living standards of its people.

The 83,400-square-kilometer region is roughly the size of Austria, and is home to 920,000 residents across 13 counties and cities, among whom 530,000 are from the Tibetan ethnic group and 170,000 are Qiang.

For years, the people of the Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture have lived a nomadic lifestyle, herding yaks and living off the land. This has meant that infrastructure and permanent housing have been slow to develop.

Today however, following considerable government investment and cooperation with the people, the far-flung inland region east of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has more than 10,000 kilometers of asphalt roads. Just several decades ago there were only dirt tracks.

The improved transport network has brought greater prosperity to Aba which is today served by two airports — Hongyuan Airport and Jiuzhai Huanglong Airport, and is set to be connected via the 573 km Chengdu-Lanzhou high-speed railway by 2020.

The general consensus among the Tibetan herdsmen who live in Aba, is that the transport infrastructure brings greater opportunities for better lives and opens a window for them to the outside world as well as making it easier for tourists to visit the area.

For generations many of the people living in Aba resided in tents made from yak pelts. From 2009, the government set about helping them move into more permanent accommodation with running water and modern facilities.

The government paid for between 20 to 30 percent of the construction costs for the housing depending on the financial situation of each family. The rest of the money was provided via five-year interest-free loans, with the average four-bedroom, two-story house costing 200,000 yuan (\$31,600).

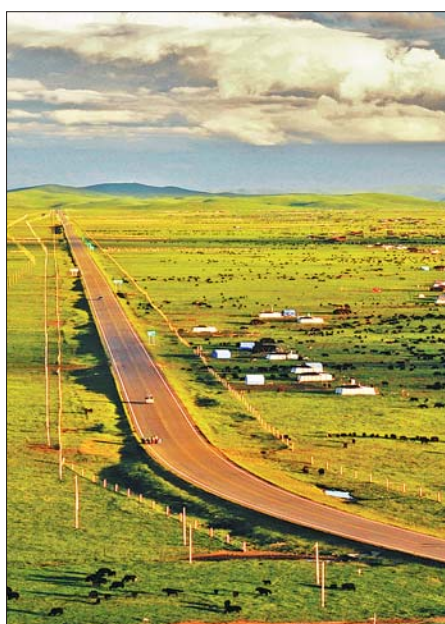
The majority of the families were able to pay off their loans within two or three years, many of them generating the money from tourism, selling yaks or raw materials used in herbal medicine.

So far, the settlement project in Aba has benefited 210,000 people from the Tibetan ethnic group. Before 2009, about 60,000 of them lived a nomadic lifestyle, while the other 150,000 lived in semi-permanent accommodation constructed using mud, wood and stone.

In the four years that followed the initiation of the project, the prefecture government helped the local people to found 608 new villages in 11 counties. The cost to the government was 2.9 billion yuan, while the local people paid 4.5 billion yuan.

The improved housing has not completely altered the lifestyles of the Tibetan ethnic group in the region.

They still graze their yaks in the pasture in summer and autumn, so the government has provided them with 41,500 canvas tents, which are more comfortable than the yak-hair variety, together with nine essential items for maintaining a basic lifestyle, including solar power storage



Clockwise from top: Herders' houses in Hongyuan county of the Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture, Southwest China's Sichuan province. An improved countryside road of Wenchuan county in Aba. Women in traditional dress applaud an artistic performance. ZHANG JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY Women from the Qiang ethnic group relax by the river's edge on Qiang cultural street in Wenchuan county, Aba. Performers take part in a traditional dance. A high-speed road at the grassland of Hongyuan county. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“Fundamental changes have taken place in our living conditions.”

Lhakpa, a Tibetan herdsman in Hongyuan county, Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture, Sichuan province

batteries, stoves, folding beds, water containers and cream separators.

Lhakpa, a Tibetan herdsman in Hongyuan county, said he is very content with his well-decorated 200 sq m home that the government helped him to build several years ago.

“Fundamental changes have taken place in our living conditions,” he said.

To supplement his income, Lhakpa has con-

verted five rooms into homestays for tourists, which has added tens of thousands of yuan to his family's yearly income.

As well putting roofs over people's heads, the Aba government has implemented compulsory 15-year education, providing subsidies for children in kindergarten and high school.

Lhakpa, a father of two, has benefited from the scheme.

“Education does not cost money. It is good for the future of our people,” he said.

Since the 1950s, the number of schools in Aba has increased from 245 to 676 today.

Sonam Tashi, Lhakpa's father, 70, has stood witness to changes that have been made in Aba over the years.

“Food and clothes are no longer a headache-maker,” he said. “More importantly, it is very convenient to see a doctor now, and thanks to the medical insurance, the medical care is not a burden anymore.”

Statistics from local government show that Aba's GDP rose from 24 million yuan in 1952 to 29.3 billion yuan last year, and that average rural income per head last year was 11,720 yuan, and 30,180 yuan for urban residents.

Apart from traditional agriculture and animal husbandry, tourism has developed into a robust economic engine and a source of income growth.

Statistics from the Aba government show that tourists from home and abroad made about 29 million trips to the prefecture last year, generating about 23.46 billion yuan in revenue.

Jin Dong, head of the poverty relief and immigration bureau of Aba, said the government is paying special attention to addressing seven livelihood issues for the shepherds — medical care, roads, electricity, water, education, employment and income growth.

In rural areas, access to

medical facilities can be difficult. However, the Aba government has set out to ensure that it takes no more than one hour for any resident to reach one of the area's 1,683 hospitals and clinics.

A spokesman for the government said that the Aba government would continue to build upon its infrastructure achievements.

Today, Aba has 13 public libraries, 14 cultural centers, nine museums, 221 township cultural stations and 1,353 village reading rooms.

Located in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and the Yellow River, Aba's ecological protection is also of national importance.

The government has moved all mines out of the region, and has increased the forest coverage rate from 21.76 percent to 25.1 percent over the past 20 years. Currently, there are five natural reserves in Aba, covering a total area of 760,000 hectares.



Dancers perform at the 18th Lantern Festival Gala in Jiuzhaigou county of Sichuan province on March 2. JIA QINHAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Jiuzhaigou Lantern Festival shines light on quake relief effort

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Picturesque Jiuzhaigou county in Sichuan province held its 18th Lantern Festival Gala on March 2, in celebration of the 15th day of the first month of the lunar calendar.

Staged at the Cultural and Artistic Center Square of the Jiuzhaigou New Area, it was the first gala hosted since a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit the county in August last year.

As a result, this year's celebrations featured elements that dealt with the reconstruction of the area after the disaster including prayers for safety and happiness, celebrating the beautiful natural landscape and praise for the Party and State.

Apart from the gala that took place in the square, there were also artistic performances held in the county towns of Dalu, Chaodi and Zhangzha.

The main gala began in style and tradition with an opening dance routine organized by Jiuzhaigou's fitness association. The performers were joined by Tibetan villagers from Wujiao who brought with them a herd of wild horses to attend the prayer ceremony — a custom of the ethnic group living in the county.

A dramatic performance entitled *No One Should Be Left Behind* and a poetry recitation *Appreciate Your Help* paid tribute to the brave men and women who helped the local area in the direct aftermath of last year's earthquake.

Time-honored dances, praying ceremonies and demonstrations of intangible cultural heritage were also held, featuring local children dressed as pandas and performances by singers Yongdrung Gyal, Purba Rgyal and Yun Duo.

Yongdrung Gyal sang the classic tune *Mysterious Jiuzhaigou*, encouraging the audience to take part.

The famous singer, who grew up in the local area, said: “I feel indebted to the mountains and rivers.”

“I feel indebted to the mountains and rivers.”

Yongdrung Gyal, a local singer

He said he hopes to encourage people with his song to work together to rebuild their hometown.

This year's Lantern Festival gala was the first to feature audience participation, with singers, dancers and the audience all celebrating the occasion equally together.

As is a feature every year, time was taken to honor and praise some model citizens of Jiuzhaigou.

Tourism to the scenic tourist spot, known for its mountainous vistas, cascading waterfalls and clear ponds and pools, has taken a hit since the earthquake but locals remain steadfast in their resolve to return to prosperity.

About seven months on, Luweihai, a popular lake in the tourism zone, has regained its original deep blue hue and the reeds lining its edge have all returned to growth.

Another lake, Shuzhengqunhai, has also returned to its original state — its water is clear enough to see all the way to the lake's floor.

Although some places in the scenic area were damaged by the earthquake, other interesting rock formations were created.

For example, the Shuanglong Waterfall (or two dragon waterfall), was created after Huohaihua Lake was destroyed — its water now flows into Shuanglonghai Lake, overflowing its bank and forming the new waterfall.

A new sightseeing platform is to be constructed near the waterfall.



Costumed children dance to music at the 18th Lantern Festival Gala in Jiuzhaigou. HUANG XINYU / FOR CHINA DAILY



Children compete on stage at the 18th Lantern Festival Gala in Jiuzhaigou. JIA QINHAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Tariffs trigger condemnation

South Korea, Japan among allies calling for exemptions

By AGENCIES

Business groups and trading partners around the world reacted sharply to US President Donald Trump's decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports on Friday, warning of damage to relations amid industry calls for retaliation.

Japan said the move would have a "big impact" on its close ties with the United States.

Yoshihide Suga, Japan's top government spokesman, said the move could harm the global trading system and the entire world economy and said Tokyo will urge the US to give the country an exemption.

Trump on Thursday pressed ahead with the imposition of 25 percent tariffs on steel imports and 10 percent for aluminum, though he announced exemptions for Canada and Mexico and said exceptions could also be made for other allies.

The European Union, Brazil and South Korea also said they should not be targeted or would seek exemptions.

South Korea, a key Washington ally, is the third largest steel exporter to the US, after Canada and Brazil.

"We should prevent a trade war situation from excessive protectionism, in which the entire world harms each other," Trade Minister Paik Un-gyu told a meeting with steel-makers.

In Germany, the economic engine of the EU — the US' biggest trade partner by volume — the German Steel Federation warned of "drastic consequences" to the German and European steel industry.

Hans Juergen Kerkhoff, president of the federation, was quoted by German news agency DPA as saying Trump's decision threatens to divert a large amount of steel and cause a spiral of protectionism. He urged quick decisions to cope with the situation.

Brazil, the largest economy in Latin America, reacted to the US decision "with great concern" on Thursday, warning the measures will severely damage Brazilian exports and hurt business flows with the US.

Brazil's National Confederation



US President Donald Trump hands out pens he used to sign proclamations placing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports to workers from the steel and aluminum industries at the White House on Thursday. LEAH MILLIS / REUTERS

of Industry estimates the tariffs will cause the Brazilian industry an annual loss of \$3.15 billion.

In Sydney, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull sounded confident of getting favorable treatment as Trump spoke of Washington's strong relationship with Australia, a major exporter of iron ore though it exports little steel and the US is not a major customer.

India's steel ministry said

last month that US import tariffs were expected to lead to a loss of \$130 million in exports which were expected to total 333,656 tons for the year ending on March 31.

In the US, a recent study by Trade Partnership, a Washington-based consulting firm, estimated Trump's new tariffs on steel and aluminum would result in a net loss of 146,000 US jobs after accounting for positive impacts on US steel and aluminum producers.

"I disagree with this action and fear its unintended consequences," House Speaker Paul Ryan said shortly after Trump's announcement of the tariffs.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch expressed similar concerns about the proposed tariffs, saying: "Slapping aluminum and steel imports with tariffs of this magnitude is misguided. It undermines the benefits that the new tax law provides and runs counter to our goal of advancing pro-growth trade policies that will keep America competitive in the 21st century global economy."

Alabama's automakers and soybean farmers could be among those hurt in any retaliation to Trump's tariffs.

The state, which voted overwhelmingly for Trump in the 2016 election, exports the most cars of any US state to China, and much of its soybean crop.

"Agriculture is going to be paying the price for the protection of the steel and aluminum industries," said Herb Karst, a spokesman for Farmers for Free Trade.

REUTERS—XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

Trade: 'Strong actions' promised

From page 1

measures are in essence trade protectionism in the guise of national security. Most US steel and aluminum imports are for civil use and by no means impair US national security.

Wang said the US abuse of the "national security" provision is a wanton sabotage of the multilateral trading system represented by the World Trade Organization, and is set to hurt the normal international trading order.

"China firmly opposes that," he said in a statement. "China has lodged solemn complaints with the US side through multiple channels, and China will assess its losses caused by the US measures, as well as take strong actions to ensure its legitimate interests."

The US first announced the tariffs on March 1 after a US Commerce Department investigation under Section 232 of US Trade Expansion Act of 1962 found the imports threatening to US national security.

The China Iron and Steel Association called on the Chinese government on Friday to

retaliate against the US by targeting "stainless steel products, galvanized sheet, seamless pipe, coal, agriculture products and electronic products" imported from the US, it said in a statement posted on its website.

Xu Xiangchun, chief analyst for Msteel.com, an iron and steel industry consultancy website, said the US move would have a limited direct impact on China's steel industry because China has been exporting a fairly small amount of steel to the US in recent years. Chinese steel products are mostly used in the domestic market, rather than for exports, Xu said.

