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The 12th National People's Congress (NPC), China's parliamentary body, opened its second annual session at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5, 2014. Nearly 3,000 NPC deputies from across the country attended the opening meeting along with top Party and State leaders. Premier Li Keqiang delivered his first government work report at the opening meeting.



Mr. Wei Wei, the Chinese Ambassador to India made a speech on the Chinese New Year Celebration Party of Jawaharlal Nehru University on February 28, 2014. He hoped the students of JNU to make greater contribution to promote friendship between China and India.



Mr. Wei Wei, the Chinese Ambassador to India, donated more than 400 books about Chinese culture and Chinese language teaching and teaching equipments to Jawaharlal Nehru University on behalf of the Chinese Embassy on February 28, 2014.



A goodwill delegation headed by Mr. Ai Ping, Deputy Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, visited India from Feb. 19 to 22, 2014. The delegation exchanged views on further development of Sino-Indian relations with the main political parties in India.



Mr. Ai Ping, Deputy Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of CPC, accepted an interview of Indian media during his visit in Delhi. His visit to India was one of the activities of "Year of China-India Friendly Exchanges".



Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony met with Deputy Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army of China Wang Guanzhong in New Delhi on Feb.24,2014. The later was here for holding the 6th round of meeting of Defense and Security Consultation between China and India.



Mr. Liu Youfa, the Chinese Consul General in Mumbai met with Indian importers and exporters in his office on March 11, 2014. He hoped more Chinese investors could be attracted to India to establish joint ventures and cooperative enterprises in India.

Welcome to Hainan !



Boao Forum for Asia conference center

Hainan sits at the southwestern tip of Guangdong Province, separated from the mainland by the narrow Qiongzhou Strait. It is China's the second largest island which follows Taiwan and it is also the country's smallest province measured in terms of land, but the largest province measured in terms of its geographical span. It is China's southernmost province and in fact, China's southernmost territory. To give an idea of just how far south the island lies, it is on the same latitude (18 degrees) as the U.S. island state of Hawaii.

Hainan Island has long been a popular tropical paradise among foreigners, thanks to the island's year-round mild climate, its sandy beaches, its pure, deep blue bathing waters and its invigoratingly fresh air. It has equally been a popular getaway for Chinese tourists. That has earned Hainan the title of China's Hawaii. The government has plans to develop Hainan Island as a casino resort à la Monaco or Las Vegas.

Big Events in Hainan 2014

*Event: Bo'ao Forum for Asia

Date: April 8—11, 2014

Place: Bo'ao

Profile: As a non-government, non-profit international organization, Boao Forum For Asia (BFA) is the most prestigious and premier forum for leaders in government, business and academia in Asia and other continents to share visions on the most pressing issues in this dynamic region and the world at large. The Forum is committed to promoting regional economic integration and bringing Asian countries even closer to their development goals.

Boao Forum for Asia was formally inaugurated in February 2001. Countries



across the region have responded with strong support and great enthusiasm, and the world has listened attentively to the voice coming from a tiny, quiet and scenic island at the southernmost part of China – Boao, the permanent site of the Annual Conference of the Forum since 2002.

The Annual Conference will be held in Boao, Hainan province, China from 8 to 11 April 2014 with its theme being "Asia's New Future: Identifying New Growth Drivers". The opening ceremony of the Annual Meeting is scheduled for 10 April, and the Secretariat has extended invitation to state leaders of China, and will invite a number of leaders of other countries.

The Annual Conference 2014 will include 60 panel discussions, with a focus on reform, innovation and sustainable development. In addition, this year's Annual Conference will for the first time include a session on the economic cooperation along the Silk Road and a promotion event co-organized with the Hong Kong SAR. (Please visit www.boaoforum.org for more information.)

*EVENT: World Travel & Tourism Council 14th annual Global Summit

Date: April 24-25, 2014
Place: Sanya

China was the world's second largest tourism economy, in terms of total contribution to GDP, in 2012 - but by 2023 it will have become the world's largest tourism economy, displacing the USA. Whether operating in the private or public sector, any senior executive engaged in Travel & Tourism has to understand this growth phenomenon, and what it means to their country or business. There can be no better way of doing this than by attending and participating in The Global Summit.

(Please contact events@wttc.org.)

*EVENT: 2014 China International (Haikou) Fashion & Creative Industry Expo
Private investment in high-end products Fair (Haikou station)
Date: May 16-19, 2014
Place: Haikou

Venue: Hainan International Convention and Exhibition Center

Organizers: Luxury (China) Union Haikou Municipal People's Government

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Hainan International Convention and Exhibition Center

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NPC & CPPCC SESSIONS 2014

China Starts Annual Parliamentary Session

Beijing, March 5 (Xinhua) — The 12th National People's Congress (NPC), China's parliamentary body, opened its second annual session Wednesday morning at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Premier Li Keqiang delivered his first government work report at the opening meeting, chaired by Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee and executive chairperson of the session's presidium.



The second session of China's 12th National People's Congress (NPC) opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 5, 2014. (Xinhua/Jin Liwang)



Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives for the second plenary meeting of the second session of China's 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 9, 2014. (Xinhua/Li Xueren)

Nearly 3,000 NPC deputies from across the country attended the opening meeting along with top Party and state leaders Xi Jinping, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli.

A silent tribute was observed at the opening meeting for victims of a terrorist attack at a train station in southwestern Chinese city of Kunming, in which knife-wielding assailants from Xinjiang killed 29 civilians and injured another 143 late Saturday.

China Pledges Stable Growth, Deepening Reform

Beijing, March 5 (Xinhua) — China keeps its economic growth target unchanged at around 7.5 percent this year as the government looks to achieve stable growth while driving through reforms for a more balanced model.

"On the basis of careful comparison and repeatedly weighing various factors as well as considering what is needed and what is possible, we set a growth target of around 7.5 percent," said the government work report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang at the parliament's annual session Wednesday.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang delivers the government work report during the opening meeting of the second session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 5, 2014. (Xinhua/Li Xueren)

This is the third consecutive year that the government put the goal at 7.5 percent.

China's economy expanded 7.7 percent last year, well above the government goal, but a set of data that pointed to softening manufacturing activity in recent months renewed concerns on the growth outlook of the world's second largest economy.

Describing the economy as at a critical juncture where the paths upward is "particularly steep" amid challenges from at home and abroad, the premier stressed that China must keep economic development as the central task and maintain a "proper economic growth rate".

He reiterated that reform is the top priority for the government's work this year, four months after a key meeting last November outlined a wide-ranging reform package.

To ensure the economy stay within a "proper range", the government promised to continue to implement a proactive fiscal policy and a prudent monetary policy.

It projected a budget deficit of 1.35 trillion yuan, an increase of 150 billion yuan over last year, and a 13-percent rise in broad money supply in 2014, while vowing to keep inflation at around 3.5 percent and create 10 million more urban jobs to ensure the registered urban unemployment rate does not rise above 4.6 percent.

To shift the growth away from the export- and investment-led model, China will make domestic demand the "main engine" that drives growth and take investment as the "key" to maintain stable growth, the report said.

Although the policy tone is largely

unchanged from last year, analysts expect authorities to put on more focus on deepening reforms this year, albeit in a gradual and cautious manner.

Premier Li announced Wednesday to set up a deposit insurance system, considered a precondition for freeing deposit rates, the last and most important step of interest rate liberalization.

The decision came along with repeated promises to expand the floating range of exchange rates and move toward yuan convertibility under capital accounts.

The report said China will overhaul the current financing scheme for local governments to issue bonds, its latest step to contain the mounting debt problems.

Containing local government debt risks has been high on the government's agenda for 2014. It is listed as one of the government's six priorities at a tone-setting economic work conference in December.

Despite various estimates on the size of China's local government debt, the National Audit Office issued its own audit results at the end of last year, which estimated local government debt was 10.89 trillion yuan (1.78 trillion U.S. dollars) as of the end of June 2013.

An emerging consensus is that China's government debt is generally manageable but could get out of hand if its structural problems and lack of oversight are not addressed in a timely manner.

Together with a range of other steps to address public concerns, Premier Li said China will "declare war" against pollution and penalize crooked officials "without mercy" in accordance with the law.

China to Punish Corrupt Officials without Mercy

The Chinese government will build a system for combating corruption and penalize crooked officials without mercy in accordance with the law, a government work report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang said Wednesday.

Efforts have been strengthened to uphold integrity and fight corruption and a number of people violating the law or discipline had been brought to justice, Li said at the opening of the annual session of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature.

The government fully implemented the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee's eight-point decision on improving Party and government conduct, carried out the campaign to heighten awareness of and implement the mass line, firmly opposed formalism, bureaucracy, hedonism and extravagance, and strictly implemented the State Council's three-point decision on curbing government spending.

Spending by central government bodies on official overseas visits, official vehicles, and official hospitality was reduced by 35 percent, and spending by provincial-level governments on official hospitality decreased by 26 percent, the report said.

China has embarked on a frugality drive as part of a popular anti-corruption campaign which targeted both "tigers and flies", referring to high and low ranking corrupt officials.

"I think its vigor has certainly surprised

everyone," Andrew Small, an expert on China issues from the Washington-based German Marshall Fund of the United States in an email interview.

"The challenge is to turn a campaign into something that is more systemic, ensuring that there are right checks and balances in place," Small said.

In his report, Li called on government at all levels to practice economy, eliminate waste, and tighten their belts in 2014.

Construction of new government buildings and renovation and expansion of existing government buildings are strictly prohibited, the total number of government employees should be reduced, and government spending on official overseas visits, official vehicles, and official hospitality is to be reduced, Li said, adding that reforms of the system for using official vehicles will also be launched.

The government will strengthen administrative oversight and correct improper conduct in trades, and intensify auditing and release more auditing results to the public, Li said.

In addition, revenue from the sale of land-use rights and its use as well as farmland protection will come under the scrutiny of auditors, he said.

Chinese Premier Vows Firm Crackdown on Terrorism

Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday strongly condemned the deadly terrorist attack in southwestern Chinese city of Kunming and pledged to crack down hard on terrorism.

"We will firmly crack down on all violent crimes of terrorism as they violate the dignity of law and challenge the bottom line of human civilization," Li said while delivering his first government work report at the National People's Congress (NPC), which opened on Wednesday.

"We will ensure the safety of people's lives and property and make concerted efforts to build a peaceful China," he said.

Li's comments about the Kunming attack were not in the official report.

A group of knife-wielding assailants slashed frantically at crowds at Kunming Railway Station late Saturday, killing 29 civilians and injuring 143.

Li condemned the attack, conveyed condolences to the victims and expressed sympathy to the victims' families.

Nearly 3,000 deputies from across the country observed a moment of silence for the victims at the opening meeting of the NPC's annual session.

Highlights of government work report

Following are the highlights of a government work report distributed to media ahead of the annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC).

MAJOR TARGETS FOR 2014

— Gross domestic product (GDP) grows about 7.5 percent.

— Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase will be kept around 3.5 percent.

— Add 10 million more urban jobs.

— Keep the registered urban unemployment rate at a maximum 4.6

percent.

— The government will work to increase personal incomes in step with economic development.

FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICIES FOR 2014

— China will continue to implement a proactive fiscal policy and a prudent monetary policy.

— The government budget deficit for this year is projected to be 1.35 trillion yuan (218 billion US dollars), an increase of 150 billion yuan over last year, and accounts for 2.1 percent of GDP.

— The broad monetary supply (M2) is forecast to grow by around 13 percent.

THREE PRINCIPLES

— The government should create impetus by deepening reform.

— The government should keep economic performance within a proper range.

— The government should work hard to raise the quality and returns of development, promote industrial upgrading and keep improving people's wellbeing.

NINE MAJOR TASKS FOR 2014

— Making breakthroughs in reform in important areas.

— Ushering in a new phase of China's opening to the outside world and ensuring its high standard performance.

— Making domestic demand the main engine driving growth.

— Advancing agricultural modernization and rural reform and development.

— Carrying out a new type of people-centered urbanization.

— Using innovation to support and lead economic structural improvement and upgrading.

— Accelerating the development of education, health, culture and other social programs.

— Making coordinated efforts to ensure and improve people's wellbeing.

— Building China into a beautiful homeland with a sound ecological environment.

WHAT TO DO IN 2014

— The central government will cancel or delegate to lower-level governments another 200 administrative approvals at least.

— The institutional reform of provincial, municipal and county governments will be finished this year and public institution reform continues.

— Governments at all levels will be asked to publish their budgets and final accounts.

— The trial of replacing business tax with VAT will be extended to railway, post and telecom services.

— The central government will grant financial institutions more power to set their interest rates.

— The government will promote the healthy development of Internet finance.

— The government will allow non-state capital to take part in some projects in areas such as banking, oil, electricity, railway, telecommunications, resources development and public utilities.

— The government pledges to protect property rights of both public and private sectors.

— Total imports and exports are expected to grow at around 7.5 percent this year.