China shipped a total of 75.43 million metric tons of steel to global markets in 2017, and the exports to the US accounted for only 1.18 million metric tons, while overall steel exports represented less than 10 percent of China's steel production, according to the National Development and Reform Commission and the General Administration of Customs.

Chen Weihua contributed to this story.

Victims hospitalized after 'brazen, reckless' nerve-agent attack

LONDON — Around 21 people have received medical treatment after a nerve-agent attack on an ex-Russian spy, British police said on Thursday, as the United Kingdom vowed strong action against whoever was responsible for the "brazen and reckless" act.

Former spy Sergei Skripal, his daughter and a British police officer who tried to help them remain hospitalized after the poisoning on Sunday in the southern English city of Salisbury.

Health authorities said there is little risk to the wider public, but Wiltshire county acting police chief Kier Pritchard said "around 21 people" have had treatment, including the Skripals, who were found unconscious on a bench.

Pritchard said "a number" of the 21 were having "blood-tests, support and advice". Previously, authorities said only that "several" people had sought treatment.

The ex-spy and his daughter remain in critical condition in a Salisbury hospital. A police officer who came to their aid, Sergeant Nick Bailey, is hospitalized in a serious condition, though he is conscious and talking, officials said.

British Home Secretary Amber Rudd said enormous resources are being devoted to determining who poisoned Skripal, 66, and his 33-year-old daughter Yulia, who were found unconscious on a bench.

"The use of a nerve agent on British soil is a brazen and reckless act," Rudd said. "This was attempted murder in the most cruel and public way."

Rudd said Britain will respond strongly when it is clear who is to blame.

The Russian embassy in London, which has mocked other British politicians for suggest-

ing Russian involvement, tweeted that it agreed with Rudd: "First evidence, then conclusions on Mr Skripal's case. Responsible political approach."

Police have refused to publicly speculate on who is behind the attack, but Prime Minister Theresa May said Britain will "respond appropriately" if evidence shows Moscow was responsible for the attack.

"We will do what is appropriate, we will do what is right, if it is proved to be the case that this is state-sponsored," May told ITV News, when asked whether Britain could expel the Russian ambassador.

"But let's give the police the time and space to actually conduct their investigation," she added.

Russian denial

The Russian government has denied the attempted killing of Skripal, a former Russian agent who served jail time in his homeland for spying for Britain before being freed in a spy swap.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday that Britain's warnings are propaganda and not serious.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Lavrov said Russian officials had not received a single fact or piece of concrete evidence about what happened to Skripal and his daughter.

"What we see is only news reports... saying that if it is Russia, then a response is going to be given that Russia is going to remember forever," Lavrov said. "That is not serious. This is propaganda fair and square and it is an attempt to raise tensions."

AP—REUTERS



Personnel wear protective suits work to secure a site in Salisbury, England on Thursday, where former Russian agent Sergei Skripal was found critically ill. ANDREW MATTHEWS / PA VIA AP

Den of destruction



A boy walks past a bombed-out building in Douma, Syria, on Thursday. The head of the United Nations children's agency UNICEF has warned that the besieged enclave has become "hell on earth" for children and aid is urgently needed. BASSAM KHABIEH / REUTERS

Tillerson's view on China role slammed

By ZHAO HUANXIN
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China is apparently on US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's mind as he visits Africa for the first time on a five-nation tour that began in Ethiopia on Thursday.

In Addis Ababa, where he visited African Union headquarters, a complex built by China in 2011, Reuters reported that Tillerson said Chinese investments in Africa "do not bring significant job creation locally," and he criticized Beijing's structuring of loans to African governments.

An expert at the China, Africa, United States Engagement Dialogue held in Washington on Wednesday painted a different picture.

"When you look at some of the largest concerns and social topics in Africa today such as employment, we at McKinsey did large-scale work where our team visited more than 1,000 Chinese firms already operating in Africa," said Irene Yuan Sun, engagement manager at McKinsey and Co.

"It turns out that they collectively employ more than 300,000 people, and 90 percent of the employees are Africans," she said.

“Africa’s concerns are China’s concerns. Africa’s priorities are China’s priorities.”

Wang Yi,
foreign minister

Sun, author of the 2017 book *The Next Factory of the World: How Chinese Investment Is Reshaping Africa*, noted that 90 percent of the Chinese enterprises in Africa are private, nongovernmental firms, although discussions of the Africa-China relationship often focus on geopolitics and government investment.

The US is the top aid donor to Africa, and China is a leading trade partner of the continent.

Robin Renee Sanders, former US ambassador to the Republic of Congo and Nigeria, said the US "is stepping back a bit from Africa at a point in time when we shouldn't be stepping back".

She said China and the US can work together in Africa on the "three pillars" of edu-

cation, adaptation and innovation.

Sanders said Africa will have the largest working population in the world by 2035.

"The areas of cooperation between the US and China have to be in the areas of exchanges and economic development," she said.

"When I talk about economic development, I'm looking at the social sectors that need the biggest help, and that is in education," she said.

Good example

A good example of China-US cooperation in Africa is tackling the lack of vocational training on the continent, given the size of Africa's population, Sanders added.

Sanders called for more attention to be paid to African women, as they represent 50.2 percent of the continent's population.

"If we leave out women and girls on any sides, whether it is on the Chinese side, or the US side, or the African side, then we are not going to have economic development on the continent," she said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who was visiting Zimbabwe on Thursday, slammed Tillerson for his comments.

"It was not appropriate to criticize the relations of his hosts — when he was a guest there — with another country," Reuters quoted Lavrov as saying.

Asked about Tillerson's outspoken criticism of China's approach on the continent, Kenya's Foreign Affairs Minister Monica Juma was diplomatic.

"This country is engaging with partners from across the world, driven by our own interests and for our own value," said Juma.

On Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said: "China welcomes the diversification of Africa's international partnerships and sincerely hopes that various parties of the international community can increase inputs in Africa."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Thursday that even as it has rapidly developed, China remains a good brother and partner of Africa.

"Africa's concerns are China's concerns. Africa's priorities are China's priorities," Wang said, adding that African countries are welcome to board China's "fast train of development."

Ke Yian contributed to this story.

Briefly

INDIA Chemical factory blaze proves fatal

A massive fire that started in a chemical factory in western India and spread to six other factories killed at least three workers and injured 15, police said on Friday. Police officer Manjunath Shinge said the bodies were recovered early on Friday, hours after the fire swept through the factory in Palghar district in Maharashtra state. It was set off by a boiler explosion, but the cause of the explosion was not immediately known.

JAPAN Official linked to land scandal dead

A Finance Ministry official at the center of cronyism allegations linked to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been found dead, local media reported on Friday. Police are investigating the death of the official in Kobe in western Japan and suspect he committed suicide, Jiji Press and Kyodo News reported, citing unnamed police sources. The unidentified official, who was found dead on Wednesday, was at the heart of a scandal over the cut-price sale of government-owned land to a close friend of Abe, the reports said.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA Earthquake toll rises above 100

The death toll from an earthquake that hit the country last month has topped 100 with thousands injured, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill said on Friday, warning it will take years for the region to recover. The Pacific nation's mountainous interior was struck by a 7.5-magnitude tremor on Feb 26, triggering landslides that blocked roads, caused power outages and cut off villages. Communities have also been rattled by strong aftershocks.

UNITED STATES Island bones 'likely' were Earhart's

Bones found in 1940 on an island in the western Pacific Ocean were quite likely the remains from famed aviator Amelia Earhart, according to a new analysis. The study and other evidence "point toward her rather strongly," University of Tennessee anthropologist Richard Jantz said on Thursday. Earhart and her navigator vanished during an attempted flight around the world in 1937. The mystery has captivated the US public for decades.

AP—REUTERS—AFP

SPORTS

中国日报 CHINA DAILY » CHINADAILY.COM.CN/SPORTS



Oakland Athletics' Marcus Semien is tagged out by Los Angeles Angels second baseman Ian Kinsler while trying to steal during their MLB Cactus League spring training game in Mesa, Arizona, on Thursday. CHRIS CARLSON / ASSOCIATED PRESS

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE WILL TO WIN

The razor-thin difference between success and failure doesn't always reflect the quality of the challenge



Tiger Woods hits from behind a tree during Thursday's opening round of the Valspar Championship golf tournament in Palm Harbor, Florida. MIKE CARLSON / AP



Dortmund's Sokratis leaps over Salzburg's Munas Dabbur to control the ball during their Europa League match in Dortmund, Germany, on March 4. MARTIN MEISSNER / AP



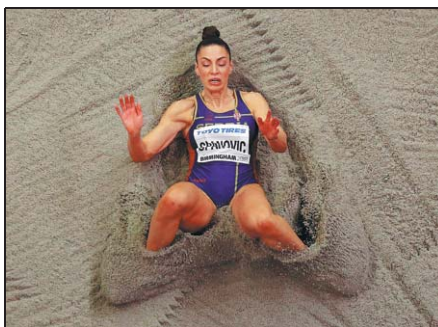
Bill Gates, billionaire founder of Microsoft, smiles as he chats with doubles partner Roger Federer during a break in their March 5 charity exhibition against Jack Sock and Savannah Guthrie in San Jose, California. Federer and Gates took the match 6-3. JEFF CHIU / AP



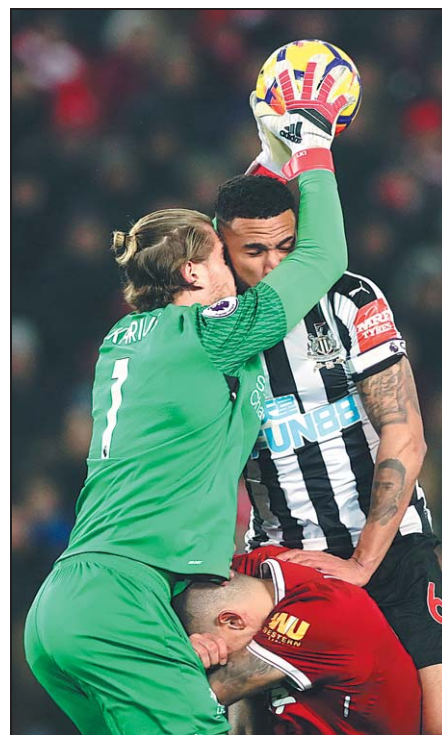
Washington's David Crisp (upper left) and Noah Dickerson converge on Oregon's Paul White as they watch a shot drop through the hoop during an NCAA college game in Seattle on March 3. TED S. WARREN / AP



Former NBA superstar Kobe Bryant holds his Oscar for writing and co-directing *Dear Basketball*, which won for Best Animated Short Film at the March 4 Academy Awards in Los Angeles. MIKE BLAKE / REUTERS



Ivana Spanovic of Serbia in action during the women's long jump final at the IAAF World Indoor Athletics Championships in Birmingham, England, on March 4. REUTERS



Liverpool goalkeeper Loris Karius collides with Newcastle United's Jamaal Lascelles during their English Premier match in Liverpool on March 4. SCOTT HEPPELL / REUTERS

COVER STORY

THE EXOTIC SECRETS OF COW STREET

Recipes handed down through the generations ensure that halal cooking holds sway in a Beijing district

By LI YINGXUE

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It's Lantern Festival eve, and three long lines of people have formed along the west side of the Beijing street Niujie, and across the road there are two more.

Anywhere else in Beijing and these people could well be lining up to buy the seasonal delicacies of *tangyuan* or *yuanyao* (rice dumplings), but in this case the lines are just part of the daily ritual. What the taste buds of these people in Niujie (literally Cow Street), Xicheng district, are hankering after is homemade halal food, readily available in the area, with its large population of those of the Hui ethnic group.

"All the food you see in Niujie, including snacks and its many delicacies, come with a taste of history, which runs down the generations and can be passed on," says Ma Enci, folklorist who is also the consultant of Niujie Halal Chamber of Commerce. "They also need to keep up with the times."

Hui people used to run many of the small family business in the neighborhood, and there is a saying that they live with two knives and eight ropes — one knife to cut beef and mutton, one knife for glutinous rice cake, and the eight ropes are to tie the shoulder pole to carry the goods.

Almost every Hui family in Niujie has a nickname, their business activity being added to their family name, such as Rice Cake Ma or Tofu Jelly Bai. Some of the families' businesses have been passed on from generation to generation but others have disappeared.

The family name of Ma, born in Niujie, is Bobopu Ma (Pastry Store Ma), but the business ceased when his father died when he was 10.

Ma still cares about the people and food in Niujie, and when Niujie Halal Chamber of Commerce was founded in August 2015 he offered to help.

"Hui snacks have three characteristics: they are strong on color, strong on flavor, and heavy on oil, but we eat them with jasmine tea to get a balance," Ma says.

As a general greeting Chinese are in the habit of saying "Have you eaten?" whereas Niujie locals say "Have you made tea?" Ma says.