— China will continue to negotiate investment agreements with the United States and the European Union, and speed up free

trade area talks with the Republic of Korea, Australia and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

— China will speed up 4G mobile network programs, build 100M fiber optic networks in cities and extend broadband connectivity to villages.

— The central budget will invest 457.6 billion yuan mainly in government-subsidized housing, agriculture, major water conservancy projects, railway projects in the central and western regions, energy conservation, environmental protection and social programs.

— More than 70 billion yuan in the central budget will go to major projects to divert water, protect water sources, harness rivers and lakes, and develop efficient water-saving irrigation.

— The country will reduce outdated production capacity of 27 million metric tons of steel, 42 million metric tons of cement and 35 million standard containers of plate glass.

— The number of rural students from poor areas enrolled in elite colleges and universities will increase by more than 10 percent.

— The government will raise its subsidy for basic medical insurance for rural and unemployed urban residents to 320 yuan per person.

— China will begin to build more than 7 million units of government-subsidized housing, 4.7 million of which will be in rundown urban areas. By the end of this year, 4.8 million units should be completed.

— Air pollution control will focus on mega cities and regions troubled by smog.

— This year, the government will shut down 50,000 small coal-fueled furnaces, as well as install desulphurization facilities in thermal power plants with the capacity of 15 million kw, denitrification facilities in plants with 130 million kw of production capacity, and dust control device on those with the 180-million-kw capacity. Six million old vehicles will be banned from the road.

— Energy intensity will be cut by more than 3.9 percent. The emission of sulfur dioxide and chemical oxygen demand will drop by 2 percent.

PROGRESS IN PAST YEAR

— China's GDP reached 56.9 trillion yuan in 2013, an increase of 7.7 percent over the previous year.

— The per capita disposable income of urban residents rose by 7 percent, and the per capita net income of rural residents rose by 9.3 percent.

— Government revenue increased by 10.1 percent.

— The service sector contributed to 46.1 percent of GDP, surpassing the industry for the first time.

— Government reform progressed smoothly as the central government abolished or delegated 416 administrative approvals.

— Energy intensity was cut by 3.7 percent.

— Emission of sulfur dioxide decreased by 3.5 percent.

— Chemical oxygen demand, a key index for water quality, fell by 2.9 percent.

— The country began to build 6.6 million units of government-subsidized housing, and 5.4 million were completed.

— The central government spending on official overseas visits, official vehicles, and official hospitality was cut by 35 percent.

— The provincial governments' cost of official hospitality decreased by 26 percent.

China's Top Legislator Delivers NPC Standing Committee Work Report

Beijing, March 9 (Xinhua) — China's top legislator Zhang Dejiang delivered a work report of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) at a plenary meeting of the ongoing NPC annual session Sunday.

Chinese leaders Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli attended the meeting along with nearly 3,000 lawmakers at the Great Hall of the People in downtown Beijing.



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC), delivers a work report of the NPC Standing Committee during the second plenary meeting of the second session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 9, 2014. (Xinhua/Li Xueren)

Highlights of NPC Standing Committee work report

China's top legislator Zhang Dejiang is delivering a report on the work of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) to the annual parliamentary session Sunday. Following are the highlights of the report.

PROGRESS IN 2013

— The NPC Standing Committee drew up a five-year legislative plan and held a meeting to determine the targets, tasks and requirements of the legislative work.

— Over the past year, the Standing Committee deliberated 15 bills and draft decisions on legal issues, of which 10 of them were passed; and revised 21 laws and enacted two.

— Over the past year, the Standing Committee listened to and deliberated 15 work reports of the State Council, the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, inspected the implementation of four laws, conducted three special inquiries and carried out five special investigations and studies.

— The Standing Committee divided NPC deputies into 260 groups and supported them to solicit people's opinions and requests through a variety of ways.

— A total of 1,740 deputies took part in investigations and studies on special topics and 1,700 deputies in inspection tours.

— Each member of the Chairperson's Council was asked to keep direct contact with at least five NPC deputies.

— The number of deputies sitting on the meeting of the Standing Committee was raised to 66.

— A total of 51 entries in 169 motions put forward by NPC deputies were incorporated in legislative programs and plans.

LEGISLATION IN 2013

— The top legislature enacted the Tourism Law and the Special Equipment Safety Law, as well as amended the Law on the Protection of Consumers' Rights and Interests.

— It revised 19 laws to facilitate the institutional reform of the State Council, which was adopted at the first annual session of the NPC in March, 2013.

— It adopted resolutions to abolish the system of reeducation through labor and allow couples to have second child if either of them is single child.

— It ratified two new national days, one to mark victory in the anti-Japanese war and the other to commemorate Nanjing Massacre victims and all those killed during Japanese aggression against China.

— NPC deputies, experts, industry insiders and ordinary citizens were invited to assess the feasibility and social effects of a motion before it was put for a vote.

— The top legislature added one round of opinion soliciting after the second reading of a motion. The public used to be asked for opinion about a motion after its first reading.

OVERSIGHT WORK IN 2013

— The top legislature strengthened the supervision on budget and final account of the central government. It examined the reports on the central government's final accounts and auditing work in 2012 as well as the implementation of the budget for the first seven months of fiscal year 2013.

— The top legislature examined a report on the government spending on science and technologies, which was the first time it oversaw the government spending for a specific purpose.

— It examined 19 new regulations of the State Council and 32 legal interpretations of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate in the past year, to determine if they were in line with the Constitution and laws.

— It reviewed all existing judicial interpretations and other documents with similar effect. This is the first such review since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

WHAT TO DO IN 2014

— The top legislature will revise the Budget Law to improve the budget management system.

— It will amend the Administrative Procedures Law and the Law on Administrative Review to facilitate cases of administrative litigation and reconsideration and correct illegal or improper administrative actions.

— It will revise the Environmental Protection Law and the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law to improve environmental protection and curb pollution.

— Lawmakers will inspect the implementation of the Tourism Law and the Patent Law.

— They will review the country's economic and social development plan, the central and local government budgets as well as the final accounts and auditing work of the central government.

— They will hear and approve the central government's final accounts for 2013.

— The State Council will submit a report on conserving energy and reducing emissions for review.

— The top legislature will inspect the implementation of the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law and carry out special investigations on soil pollution control.

— It will carry out special investigations on economic and social development in the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

China's Top Political Advisory Body Convenes, Pledging to Help Deepen Reforms

BEIJING, March 3 (Xinhua) — China's top political advisor Yu Zhengsheng Monday pledged to further efforts to contribute to the deepening of the country's reforms in a comprehensive manner.

Yu, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), made the pledge in a report delivered at the opening meeting of the Second Session of the 12th CPPCC National Committee that opened in Beijing Monday.

"We will perform all our functions in a spirit of reform and innovation throughout the course of our work, ... and strive to play a bigger role in the development of the cause of the Party and country," Yu said in his report.

In regards to future work of the CPPCC, Yu said the political advisory body must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), while adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

It should also make sound, reasonable and feasible suggestions, foster the spirit of reform and innovation, and perform its functions for the benefit of the people, Yu said in his first report on the work of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee.



Xi Jinping (3rd L, front), Li Keqiang (3rd R, front), Zhang Dejiang (2nd L, front), Liu Yunshan (2nd R, front), Wang Qishan (front L) and Zhang Gaoli (front R) sit on the platform during the opening meeting of the second session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 3, 2014. The second session of the 12th National Committee of the CPPCC, the national advisory body, opened in Beijing on March 3. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang

The top political advisor said the year 2014 is the first year for implementing the CPC Central Committee's decision to comprehensively deepen reform, and is crucial for completing the 12th Five-Year Plan.

The CPPCC will conduct thorough investigations and studies on key reform areas — including the fiscal and tax system, the judicial system and the Internet management system — to provide reference materials for the Party and government in their decision making, Yu said.

It will also conduct democratic oversight on how well major reform measures and tasks

have been carried out, and put forward candid suggestions and comments thereon, he said.

Further efforts will be made to promote sustained, healthy economic development in addition to social harmony and stability, Yu said.

The CPPCC will strengthen ties with ethnic minorities and religious groups to promote development, unity and harmony in ethnic regions, he said.

In his report, Yu also said the CPPCC should fully play its role as an important channel for consultative democracy, adding that unity and democracy are the "very essence" of the CPPCC.

"We must always focus on unity, constantly strengthen it, and strive to expand it," he said, "... we should give full expression to democracy, encourage members to make criticisms and comments, promote discussion and exchanges of everyone's views, and thereby constantly increase consensus and strengthen unity."

Yu said the CPPCC will build more and better platforms to expand the forms of democracy, increase the frequency of consultation, and get CPPCC committee members to speak willingly and feel free to speak the truth.

He said the CPPCC should have members from Hong Kong and Macao play an active role and improve exchanges between the mainland and the two regions. Exchanges and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait should also be expanded, he said.

He also called on the CPPCC to play a more active role in foreign contacts and public diplomacy.

The annual session of CPPCC National Committee is scheduled to conclude on March 12. About 2,200 members of the CPPCC National Committee from different sectors across the country will discuss major issues concerning the country's development during the session.



Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), delivers a report on the work of the CPPCC National Committee's Standing Committee at the second session of the 12th CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 3, 2014. The second session of the 12th National Committee of the CPPCC, the national advisory body, opened in Beijing on March 3. (Xinhua/Pang Xinglei)

Recalling the work of the 12th CPPCC National Committee over the past year, Yu said the political advisory body had "got off to an excellent start."

According to Han Qide, vice chairman of the 12th CPPCC National Committee, a total of 5,884 proposals had been submitted by the CPPCC National Committee members over the past year, and 5,396 of them had been handled as of Feb. 20.

Yu said the CPPCC National Committee

had performed its functions of political consultation, democratic oversight, and participation in the deliberation and administration of state affairs.

It also played its role in coordinating relations, pooling strength, making suggestions and proposals to the central leadership, and serving the overall interests of the country, he said.

Achievements were made in serving reform and development, developing consultative democracy as well as in improving its own style of work, Yu said.

Top CPC and state leaders Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli attended the opening meeting.

A silent tribute was observed for victims of a terrorist attack at a train station in southwestern Chinese city of Kunming, during which knife-wielding assailants from Xinjiang killed 29 civilians and injured another 143 late Saturday.

Founded in 1949, the CPPCC consists of elite figures of the Chinese society who are willing to serve the think tank for the government and for the country's legislative and judicial organs.

As an open forum where the ruling CPC, non-Communist parties and people without party affiliation discuss state affairs freely and on an equal footing, the CPPCC has been the manifestation of China's socialist democracy.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang Meets the Press

Pledges Financial Reforms, Social Fairness

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Thursday vowed to make financial and fiscal reforms a priority in the country's overall reform agenda, but also promised to promote social fairness and people's livelihoods to bridge the widening wealth gap.

During a press conference lasting nearly two hours shortly after the conclusion of China's annual parliamentary session, Li responded to a wide array of concerns, ranging from the ongoing search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight and air pollution, to debt risks and the country's relations with the United States.

Almost a quarter of the questions raised



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang speaks at a press conference after the closing meeting of the second annual session of China's 12th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 13, 2014 .(Xinhua /Chen Jianli)

by journalists were related to China's economic development and reforms.

Li, the first senior central government leader to hold a doctoral degree in economics, answered the questions with his characteristic ease and expressive hand gestures.

He said China's growth target of around 7.5 percent in 2014 is "flexible," but also underscored the importance of a proper growth to deliver enough jobs.

Li emphasized that China's economy has "tremendous potential and resilience," and that the country has the ability and conditions to keep its economic operations steady.

"We will press ahead with fiscal, tax and financial reforms as our priorities this year," he said, adding that the ultimate goal is to fully energize the market and the creativity of society.

To achieve the goal, the Chinese premier said, the government will better handle the relationship between the state and the market, allowing latter to play a "decisive" role in the allocation of resources and making the government play a better role.

Li's latest pledges came as China's economy is shifting into a lower gear and focusing more on quality development.

Its development dilemma is reflected by its sizzling property market, corruption and the bouts of choking smog that have become more common in recent years.

"Corruption is a natural enemy of the people's government," Li told the press conference, reiterating his "zero-tolerance" approach to corrupt officials, no matter who they are.

He vowed tough measures and regulations to fight pollution and a differential approach to curb speculation in the housing market.

The premier downplayed the risk in China's government debt, saying it is generally within control. But he also admitted that China has set a timetable concerning regulation over shadow banking.

Three major tasks Li said his government faces this year are to meet people's basic living needs, to provide a safety net for people to fall back on in case of special difficulty, and to promote social fairness.

"Corruption is a natural enemy of the people's government," Li told the press conference, reiterating his "zero-tolerance" approach to corrupt officials, no matter who they are.

Regarding its relations with the United States, Li said that the world's two largest economies should expand common interests while respecting each other's core interests and major concerns and properly managing differences to raise the level of the bilateral relationship.

"The wise people will seek their common interests, while the unwise ones will focus on their differences," said Li, citing a Chinese saying.

Target Flexible, Stresses Employment

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Thursday said there is a level of flexibility for the government's growth target at around 7.5 percent this year, stressing rather the importance of creating enough jobs.