"A few things distinguish Hui people's food, namely its being incredibly varied, that it carries on from generation to generation, and that each family has its unique approach. It is also seasonal, and a lot of attention is paid to nutritional value."

Ma's family used to make a crisp egg cake called *furonggao*, which has a red, sweet topping and was very popular. Ma says people used to use food coloring and sugar to make the topping, but his family used saffron.

Feng Qiusheng's family business, which was founded in 1888, used to be in Niujie, but the family business moved to a nearby neighborhood in 2006.

Feng's family now runs two restaurants named on the basis of the family nickname, Baodufeng (Quick-Fried Tripe Feng).

Feng's father taught him how to make the sauce that goes with the family speciality, and Feng says it has taken him more than 40 years to master the art of cooking the tripe.

"Even though the cooking takes only seconds, four generations of hard work have gone into it," Feng, 66, says.

"It's a skill that is easy to learn but hard to perfect."

Each day Feng cooks about 50 kilograms of tripe, and from the day he started to cook in the kitchen in 1985, he says, he has handled at least 500 metric tons of tripe for customers.

He still goes to the kitchen every day to cook for his customers. "If you don't do it for a day you notice, if you don't do it for two days, your family notices, and if you don't do it for three days, your customers notice."

Cooking is the final step in preparing the dish, Feng says, but first you need to learn how to choose, wash and cut the tripe, and that requires one or two years' practice.

Feng is glad to see his old customers from 30 years ago now bring their sons and



Jubaoyuan restaurant is one of many delicacies in Niujie attracting diners everyday (right). Its signature product is now mutton hotpot (left).

PHOTOS BY ZHANG ZEFENG / CHINA DAILY AND ZHAO YADAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Cheese Wei has developed a Qing court recipe to the masses, and added more flavors to the traditional palace cheese. ZHANG ZEFENG / CHINA DAILY



All the food you see in Niujie, including snacks and its many delicacies, come with a taste of history, which runs down the generations and can be passed on."



Ma Enci, folklorist who is also the consultant of Niujie Halal Chamber of Commerce

grandsons to eat his dishes.

"Each of these traditional snacks are irreplaceable, and I feel it's my responsibility to safeguard the flavor and pass it on."

Ma Guoqi, 76, also insists on continuing his family tradition of making spiced beef and mutton, even though he now only has a booth in a company canteen.

Ma is the sixth descendant of his family business, Yueshengzhai Ma, which was established in 1775, meaning it is a year older than the United States.

"From coal to gas tank, and now to electric cooker, we have updated the equipment we use to cook the meat, but the flavor is the same as it was generations ago," Ma says.

He now lets his son and daughter do the cooking, but has still not divulged the secret recipe of the spices yet.

"We don't have a written recipe, so it's all in my head. My father gave it to me just before he died, and he asked me to do the same."

"We treat the meat the same way we treat our customers,' my father always told me."

Just as Ma's father impressed on him the importance of being honest in business, so it would last down the years, Ma impresses on

his son the importance of being consistent with flavor.

"The idea is that today you have this taste, and tomorrow, next week, or next month, you will enjoy exactly the same taste."

Ma recalls that when his restaurant was small there was a customer who lived in the United States and often visited Beijing.

"The first place he would come to after arriving in Beijing was my restaurant, and he would order 150 grams of braised mutton and a bowl of noodles with braised mutton, and as he was heading back to the States he would come to my place and have exactly the same order before going to the airport."

Ma has lived in Niujie all his life, as has Wei Ning, also known as Cheese Wei. Unlike Ma, he still owns a cheese shop in Niujie, but he is confronted by the problem that his sons show no desire to continue the business.

Wei started to help his father to make cheese when he was 31, before which he worked in a factory. Learning from making rice wines to make the cheese, Wei gradually understood what his family business was about.

"There's a duty and responsibility to maintain the family tradition," Wei says.

Both sons are in their 30s, one a police officer and the other a computer programmer, and Wei believes they will eventually realize that they have a duty to take over the business.

"I'm the fourth generation of our family business, and this should continue. My sons don't realize how precious this brand is."

The founder of Cheese Wei, Wei Hongchen, learned from the chefs in the palace in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), about distributing imperial food to the masses. And Wei Ning's father researched the way to make their own rice wine.

Wei developed more flavors to suit young people's tastes, and also cut down the sugar in the cheese. "Besides less sugar, our cheese has kept the same flavor for decades," Wei says.

In the past, Wei says, people urged him to expand his stores, but he declined.

"All of our cheeses are handmade, and if we open more shops I won't have what it takes to ensure the quality."

See *Halal food* page 15

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Close encounters: A Rwandan professional speaks about how China and Africa can strengthen ties by boosting people-to-people contact.



Image » 17

Tradition: Suiyang noodles are hand-made, and each strand is as thin as hair. The noodles' chewy texture and salty flavor has earned them the nickname "love noodles".



Art » 20

Theater: The China National Peking Opera Company is holding Ode to Spring, an event that will run until April 16, to promote the traditional art form in Beijing.

Shanghai is considering whether to carry out a study on the colors of the city as part of efforts to realize its ambition of becoming an excellent global city. GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY



COLORS TO CALL ITS OWN

Authorities are looking to help Shanghai stand out by selecting a hue that can best encapsulate the city's personality and heritage

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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Every country has its own set of official colors that can be found on their flags. These colors would also be particularly prominent during certain events, such as this year's World Cup in Russia.

The Brazilian players have their bright yellow strips. The English wear predominantly white jerseys with elements of blue and red.

In China, the traditional colors are red and gold.

Cities, on the other hand, don't usually have official colors. But this could soon change in Shanghai, with authorities mulling over whether to select hues to represent the city's character.

In January, Secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China Li Qiang said that Shanghai would carry out an in-depth study of urban design and the use of colors as part of efforts to support the city's ambition of becoming a global hub.

"The right use of colors could make the city more attractive and impart joy to our residents. But Shanghai still has room for improvement in this aspect," said Li during his visit to the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Planning and Land Resources.

"The city should have more warm colors to exude a sense of style instead of looking like a concrete jungle."

Li pointed out that urban planners must come up with a unified guideline regarding the use of colors in order to best reflect the city's unique characteristics. According to local authorities, the Shanghai Urban Planning and Design Research Institute has already started work on crafting this guideline which could be published in the second half of this year.

The predominant colors in Shanghai have constantly been changing. For instance, gray was ubiquitous during the city's industrialization phase.

"In the 1970s and 80s, a large number of factory workers like myself moved into residential buildings that had gray walls and ceilings," said Wang Keyi, a 66-year-old Shanghai native.

"Before the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, many of these buildings underwent a facelift. Authorities added sloping red roofs and painted the exteriors beige, which gave a feeling of warmth and comfort," he added.

Some architectural experts agree that Shanghai's status as a mega city and an influential regional



Clockwise: French planes on Hengshan Road infuse green into the landscape. Shanghai's affinity with red can be traced to the first national congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) which was held in Shanghai in July 1921. Shanghai is home to the Huangpu River and the Suzhou Creek. Shikumen houses with gray brick walls were once the city's most typical residences. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The hues around Shanghai

Green

The iconic French planes were first introduced to the former French concession in Shanghai by immigrants from France in the early 20th century as a means of relieving homesickness. The trees gradually became ubiquitous in the city, which is often dubbed the "Paris of the East". Apart from being aesthetically pleasing, the plane trees also serve a practical purpose — they create a thick canopy that shelters people from the summer heat. Residents armed with fans used to seek reprieve from the scorching sun under these trees before the mid-1990s when air conditioners were still uncommon.

Some famous boulevards featuring French planes include Hengshan Road, which is located at the heart of the former French concession. Fuxing Road, which is home to a large number of old Shanghai-style alleys, as well as Shaoying Road, where people can find several publishing houses that are more than eight decades old.

Another popular destination to view these trees is Xinhua Road as it also offers charming views of daily local life and old town houses of different architectural styles which reflect the city's heritage and diversity. The road is also a storied location as it used to be where government officials welcomed State guests who arrived in Shanghai from Hongqiao International Airport in the 1970s and 80s.

Red

Shanghai's affinity with red can be traced to its status as the birthplace of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The first national congress of the CPC was held in Shanghai in July 1921, and subsequent sessions were held here in 1922 and 1925. The sites of the historic congress sessions in Shanghai are still standing and are well-preserved.

Xu Jianguang, director of the Party History Research Office of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the CPC, said there are 42 verified sites that are related to the early activities of the CPC Central Committee. They include 23 spaces reserved for conferences, five fixed residences for core CPC leaders and 14 news and publicity facilities, such as the publishing house of *The Communist*, CPC's first monthly journal for CPC members.

Last November, General Secretary Xi Jinping and six other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee visited the Memorial for the Site of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and this incident triggered a surge in visitor numbers to the site. According to official statistics, the site had a record high of 835,000 visits last year.

Blue

Some global cities have well-known rivers that run through them — Lon-

don has the River Thames and Paris has the River Seine. Shanghai, on the other hand, is home to two famous water bodies: the Huangpu River and the Suzhou Creek.

The two water bodies played an integral part in the city's transformation from a sleepy backwater into a vibrant trading hub when shipyards, factories, storehouses and financial institutions sprouted. This meant that they weren't always as blue as they could be.

The local government moved to clean up the Huangpu River and the Suzhou Creek in the 1990s. By 2010, the Suzhou Creek had taken on an entirely different look and its waterfront area became a popular place for residents to jog and get a tan.

The Huangpu River has also been transformed into a public space for leisure and sightseeing. As of the end of last year, the redevelopment of the Huangpu River reached a milestone when the riverfronts on both sides were connected to form a 45-kilometer trail featuring riverside parks and art museums.

Shanghai Mayor Ying Yong said in January that the position and quality of water tours on the river, as well as the lighting on both banks, will be upgraded this year to turn the area into a world-class tourism spot.

Gray

Few would disagree that the charm of Shanghai lies in the combination

of its bright neon lights, glimmering modern skyscrapers and rustic shikumen houses with gray brick walls that were once the city's most typical residences.

Li Qiang, Shanghai's Party chief, has frequently recommended shikumen houses to guests, citing how these buildings "carry the stories, history and flavor of Shanghai".

Most shikumen neighborhoods were built in the 1930s. There were more than 9,000 shikumen complexes in the city, accounting for roughly two-thirds of local residences in 1949, according to municipal records.

Although these homes are small and rudimentary, they are nevertheless a symbol of harmony for the residents. Because of their size, neighbors can easily communicate and help one another. It is not uncommon to hear residents alerting their neighbors of rain while helping them bring their laundry indoors.

In the past few years, the city's authorities have been paying greater attention to preserving existing shikumen residences in the downtown area. Many have throughout the past decades made way for high-end residences, shopping malls and office buildings. One of the most prominent examples of repurposed shikumen residences is Xintiandi, which is today a landmark that features a wide selection of fashion boutiques and dining establishments.

ZHOU WENTING

hub warrants the selection of primary colors.

"When one color is used as the main hue, the use of other colors in the surrounding can be controlled so that the landscape won't appear disorderly," said Zhang Ming, deputy director of the department of architecture at Shanghai-based Tongji University.

Fu Guohua, general manager of KFS Design International Shanghai, pointed out that as people's reactions to colors change over time, the city's main hue should be one that is timeless. He used the main color of Honolulu as an example.

"Most buildings in Honolulu are painted white or have light colors that contrast with the blue sky and oceans. Such colors fit the environment and make visitors feel comfortable," said.

Zhang suggested using gray as the main hue for Shanghai.

"The old buildings along the waterfront at the Bund are mostly gray. The color is timeless and elegant, reflects Shanghai's culture, and goes well with the city's architectural styles," he said.

Zhang added that the main color in different parts of the city could differ depending on the nature of each section. For instance, the main hues on Chongming Island where there is more greenery would naturally differ from those used in the Lujiazui financial district.

Apart from the main city colors, other hues could also be used to create a more vibrant atmosphere through the use of elements such as vegetation, billboards, street art and taxis.

"Vegetation is a versatile element that allows us to create differing atmospheres because their colors change according to the seasons," said Fu, referring to the city's iconic French plane trees.

The Shanghai government has since 2012 been promoting the best boulevards in the city for visitors to admire the summer greenery or the autumn spectacle of red and yellow leaves that blanket the streets.

Canadian media artist explorer JT Singh said that lighting fixtures can also play a part in making spaces in the city more engaging and aesthetically pleasing. He suggested that more fixtures can be installed on existing old buildings to breathe new life into them and the neighborhoods they are in.

"If someone can recognize Shanghai within moments of seeing one of its streets, and not any of its famous landmarks, that means our color scheme has worked. That is the level we want to be at," said Wang.