"We are not preoccupied with GDP growth," Li stressed when asked on the lowest growth rate that the government can live with at a press conference following the conclusion of the annual legislative session.

"The growth that we want is one that brings real benefits to the people, helps raise the quality and efficiency of economic

development, and contributes to energy conservation and environment protection," he said.

Li's elaboration came after the government announced last week that the country will target an unchanged growth of around 7.5 percent in 2014.

It also vowed to keep inflation at around 3.5 percent and create 10 million more urban jobs to ensure the registered urban unemployment rate does not rise above 4.6 percent.

At the conference, Li underscored the importance of a proper growth to deliver enough urban jobs while leaving room for the six to seven million migrant workers to seek employment in cities.

China's economy grew 7.7 percent last year, well above the government goal, but a set of data that pointed to softening manufacturing activity in recent months has renewed concerns on the growth outlook of the world's second largest economy.

In response to the concerns, Li emphasized that China's economy has "tremendous potential and resilience", and the country has the ability and conditions to keep its economic operation within a proper range.

The premier noted a spate of complex challenges for this year, including enhancing the quality and efficiency of economic development, tackling pollution and saving energy.

"So we need to strike a proper balance amidst all these goals and objectives. This is not going to be easy," Li acknowledged.

"We need to face up to the difficulties and challenges and make the most of the favorable conditions. This holds the secret of our success," he said, citing a Chinese proverb that "only a sharpened axe can cut through firewood."

Although China's 7.5 percent growth target is the same as previous years, its importance is fading as many believe the government will no longer view the figure as the necessary minimum as it usually did in the past.

Senior leaders and officials have on various occasions backed up the macro-economic control strategy featuring the idea of "a proper range," — a lower limit to ensure steady growth and job creation and an upper limit to avert inflation, which was first proposed by Li in July.

Finance minister Lou Jiwei joined the chorus last Thursday, calling for more comprehensive understanding on the country's growth target instead of merely fixating on the 7.5-percent figure.

Finance minister Lou Jiwei joined the chorus last Thursday, calling for more comprehensive understanding on the country's growth target instead of merely fixating on the 7.5-percent figure.

GDP growth, inflation and employment are all key factors that should be taken into consideration when assessing economic conditions, Lou told a press conference, adding that a growth of 7.3 percent or 7.2 percent can still be counted within that range.

"Zero-Tolerance" to Corruption

China will show "zero-tolerance" to corrupt officials no matter "how senior his position is," Premier Li Keqiang said at a press conference Thursday after the annual parliamentary session concluded.

"China is a country under rule of law. No matter who he is, and how senior his position is, if he violates Party discipline and the law of

the country, he will be punished to the full extent, because everybody is equal before the law," Li said.

"Corruption is a natural enemy of the people's government," Li said. "We must put the exercise of power and the use of public money under institutional checks."

Li said the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government are firm in will and determination to fight corruption, and "that is our consistent position."

Since its 18th National Congress, the CPC has been steadfast in combating corruption and holding corrupt officials accountable, Li said, adding that visible progress has been made in this regard and the Party and the government will carry forward this campaign with perseverance.

Li said that the government will continue to streamline administration and delegate government powers.

The government will step up its efforts for the release of "a list of powers" and define a clear boundary for the exercise of power to ensure that power is not abused, he said.

The government will also carry out comprehensive audit in those areas which are of high concern to the public, such as the revenues on the transfer of land use rights and transfer of mining rights, according to Li.

"We will take institutional steps to ensure... corruption will have nowhere to hide," Li said.

Promote Social Fairness, Improve People's Livelihood

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Thursday said that his government will give a priority to the promotion of social fairness and the improvement of people's livelihood.

"We need to meet people's basic living needs, to provide the last resort for people to fall back on in case of special difficulty, and to promote social fairness," Li said at a press conference shortly after the conclusion of China's annual legislative session, calling them three major tasks for the government this year.

"Those topics related to people's livelihood presents priority on the government's work agenda," he said.

Li said the government will endeavor to make China's medical insurance and basic old insurance schemes "truly portable and transferrable" to further expand their coverage in urban and rural areas.

The government is going to explore the possibility of raising the basic pension benefits at a proper time, he said.

The premier urged all the government employees to put the special needs of the people, such as those who run into special difficulty because of serious illnesses or sudden disasters, on the top of their mind.

"The government needs to take more effective measures to ensure equal opportunities in finding jobs and to level the playing field for people who want to start their own business," Li said.

"The government needs to take more effective measures to ensure equal opportunities in finding jobs and to level the playing field for people who want to start their own business," Li said.

He also said that the government needs to pay particular attention to education to ensure fairness at the very starting point.

"This year we have set the target of raising the proportion of rural students from poor areas enrolled in key universities and colleges by over 10 percent," he said.

The premier also vowed to

further improve the poorly built and low performing schools in China's poor areas.

"The government needs to create conditions to ensure that each and every individual has an equal shot at a better life through hard work and that fairness and justice are truly realized even at the most primary level of society," he said.

China Needs Tough Measures, Regulations to Fight Pollution

China needs both tough measures and tough regulations to fight pollution, Premier Li Keqiang said Thursday.

Li made the remarks at a press conference shortly after the conclusion of this year's parliamentary session.

Polluters, which harm both nature and human health, will be severely punished, said Li, when responding to a question about smog that frequently blanketed Beijing and some other major cities since winter.

Watchdogs which turn a blind eye to polluting activities and fail to perform their duties will be held accountable, Li added.

"To declare a war on smog doesn't mean we are declaring a war on nature. Rather, we are going to declare a war on our own inefficient and unsustainable model of growth and way of life," he said.

Last year, the State Council issued a ten-point action plan on the prevention and control of air pollution.

China now conducts PM 2.5 monitoring in 161 cities across the country, the most extensive scale among all the developing countries, according to the premier.

China also set a 3.9 percent reduction target for cutting energy intensity this year on top of a 3.7 percent reduction it achieved last year, which is equivalent to cutting coal burning by 22 million tonnes, said Li.

Li admitted there are complex causes for smog and to tackle this problem takes time.

Li called for the government, businesses and every individual of society to act together and make consistent efforts to win the tough battle against smog.

China to Enhance Common Interests, Narrow Differences with Neighbors

China will enhance common interests and narrow differences with neighboring countries for the sake of peace and stability, said Premier Li Keqiang here Thursday.

China has unwavering commitment to pursuing peaceful development and unshakable will in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, both for the sake of upholding stability and creating a favorable environment for its development, said Li at a press conference after the annual parliamentary session ended.

As a developing country, China needs a favorable neighboring and international environment for its modernization drive, he said.

"When neighbors interact with each other, it is only natural that sometimes they will run into problems of some kind or another," Li said. "As long as they respect each other, properly manage differences and pursue mutual benefits, there will be harmonious sound instead of jarring noises."

Peace and friendship and peaceful coexistence represent common aspirations of all people in China and its neighboring countries, he said.

As long as China and its neighbors together improve common interests and narrow differences, they will bring greater benefits to their people, he said.

China, U.S. Should Expand Common Interests

China and the United States should

expand common interests while respecting each other's core interests and major concerns and properly managing differences to raise the level of bilateral relationship, Premier Li Keqiang said here Thursday.

The Sino-U.S. relationship is in essence the one between the largest developing country and the largest developed country in the world, Li told a press conference after the conclusion of the annual legislative session.

Last year, President Xi Jinping and President Barack Obama had a meeting in California and reached consensus of building a new model of major-country relationship between China and the United States.

The new model of relationship has a defining feature of non-conflict and win-win cooperation, Li said.

Due to different historical and cultural backgrounds and development stages, it is natural for the two countries to have some differences on certain matters and frictions in cooperation, but these are just "pains" amid growing cooperation, Li said.

"As long as the two sides respect each other's core interests and major concerns, properly manage their differences and engage in equal consultations, and in particular, continue to expand their common interests, the two countries will be able to further raise the level of their relationship," said Li.

The common interests between China and the United States far outweigh their differences, said Li, adding the volume of bilateral trade registered over 520 billion U.S. dollars last year.

"There is much more that we can do to further unleash the potential of Sino-U.S. cooperation. We need to make the most of our complementarity," said Li.

"The wise people will seek their common interests, while the unwise ones will focus on their differences," said Li,citing a Chinese saying.

Whatever change may take place, it should be conducive to both countries and the sound and steady development of Sino-U.S. ties, said Li.

"China and the U.S. need to focus more on common ground in pursuit of long-term benefits," Li said.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press

On 8 March 2014, the Second Session of the Twelfth National People's Congress held a press conference at its Press Center and invited Wang Yi, China's Minister of Foreign Affairs, to answer questions from Chinese and foreign journalists about China's foreign policy and external relations.



Wang Yi: Good morning, everyone. It is a great pleasure to



meet with journalists from the press. At the outset, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I would like to thank you for your interest in and understanding of China's diplomacy. I would also like to thank you for your efforts in reporting on China.

Today is the International Women's Day. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my best festive greetings to all the ladies in this room, including those behind the cameras.

Early this morning, we received a piece of very disturbing news. A Malaysian civil aviation flight bound for China lost contact with ground control. This has gotten us all very worried. We hope every one of the passengers is safe. The Foreign Ministry and relevant diplomatic and consular missions of China have activated the emergency mechanism. We are doing all we can to get more details. Once we have some information, we will get it out for you immediately. Now, I am ready to take your questions.



People's Daily: The year 2013 was the first year of diplomacy under the new Chinese government. As China's foreign minister, what has struck you the most about China's diplomacy in the past year? Could you also talk about how China will pursue its diplomacy in 2014?

Wang Yi: "Active" is the most salient feature of China's diplomacy in the past year.

The CPC Central Committee headed by General Secretary Xi Jinping responded to the aspirations of the people and the expectation of the international community, and carried out a series of visible and effective diplomatic activities.

Let me share some figures withyou. President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang visited as many as 22 countries, received 65 foreign heads of state and government, met and talked with over 300 hundred foreign dignitaries and reached around 800 cooperation agreements with other countries.

There are also some facts I'd like to share with you. In the past year, China vigorously defended its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, advanced relations with major countries, unveiled a series of major cooperation initiatives such as the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". We played a constructive role in the political settlement of hotspot issues such as Syria and Iran. For the first time we deployed formed units of our security force to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, and for the first time we sent a naval vessel under operational conditions to escort shipments of Syrian chemical weapons.

China's diplomacy in 2013 was broader in horizon and more active in conduct. It was not just a successful year under the new

leadership, but also a year of innovation and harvest for China's diplomacy.

In 2014 China will continue to pursue an active foreign policy. We will focus our efforts on two main areas.

First, we will be more active in serving the efforts of comprehensively deepening reform in China. We will strengthen friendly relations with all countries in the world, especially our neighbors, and we will create a more enabling external environment for domestic reform and development. We will vigorously pursue economic diplomacy, deepen win-win cooperation with other countries and create more favorable conditions for the transformation and upgrading of China's economy. And we will do all we can to implement the initiative to better protect and serve overseas Chinese, and provide stronger protection for China's ever-growing legitimate rights and interests.

Second, we will be more active in playing the role of a responsible, big country. In our international engagement, we will uphold principles, promote justice and practice equality. In particular, we will advance and protect the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries and make the international order more just and reasonable. We will take an active part in international and regional affairs, put forward more Chinese proposals and play a bigger role in helping to resolve all kinds of global challenges and regional hotspot issues.



Hong Kong Phoenix TV: Over the past year, China has unveiled some new ideas and measures in its diplomacy. It's clear that there is a shift in China's diplomatic style. What is your perspective on this as China's foreign minister?

Wang Yi: In recent years, the international community is generally interested in how a growing China will handle its relations with the outside world. The CPC Central Committee headed by General Secretary Xi Jinping is committed to innovation in both diplomatic theory and practice. On the basis of maintaining policy continuity and stability, the new Chinese leadership has unveiled a series of major diplomatic ideas and steps.

For example, we proposed to build a new model of major country relations. This is to break the historical pattern of conflict and confrontation between major countries and to find a new path in the modern era that seeks win-win cooperation to deliver benefits to all parties. It shows a new approach on the part of China to handle major country relations. It also shows China's sense of responsibility for the international community.

Let me give you another example. We have proposed the guideline for our neighborhood diplomacy featuring amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. This is to further demonstrate China's sincerity and goodwill toward its neighbors and our readiness to work with them to build a community of common destiny. It is a new advancement of China's policy toward its neighbors and shows that China is more open and accommodative.

A third example is that we have proposed a more balanced approach to upholding principles and pursuing interests. It is to put moral principles first when we deal with fellow developing countries and be more sensitive to their needs. It inherits the fine character of China's external relations and reflects the inherent nature of the socialist system. It has become an important banner of

China's diplomacy.

These new diplomatic ideas and steps send the following message to the world: China is committed to the path of peaceful development, and we hope other countries will also take the path of peaceful development. The Chinese Dream belongs to the Chinese people, and it is closely connected to the dreams of other nations as our interests are all intertwined.



ITAR-TASS of Russia: Last month, President Xi Jinping traveled specially to Sochi to attend the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games. This is the second time since 2013 that he visited the Russia at the start of the year. How do you assess the current China-Russia relationship, and what will be the priorities for China-Russia relations and cooperation in 2014?

Wang Yi: Speaking of the Sochi Winter Olympics, I'd like to first offer my congratulations to our Russian friends for hosting a memorable and spectacular winter Olympics.

The China-Russia relationship is at its best period in history, characterized by a high level of mutual trust, firm support for each other and intensifying cooperation in various fields. Our two presidents have established a deep friendship and they play an important role in guiding China-Russia relations.

As for China-Russia relations in 2014, I believe the most important task is to make sure that our comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination will continue to grow from strength to strength. We will further strengthen mutual political trust and intensify our strategic cooperation. On that basis, we must focus on following priority tasks. Firstly, we must do all we can to upgrade practical cooperation and make new breakthroughs in our cooperation on some big projects in particular. Secondly, we must organize a successful China-Russia year of friendly exchange between the young people to consolidate and deepen the social foundation for China-Russia friendship. Thirdly, we must work together to uphold the victory of the Second World War and post-war international order and make good preparations for 2015, which will mark the 70th anniversary of the victories of the World Anti-Fascist War and the Chinese People's War against Japanese Aggression.



Xinhua News Agency: This year, China will host two important international conferences, the Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. Can you talk about these two important international conferences and share with us your expectations for them?

Wang Yi: A key feature of China's diplomacy in 2014 is that we will play host to two major international conferences in Shanghai and Beijing respectively. In May, we will hold the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Summit in Shanghai. CICA is a very important security cooperation forum in Asia. And then in November, we will hold the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Beijing. It is a primary platform for discussing economic and trade cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. So

you can see that the two conferences focus on security and economic issues respectively. And both will be key priorities for China's diplomacy this year. We will make the most of our role as the host country, put forward China's proposals, pool Asia's wisdom and work with the participants to inject new momentum into these two mechanisms.

At the CICA Summit, we hope to advocate common security, cooperative security and comprehensive security, bring into being a new Asian security concept and work together to build a new Asia of peace, stability and cooperation.

At the APEC meeting, we will focus on the theme of "Shaping the Future Through Asia-Pacific Partnership" and achieve new outcomes in advancing Asia-Pacific economic integration, adopting a blueprint for connectivity and promoting economic innovation and development. In particular, we will strive for a new breakthrough in launching the process of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.



National Broadcasting Company of the United States: China-US relations are the most important bilateral relations in the world. How do you assess the development of the relations in the past year? What major challenges do you see this year? And how exactly do you propose to build the new type of great-power relationship? Will there be more transparency and more coordination between China and the United States in the spirit of the new type of great-power relationship and joint responsibility in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region?

Wang Yi: The biggest highlight of China-US relations in 2013 was the historic meeting between President Xi Jinping and President Obama at the Sunnylands. The two sides reached important consensus on working together to build a new model of major-country relations between China and the United States. At the heart of this new model of major-country relationship is no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. This is the common direction the two sides have set. It is a positive strategic outlook the two countries show to the world and a solemn commitment we've made to the international community.

The China-US relationship is both very important and very complex. This year marks the 35th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. Over these past 35 years, China-US dialogue and cooperation has increasingly deepened. And the needs for cooperation far exceed our differences. Our experience and lessons of the past 35 years come down to one point, that is, we need to respect each other.

If one compares the new model of major-country relations between China and the United States to a building, then mutual respect is the foundation of that building. I believe when the two sides truly respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, social system and development path, and core interests and major concerns, the foundation will be a solid one that can withstand storms and truly grow into an edifice of win-win cooperation. That will not just benefit China and the United States but also the whole world.

We stand ready to work with the United States to uphold peace and stability in the

Asia-Pacific region and carry out positive interactions in this region. An in our view, the Asia-Pacific should be the testing ground of our commitment to build a new model of major-country relations, rather than a competitive arena. Thank you.



Lianhe Zaobao of Singapore: The situation in China's neighborhood is closely watched by many people. Some people see many problems. Some believe China is more assertive in handling its disputes with its neighboring countries? What is your response to these views?

Wang Yi: This is a quite critical question but one that everyone is interested in. Let me first say that the general situation in China's neighborhood is both positive and stable.

Last year, China held its first neighborhood diplomacy conference. We made clear that the neighborhood tops China's diplomatic agenda. We unveiled a whole set of diplomatic guidelines to show we are more friendly and accommodative. And we have put forward a series of major cooperation proposals aimed at delivering win-win results. This fully shows that China attaches a great deal of importance to neighboring countries.

China has been interacting with its neighbors for thousands of years. And all along, we have valued harmonious relations and treated others with sincerity. When others respect us, we respect them even more. Going forward, we will more actively practice the guideline of "amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness". We will help our neighboring countries and peoples benefit more from China's reform and opening. We will help them better appreciate China's commitment to peaceful development. We are willing to listen to voices from our neighboring countries and respond to their doubts about China's neighborhood policy.

As for China's territorial and maritime disputes with some countries, China would like to carry out equal-footed consultation and negotiation and properly handle them by peaceful means on the basis of respecting historical facts and international law. There will not be any change to this position. We will never bully smaller countries, yet we will never accept unreasonable demands from smaller countries. On issues of territory and sovereignty, China's position is firm and clear. We will not take anything that isn't ours, but we will defend every inch of territory that belongs to us.



China Central Television: The issue of Ukraine has been the focus of international attention in recent weeks. We know that you've been on the phone with the foreign ministers of some countries discussing this issue. Can you talk about China's view on the current situation in Ukraine and how do you think the Ukrainian crisis should be resolved?

Wang Yi: First, let me tell you that China follows a just and objective position on the issue of Ukraine, and we have stated our position on multiple occasions.

It is regretful that the situation in Ukraine has come to what it is today. Yet it is not by accident that the situation has reached this point. There is a complex history behind it as well as conflicting interests. The complex the problem is, the more necessary that it is

handled in a prudent way.

China urges that keeping in mind the fundamental interests of all ethnic communities in Ukraine and the interests of regional peace and stability, the priority now is to exercise calm and restraint and prevent further escalation of the situation. The parties should carry out dialogue and consultation to put the issue on the track of a political settlement. China is in communication with various parties, and we will play a constructive role in bringing about a political settlement of the Ukrainian issue. Thank you.



Paris Match of France: Mr. Minister, at the end of this month, President Xi Jinping will be in Europe. What kind of message does he want to deliver to the countries he will visit? And also, what will be the intention of President Xi Jinping when he goes to the European institutions in Brussels?

Wang Yi: Europe has a priority place in China's diplomatic agenda this year. As you said, President Xi Jinping will visit Europe in late March. This will be yet another major diplomatic action taken by China to advance major-power relations. The visit will open a new chapter in the history of China-Europe relations.

"Cooperation" is the key word in China-Europe relations. China and Europe are two major forces in the world. We are two large civilizations and two big markets. So it's only right and proper that our cooperation is comprehensive and strategic in nature. Particularly when China shifts its development pattern and embarks on comprehensive and in-depth reform, Europe is a strategic partner with whom our cooperation will have great potential. Through the historic visit of President Xi Jinping to Europe, the two sides will work intensively to align our respective development strategies. I believe the two sides will strengthen win-win cooperation in some priority areas, such as scientific and technological innovation, energy and environmental conservation, a new type of urbanization, connectivity and people-to-people and cultural exchanges. We also hope to speed up the negotiation toward a China-EU investment agreement, with a view to future free trade arrangements between China and Europe. And of course, we'd like to increase strategic communication with the Europeans in international affairs and work together to promote democracy in international relations and a more multi-polar world.

I think all of you will agree with me in saying that China-Europe cooperation will make the world a safer, more balanced and better place.



China Radio International: Foreign Minister, you made a whirlwind visit to Afghanistan recently, which generated a lot of interest from the international community. This year, the United States and NATO will wind down their troop presence in Afghanistan. How do you see the situation in Afghanistan playing out? And what role will China play in the reconciliation and reconstruction process of Afghanistan?

Wang Yi: This year will be a crucial one for Afghanistan. The country will go through

political, security and economic transitions all at the same time. Of course, it's mainly up to the Afghan people to realize the triple transitions, but they cannot do without the care and support of the international community.

China is Afghanistan's biggest neighbor. Afghanistan's peace and stability has a direct bearing on security in China's western region. We hope to see a united, stable, growing and amicable Afghanistan. For this purpose, we'll work with the international community to actively facilitate political reconciliation in Afghanistan, support the peace and reconstruction efforts and encourage Afghanistan to be more involved in regional cooperation. We'll also work with Afghanistan and other neighbors of China to resolutely fight all terrorist forces.

In August this year, China will for the first time host a ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan. We'll send invitations to the 14 member states and 28 supporting parties of the Istanbul Process. We hope that through this conference, the parties will build more consensus and work together to support Afghanistan's efforts to complete the triple transitions and help the situation in Afghanistan to move toward lasting peace.



Asahi Shimbun of Japan: I have a question about the China-Japan relationship. In his Government Work Report, Premier Li Keqiang mentioned the issue of history. He said that we need to uphold the victory of the Second World War and the post-war international order, and no one will be allowed to reverse the course of history. The China-Japan relationship is in a lot of difficulties and the outside world is quite concerned. How do you think the relationship can emerge from its current impasse? And someone has likened the current China-Japan relationship to Germany-Britain relations before the First World War. What is your view?

Wang Yi: Premier Li Keqiang spoke the mind of the Chinese people and showed that China shoulders the responsibility to uphold peace. We fully support his statement.

China and Japan are next-door neighbors. We have every reason to have an amicable relationship. The current situation is not something we want to see and is not in the interests of the people in either country.

When China and Japan normalized diplomatic relations in 1972, the two sides reached important common understanding and consensus on properly handling history, Taiwan, Diaoyu Islands and other issues. This was the precondition for the normalization of diplomatic relations and the basis for a return to friendly relations between China and Japan. Yet the recent comments and actions of the Japanese leader betrayed the spirit of 1972 and undermined the foundation of China-Japan relations. Of course, the Chinese people cannot and will not accept it.

On issues of principle such as history and territory, there is no room for compromise. If some people in Japan insist on overturning the verdict on its past aggression, I don't believe the international community and all peace-loving people in the world will ever tolerate or condone that.

As for the parallel some people have drawn between the current China-Japan relations and the Germany-Britain relations before the First World War, I wish to emphasize that 2014 is not 1914, still less 1894. Instead of using pre-WWI Germany as an

object lesson, why not use post-WWII Germany as a role model? Only by making a clean break with the past and stop going back on one's words, can the relationship emerge from the current impasse and have a future. Only by truly committing to a peaceful path and stop saying one thing and doing something else, can a country gain the trust of its neighbors and the world. I hope Japan's leaders can understand these basic points and respect human conscience and the bottom line of international justice.



China Daily: There have been a lot of interactions between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries in the past year, and we have learned that this year the China-CELAC forum will be formally established. Can you share with us your expectations for the furtherance of China's ties with Latin America and the Caribbean in the year ahead?

Wang Yi: The best line to describe China's relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean is the following: "Bosom friends from afar bring a distant land near." This year, we face a historical opportunity for taking this relationship to the next level.

Firstly, President Xi Jinping will attend the BRICS Leaders' Meeting in Brazil and visit some Latin American countries. Secondly, the recent summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) adopted a special statement supporting the establishment of a China-CELAC Forum. In 2014, we will work hard to formally launch this forum and hold its first ministerial conference. This will be an important breakthrough in the relations between China and Latin America and the Caribbean.

I am full of expectations about China-Latin America relations this year, as I'm sure many football fans in China are full of expectations about this year's Brazil FIFA World Cup.



Korean Broadcasting System of the Republic of Korea: The current situation on the Korean Peninsula is quite tense. How do you look at the situation? What are the chances of the resumption of the Six-Party Talks? What specific steps will China, the host country, take to help restart the Six-Party Talks?

Wang Yi: The Korean Peninsula is right on China's doorstep. We have a red line all along: that is, we will never allow war or instability on the Korean Peninsula. This, I believe, is in full keeping with interests of both the south and the north of the Peninsula and the common interests of all countries in the region. As for the best way to handle the current situation on the Korean Peninsula, if I may use some metaphors, I believe we need to do three things: climb a slope, overcome a stumbling block and follow the right way.

First, we need to climb the slope of denuclearization. The nuclear issue is the crux of the matter. Only with denuclearization can the Korean Peninsula enjoy genuine and lasting peace. So no matter how long or steep the slope is, we must keep climbing it without any stop.

Second, we need to work hard to overcome the stumbling block of mutual mistrust. There is a woeful lack of mutual trust between the parties, especially the DPRK and the United States. This is the stumbling

block before us. It has caused sustained tension on the Korean Peninsula and several disruptions to the Six-Party Talks. We hope that the parties will exercise restraint, show goodwill and build mutual trust little by little.