Clockwise: During the Eid al-Fitr or fast-breaking festival in Niujie in Beijing in 2016; a traditional hotpot in Jubaoyuan restaurant; Feng Qiusheng, 66, owner of Baodu Feng restaurant, says it has taken him more than 40 years to master the art of cooking tripe. PHOTOS BY KUANG LINHUA AND ZHANG ZEFENG / CHINA DAILY



Food brings outsiders to my moveable feast

In the shadow of the skyscrapers, a sense of belonging

By CHEN NAN
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The tourist sights on offer in and around Beijing almost jump out at you even before you have time to consult a tourist guide book, the most obvious being the Forbidden City, the Great Wall or Houhai Lake. One that is a little less obvious, but will always be my top choice, is Niujie, an area in which I was born, grew up and still live.

In this area lives city's largest population of the Hui ethnic group, who are traditionally Muslim, and the Niujie Mosque, built in 996 during the Liao Dynasty (916-1125), is there. It is also an area that offers authentic Beijing culture such as hutong and dialects.

I imagine that when city folk drive through or past Niujie, a common line is: "Great place to buy lamb, beef and snacks." For me though the area's greatest charm is its contrast to the skyscrapers of the central business district, and that it offers me the most comfortable sense of longing.

As a child I lived in a narrow hutong and can still remember that the zigzagging alleyways were my favorite playground.

Although I am an only child, I was not lonely. Children of my age living in the hutong of Niujie played together and attended the same primary school. Locals buy daily supplies at closet-sized stores, build pigeon nests on the roofs, and visit neighbors without changing their pajamas.

Niujie is in Xicheng district, formerly known as Xuanwu district, known for its Beijing traditional folk culture.

When the mosque was built during the Liao Dynasty many Muslims moved to the area.

My grandmother reckons the local families of Niujie made their living by running small businesses, especially selling handmade food. The name of the food is usually a combination of the food and the families' names.

Now, more and more restaurants are appearing in Niujie, mostly selling Muslim food. But snack food is the most popular with consumers.

In the 1990s Niujie flourished when the neighborhood's roads were widened and more residential buildings were built, supplanting old, shabby courtyards. Despite the changes, old neighbors remain close and still visit each other frequently.

Trees abound, and in summer elderly men gather in their shadows, drinking, eating and chatting. Outside a window of my house is a big tree that has been there since I moved from a courtyard to building in 1994. Over those 24 years it has presided not just over every changing season, but over the locals as they come and go, too.

In 1950 Ernest Hemingway wrote to a friend: "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast."

For me, Niujie possesses the magic of Paris, which Hemingway documented in his memoir. I still enjoy observing the place and feel the need to know more about it.



This 2016 picture shows people celebrating the fast-breaking festival in Niujie. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Halal food: Preserving quality over generations

From page 13

"My father said we must not cut corners and we must keep our integrity."

Hong Yuchun, 61, manager of Hongji Snack in Niujie, says she has thought about opening new restaurants because there are always long lines outside the current one. But all her restaurant's food is homemade, she says, and before she can consider expanding needs to figure out how to keep consistency of flavor.

In contrast to other brands in Niujie that may go as far back as 200 years, Hongji Snack is relatively new, having been established in 1991, when it sold only three different snacks.

"We don't have a special recipe or a long history, and most Hui people can make snacks at home, so we just try to give each snack the best flavor we can with the best ingredients available," Hong says.

Her parents and all her eight siblings worked together to run the res-

Niujie, Beijing

Niujie covers 1.4 square kilometers and is located in Beijing's south, bound by Caishikou to the east, Guang'anmen to the west, Guang'anmen to the north and Zaolinjianjie to the south.

In 651, during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Persian and Arabic merchants and travelers introduced Islam to China. During the Yuan Dynasty

(1271-1368), many Muslims settled in China, and about 3,000 households were established in Niujie. They worked in various fields, including the spice industry, camel transport and cuisine.

The State Ethnic Affairs Commission says about 12,000 Hui ethnic people now live in the area, accounting for 23 percent of the total population of 54,000. The others belong to 22 ethnic groups.



taurant and learn from others how to make different Hui snacks, of which they now have 50 different kinds, she says.

"My father reckoned that before we sold food to others we must enjoy it ourselves."

Hong, born in Niujie, moved out when she married, but each time she returned for a visit "I would take this really deep breath when I was in

the neighborhood."

She then decided to move back into the area.

There is always a long line outside Hongji Snack, and as it has relocated, so have those lines. Hong says that most customers are from outside Niujie, its reputation having grown thanks to word-of-mouth recommendations.

These days, too, young people are

ordering takeaway from Hongji Snack on their smartphones. Hong's nephew, who helps in the restaurant, has advised Hong to open an online shop.

"Our generation is old-fashioned, so we may be a little slow on the uptake with these new sales methods," Hong says.

The three long lines on the other side of Niujie are outside Jubaoyuan,

which gained a reputation over many years for its raw beef and mutton and cooked beef, but whose signature product is now mutton hotpot.

Ma Gang, the general manager, is a Niujie resident whose family is nicknamed Brick Ma, his father being a builder. He took over managing Jubaoyuan, which then had 12 staff, 25 years ago.

"We're known for our beef and mutton, so I go to the slaughterhouse each day and wait for the fresh meat and bring it back to the shop," Ma says.

When Niujie was upgraded in 1997, Ma took the sign that had hung outside Jubaoyuan's shop and reopened the business elsewhere. In 2003 he moved back to Niujie and, with much more space, decided to start offering mutton hotpot. That has been a resounding success.

The long lines outside seem to be a constant, and even at 10 pm people are still waiting for a table.

"The high quality of our beef and mutton is the key, and we need to keep that into the future," Ma says.

Careers with roots deep in royalty

Three halal meat sellers talk of their business experiences

By LI YINGXUE
liyngxue@chinadaily.com.cn

YUESHENGZHAI MA

Around 1763 Ma Qingrui began working in the Ministry of Rites for Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and he was then recommended to work in the imperial kitchen.

When he was rewarded with a whole sheep due to his diligent work, Ma would take it on to the street and sell various cuts. Later he quit his job and went into the mutton business. In 1775 he opened a store named Yueshengzhai that sold spiced mutton.

Given Ma's reputation for having worked in the imperial kitchen, his mutton soon became popular. The meat had to be cooked for seven to eight hours and then kept for a month.

The second generation Ma Yongxiang and Ma Yongfu then decided to improve the taste and consulted an imperial physician. They added clove, cinnamon, aniseed and other spices to make the mutton more flavorful and nutritious.

The mutton from Yueshengzhai then became the first choice for officials as a gift. Empress Dowager Cixi is said to have loved the meat, and issued permits for Ma's staff to deliver their mutton to her.

Ma Guoqi is the sixth generation, as is his brother Ma Guoai, who moved to Hohhot, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, in 1968, taking

his mutton cooking skills with him.

When Ma Guoqi entered the family business in 1991, he raised their prices, reckoning that the premium quality of their beef and mutton warranted premium pricing.

"One kilogram of raw beef produces 500 grams of cooked beef and 1.2 kilogram of raw mutton produces 500 grams of cooked mutton," Ma says. "That's why it takes seven hours to cook the meat: we need to stew out all the water in the meat."

Ma recalls an opera actor passing by Yueshengzhai on a rickshaw just after meat had been taken out of the pot, and he ate a steamed bun soaked in just the fragrance of the meat.

Li Binsheng, a cartoonist, depicted that scene in a drawing for the Beijing Daily in 1950s, and when Ma and Li met decades later, the cartoonist produced an updated version of the drawing and gave it to Ma as a memento.

Now Ma's son Ma Yunpeng and daughter Ma Yunyan have taken over their family business and sell their meat at a booth of a company canteen in Beijing.

BAODU FENG

In 1888 Feng Lishan, a chef, moved from Shandong province to Beijing and started to sell quick-fried goat tripe in the street, for which he was given the name Baodu Feng (Quick-Fried Tripe Feng).

His son Feng Jinhe took over the business at the end of the reign of

Emperor Guangxu (1875-1908) in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). According to Feng Fusheng, the fourth generation of the business, his grandfather Feng Jinhe, happened to know a prince who was in a street fight and they became friends.



When I'm on a bus or go to the bank, people notice the smell and ask if I have just eaten mutton hotpot."

Feng Fusheng, chef from Baodu Feng restaurant

1 kilo

One kilogram of raw beef produces 500 grams of cooked beef and 1.2 kilogram of raw mutton produces 500 grams of cooked mutton

The prince then introduced Feng Jinhe to the imperial kitchen and he became the goat tripe provider.

Feng Fusheng's father collected all the recipes of their business in written form, from the methodology to the ingredients of the special sauce, and passed this on to his sons. Ox tripe was added to their list when Feng Fusheng and his brothers registered their brand name as a restaurant in 1985, and now they have 13 different types of tripe available with nine sheep cuts and four ox cuts.

Feng Fusheng says different parts of the tripe have different flavors and need separate time to cook.

"They all just need seconds to quick fry, but each of them has its own time."

If you taste all the parts you should start with the chewy ones and then the crisp ones and finally the most tender ones. Even though some of them are chewy, they are easy to digest because tripe is the stomach of a sheep or an ox."

For some parts of the tripe, one plate needs to be cut from seven to eight sheep. In summer when sheep are slim it is hard to come by, which gave rise to the use of ox meat.

"There are also different ways of cutting different parts of the meat, meaning each piece of the tripe can be heated evenly," Feng says.

Because Feng Fusheng and his brothers have been dealing with tripe for decades, there is always something of a sheep odor about them.

"When I'm on a bus or go to the bank, people notice the smell and ask if I have just eaten mutton hotpot," Feng says.

CHEESE WEI

At the beginning of the reign of

Emperor Guangxu (1875-1908) during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Wei Hongchen learned how to make cheese from a chef in the imperial kitchen and started his business. He had this trick in which if he turned an open container of cheese upside down, the contents would not fall out.

The writer Liang Qiushi wrote in an article *Lao* (Cheese) that the cheese from Cheese Wei tasted fresher and better than others, and each time he passed by he would eat two bowls of it.

"Anyone like me who had been out of Beijing for a long time missed the food there, and cheese was one of those foods," Liang said.

Wei Ning is now the fourth generation in the business. His father figured out the way to make rice wine for their cheese, and this became a family recipe.

"We used to buy rice wine to make our cheese, because my grandfather thought that if we made our own we would take other people's business," Wei says.

Wei's father used to sell cheese in two large blue insulation barrels on a street corner near Niujie each day at 3 pm. Both barrels could hold about 40 bowls of cheese, which were sold out soon after school finished.

Wei says that when he was a boy he could have cheese only during Spring Festival.

When Wei reopened the cheese store in Niujie in 2006, many middle-aged customers from the neighborhood would come to taste their childhood-memory flavor.

Wei has added more flavors to their traditional palace cheese, and has expanded their product range to milk custard, herbal jelly and almond jelly.

16 CULTURE

LOS ANGELES — When the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced its nominees for its 90th Oscar awards to be given on March 4, their lineup for Best Documentary Feature included, *Abacus: Small Enough to Jail*.

It's a film about a tiny Chinese-American community bank indicted for fraud during the 2008 US mortgage crisis that triggered a financial crisis worldwide.

The Academy Award-winning director, Steve James, best known for *Hoop Dreams*, told Xinhua in a recent exclusive interview, "I gravitated toward documentaries because I wanted to tell stories, but I wanted to tell true stories about people in pivotal situations, at a crossroads in their lives. This is such a story."

This small story has had big impact. It won Best Documentary from the Critics Choice and the National Board of Review Awards. Movie City News called it "one of the best documentaries in recent years," while The Hollywood Reporter asserted it was "both an affirmation and an indictment of the American dream."

In 2012, in the aftermath of the crippling 2008 mortgage crisis that sent the United States and world economies into a devastating tailspin for half a decade, New York District Attorney Cyrus Vance filed multiple charges of fraud against Abacus Federal Savings Bank, a small, privately-owned bank that served New York's Chinatown community.

The ordeal began when Jill Sung, CEO of the bank founded by her father, Thomas Sung, noticed an anomaly in the bank's loan department and discovered one of the bank's lower-level employees had been falsifying mortgage applications.

Did they cover it up and skate with a simple fine like all the big banks did? No. They immediately reported it to the banking authorities and fired the employee. What happened next is what director James calls, "a wrongful persecution" and "an unequal application of justice."

Despite Sung's blowing the whistle on their employee's illicit activities and firing him the same day it was discovered, the bank itself became the target of a federal investigation into mortgage fraud.

"Big banks that engaged in damaging actions that caused so many people to lose their life savings and their homes were not punished. Yet here is a small community bank doing what banks are supposed to do — lend to their community — and this is the only one indicted," said James.

"That was mind-boggling to me," said the film's producer, Mark Mitten. "Because no other bank had been indicted, and knowing it was just a small community bank, the 2651st largest bank in America, with one of the lowest default rates on record, it was a head-scratcher. Why them?"