Third, we must follow the right way forward, which is dialogue. Confrontation will only bring tension and war will only cause disaster. Equal-footed dialogue, consultation and negotiation is the only right way forward. The Six-Party Talks is the only dialogue mechanism acceptable to all the parties. As the host country, we hope it can be resumed as soon as possible. Some dialogue is better than none, and better early than late.



ETV of South Africa: As you are aware, China has become very active in Africa in recent years, but there are different opinions about this engagement between China and the African continent, especially emanating from the West. What is your opinion? Thank you.

Wang Yi: Let me make three points to sum up the China-Africa relationship.

First, China and Africa are good brothers who share weal and woe. When China was a poor country, we tightened our belt to support the cause of national independence and liberation of our African brothers. It's our African brothers who got the People's Republic of China back into the United Nations.

Second, China and Africa are good friends who engage in cooperation as equals. In its cooperation with Africa, China has never been condescending, never interfered in the internal affairs of African countries and never given any empty promise. Let me tell you one figure. So far, we have helped African countries build over 1,000 projects and we have never attached any political condition to these projects. This fact alone can show that the groundless accusations against China are pale and hollow.

And third, China and Africa are good partners for common development. When I visited Africa in January this year, many African friends told me in person that an important reason behind Africa's sustained economic growth in recent years is the boost provided by China-Africa cooperation. And this has gotten other countries to increase their attention to Africa.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of Premier Zhou Enlai's first visit to Africa. Since then, China-Africa friendship has been handed down from one generation to another. Last year, President Xi Jinping made a successful visit to Africa. Later this year, Premier Li Keqiang will also step on the soil of Africa. This will be the first visit to Africa made by the premier of the new Chinese government. China-Africa cooperation is entering a new phase of development.



China News Service: Foreign Minister Wang, shortly after you took office, you visited the Foreign Ministry's Consular Service and Protection Center. You stressed that Chinese diplomats must listen to the voice of the people at all times and uphold their interests. You also expressed your wish to make it easier for people to travel on a Chinese passport. Going forward, how will the Foreign Ministry protect the lawful rights and interests and safety of Chinese institutions and nationals abroad?

Wang Yi: It is the abiding purpose of China's diplomacy to serve the people. My colleagues and I often receive letters from the public. A lady from Henan Province wrote a letter which has moved me a great deal, and I would like to share this story with you. Her husband was working in a foreign country. He was thrown into prison under false charges. Our embassy in that country argued hard for him, cleared his name and got him released so that he could reunite with his family. His wife wrote to us: "You saved our broken family. You are the people closest to us." The people see us as closest to them: there is no higher honor for Chinese diplomats.

Every year close to 100 million Chinese travel abroad, and there are over 20,000 Chinese companies operating overseas. It is our bounden duty to protect their legitimate rights and interests. I don't know whether you've noticed or not: when Chinese nationals go abroad, the first text message they will receive on their mobile phone is from the Foreign Ministry, reminding them of the things to be careful about and informing them of the telephone number of the Chinese diplomatic and consular missions in that country. Every year, we handle tens of thousands of consular cases. It could be a small thing like helping our nationals to get their documentation in order or get into contact with their relatives and friends, or it could be a big operation such as rescuing Chinese hostages or carrying out large-scale evacuation of overseas Chinese nationals. Whenever our compatriots abroad need us, no matter how difficult or dangerous it is, Chinese diplomats will appear before them and do all we can to help.

In the new year, we will continue to do our best to implement the initiative to better protect and serve overseas Chinese, and we will further improve consular protection and service. Let me disclose a piece of news to you. In 2014, the Foreign Ministry will establish a global emergency call center for consular protection and services. It will be a 24-hour telephone hot line. In the future, when our compatriots go abroad, no matter in which part of the world they are, if they run into an emergency, they can get into contact with their motherland right away and hear the voice from their motherland.

Only by sinking its roots in the people and delivering benefits to the people, can China's diplomacy be in an invincible position. We would like to shield wind and rain for every one of our compatriots who travel abroad with their dreams, and become the firm support they can count on.



Kazaag News Agency of Kazakhstan: Last year, when President Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan, he proposed to build a Silk Road Economic Belt. Later, he proposed to build the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. These have been called the new concepts of China's diplomacy. What is the thinking behind these two initiatives? How will China put them into practice?

Wang Yi: The Silk Road was first traveled by the Chinese people 2,000 years ago, but it belongs to the whole world. At the core of the Silk Road spirit is peace, friendship, openness and inclusiveness, which have become the common assets of human civilization.

As you mentioned, President Xi Jinping proposed to build a Silk Road Economic Belt when he was on a visit to Kazakhstan. And later, when he was visiting Indonesia, he proposed to build the 21st Century Maritime

Silk Road. These two initiatives of overland and maritime Silk Roads aim to seize the opportunity of the further opening-up of China, especially opening in the westward direction. We want to update the spirit of the ancient Silk Road and work with relevant countries to add two powerful wings to the rejuvenation of Asia as a whole.

These two initiatives will focus on economic cooperation and people-to-people and cultural exchanges and prioritize connectivity and trade and investment facilitation. We will pursue these initiatives through equal-footed consultation and incremental progress, with a clear goal to deliver benefits to all and build a community of shared interests.

The door of these two initiatives is wide open, and it will proceed in parallel with the existing cooperation mechanisms and ideas in the region. We welcome countries in the region and other interested countries to take an active part in these two initiatives so that together, we will discuss and build them and benefit from them.



China National Radio: From what you've said, Foreign Minister Wang, we can all see that China had a full diplomatic agenda in the past year. You've been in the position of Foreign Minister for a year now. Can you talk to us about your personal experience and impression?

Wang Yi: This is the first time I give such a big conference and I thought that such a question would come up. Let me say in relation to your question that I'm a member of China's diplomatic service. Like my colleagues, I feel a heavy responsibility and a glorious mission to engage in diplomatic work at an important time when our nation is marching toward rejuvenation.

We Chinese diplomats must live by the core values of loyalty, responsibility and devotion. Our task is to face the problems and solve them. Our job is to act responsibly for the nation, win honor for the country and serve the people.

To conduct diplomacy well in the new era, first of all, we must have confidence. Confidence comes from the strength and prosperity of our motherland. Today's China is marching ever faster toward what we call the "two centenary goals". The motherland and the people are our firm backing and peaceful development is our firm commitment. We have every confidence and ability to create an even more favorable external environment for the rejuvenation of our nation.

We must also have backbone. The backbone comes from our national pride. Gone is the century of humiliation in China's modern history. We feel passionately about our sovereignty and national dignity. We have our own judgment about international affairs. We follow the independent foreign policy of peace. We uphold our national interests as well as international justice. This is the character of Chinese diplomats and why we have so much support in the world.

We must also show generosity. Generosity comes from the self-confidence of an old civilization. The Chinese civilization has thrived for 5,000 years without any interruption. An important reason is that we are like the ocean that admits all rivers and streams. Today, as we pursue major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, it is even more important to draw nourishment and strength from China's rich and profound cultural heritage and show to the world that the Chinese people are poised, confident, open and enterprising.

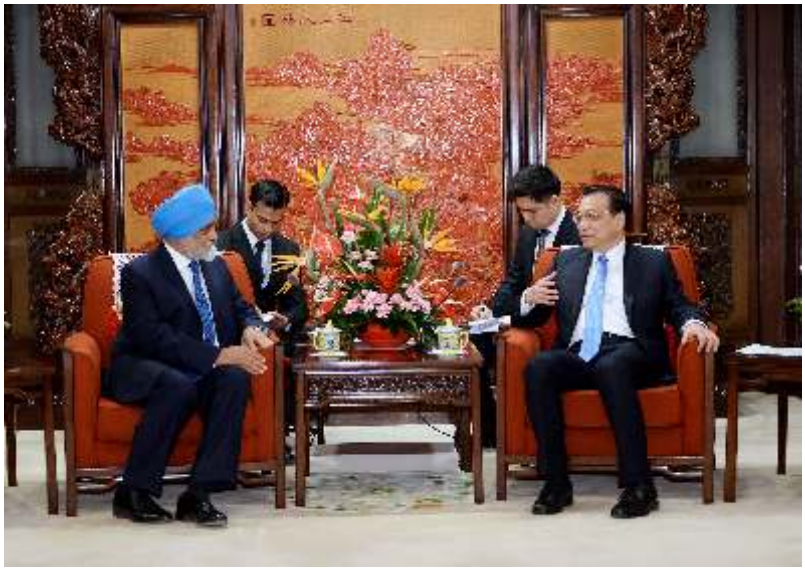
The press conference lasted 95 minutes and it was attended by more than 500 journalists from home and abroad.

CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

China, India Stress Cooperation in High-Speed Rail, Energy

Beijing, March 19 (Xinhua) — China and India on Wednesday pledged to further enhance their strategic partnership and cooperation in areas such as urbanization, railway and energy.

The pledge came out of a meeting between Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and visiting Deputy Chairman of India's Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who is here for the third China-India Strategic Economic Dialogue.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (R) meets with Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission of India, in Beijing, capital of China, March 19, 2014. Ahluwalia attended the third China-India Strategic Economic Dialogue which is held on March 18 in Beijing. (Xinhua/Li Tao)

Li said both China and India face the common task of stepping up economic transformation, improving people's livelihood while protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development.

He hoped the two countries, both with vast population, could expand cooperation in areas including urbanization, information and telecommunication, and high technology.

Li also called on the two countries to combine China's technology and cost advantage in high-speed rail and energy sectors with India's market demand, jointly promote the construction of the Bangladesh-India-China-Myanmar economic corridor, and push forward regional inter-communication and integration.

This year marks the Year of Friendly Exchanges between the two countries. China was ready to work with India to consolidate their political mutual trust and expand cooperation, he said.

Ahluwalia said the two countries' cooperation is facing a rare opportunity. India will strengthen their cooperation in such areas as industrial parks, railway, energy and urbanization.

He also invited more Chinese companies to invest in India and pledged to provide them with support.

The one-day dialogue was co-chaired by Ahluwalia and Head of China's National Development and Reform Commission Xu Shaoshi on Tuesday in Beijing.

China, India Vow to Boost Cooperation, Mutual Investment

Beijing, March 18 (Xinhua) — China and India will work to nurture more cooperation and mutual investment, officials said on Tuesday during the third China-India Strategic Economic Dialogue in Beijing.

China and India will continue to improve the investment and trade environment, encourage companies to increase mutual investment and strengthen cooperation in areas of infrastructure, information technology, energy, environment protection and finance, according to the one-day meeting.

The meeting was presided by Xu Shaoshi, head of China's National Development and Reform Commission, and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission of India.

China and India can learn from each other as both countries are under the same pressure of balancing reform and structural adjustment, both sides said.

The first such dialogue was held in Beijing in September 2011, the second was in New Delhi in November 2012.

China Adheres to Strategic and Cooperative Partnership with India

Question: First, China has responded to other countries' concerns over the increase of its military spending. But the Indian side is still concerned about the gap between India and China in terms of military spending. What is China's response? Second, India extended condolence to China after the violent and terror attack in Kunming on March 1. China said that international efforts are needed to combat terrorism. Mumbai, India also went through a terrorist bombing attack years ago. Have China and India had communication over joint crackdown on terrorism?

Qin Gang: I have reiterated China's position on the issue of military spending on different occasions over the past few days. I want to stress that China's defence policy is defensive in nature. China adheres to the path of peaceful development and places importance on growing a good-neighborly, strategic and cooperative partnership with India. We are committed to this point.



Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang held a press conference on March 6, 2014. He said that China adheres to the path of peaceful development and places importance on growing a good-neighborly, strategic and cooperative partnership with India.

We are also ready to work with the Indian side to constantly deepen strategic mutual

trust, expand mutually beneficial cooperation, jointly safeguard peace and tranquility of the border areas and jointly maintain peace, stability and security of the region and beyond. The signal we send to our friendly neighbor India is about peace, cooperation and mutual benefits.

On anti-terrorism, we have noted the sympathy and support that India conveyed to China through open and diplomatic channels on the serious and violent terror attack in Kunming not long ago. We are grateful for that.

I want to point out that counter-terrorism is a common task of the world. China also strongly condemned the Mumbai terrorist bombing attack and extended support and sympathy to India. We want to work with India, countries in this region and the rest of the world to enhance cooperation and combat terrorism with concerted efforts.

Indian Defense Minister Meets with Deputy Chief of General Staff of PLA of China

New Delhi, Feb. 24 (Xinhua) — Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony Monday met with visiting Deputy Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army of China Wang Guanzhong, who was here for holding the 6th round of meeting of Defense and Security Consultation between China and India.

Antony highly evaluated the results of the just concluded meeting and said that the Indian government and armed forces are committed to maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border areas of the two countries and implementing relevant agreements in the field.

He said there exist opportunities for the two countries and their armed forces to develop good relations and India is willing to enlarge the fields of dialogue and exchanges with China and push forward the relationship with China to contribute to regional peace and stability.

The Indian defense minister also said India and China, while having a long tradition of friendship and exchanges, are experiencing a stable development of relationship now.

He said India is glad to see the development of China and looks forward to sharing common development with China.

Wang said China and India are two important neighbors, big countries and emerging economies and it is good for the common development of the two countries as well as international and regional peace and stability that they maintain peace and tranquillity of the border areas and keep a healthy and stable relationship between their armed forces.

He said China is willing to strengthen dialogue and consultation between the institutions of defense affairs and the military of the two countries and seriously implement the spirit of bilateral agreements and work out the consensus reached between the leaders of the two countries.

Wang said that China is ready to deepen pragmatic cooperation in all fields with India, properly handle the existing differences between the two countries, and push forward relations between the armed forces of the two countries to a new stage.

Wang also met with the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Indian Armed Forces and Indian Army Chief General Bikram Singh and co-chaired with

Indian Defense Secretary R.K. Mathur the 6th round of meeting of Defense and Security Consultation between China and India.

The two sides made in-depth exchanges of views on relations between the two countries and their armed forces, the exchanges and cooperation between the two armed forces and regional security situation among other topics of mutual interest. (Editor: Mu Xuequan)

CIPG Expects Closer Ties with India

The delegation also represented major Indian media organizations such as Press Trust of India, Indian Express, The Week magazine, National Duniya newspaper , India Writes website and Rediff website.



The president of China International Publishing Group (CIPG), Zhou Mingwei, expressed his wishes to strengthen ties with Indian media when meeting with a delegation of Indian journalists on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2014, in Beijing. CIPG and a visiting Indian press delegation have expressed their mutual hopes to deepen the ties ahead of this year's China-India Media Forum.

Zhou said that China and India, as bordering neighbors, do share more common interests than differences. Zhou also acknowledged Indian's rapid development in the field of computer software engineering, as well as its successful experiences in outsourcing services which have shown New Delhi's capability to make full use of its traditional scientific and technological strengths while properly handling the issues that come with a large population.

He said CIPG, with its expertise in publishing in various foreign languages, longs to seek deepened cooperation with India's leading publishers.

The Indian guests in turn responded positively to the proposed initiative. They said most Indian people respect China's achievements and are amazed at how rapid the Chinese economy has grown over the past decades. Equally, Indian people respect the Chinese government's efforts in improving equality through measures such as combating corruption, curbing the income gap and, in a most recent case, relaxing the nation's "one child policy."

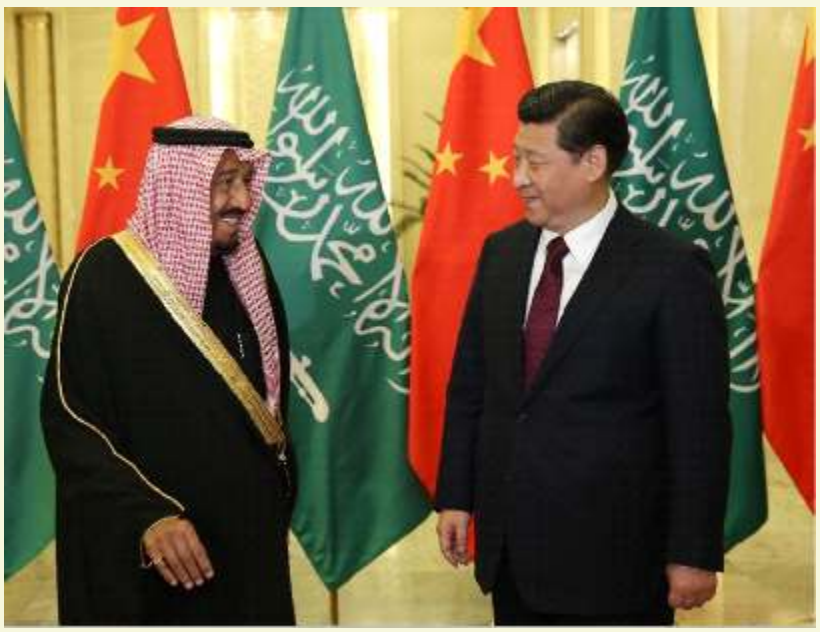
Zhou added that the upcoming China-India Media Forum would provide a prime opportunity for deepening mutual understanding between the two peoples.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Chinese President and Premier Meet Saudi Arabia Crown Prince

Beijing, March 13 (Xinhua) — Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in Beijing on Thursday, pledging to strengthen strategic partnership of the two countries.

Xi recalled the rapid growth of bilateral ties since China and Saudi Arabia forged diplomatic relations in 1990 and the latter's assistance to the affected areas after an earthquake hit China's southwestern province of Sichuan in 2008.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) meets with Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who is also the deputy premier and minister of defense, in Beijing, capital of China, March 13, 2014. (Xinhua/Pang Xinglei)

Hailing Saudi Arabia as China's good friend, brother and partner in the Middle East and Gulf region, Xi said developing a bilaterally friendly relationship is China's established and long-term policy, calling on the two countries to strengthen bilateral partnership.

Xi said the two sides should maintain high-level exchanges and support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests, expressing China's support to Saudi Arabia for choosing a development path that suits its own conditions.

"Both sides should take energy cooperation as a pillar and expand partnership in aerospace and new energy to forge closer ties," Xi said.

Xi welcomed Saudi Arabia to join in building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, to promote transportation connectivity and cultural exchanges.

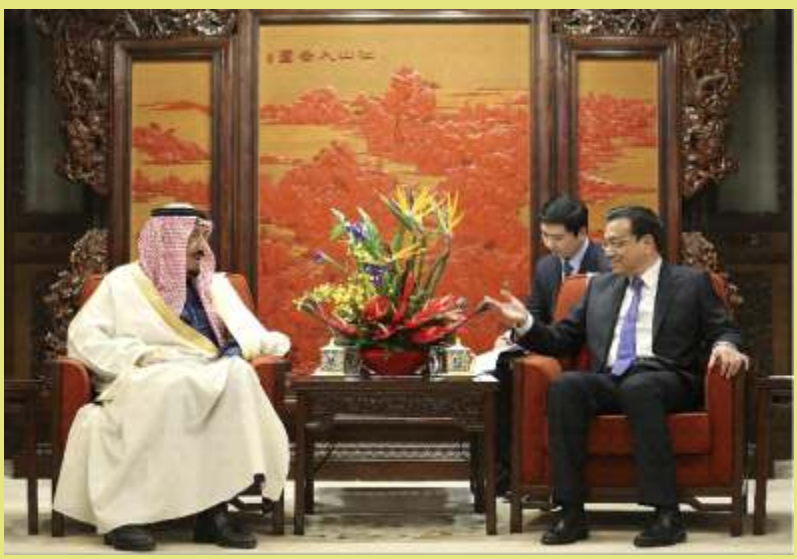
"China is willing to work with Saudi Arabia to accelerate the FTA talks between China and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and enhance cooperation in defense, security and anti-terrorism," Xi told Salman.

Salman conveyed the greetings of Saudi

Arabia King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to President Xi and said his visit aims to enhance the strategic partnership with China.

Saudi Arabia hopes to increase communication and cooperation with China in various fields based on mutual respect and benefit. Saudi Arabia condemns the terrorist attack in Kunming city of southwest China and expressed sympathy with the Chinese people and families of victims, Salman said.

Xi stressed that the Gulf region and Middle East situation has a global impact and all region members share responsibility for safeguarding Gulf security and stability.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (R) holds talks with visiting Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, also deputy prime minister and defense minister of Saudi Arabia, in Beijing, capital of China, March 14, 2014. (Xinhua/Ding Lin)

China has always backed the just cause of the Palestine people and will continue to facilitate peace talks. China supports a nuclear-free Gulf and will continue to promote a long-term, comprehensive and proper solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, Xi said.

Political settlement is the only realistic way out for the Syria crisis and the Geneva Communique should be fully implemented, said the Chinese president.

China is delighted with the initial results in the political transition in Egypt and hopes for stability and development at an early date, Xi said.

China backs Saudi Arabia's efforts to maintain the stability of its own and the region, ready to increase coordination with Saudi Arabia for promoting regional peace and stability, Xi said.

Saudi Arabia prioritizes China's important influence in the region and appreciates its objective and just stance, Salman said, expecting China to play a constructive role in resolving the Palestine and Syria issues and achieving a nuclear-free Gulf.

Saudi Arabia is ready to enhance cooperation with China to protect peace, security and stability in the region, Salman said.

Salman is paying an official visit to China from March 13 to 16 at the invitation of Chinese Vice President Li Yuanchao. Li held a welcoming ceremony for him at the Great Hall of the People.

Premier Li Keqiang met with visiting Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in Beijing on Friday. Hailing Saudi Arabia as China's important strategic partner in the Middle East and Gulf region, Li said the two countries share the

common pursuit of world peace, respect each other's development path chosen in accordance with their own national conditions and both play constructive roles in international and regional affairs.

China stands ready to step up high-level interactions, boost energy cooperation and the cooperation inn infrastructure construction, and increase people-to-people exchanges to cement the strategic friendship with Saudi Arabia in a sustained way, said the Chinese premier.

"China attaches great importance to the ties with all members of the the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)," Li said, adding that the Chinese side is willing to restart FTA (free-trade agreement) talks with the GCC to reach a high-grade, win-win deal with a view to enhancing economic cooperation in an all-around way.

Chinese President Xi Jinping Holds Telephone Talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin

In the evening of March 4, 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping held telephone talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the request. They exchanged views on China-Russia relations and the situation in Ukraine.

Xi Jinping said, I just held a successful meeting with President Putin in Sochi. It marks a good start for China-Russia relations for this year. Guided by our consensus, the relevant departments of both countries are promoting the cooperation on major projects which of strategic significance. President Putin sent message of condolences immediately after the serious and violent terrorist attack in Kunming, Yunnan Province, and expressed staunch support to China. China is willing to continue and strengthen anti-terrorism cooperation with Russia. I welcome you to visit China in the near future and we work together to push forward China-Russia relations for continuous development at this high level.

Putin said Russia and China have maintained close exchanges and cooperation. He looked forward to another meeting with President Xi Jinping, to further discuss the major issues of common interest.

Putin briefed on the evolvement of the current situation in Ukraine, as well as Russia's position on the issue and its countermeasures.

Xi Jinping stated China's principle position. He pointed out, the situation in Ukraine, going as it is today, seems to be accidental but has the elements of the inevitable. The situation now is highly complicated and sensitive. It is with an impact on the region and overall on the world. We believe that Russia can coordinate with all parties concerned, to push for the political settlement of the issue so as to safeguard peace and stability in the region and the world at large. China supports the proposals and mediation efforts of the international community which are conducive to the ease of the tension.

Chinese President Xi Jinping Holds Telephone Talk with U.S. President Barack Obama

On March 10, 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a telephone talk with U.S. President Barack Obama at his request. The two heads of state exchanged views on China-US relations and the situation in Ukraine.

Xi Jinping said, I met with President Obama twice last year and we reached a series of important consensus. It has pushed China-US relationship into a new stage of building a new model of major-country relationship. China is willing to join the efforts with the United States, along the course of building the new model of the major-country relationship, respecting and being considerate to the core interests and major concerns of each other, enhancing dialogue, mutual trust and cooperation, in a bid to achieve sustainable, healthy and stable development of China-U.S. relations. I am looking forward to the next meeting with President Obama in the near future, and I welcome the upcoming visit of your wife, Mrs. Michelle Obama.

Obama said that U.S.-China relations have made positive progress since their meeting at the Annenberg Retreat last year. As this year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of US-China diplomatic relationship, the United States is looking forward to new achievements of the two countries' cooperation on major issues. He is looking forward to another meeting soon with President Xi Jinping and his wife has quite an urge for her upcoming visit to China.

President Obama expressed his condolences for the incident of the loss of contact of the Malaysia Airlines flight. He expressed the full willingness of the US side to cooperate with the Chinese side for the search and rescue work. President Xi Jinping said, we are very much worried about the safety of everybody on board, including Chinese and U.S. passengers as well as the crew members. I have, at the very first time, instructed the related departments to carry out search and rescue operations and to prepare for emergency response and follow-up works. China will stay in close contact with the United States.

President Obama also mourned the victims of the violent terrorist attack in Kunming, Yunnan Province. He said that the United States condemns all forms of terrorism and stands ready to cooperate with China combating against terrorism. Xi Jinping stressed, terrorism is the enemy for all human beings. China is willing to strengthen the cooperation with the international community, including the United States, to fight against all forms of terrorism.

Obama briefed the US views on the current situation of Ukraine. Xi Jinping stressed, China holds an objective and fair position on Ukraine issue. Given the complexity of the Ukrainian situation, it is the first priority for all parties concerned to remain calm and exercise restraint in order to avoid the escalation of the tension. It should be insisted to finding the solution to the crisis through political and diplomatic means. Hope that all parties concerned would tackle the differences through communication and coordination, making efforts for political

solution to the Ukraine issue. China adopts an open attitude toward any proposals and suggestions that could help ease the tension in Ukraine and is willing to keep in contact with the United States and other relevant parties on the issue.