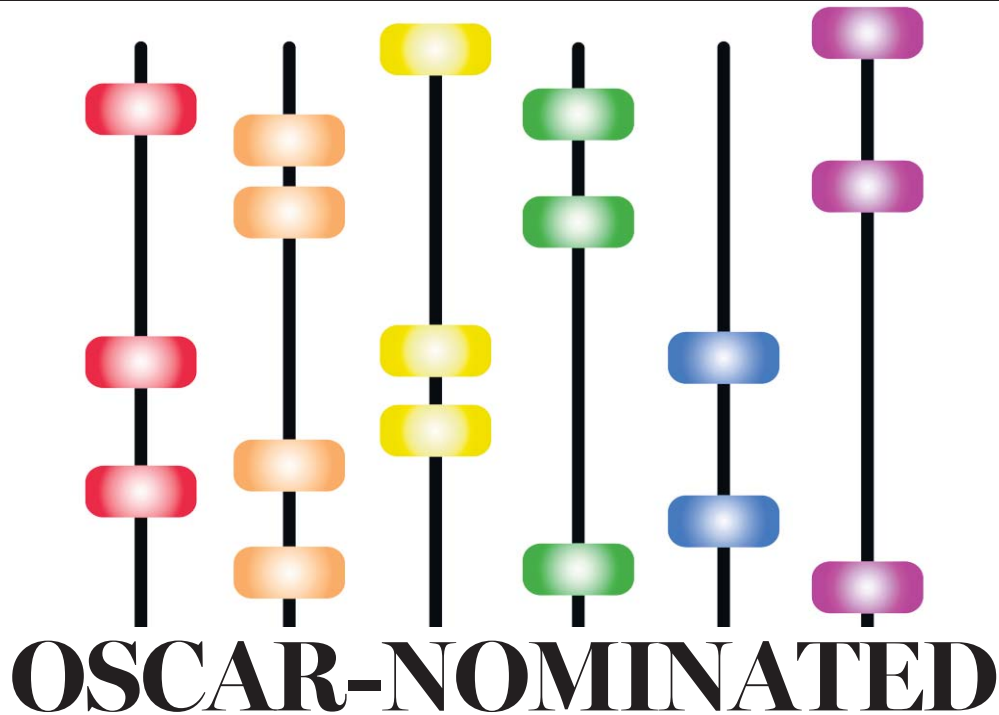
During the early 2000s, in the largely unregulated subprime mortgage industry, the biggest banks in

America, like Citibank, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Chase, Lehman Brothers, and many others, provided billions in risky mortgages to millions of unqualified applicants unable to afford them.

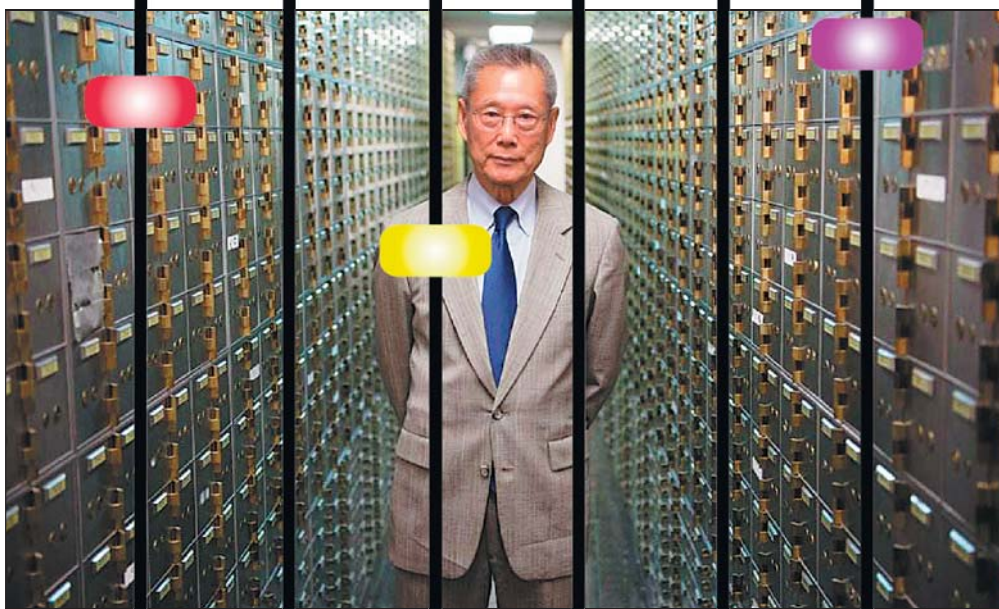
Bitter controversy arose when the US government determined that the multimillion dollar banks were indeed "too big to fail". And some would complain, too big to indict, when not a single financial institution was brought to justice.

"Going after a big bank would have been a formidable undertaking for the DA's (district attorney's) office, and probably wouldn't even have come to trial yet," James said.

"So the big banks just had their



OSCAR-NOMINATED



Abacus: Small Enough to Jail tells true story about Chinese immigrants



Abacus, a small financial institution becomes the only company criminally indicted in the wake of the United States' 2008 mortgage crisis.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

wrists slapped," Mitten added. "They were fined, but never charged with felonies, after we bailed them out with \$700 billion of taxpayer money."

So, if the big banks were too big to indict, which ones were small enough? This is the question James and Mitten were compelled to ask in their insightful documentary.

The film shows the impact of the case on the Abacus bank owner, Thomas Sung, wife Hwei and their four daughters, Vera, Jill, Chanterelle and Heather.

"The Sung family is revered by the Chinese community they serve," Mitten said. "He started a bank to help people get mortgages and

loans to expand their businesses when no other bank would, so he was always been looked up to."

He added, "Whenever you walked down the street with Mr Sung, whether you met first generation, second generation, or third generation Chinese immigrants, they were all honored to know him."

When asked by Xinhua if he felt Sung and his daughters were singled out because of their ethnicity, the director said, "I want to believe it was (the DA's) sincere belief that fraud reached up into the highest levels of the bank, but what clouded his judgment was a belief that there was an opportunity ... to be a heroic DA and be the only one to bring a bank connected with the mortgage crisis to its knees."

"This was the perfect type of banking community for Cyrus to target, because he wouldn't have any concerns about political fallout. It's well known in New York that the Chinese immigrant community is not very politically engaged," James said.

"The DA thought they would be submissive because (the Chinese) don't stand up for themselves and wouldn't have the resources to fight back," Mitten said.

But, Sung and his family, determined to prove their innocence, decided to fight back. Sung told the press, "From a social justice point of view, it is our belief that our case should be an awakening call to the community that there are injustices in our society, even though we profess to be fair, democratic and just."

James was moved by the Sung family's plight when he met them. "Their decision to fight back, to save their bank and save their family name was inspiring. They were just such a compelling family: courageous, principled, funny and lively — ideal subjects to follow."

"It cost (the Sung's) \$10 million and five years of their lives plus the toll it took on the family and particularly how Thomas aged over that time," he said.

"Now that it turned out the way it did, you can see a very different spirit about them," James told Xinhua. "There is a huge sense of relief, and joy."

The filmmakers have plans to distribute the film theatrically and via streaming online in China.

James visited China in 2009 as a VIP guest of the Beijing Film Academy at their International Documentary Conference in Beijing. "It was a great trip. Our hosts were lovely and we had some really great master classes for Chinese documentarians and students who wanted to get into the field."

He added, "There is such a rich tradition of filmmaking in China and the Beijing Film Academy is such a fertile birthplace for a lot of incredible filmmakers, including some incredible documentaries set in China that tell extraordinary stories that are highly regarded in this country, whether they are nominated for Oscars or not."

"It's important that everybody worldwide knows what happened. How the Sung's fought back, and how they won," Mitten said.

XINHUA

Close encounters of a personal kind key to trade and tourism

A Rwandan professional speaks about how China and Africa can strengthen ties by boosting people-to-people contact

By **REN JIE**
renjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Increased exchanges and dialogue between China and Africa is the most important thing to promote understanding, says Norbert Haguma, now the secretary of the Rwanda China Alumni Organization.

Haguma, one of the organizers of the East-Africa-China Business Forum in Rwanda in 2015, is contributing his knowledge and experience in China to promote trade, investment, and mutual understanding between China and Africa.

"I consider China to be my second home. I have many Chinese friends, and I love Chinese culture," he says.

After studying and working in China for about 10 years, the 35-year-old Rwandan returned to his country in 2015.

Explaining, why he returned home, he says: "There are more opportunities in Rwanda for me."

"Also, Africa is quickly becoming a popular destination for tourism and business. So, it makes sense for me to be based on the continent."

began in September 2001, when he was studying Chinese at the Beijing Language and Culture University, and then computer science at the Beijing Jiaotong University.

During that time, he began to take part in events organized by Rwandan community in China.

"I was involved in the founding of the Rwandan Students Association in 2003-04, which later became the RCA-China.

"It is an important organization, and I was honored to lead it before returning home.

"It still contributes to the good bilateral relations to this day," he says.

"Even though I was always involved in Rwandan community events, I think China made me more African, in a way.

"I did not know much about other African countries before arriving in China. But other African students became my friends, and our solidarity in a foreign country brought us closer, until we started talking about pan-Africanism, and then about Africa-China relations, and started organizing ourselves to contribute to them."

In 2006, Haguma was selected by Rwandan embassy to participate in the 2006 FOCAC summit, with



Norbert Haguma with Jack Ma, executive chairman of Alibaba Group.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

about 50 African leaders.

"I attended the summit, translating proceedings at bilateral meetings between Rwandan and Chinese businesses as a student-volunteer," he says.

"That got me very interested in the development of China-Africa relations, a passion I still have to this day."

The involvement in FOCAC is what led him to seek other Africans with similar interests.

And, in 2009, Haguma established the Young African Professionals and Students with five friends, which was the biggest African organiza-

nization in China at the time.

Then, with fellow YAPS members, Haguma started an education, HR services business and became the chief executive of Kiziga.com.

Speaking about the venture, he says: "We decided to start this company and do education and human resources work because we quickly realized that human resources was the biggest roadblock to deeper economic ties between China and Africa, especially in investment."

"We understood that education and human resources were going to be the catalysts, and really impor-

tant to the future of everyone involved."

For now, Kiziga has developed a network of more than 186 Chinese universities, directly linking African students seeking education opportunities to programs that suit them. It is the only online platform, created from scratch, to offer such a service in China.

Separately, YAPS has also organized many events, such as an annual Mandela day event in Beijing, coffee promotion events in collaboration with African embassies, Africa day events, and country roundtables.

YAPS also works closely with African embassies to promote their countries to young Chinese.

"It also lays the ground for other African organizations," says Haguma. "We also mentor young Africans who are doing their own things in China."

Haguma, who returned home 2015, is now the secretary of the Rwanda China Alumni Organization, an NGO focused on connecting Rwandans who studied in China.

Separately, Haguma runs a China-Africa advisory firm, AfrOrient Group, which helps companies in Asia and Africa penetrate new markets.

Haguma says he hopes that what he does can help promote mutual understanding between the two sides.

"On the one hand, we need more people-to-people exchanges. And, as many young Africans are studying in China, I want more Chinese youth to study in Africa as well.

"We have some of the best universities in the world. I also want to see more cultural exchanges.

"I would love to see more African music and songs in China. And more sports exchanges.

"The signing of Congolese football player Cedric Bakambu by my favorite Chinese football club Beijing Guo'an — making him Africa's most expensive football player in history — is a great testimony to the potential of sports in China-Africa relations."

Media exchanges are also important, he says.

"There are a growing number of Chinese who visit and fall in love with Africa. And they often write beautiful blogs and make amazing videos about their experiences.

"I hope to see more of that.

"For example, African countries can invite more social media savvy Chinese to visit the continent."



A FINE PRODUCT

Noodles from Suiyang are a traditional staple of the region, and each strand is as fine as hair

Photos by **OU DONGQU**
Xinhua

Suiyang noodles are hand-made, and each strand is as thin as hair. The noodles' chewy texture and salty flavor has earned the noodles the nickname "love noodles".

In Suiyang county, Guizhou province, where the noodles originate, they are called "salt water noodles".

The noodles have been a traditional staple in Suiyang for hundreds of years.

Early in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the

noodles were presented as a tribute by the locals to the royal family. Now, the noodles' annual production is 800 tons, with an annual value of 24 million yuan (\$3.8 million).

It takes a lot of effort to make the noodles. One needs to follow 72 steps, including the kneading, rubbing, plating, entangling and pulling, which are all done manually.