China Makes Proposals on Political Solution to Ukraine Crisis

United Nations, March 15 (Xinhua) — China on Saturday made a three-point proposal on seeking a political solution to the ongoing Ukraine crisis, stressing that the key to resolving the crisis is to settle differences through dialogue and negotiations.

"China holds an objective and fair position on the Ukraine issue," Liu Jieyi, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, told the Security Council after it failed to adopt a draft resolution on Ukraine.

Russia, one of the five permanent Security Council members, voted against the draft resolution drawn up by the United States and backed by Western countries. China, also a permanent Security Council member, abstained.

Liu said China will continue to mediate and promote dialogue so as to play a constructive role in bringing about a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine.

"To that end, we would like to propose three recommendations," he said. "First, to establish as soon as possible an international coordinating mechanism consisting of all the parities concerned to explore means to a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis."

Secondly, Liu said, all parties in the meanwhile should refrain from taking any action that may further escalate the situation.

"Thirdly, international financial institutions should start to explore how to help maintain economic and financial stability in Ukraine," he added.

The Chinese ambassador said his country has been calling for constructive efforts and good offices of the international community to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine, and has noticed in this respect some new developments and new proposals.

"The vote on the draft resolution by the Security Council at this juncture will only result in confrontation and further complicate the situation, which is not in conformity with the common interest of both the people of Ukraine and those of the international community," said Liu.

"Based on the above we can only abstain from voting on this draft resolution," he said.

The envoy also reiterated that China always respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, which is the long-standing fundamental foreign policy of China.

At the same time, Liu said "external interference" is also an important reason leading to violent clashes on the streets of Ukraine and resulting in crisis in the country.

He stressed that the key to resolving the Ukraine crisis is to act within the framework of law and order, seeking an early solution of the differences through dialogue and negotiation with due respects to the legitimate rights and interests of all the people in various

communities and areas.

"In the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups in Ukraine and the overall interests of regional peace and stability, all parties concerned should exercise calm and restraint, prevent further escalation of the tension, and stay on the track of resolving the crisis through political means so as to find a specific way out," Liu said.

China and Russia Co-host 6+1 Dialogue on Afghanistan Issue

On March 6, 2014, the 6+1 Dialogue on the Afghanistan issue was held in Geneva. It was co-hosted by Ambassador Luo Zhaohui, Director-General of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Foreign Ministry of China, and Ambassador Zamir Kabulov, Special Envoy on Afghanistan of Russian President. Deputy Foreign Minister Ershad Ahmadi of Afghanistan, Joint Secretary Rudrendra Tandon of Ministry of External Affairs of India, Ambassador Javad Kachuian, Foreign Minister's Consultant of Iran, Additional Secretary Sohail Mahmood of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Ambassador James Dobbins, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, along with others, were present.



Participants agreed that the lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the whole region hinge upon how the situation in Afghanistan develops. A united, stable, developing and amicable Afghanistan is in line with the common interests of Afghanistan and all parties concerned. All participants focused their discussion on the Presidential election in Afghanistan and its peace and reconciliation process. They reached the consensus on supporting the Presidential election to be held as scheduled and going smoothly in Afghanistan and on helping Afghanistan realize stable political transition, and as well on supporting the "Afghan-led and Afghan owned" peace and reconciliation process and on jointly safeguarding the security and stability in Afghanistan and the region. All participants highly praised the Chinese side for holding the Foreign Ministers' Conference of the Istanbul Process in Tianjin and expressed their willingness to

make joint efforts to ensure the success of the Foreign Ministers' Conference, so as to make contributions to facilitating the smooth transition of Afghanistan and regional cooperation.

Chinese Envoy Urges Japan to Face Historical Facts of "Comfort Women"

United Nations, March 17 (Xinhua) — A Chinese envoy to the UN on Monday urged the Japanese government to squarely face up to the historical facts regarding the use of a large number of war-time sex slave, or "comfort women," and make formal and sincere apologies to the victims.

"A lot of historical evidence points to the fact that the Japanese military forcefully drafted a large number of the ' comfort women' as sex slaves in an organized manner from China, the Republic of Korea and many other countries during WWII," said Wang Min, the Chinese deputy permanent representative to the UN, at the General Debate of the 58th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

The women and girls forced to be "comfort women" were victimized by horrific sexual violence, Wang said. "70 years later, only a few of them have survived, with unhealed physical and psychological trauma still haunting their twilight years. Most of them have left the world without seeing justice served."

"In total disregard of the repeated calls of the UN human rights mechanisms, the Japanese government refuses to assume legal responsibilities and take concrete actions to compensate the victims," said Wang, adding that senior leaders of the Japanese government have attempted to negate the history of aggression.

Under international pressure, the Japanese government has recently stated that it has no intention to revise the Kono Statement but would continue with the so-called investigation into the circumstances surrounding the statement.

They try every means in their attempt to whitewash and exonerate the Japanese militarists from this crime against humanity, he said.

The Kono Statement, made by then Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono in 1993, acknowledged the Japanese government and its army were involved in the use of war-time sex slaves.

Wang also lashed out at Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent move to blatantly pay homage to the Yasukuni Shrine where 14 Class A war criminals from WWII are honored.

"These war criminals were the chief culprits responsible for the drafting of the 'comfort women.' What the Japanese leaders have done constitutes a serious affront to the rights and interests of the 'comfort women'victims," Wang said.

"It is a blatant provocation to human conscience and historical justice. It is a gross challenge to the post-WWII international order. It has met the strong condemnation and denunciation of the international community," he said.

Wang called on women's organizations

around the world to unite as one and urge the Japanese government to squarely face the historical facts and make formal and sincere apologies to the victims "so as to let those deceased rest in peace and the traumatized souls of the survivors be consoled."

The 13th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief Held in Chengdu



From February 27 to 28, 2014, the 13th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, was held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. 27 members of the Forum from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the United States, Russia, Australia, and the European Union (EU), and more than 100 government officials, experts and scholars from ASEAN Secretariat, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), Beijing Office of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response and other regional and international organizations attended the Forum. Vice Minister of Civil Affairs of China Jiang Li was present at invitation and addressed the opening ceremony.

The delegates exchanged their experience in responding to recent major disasters, and had in-depth discussions on issues of disaster warning, risk assessment, humanitarian materials reserve, emergency response dispatch, post-disaster damage assessment and reconstruction in disaster areas. They reached a broad consensus on deepening regional cooperation in disaster relief, helping the developing countries to upgrade the build-up of their responding ability to natural disasters, and strengthening coordination and cooperation among various regional cooperation mechanisms.

Many relevant research institutions and enterprises which are engaged in disaster relief service of earthquake early warning and emergency communications, presented their products during the meeting. Foreign delegates afterwards conducted a field trip on the reconstruction of Yingxiu Township, the epicenter of the Wenchuan earthquake-

stricken area in 2008. They all spoke highly of the reconstruction of the disaster area.

ASEAN Regional Forum, established in 1993, is the most inclusive and influential security dialogue and cooperation mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region. Cooperation in disaster relief is the key area of practical cooperation under the framework of the Forum. The inter-sessional meeting is held once a year.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

President Xi Jinping's Smogbound Hutong Tour Boosts Populist Image

Beijing, Feb. 26 (Xinhua) — Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Beijing's hutongs in the heavy smog on Tuesday, calling for strengthened efforts to address pollution and improved city management.

Such a visit by Chinese leaders is rare, but it is not the first time Xi has made such a surprise appearance among ordinary people, moves that show his populist approach.

Xi visited trendy Nanluoguxiang Hutong and walked along the banks of a nearby river on Tuesday. He also visited Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall, Capital Museum, a water plant and the command center of Beijing's subway.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (C), also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, shakes hands with residents as he visits a historical and cultural preservation area along the banks of the Yuhe River during an inspection tour in Beijing ,capital of China . (Xinhua/Ding Lin)

IMPROVED CITY MANAGEMENT

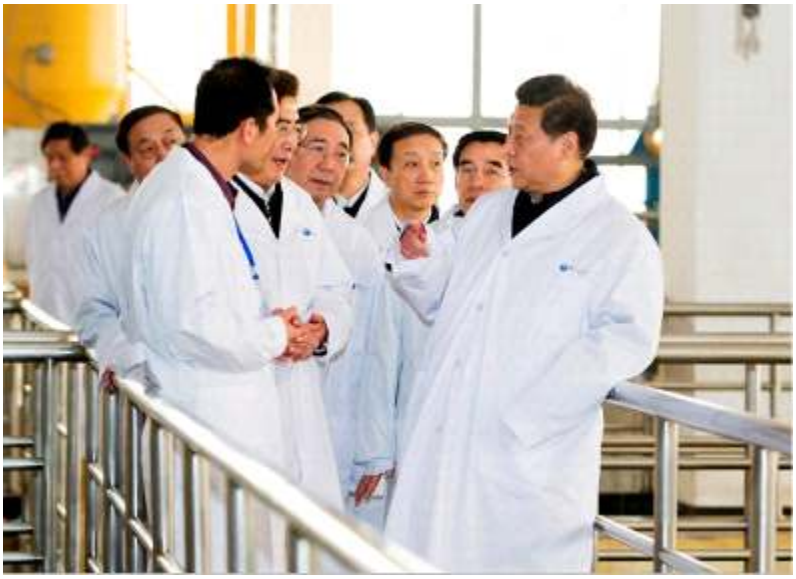
Xi visited courtyard homes on Nanluoguxiang, a popular tourist spot famous for its boutiques, restaurants and bars.

He stopped to ask about residents' work, salary, the materials they burn for cooking and heating, as well as how far their homes are from the nearest toilet.

"I am familiar w / ith this region, and today, I come here to visit old neighbors and listen to your opinions on renovation of the old urban district," Xi said.

Renovation work should be carried out in accordance with residents' different aspirations and demands, according to the president, who called on the public to better understand and support the government's decision to carry out such work.

After learning of Xi's visit to the hutongs, residents crowded around and greeted the President. Xi shook hands with many and wished them a better life.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (1st R) visits the No. 9 water plant of Beijing Waterworks Group during an inspection tour in Beijing , capital of China (Xinhua/Xie Huanchi)

He later came to the Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall to learn the capital's history, geographical conditions, planning and functional orientation.

Xi said scientific planning will produce maximum benefits, while planning faults will be the greatest waste. He added that the capital should stick to people-oriented and sustainable development in city planning.

During his visit to the command center of Beijing's subway, he inquired about procedures of subway operation, safety management and ways of assessing passenger flow.

He asked for strict subway security checks and rigor in safety operations.

The president noted that resolving the city's travel difficulties is a huge problem, calling for priority to be given to finding ways to ease traffic congestion.

Next was Beijing's Capital Museum on Tuesday afternoon, where Xi asked officials to attach equal importance to exhibition and the compilation of history in order to inspire national pride and confidence.

He noted that long-term painstaking efforts are needed to ensure Beijing's sustainable and sound development.

Officials were also urged to clarify the city's strategic position and strengthen its function as the center of national politics, culture, international communication and technological innovation.

Xi called for optimization of industrial structure, a focus on high-end, service and low-carbon-oriented industries, effective limiting of population size and promotion of regional balanced development.

The president also wants improved city infrastructure and city management.

POLLUTION BATTLE

Xi's tour came as Beijing and other areas in

north China have been shrouded in heavy smog in recent days. China's Ministry of Environmental Protection said earlier this week that 800,000 square km of land in China suffered heavy air pollution.

On Tuesday, the city maintained an orange pollution alert, as the density of PM2.5, or particles smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, measured over 400 in the city proper.

The smog drew wide social complaints and criticism despite authorities' efforts in addressing the issue, and left masks in Beijing out of stock. But Xi did not wear a mask.

The heavy air pollution eased on Wednesday evening as a cold front arrived.

When visiting the water plant, Xi said environmental protection in the megacity of Beijing is a job for systematic engineering, and much attention should be paid to it as air pollution is a major issue concerning people's livelihood.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (C)poses for a group photo with residents as he visits the Yu'er Hutong, an alleyway in Dongcheng District, during an inspection tour in Beijing, capital of China. (Xinhua/Ding Lin)

"We should treat both symptoms and root causes of environmental pollution, focusing both on emergency and regular measures," said the President, adding that the issue should be addressed through coordination between different areas and with action by the whole society.

At a symposium after the tour on Wednesday, Xi called for strengthened efforts to control smog. He said the priority is to limit PM2.5 by reducing dependence on coal, strictly controlling vehicles and adjusting industry structures.

He also urged related departments to strictly implement an index system used to evaluate officials' performances, and to strengthen law enforcement on environmental issues.

Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli attended the symposium.

CLOSE-TO-PEOPLE STYLE

Xi's surprise hutong tour typified his political style, which is quite different from his predecessors.

At the end of last year, Xi queued for pork buns at a Beijing eatery, paying for his own bill, sitting down and having lunch there.

The move was widely endorsed by the general population, and led to a rush on steamed buns from the chain store.

Wang Yukai, a professor with the Chinese Academy of Governance, said the current

leadership of the Communist Party of China is paying more attention to the building of a populist image.