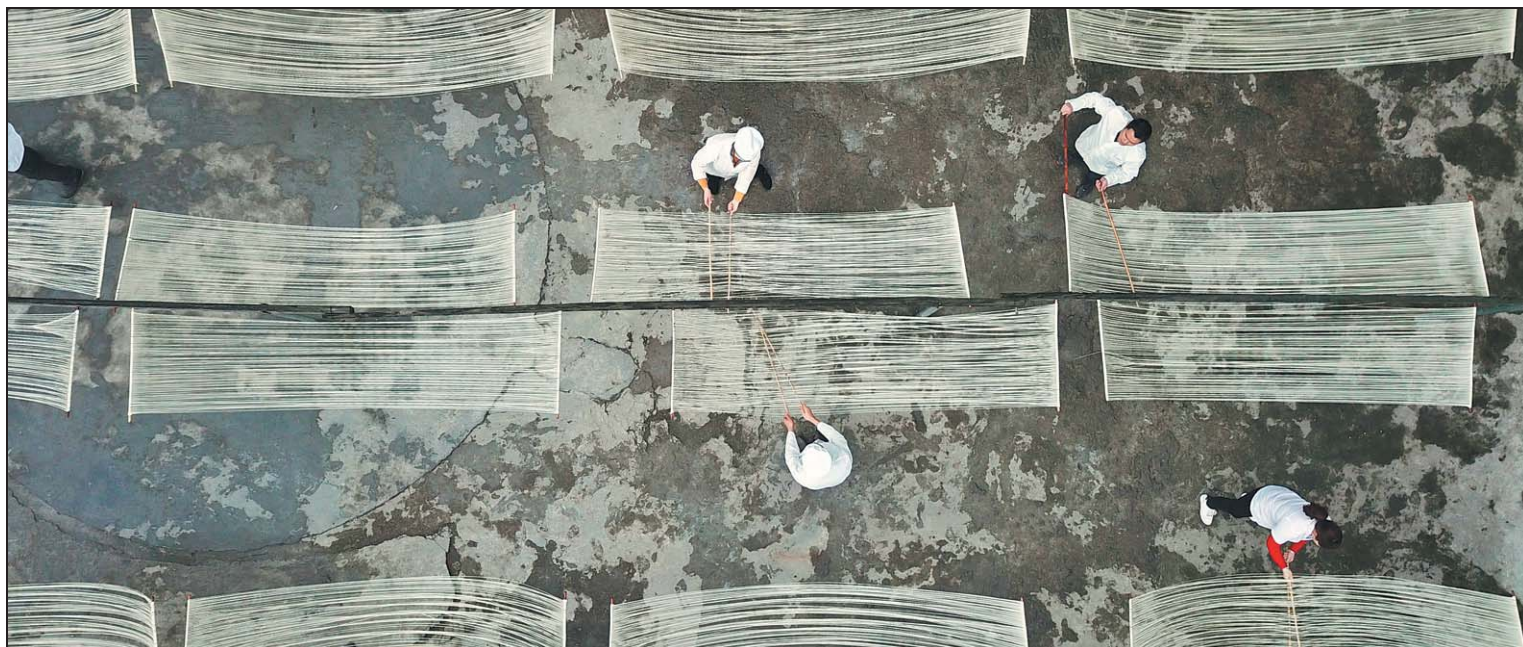
The noodles are made using local refined flour, sesame oil and chicken soup.

As for the devices used, the makers use two sticks to create the noodles, and later then let them dry in the open.

- ZHANG LEI



Among the 72 steps to make Suiyang noodles, "pulling" is tough physical work.



18 TASTE

Festival offers chance to test and taste the best

By DONG FANGYU
dongfangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Discerning beer drinkers, get ready for the big fizz. The Beijing Invitational Craft Beer Festival will be held at TRB Copper by Great Leap Brewing in Beijing from Mar 23 to 25. This is the fourth edition of an event the organizers say is the first of its kind in Beijing featuring international brewers that brings in beer fresh, a lot of it unavailable otherwise in China.

"We want to expand the craft beer experience beyond the gray market and the suitcase beers that are creeping their way into China," says the event organizer, Carl Setzer, founder and brewmaster of Great Leap Brewing.

In 2012 GLB organized a Beijing Craft Beer Festival that featured emerging Chinese craft brewers, and two years later it decided to branch out and bring a wide variety of international brands into the country.

The festival provides an opportunity for both appreciation and education at a personal level rarely available in China's nascent craft brewing scene in Beijing.

What makes this year even more special is the number of international brewery representatives attending. At least 40 breweries will be in attendance, and 170 unique beers will be drunk throughout the festival.

The list includes Bell's and Left Hand from the United States, 8 Wired and Yeastie Boys from New Zealand, Mikkeller from Denmark, Baird from Japan, Moon Dog from Australia, Oedipus from the Netherlands and Lervig from Norway. Those names alone ought to be enough to pique any beer lover's interest.

However, there is a lot more to it than that, for after all it is the beers themselves that truly make this event.

Organizers say that the beer being sent to the festival includes some of the most sought after and most interesting brews. For example, Two-Hearted Ale, an IPA from Bell's Brewery of Michigan, was named best brew in the US in 2017 in the 15th annual ranking published by Zymurgy Magazine in association with the American Homebrewers Association.

Also present will be Cyclo Stout from Pasteur Street in Vietnam, which won a gold medal at the 2016 World Beer Cup.

"These beers are not only unavailable in all of China, but also difficult to try anywhere in the world," Setzer says.

"Most of the breweries will be sending brewmasters and brand creators to attend the fest and pour their beer for you. This will allow you unprecedented access to pick their brains and learn about their beers as



CRAFT BEER MAKERS DESCEND ON BEIJING



More than 800 people visited The Third Beijing Invitational Craft Beer Festival held at TRB Copper in Beijing from Mar 10 to 12, 2017.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



“These beers are not only unavailable in all of China, but also difficult to try anywhere in the world.”

Carl Setzer, founder and brewmaster of Great Leap Brewing

you try them. Like what exactly is the difference between a kettle sour and a Lambic? How long did your barrel-aged stout sit in the barrel? What made you decide to brew your beer with these ingredients?"

GLB, which opened in October 2010, was the first microbrewery in Beijing and from an original four taps in one place now has 60 taps in three outlets. For Setzer, since pouring his first pints of Honey Ma Gold, Pale Ale #6 and the East City Porter on an autumn evening, he has felt the responsibility of building a craft beer community.

Before autumn 2010, craft beer in Beijing was a far-off dream or a recollection of home for many expats.

Nowadays, apart from GLB, other serious local craft beer players in Beijing include Jing A, Slow Boat, NBeer, Panda and Arrow Factory. They have their own complete branding output that differs from myriad new pubs emerged having beers on tap among the emerging craft beer movement.

Festival organizers say there will be a panel discussion about craft beer at TRB Copper on March 24 from 11 am till noon. One of the topics will be AB InBev's expansion into craft brewing and the effect of that on the global craft beer trade.

The festival will be a door ticketed event for which guests will be provided a 150ml branded glass for sampling free-flow beers as well as tasting the all-you-can-eat canapes provided by TRB Cooper during the five sessions, each one lasting 3-4 hours, over the three days of the festival.

A ticket costing 200 yuan (\$32) will give you access to one session; 488 yuan will get you a specially designed five-course brunch paired with limited-edition beers unique from those presented at the festival on Mar 25.

There is also a weekend pass (valid for three sessions, one on Friday, one on Saturday, and the other on Sunday) for 550 yuan, and an all-access pass (entrance to all five sessions as well as the brunch) for 988 yuan.

Each session will be limited to 240 people, which organizers say will give guests plenty of opportunity to sample beers from a variety of international breweries and to gain valuable insights into different beers.

For the panel discussion, entrance is free. Tickets are available either online at 247tickets.com or at the three GLB locations in Beijing.

Eat Beat

1 Free-flow Mexican

In Pixar's animated movie *Coco*, audiences discover not only the importance of family, but also the delicious Mexican food that Miguel Rivera's family enjoy.

Fans of Mexican cuisine can sample a range of typical dishes at Q Mex Taqueria restaurant in Beijing. Its brunch menu is available from 11 am to 4 am every weekend.

Chef Marcus Medina prides the restaurant on the authenticity of its dishes, which are made with ingredients shipped in from Mexico.

After an appetizing vegetable salad, you can continue to enjoy a deliciously dainty brunch. And for those who like a touch of spice, there are many quintessential Mexican spicy dishes on offer.

Guests can sample the restaurant's signature dish of tacos. One great example is a plate of tortilla with fillings of cream cheese, air-dried beef chorizo and scrambled eggs.

Tamale is similar to China's traditional *zongzi*, or glutinous rice dumplings. Mexican-style polenta (boiled cornmeal), beef, chicken, olives and chopped onions are mixed and steamed in banana leaves, and served with a topping of sesame and chili sauce.

The chorizo eggs Benedict features spicy beef chorizo, red cabbage and poached eggs. Other popular dishes include a rich tripe soup with red chillies and chargrilled skirt steak and eggs.

Another recommendation is the popular Mexican snack, molotes. These ground corn and potato fritters are filled with spicy beef chorizo, and topped off with sour cream.

For an additional 188 yuan (\$30), you can enjoy three hours of free-flowing margaritas, sangrias, mimosas or sparkling wines with your brunch. The restaurant's unique take on a bloody mary — a bloody maria — is served with a skewer of shrimps, chicken taquito, bacon and cucumber.

For nonalcoholic drinks, there are a range of homemade horchata (a Mexican-style almond drink), smoothies and fresh fruit juices on offer.

And as the aftertaste continues to linger, guests will soon come to appreciate the country's culinary culture through the restaurant's fresh approach to authentic Mexican fare.

First floor of Shang, 20 Xinyuanli West, Chaoyang district, Beijing
When: 11 am — 1 am daily
Tel: 010-8435-3601

2 Brunch Italian style

Besides its signature Neapolitan-style pizzas, Bottega's delicious Italian brunch dishes are also proving a big draw with Beijing foodies.

The brunch menu is available at its branch in Xinyuanli from 12 am to 3 pm every weekend, and features 10 Italian dishes and three desserts in total.



Chef Paolo Salvo was born into a family famous for making pizza in Naples, the Italian city traditionally credited as the birthplace of pizza.

Besides the ubiquitous chicken Caesar salad, you can opt for bruschetta as a starter. The crispy toasted bread is topped with grilled flank steak and white mushrooms. It's a common snack or appetizer in Italy

that will whet your appetite for the next course.

You can then opt to sample the wood-fired Japanese eggs with spicy Italian sausage and provola cheese, where the mouthwatering mix of flavors create the perfect combination. Or, you can choose to have a bite of frittata, an Italian egg dish similar to omelet, that is

baked with cheese, Italian ham and broccoli.

Another great option is the classic baked lasagna, with pork and beef ragu sauce and Italian sausage.

Also recommended is another popular Italian dish — porchetta, or Italian roast pork. It takes six hours to roast the pork belly of a suckling pig in the traditional Italian way. It's fatty but far from greasy, and is especially delicious when dipped in the accompanying ground pesto and mustard.

There are a range of other meat dishes to sample from the brunch menu, including sliced Parma ham, salami from Naples and grilled Italian pork sausage.

Cannoli, a traditional pastry from the southern Italian region of Sicily, is a popular choice for dessert. The tube-shaped shells contain a sweet and creamy filling of ricotta, shavings of chocolate and candied almonds.

As well as a good selection of wines, you can also choose from six classic cocktails, including Bellini and gin and tonic, priced from 50 yuan. Or instead, why not try an Aperol Spritz, a popular Italian aperitif that consists of Aperol, prosecco and soda.

First floor of Shang, 20 Xinyuanli West, Chaoyang district, Beijing.
When: 12 am-12 pm
Tel: 010-6410-9800

3 Go-to Korean

Bibigo, one of South Korea's largest restaurant brands, recently

opened its first premium restaurant in Beijing's Indigo Mall.

Be it the tender karubi beef, the fragrant beef steaks or the chewy roast loins, Bibigo's handpicked selection of meats presents diners with the opportunity to experience the rich tastes of Korean barbecue.

The newly introduced Korean iron plate brings together the best of Korean meat dishes, and the special sauces create a perfect flavor for the premium ingredients on offer. Sizzling pork, chicken with soy sauce and fried beef with bean sprouts are among the most popular choices, and guests can also enjoy the fun of devising their own plates.

Sitting snugly in the early spring sunlight, diners will feel get that cozy feeling after sampling the staple beef octopus hotpot or the traditional army pot. While continuing to offer more options to its menus, Bibigo has managed to retain many of its most popular staple dishes enjoyed by its customers over the past eight years.

Every kind of rice, soup or noodle dish is enriched by the selection of choice ingredients, such as the stand-out seafood stone bibimbap and the squid kimchi cake. The newly added Korean salad, colored vegetable rolls and other appetizers are a refreshing match for the meat dishes.

No 53, First floor, Indigo Mall, 18 Jiuxianqiao Road, Chaoyang district, Beijing.
11 am-9:30 pm
Tel: 010-8426-0759

GOINGS ON

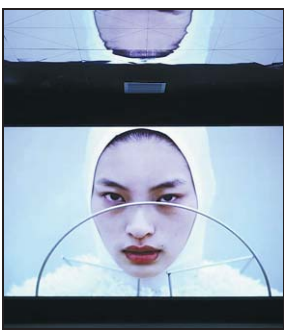
Best bets

**Caracalla Dance Theater Sailing the Silk Road****Date:** March 15-17 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing

In 1968, Abdel Halim Caracalla founded what would evolve into the first and most prominent professional dance theater of the Middle East, creating a body language based upon the Martha Graham dance disciplines blended with Arabic heritage, thus creating a unique "Caracalla Dance Style".

The Caracalla created over fourteen ballets and musicals including adaptations of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Recipient of numerous acclaimed awards and decorations from Arabic and International leaders, the Caracalla has the honor to collaborate with some of the most internationally renowned artists that are pioneers and leaders in the world of theater. Under the auspices of great leaders and with the admiration of a vast audience, the company has succeeded in the establishment of its own theater home to the dancers and guardian to over forty years of invaluable and extensive archival research in dance, music, costumes, traditions and Arabic heritage. Theatre is also home to "Studio Caracalla", a dance school teaching and illuminating today's youth for an artistic future.

**Theater of Physical Comedy: AGA-BOOM****Date:** March 21-25 — 7:30 pm/2 pm**Venue:** Shanghai PG Theater

Created by veteran of Cirque Du Soleil Dimitri Bogatirev, AGA-BOOM was nominated for the Ovation Award, in the category of best touring show, along with *The Producers*, 42nd Street, Lily Tomlin and Elaine Stritch, as well as *The Luna del Auditorio Award* in the category of Alternative Productions, along with *Blue Man Group* and *Apocalyptica*. Rooted in the unique European theatrical style and universal language of clowning, Aga-Boom cuts through the barriers of language and culture with the art of slapstick, the humor of physical comedy and the delighted excitement of childhood. Aga-Boom is an interactive mayhem that carries audiences to the other side of the funhouse mirror, with outrageous zaniness and unrestrained laughter. This 75-minute explosion of pure family fun, for children and adults alike, is high energy, and nothing you have ever seen before.

**Harper's Bazaar 150th Anniversary Exhibition****Date:** March 10-11 — 10 am**Venue:** Museum of Contemporary Art MoCA Shanghai and Harper's Bazaar

jointly present their final exhibition of the year, *Breaking Boundaries: Bazaar's 150th Anniversary Exhibition*. In this last stop of the Bazaar 150th Anniversary Exhibition world tour, six chapters showcase the growth of Bazaar within six historical periods of women's enlightenment and empowerment. These periods include women's struggle for freedom during the "Belle Epoque"; industry and modernity during the "Art Deco" era, challenging old labels during the "Rebellious Era"; the rediscovery of far-Eastern fashion during the "Oriental Aesthetics" era; fashion's fusion and fission with other industries during the "Crossover Era"; and artistic breakthroughs of the "Futurist Era." Fashion, video art, and installation work spanning the exhibition's six epochs explore how Bazaar has both shaped and been shaped by the trends of its time. These include videos from the legendary Coco Chanel, Pipilotti Rist's installations, and Xu Longsen's Shanshui Totem. Through this historical frame, breaking boundaries expounds on the diverse roles, identities and voices that women hold claim to today.

**Drama The Face of Chiang Kai-shek****Date:** March 14-18 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** National Centre for the Performing Arts

This is a fictitious story written by a student based on the school history about the senior teacher and the president. In 1943, Chiang Kai-shek, who was the president of National Central University, invited three famous professors of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature to dinner. It made the three professors feel embarrassed: to go or not to go is an awkward matter, whether or not should they accept this invitation? In 1967, in the former capital, Nanjing, the three professors were investigated because of this matter. Each of them had different memories of whether they had been invited by Chiang Kai-shek and whether they had attended to Chiang Kai-shek's dinner. Wen Fangyi, a student of Department of Drama, Film & Television of School of Liberal Arts, Nanjing University, was guided to write her term paper by professor Lyu Xiaoping in 2012. Lyu assigned Wen Fangyi to write a comedy titled *The Face of Chiang Kai-shek* based on the legend of Chiang Kai-shek, the president of National Central University, who invited professors of Department of Chinese Language and Literature to dinner.

BRIDGE NIGHT

A crazy deal has instructive points

Henny Youngman said, "How to drive a guy crazy: Send him a telegram and on the top put 'page 2'".

How to drive an opening leader crazy: Give him a wild auction like this one. What should West lead against seven spades undoubted? Would West's choice of card change if East had doubled the final contract?

South opened four no-trump, hoping partner had the heart ace, so that he could play in seven no-trump. But when North denied that card, South confidently leapt to seven spades.

Against seven spades undoubted, a naive West would lead the heart ace, but South would ruff, draw trumps and claim. A more rational West would lead a trump, hoping South had a two-suiter and eventu-

ally would lose a trick in the side suit because his ruffing power had been critically reduced.

In this deal, though, East must double seven spades — which means what? There is little point in doubling a grand slam because you think it is going down one. You increase the penalty by a very small amount (50 or 100 points), but if they make it, they get even more points (from 190 to 260); and perhaps they will redouble. Also, they might run from the doubled grand slam that was going down into another grand slam that makes.

Against a grand slam, double should show a void and a desire to get a ruff at trick one. Now West ought to find the killing diamond lead.

		North		
		♠ 6 3		
		♥ Q 5 4		
		♦ J 10 8 7		
		♣ J 10 9 2		
West			East	
♥ 7 4			♠ 5 2	
♠ A K 8			♥ J 10 9 7 6 3 2	
♦ 9 6 5 4 3 2			♦ —	
♣ 6 3			♣ 8 7 5 4	
		South		
		♠ A K Q J 10 9 8		
		♥ —		
		♦ A K Q		
		♣ A K Q		
		Dealer: South		
		Vulnerable: East-West		
South	West	North	East	
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass	
7♣	Pass	Pass	Pass	
		Opening lead: ??		

Shows

Mikhail Pletnev & Russian National Orchestra**Date:** March 15 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** NCPA, Beijing

Mikhail Pletnev's genius as pianist, conductor and composer enchants and amazes audiences around the globe. He was Gold Medal and First Prize winner of the 1978 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition when he was only 21, a prize that earned him early recognition worldwide. An invitation to perform at the 1988 superpower summit in Washington led to a friendship with Mikhail Gorbachev and the historic opportunity to make music in artistic freedom. The Russian National Orchestra was founded in 1990 by pianist and conductor Mikhail Pletnev and today is widely recognized as one of the world's top orchestras.

The Key Theater: When All Was Green**Date:** March 10-April 1 — 10 am/3 pm**Venue:** Nanshan Culture & Sports Center Micro Theater, Shenzhen

Through old books, recycled bindings and yellowing pages a story is told about a boy and a tree, about childhood and adolescence, about fields that are lost between gray concrete and about one green bud of hope. The Key Theatre was established in 1998, a collaboration between writer Dikla Katz and actor Avi Zlich — graduates of Tel-Aviv University from the Film and TV and Theater departments respectively. As a theater for young audiences that travels in Israel and abroad, they seek to reach audiences from different cultures and backgrounds and strive to create performances which will be artistic as well as thought-provoking. They seek to encourage curiosity and imagination and believe that by creating fantastic, nonrealistic children's theater we can make a basis for acquaintance and a wide understating of the place we are living in.

Fabio Luisi & The Danish National Symphony Orchestra**Date:** March 14 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** NCPA, Beijing

Grammy and ECHO Klassik Award-winner Fabio Luisi serves as General Music Director of the Zurich Opera and Principal Conductor of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. After concluding a 6-year tenure as Principal Conductor of the Metropolitan Opera last season, he launches a new appointment as Music Director of Florence's Opera di Firenze this coming

spring. The Danish National Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1925 as part of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation under the motto: "The best — only the best." Today, it is one of the leading symphony orchestras in Europe performing with the world's leading conductors and soloists. The strong and straightforward personality of the Symphony Orchestra is rooted in its close relationship with Danish and Nordic music, and it is the world's foremost Carl Nielsen-orchestra.

NCPA Children's Opera Snow White**Date:** March 10-14 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** NCPA, Beijing

The NCPA's third commissioned children's opera, *Snow White*, is scheduled for its premiere from March 3 to 9, 2018, with six performances ongoing at the Multifunctional Theater. The *Snow White* opera, based on a Brothers Grimm's fairytale of the same name, features enthralling music alongside a stage of vibrant colors. The NCPA has assembled an international creative team with the music written by NCPA resident composer Cai Dongzhen, whose works have been acclaimed inside and outside China. Accomplished Swiss director and set designer, Stephan Grogler and costume designer Veronique Seymat, have joined forces with France-based projection designer, Hu Tianji to orchestrate a classic with their unique perspectives. The stage's surreal set, including mirror-like elements, presents a backdrop for audiences young and old to be mesmerized.

China People's Armed Police Force Male Chorus**Date:** March 11 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** NCPA, Beijing

China People's Armed Police Force Male Chorus & Orchestra consists of outstanding graduates from many professional music colleges across the country. China People's Armed Police Force Male Chorus is currently only professional male chorus, which premiered in Beijing in April 2007. Their singing has a distinctive military feature, which is magnificent, powerful and unswerving with delicacy and highly emotional tension. China People's Armed Police Force Male Orchestra is characterized by orderly staffing, delicate performance, rich experience, rigorous style and broad repertoire, which has been highly praised by experts and masses of audience.

China National Traditional Orchestra**Date:** March 17 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** NCPA, Beijing

As a national-level orchestra directly under the Ministry of Culture, China

Nightlife & Activities

Women in Leadership Mentor Walk**Date:** March 10 — 9:30 am**Venue:** Embassy of Australia

The British Chamber of Commerce in China is delighted to invite you to participate in the Beijing Mentors Walk. Our first Mentor Walks of 2018 will take place on March 10, at the Australian Embassy. Mentors and mentees will be gathering to walk around Liangma river. As they walk, attendees will be able to discuss their professional and personal challenges, successes, aspirations and lessons learned.

Comedy Night — Kyle Grooms**Date:** March 11 — 8 pm**Venue:** The Bookworm, Beijing

Best known for his hilarious half-hour stand-up special on Comedy Central and his guest appearances on VH-1, NBC's *Last Comic Standing* and *Chappelle's Show*, Kyle started doing stand-up at a local Miami night club while holding down a day job as Art Director at the Spanish-language network Univision. After a few years honing his act in Miami, Kyle said goodbye to Spanish TV and returned to New Jersey, where he was born. He delivers an honest and intelligent view of the world and gives an intimate look into his life experiences growing up in the American melting pot. Kyle has a sharp sense of humor that appeals to a broad audience. His first comedy CD, *The Legend of the Jersey Devil*, was named one of iTunes' Top 100 Comedy CDs of 2009. Kyle has been featured on several television, radio and internet broadcasts. He also has several appearances in national TV ad campaigns under his belt for companies including T-Mobile, Sears, Career Builders and Holiday Inn Express. Kyle continues to grow as a stand-up comedian, writer and actor and can be seen performing worldwide.

How to Build an Anti-Fraud Program**Date:** March 13 — 9 pm**Venue:** European Union Chamber of Commerce in China

Asset misappropriation, bribery and corruption are relatively common economic crimes in China. PwC's most recent Global Economic Crime Survey indicates that around one out of every three China based companies have experienced some form of economic crime in the past two years. Given the extent of this issue, businesses and

their staff need to ask themselves some hard questions about these risks, including: "Is our company doing enough to preserve its value so we can sleep soundly at night?" The European Chamber invites you to join a seminar with Benjamin Ee, Director of Forensic Services, PwC China who will present on how to build an effective anti-fraud program and share practical experience of managing these challenges.

In Conversation with Geoff Dyer**Date:** March 10 — 6 pm**Venue:** The Bookworm, Beijing

Geoff Dyer dissolves genres and writes a blend of fiction, autobiography, travel writing, cultural criticism and literary theory, often laced with a sardonic and self-deprecating wit. His 14 books have won many awards including the National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism and the Somerset Maugham Prize. His subjects vary wildly, from an ode to critic John Berger to how the World War I is remembered, to a book about his failure to write a book about DH Lawrence. His "nonfiction" book about jazz imaginatively reconstructs scenes from the lives of the greats, his "novels" often harbor essays and critiques, while his latest book *White Sands* blends travel writing with some fictitious aspects in his search for the most vivid of experiences.

Longines Global Champions Shanghai**Date:** April 20-22 — 10 am**Venue:** South of China Art Museum

The Longines Global Champions Tour is the world's premier show jumping series, bringing together the top ranked athletes in the world to compete in prestigious locations for unprecedented prize money. From the sands of Miami Beach to the lights of Shanghai, under the Eiffel Tower in Paris to the breathtaking Stadio dei Marmi in Rome, it offers some of the most explosive and exciting competition of any equestrian series. Revolutionary in the sport, the LGCT of Shanghai is in its fifth year running, breaking records by being one of the first major equestrian events in the heart of China, and bringing top sport to new audiences. Now highly respected as one of the most prolific social and sporting events on the calendar, the Shanghai leg of the Championship will welcome the world's best horses and riders as they battle it out for the prestigious top spot in their season long campaign for the coveted LGCT Champion of Champions title. Over the course of three days,

National Traditional Orchestra, founded in 1960 under the direction of Premier Zhou Enlai, is regarded as the standard-setter and benchmark of China's folk music performance. The orchestra, made up of folk orchestra, chorus and art creation center, boasts a group of musicians and sharp-sighted managers. China National Traditional Orchestra not only performs typical traditional music in various forms but dabbles in contemporary Chinese music, western classic music and other genres. Adhering to popularizing traditional Chinese music and culture, the orchestra collects, arranges and performs a great variety of excellent folk music and contemporary selected works, adding a glorious stroke to China's traditional music.

James Blunt: The Afterlove Tour Live**Date:** April 4 — 8 pm**Venue:** Mercedes-Benz Arena, Shanghai

James Blunt will release his fifth studio album, *The Afterlove*, on March 24 through Warner Music. The new album is the follow-up to the multiplatinum selling *Moon Landing*. James' new single "Love Me Better" is available to stream and download now. The single shows Blunt in a new light, thanks in part to Ryan Tedder's fresh and modern pop production, and the lyrics combine a heartfelt poignancy along with touches of Blunt's classic, self-deprecating humor. James Blunt will also be embarking on a world tour — *The Afterlove Tour*. This is the first tour for James following his extensive *Moon Landing Tour*, which saw him perform over 140 shows across the world over the course of twelve months.

Lany 2018 Live in Shanghai**Date:** March 21 — 8 pm**Venue:** Bandai Namco Shanghai Base Dream Hall

By the time Lany formally released the first in a series of EPs the band had established their own lane on music's crowded highway. Billboard praised the group's "lush, luxuriant" alternative sound when *I Loved You* dropped. By 2016, and the release of *Where The Hell Are My Friends*, the *Line Of Best Fit* were praising Lany's music for its "swoning melange of gilded vocals, spidery riffs, and dusky synths". Much of the music that propelled them to multi-million-stream success was recorded out of aux sockets. "It was very do it yourself," Paul Jason Klein, one of Lang's major members, says, "We were led by conviction and instinct simultaneously. We didn't demo anything. We had zero followers on Twitter, SoundCloud or Instagram. We just decided: let's make a band, stick the music online ourselves, and see what happens."

fans will be treated to a spectacle of show jumping as the world's best come together to battle it out for top honors.

The Pearl Movie Night**Date:** March 13 — 8 pm**Venue:** The Pearl, Shanghai

Like the TV series that shared the same title, *The Untouchables* (1987) was an account of the battle between gangster Al Capone and lawyer Eliot Ness. Kevin Costner stars as Ness, a federal agent who has come to Chicago during the Prohibition Era, when corruption in the local police department is rampant. His mission is to put crime lord Capone (Robert De Niro) out of business, but Capone is so powerful and popular that Ness is not taken seriously by the law or the press. One night, discouraged, he meets a veteran patrolman, Jimmy Malone (Sean Connery), and discovers that the acerbic Irishman is the one honest man he's been seeking. Malone has soon helped Ness recruit a gunslinger rookie, George Stone (Andy Garcia), and, joined by nebbish accountant Oscar Wallace (Charles Martin Smith), the men doggedly pursue Capone and his illegal interests. At first a laughingstock, Ness soon has Capone outraged over his and Malone's sometimes law-bending tactics, and the vain mobster strikes back in vicious style. Ultimately, it is the most unexpected and minor of crimes, tax evasion, which proves Capone's undoing.

The Future of Cars in China**Date:** Mar 14 — 1:30 pm**Venue:** Microsoft Research Center Asia

The automotive industry and technology sector are converging, and intelligent connected vehicles including interconnected smart cars, electric vehicles, will change the future of personal transportation. This development and implementation is coming to China and AmCham China member companies are leading the way in technological development through innovations in artificial intelligence and utilization of big data. However, the progress of new interconnected vehicles also presents policy challenges.

Stage: The Seagull**Date:** March 14-17 — 7:30 pm**Venue:** Capital Theatre

Theater Lithuania stages Chekov's classic play *The Seagull*, at the Capital Theatre, with an all-star cast. The production stays true to Chekov's dark comedic script, the first of his four major plays and a major leap forward in the way drama was written and directed.

20ART

The China National Peking Opera Company is holding Ode to Spring, an event which will run till April 16, to promote the traditional art form in Beijing

By CHEN NAN
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Spring is the main season for Peking Opera fans in the capital as the China National Peking Opera Company — the top national ensemble which founded in 1955 — always presents shows featuring both established and young Peking Opera artists as well as programs ranging from traditional to contemporary works.

Now, in its fifth year, the event, titled *Ode to Spring*, which kicked off on March 2 and will run till April 16 features nearly 20 programs.

The highlights of the event which will be staged at the Mei Lanfang Grand Theater in Beijing include a new Peking Opera piece, titled *Song of the Silk Road*, which make its debut over March 22 and 23.

According to Song Chen from the National Peking Opera Company, the piece was inspired by the ancient Silk Road and is divided into two sections.

With Peking Opera, the 200-year-old art form, facing a decline, Song says that the company is trying to revive it with new approaches.

In *Song of the Silk Road*, Peking Opera artists perform songs which combine pop elements and Peking Opera — an experiment to appeal to a contemporary audience — says Song.

Speaking about the company's work, Song says: "In 2017, we staged more than 400 shows at home and abroad.

"Peking Opera is a sophisticated art form, which contains various performing styles and various roles. And what we do is to keep the tradition alive with creative ideas. But, besides staging traditional pieces, we need a new repertoire."

In 2017, the company revived three classic Peking Opera pieces, including *You Sisters in the Red Chamber* — a story from *Dream of the Red Chamber* by Qing Dynasty (1644—1911) writer Cao Xueqin; *The Legend of the White Snake* and *Zhu Hen Ji*.



PROMOTING PEKING OPERA



China National Peking Opera Company is staging about 20 shows in Beijing, both traditional and contemporary Peking Opera pieces, to promote the traditional art form and display young talents. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



These three newly-choreographed pieces will be staged from April 12 to 16.

Meanwhile, Song says that the two-week event has been expanded to more than a month this year to offer audiences more shows, as well as to give young Peking Opera artists a platform to display their skills.

"We've selected eight top young artists from our company to per-

form at the event. These actors, in their 20s and 30s, are taking the responsibility of keeping the tradition alive," says Song.

One of the young actors is Guo Fanjia, who will play the lead role in the contemporary Peking Opera piece, *Daughter of the Party*, which premiered in 2016, marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the Long March, a strategic operation

undertaken over 1934-36 by China's Red Army.

In the piece, Guo, who graduated from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts and now focuses on doing *dan* (female) roles, plays Guiying.

Speaking about the role, Guo says: "Unlike the roles I played earlier, such as brave female warriors and pampered princess, the Gui-

role is challenging.

Young actress Fu Jia, who has been training with veteran Peking Opera actress Du Jinfang for three years, plays Xie Yaohuan in the classic Peking Opera piece of the same title.

The opera is based on the story of a female official named Xie Yaohuan from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) who served Empress Wu Zetian.

The Xie Yaoyuan role is the third

one Fu is learning from Du, who has done these female roles earlier.

Song says that to popularize Peking Opera among the young, the China National Peking Opera Company will do about 140 shows at primary schools in Beijing.

And the company also plans to turn Peking Opera pieces into cartoon films besides offering training to students across the country.

Artist brings Lunar New Year heritage to life on stamps

NEW YORK — You may not be familiar with the name of the Chinese-American artist Kam Mak but you have probably seen his latest work — The Year of the Dog stamp sheetlet, which highlights and refreshes a lot of fond memories about Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations.

Mak, who moved to New York with his parents from Hong Kong when he was 10 years old, has been commissioned by the US Postal Services (USPS) to design the second set of Celebrating Chinese New Year stamp series since 2008.

The USPS' first set of 12 zodiac stamps was designed by Chinese-Hawaiian designer Clarence Lee and first introduced in 1993.

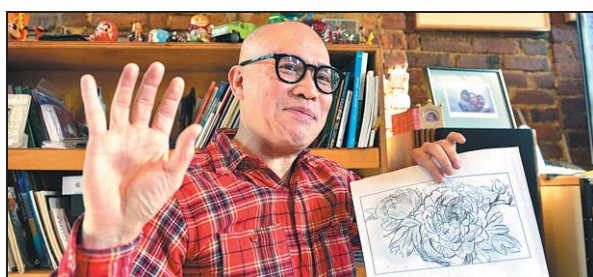
HIGHLIGHT CUSTOMS & TRADITION OF LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

"I hope I showcase our culture, customs, and traditions well," Mak said in a recent interview with Xinhua. "(What) we want to really highlight is how beautiful our tradition is and the custom ... especially to people who don't really know about the Lunar New Year."

The Year of the Dog stamp, released by USPS early last month, continues Mak's concept of using the Lunar New Year symbols to highlight the customs and tradition of the Lunar New Year celebration.

The 56-year-old artist said he specifically chose three stalks of lucky bamboo to symbolize three types of good fortune: *fu* (happiness), *lu* (wealth), and *shou* (long life).

"The bamboo stalks are artistically curving and twisting, which symbolizes life's paths. Though the



From left: Kam Mak shows the sketch of the Year of the Monkey stamp in his studio in Brooklyn, New York; the official first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony of the Year of the Monkey Commemorative Forever Stamp at St. John's University Queens Campus in New York in 2016. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

journey may be fraught with twists and turns, the budding leaves on top are always optimistically facing upward to heaven."

"The red ribbon of fate floats throughout the middle," he said, "signifying joy and rebirth, entwining us together in peace and cooperation while anchoring us firmly to the earth."

On the right side of the design is a red square positioned on one point (diamond shape) with additional script characters *fu* written on red paper, he said. The color red has been used to symbolize luck in Chinese culture. The word *fu* stands for good fortune or happiness.

"Recalling my childhood in Hong Kong, my grandma would pay someone to write Fu and other couplets on red paper by hand, and she would post them around the house just before the New Year," he said.

The stamp also incorporates two elements from the previous series of Lunar New Year stamps — Lee's intricate cut-paper design of a dog which Mak said had gained a great following.

"So I think this is a beautiful concept, incorporating the traditions, the customs and still have the animal there," he said.

SELECTION OF SYMBOLS A MAJOR CHALLENGE

Mak, who now teaches painting at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology, said the selection and presentation of the symbols were a major challenge during the design process.

"The biggest challenge of stamp designing is how to convey your ideas in a space of a square inch," he said.

The zodiac series require the designer not only to think about the composition, but also to understand Chinese culture. The first draft he presented to USPS made officials shake their heads.

"No, no. The illustration will lose too many details when printed on stamps," they told him. Mak started to think about how to simplify the illustration. He had also to make his design different from the previous set.

"The stamps designed by Clarence focus on the images of the zodiac ani-

mals. I wanted to show in mine the variety of the Chinese culture," said Mak. "So I decided to not put the spotlight on the animals but on other cultural symbols such as peonies, daffodils, oranges, and red envelopes. But not everyone likes the idea."

Mak had to do presentations again and again to explain the meaning of the symbols to the USPS officials and other people who viewed the drafts until they were approved.

In 2010, on the stamp for the Year of the Tiger, Mak drew five white daffodil flowers. Some people immediately opposed it saying that white is not a blessed color in the Chinese culture, and the white flowers may affect the sales of the stamp, he said.

It was only after he explained that, with the yellow stamens and the white petals, the daffodil flower is also called *jin zhan yin tai* — gold wine cup on a silver plate — in Chinese, and is believed to bring good fortune, did USPS accept the idea.

"In China, everyone knows the origins and meanings of the cultural symbols," said Mak. "But in the US even Chinese Americans born here

may not know much. So I have to explain everything to the audience. After listening to my speech, many people said they like the stamps very much and are enchanted by the Chinese culture."

LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMP MEANS A LOT FOR CHINESE COMMUNITY

The issuance of Chinese zodiac stamps by the USPS is the result of a longtime effort by Chinese American communities in the United States.

The Organization of Chinese Americans (now OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates), a major advocacy organization in the Asian community, started to push for the stamps in 1988 under the suggestion of a member in the US state of Georgia named Jean Chen who is also a stamp collector.

More importantly, they hoped to bring to light how Chinese immigrant workers played a big blood-and-sweat role in building the transcontinental railroad essential for the US economy. They decided on the Lunar New Year theme.

"This lunar year stamp series has a different meaning for us. It's incredible to see my culture being displayed on a stamp in America," Mak said. "It's never too late."

Recognition of Chinese culture in America goes beyond stamps. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the Chinese New Year a public school holiday in 2016.

Mak said it was a thrill for the Chinese American community. Many kids including him back in the days had to skip school for the new year. "That was wonderful. It's about time," he said.

On Feb 24, Mak led a stamp-making workshop at a special program held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET) to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year. This is the ninth consecutive year for the museum to hold celebratory events for the festival.

"I'm so happy to see all that stuff going on, and we are promoting our culture," Mak said. "This country has many different cultures from different countries and we should all embrace that multiculturalism. Because that's what makes America great."

Mak thinks the holidays are a great opportunity to ingrain customs and cultures into the next generation, like what they eat and do around the Chinese New Year. "I think it is through the holidays that I find it is a wonderful way to share the customs."

"One of my students, she's born here she couldn't even speak Chinese but she's performing a lion dance at the MET," said Mak, who goes to inner city schools to read his book *My Chinatown: One Year in Poem*.

XINHUA