Xi's move narrowed the gap between him and the people, and even the authorities as a whole, according to the professor.

Pictures of Xi's tour went viral online.

"Breathing the same air, sharing the same fate," one netizen posted on Twitter-like microblog service Sina Weibo.

"Xi has abundant grassroots work experience and understands the hardship of ordinary people," Wang said. "More importantly, he knows that no matter how grand the blueprint is, reforms cannot be implemented without people's endorsement."

Revive Silk Road to Contribute to Greater Regional Connectivity

Kabul, March 8 (Xinhua) — The revival of the historic Silk Road is very essential for greater connectivity between China and other countries in the region, Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan, Deng Xijun, said in an article published in an Afghan newspaper on March 8,2014.

In the article titled the Silk Road - From Past to the Future, published by the English newspaper Daily Outlook Afghanistan, Deng said the call of Chinese President Xi Jinping for the joint development of an "Economic Belt along the Silk Road" is the continuation and development of the spirit of the ancient Silk Road.

"The initiative, by linking Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia, will contribute to greater connectivity and complementarity across the sub-regions, bringing Pan-Asian and Euroasian regional cooperation to a new level," Deng said.

The Silk Road has become all the more important and precious as a symbol of peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and resilience, he stressed.

The ambassador pointed out, "the Belt initiative comes as a highlight in China's diplomacy in the new era, especially its neighborhood diplomacy occupies the primary position in China's overall diplomacy."

"We hope to participate more actively in international affairs including those in the neighborhood through the 'Belt' initiative, highlighting the concept of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, providing more public goods and playing a more effective role as a responsible major country," Deng said.

"Let us pool our wisdom and resources, work together to write a new chapter of the Silk Road and build a happy life for all of us, " the ambassador concludes.

The Silk Road - From Past to the Future

Zhong Sheng

In his separate visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in September and October 2013, President Xi Jinping of China called for joint development of an "Economic Belt along the Silk Road" and a "Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century". The "Belt" and the "Road" are two major initiatives that China has made to deepen reform and opening-up and advance its neighborhood diplomacy. They have been written into the documents of the Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the Meeting on Neighborhood Diplomacy and the Central Economic Work Conference, and have been enthusiastically received both at home and abroad.

1. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives are the continuation and development of the spirit of the ancient Silk Road.

Over 2,000 years ago, the industrious and brave people on the Eurasian continent opened several trade routes connecting major civilizations across Asia, Europe and Africa. Together, they were referred to as the "Silk Road" by succeeding generations. Despite repeated strifes and wars in Eurasia, traffic on the Silk Road, with sound of camel bells and endless flows of caravans and ships, never stopped completely. Transportation and technologies were so backward back then, yet nothing would keep merchants, the wise, the learned and envoys from travelling across mountains and rivers amid untold difficulties, and exploring the Silk Road with utmost resilience and courage. Countries large and small along the routes had all reaped considerable benefits from the Silk Road. China learnt a lot from other countries, and so did these countries from China. Such links of mutual emulation via the Silk Road made exchanges of goods, know-how, people and ideas possible, promoted the economic, cultural and social progress in the various countries, facilitated dialogue and integration of different civilizations, and left behind brilliant pages in human history.

Moving into the 21st century, an era that is dominated by the themes of peace, development and cooperation but continues to feature a complex international and regional landscape, the Silk Road has become all the more important and precious as a symbol of peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and resilience. If our ancestors could treat each other with respect as equals, work for mutual benefit and rise above occasional hostility 2,000 years ago, it is all the more pressing for us today to carry this invaluable legacy forward. It is all the more crucial for the international community to embrace the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, bring it up to date, instill greater dynamism, and realize its value in this new age, thus creating a new material and cultural wealth for humanity.

2. Working jointly for the "Belt" and "Road" initiatives meets the trend of the times for regional cooperation.

Asia, known as the engine of global growth and a key driver for world multipolarization and economic globalization, plays a critical and increasing role in the shaping of international landscape.

Meanwhile, Asia faces multiple challenges, old and new, including mounting pressures to stay vibrant. It will be the common tasks of all Asian countries to consolidate and maintain the favorable situation of peace and development in Asia, build stronger consensus and capacity of Asian countries, enhance the awareness of a community of shared interest and shared destiny for a harmonious Asia and achieve a comprehensive rejuvenation of all Asian countries. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives linking the past with the present and covering China and other countries, have a highly inclusive scope that bears witness to the history of great glory in Asia, provide an important source from which Asians draw confidence and pride for their history and cultures, and stand as a banner of Asian unity and commitment to cooperation.

Regional integration is an unavoidable phase towards economic globalization. The flourishing cooperation in Asia has boosted peace and development in the region. However, compared with those in Europe and North America, regional cooperation in Asia remains inadequate, as evidenced in particular by the uneven development and poor connectivity among Asia's sub-regions, posing a considerable obstacle to deeper regional cooperation. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives, by linking Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Asia, will contribute to greater connectivity and complementarity across the sub-regions, and help the establishment and improvement of Asia's supply chain, industrial chain and value chain, thus bringing Pan-Asian and Eurasian regional cooperation to a new level.

Profound changes are taking place with respect to global growth, trade, investment and capital flows. Eurasian countries, all in a critical state of transition and upgrading, desperately need to unleash their potential demand and that of the region, create still more growth points and make their economies more dynamic and more resilient to fend off risks. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives foresee infrastructure development and systemic innovation, which conduces to an improved business environment in relevant countries and the region as a whole, to an orderly and unimpeded flow of production factors and their improved distribution, to the development of landlocked countries and the remote areas of various countries, to lowering costs and trade and investment barriers, and to providing greater drive for reform and opening-up in the various countries.

With obvious differences in history, culture, religion and level of development, Eurasian countries need to give scope to their advantages of diversity, follow a path of diversified development, build harmony to bridge differences while constantly seeking common ground. Personnel exchanges, cultural interactions and inter-civilization dialogues are therefore of vital importance. The ancient Silk Road is paved with timeless jewels of country-to-country and people-to-people exchanges. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives will bring out the profound cultural achievements of ancient times, strengthen people-to-people exchanges among all countries across a spectrum of areas, strata and faiths, give scope to the potential of "soft" exchanges geared to expanding the groundwork of friendship among peoples and contribute a positive energy to peace and development in Asia.

3. Working jointly for the "Belt" and

"Road" initiatives meets China's needs for its own development and its cooperation with the outside world.

China's cause of reform and opening-up has been a resounding success. Unbalanced development, however, remains a problem, especially between the country's eastern region and central and western regions. To solve this problem, we need to promote transfers of resources and industries among the different regions, giving greater scope to the resource and geographical advantages of the central and western regions and tapping their potential for exchanges and cooperation with neighboring countries. Building the Economic Belt along the Silk Road may be an important way to this end.

China's opening-up in the past 30-odd years has been more targetted to the east and the developed world. Today, as we turn around and set our eyes to the west direction, we see a big market on the Eurasian continent. This is a vast region calling for our vigorous efforts to explore, develop and manage. The Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee made the decision to expand and accelerate the opening of the inland and border regions so as to build an economic corridor criss-crossing the country. At the same time, coastal areas in China's east region should build on their existing strengths, open still wider to the outside, speed up FTA implementation aimed at neighboring countries and deepen the maritime economic cooperation scheme with the relevant countries. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives, by covering multiple provinces, autonomous regions and major municipalities in China's central, western and east coastal regions and being consistent with the country's regional development strategy, the new urbanization strategy and the opening-up strategy, will serve as a big booster for the shaping of an all-directional opening China.

The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives also come as a highlight in China's diplomacy in the new era, especially its neighborhood diplomacy. Neighborhood diplomacy occupies the primary position in China's overall diplomacy. As a policy priority, China works hard to develop more friendly political relations, stronger economic ties, closer security cooperation and deeper cultural links with the neighboring countries. The state of China's relations with the rest of the world finds expression, first and foremost, in the changing relations between China and its neighbors. Whether or not China can continue to live harmoniously with its neighbors and help each other along the way will have an important bearing on the way China conducts its relations with the world. China has adhered to the policy of building friendship and partnership with the neighbors and abided by the principle of bringing harmony, security and prosperity to the neighborhood. We hope to participate more actively in international affairs including those in the neighborhood through the "Belt" and "Road" initiatives, highlighting the concept of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, providing more public goods and playing a more effective role as a responsible major country. The initiatives will also help dovetail China, its neighbors and other Eurasian countries on the issue of development strategies, build an even closer network of common interests, and bring integration of respective interests to a higher level, whereby China and all countries in the neighborhood can benefit from each other's development and the common development of the whole

continent.

4. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives are ones for open and inclusive economic cooperation.

Both the Economic Belt along the Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century have been anchored on economic cooperation, and built on cultural and people-to-people exchanges. They foresee no interference in the internal affairs of the countries involved, nor do they seek to dominate regional affairs or secure spheres of influence in the region.

The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives look at ideas and suggestions for cooperation and development. They are not about building an entity or creating new mechanisms. The initiatives will rely on existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms between China and other countries and use existing platforms of regional cooperation that have proven effective. They will not overlap or compete with existing cooperation mechanisms of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Community or ASEAN Plus China. If anything, they will enrich and enliven those mechanisms. We should open our mind and heart for the various cooperation initiatives and mechanisms, take a more pragmatic approach, and make them more effective and mutually reinforcing.

Inheriting the proud tradition of openness from the ancient Silk Road and adopting the "Open Regionalism" advocated by East Asian countries, the "Belt" and "Road" initiatives can only be more open and more inclusive, rather than becoming a secluded, ossified and exclusive mechanism. Instead of starting from scratch, the initiatives will be built on the continuation and upgrading of existing cooperation. The parties involved may consider linking their cooperation projects, both existing and planned, together into an integrated package for multiplied cost-effectiveness.

The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives foresee complete openness in geographical and country-specific reference. They may trace, but not be limited, to the past Silk Road, and all countries along the land and the maritime Silk Roads as well as all friendly neighbors of China can get involved. Central Asia, Russia, South Asia and Southeast Asia will be the priority direction. So will the Middle East and East Africa since they are where the "Belt" and "Road" join. Countries in Europe, CIS and Africa may also be included in the long run. What is more, the initiatives, as they make progress in the future, may involve a lot more projects, countries or entities, which can only ensure their increasing openness.

Some parts of the ancient Silk Road went through Russia, and the Tea Road as it was known strikes deep roots in the history of that country. Russia is a world power that spans across Eurasia, enjoying a major and traditional influence on the Continent and Central Asia in particular. To China, Russia is a good neighbor, good friend and good partner. In building the Economic Belt along the Silk Road, Russia is an indispensable partner. Around the Opening Ceremony of the Sochi Winter Olympic Games not long ago, the presidents of the two countries met again to have a positive and in-depth discussion on the subject of the Economic Belt along the Silk Road. Some existing cooperation projects between the two countries, such as oil and gas pipelines, Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe railway, West China-West Europe highway, and China's participation in the development of Russia's

Far East and Eastern Siberia, can very well be integrated with the building of the Economic Belt along the Silk Road. The Economic Belt along the Silk Road is in the shared interests of China and Russia and complementary to the ongoing process of the Eurasian Economic Community. It may therefore become a drive for the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

5. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives feature "five links" and focus on result-oriented and project-based cooperation, all aimed at bringing tangible benefits to the people in the region.

The first of the "five links" is policy. Countries can discuss strategies and policies on economic development and in the spirit of seeking common ground while shelving differences, harmonizing their positions through consultation, formulate corresponding plans and measures for cooperation and give regional economic integration their policy and legal "green light".

The second "link" is road. We have a saying in China that goes "if you want to get rich, get started by building roads." Many countries share this view. There is need for China and its neighboring countries to improve on their cross-border transportation infrastructure, put in place a transportation network linking Asia's sub-regions and connecting Asia with Europe and Africa and effectively address the existing inadequacies of connectivity and transportation in regions targeted by the project.

The third "link" is trade. We should study issues of trade and investment facilitation while making proper arrangements accordingly, remove trade and investment barriers, promote economic circulation and improvement in the region, unleash still greater trade and investment potential of participating countries and make the regional cooperation "pie" still bigger.

The fourth "link" is currency. We should promote greater trade settlement in local currencies and more currency swap schemes, strengthen bilateral and multilateral financial cooperation, set up financial arms for regional development, bring down transaction costs, enhance capacity to fend off financial risks through regional arrangement and make the region's economy more competitive globally.

The fifth "link" is people. Amity between peoples holds the key to sound relations between states. China and the neighboring countries need to shore up popular support for their state-to-state relations, promote inter-civilization dialogue, enhance exchanges, understanding and friendship among different peoples, especially those at the grassroots level.

The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives are a long-term systematic engineering that cannot be done overnight. They can only be advanced in a step-by-step manner, moving from easier tasks to more difficult ones, and from scattered spots to wider areas and finally to the whole region. The ancient Silk Road was mainly about trade in goods, while the "Belt" and "Road" cooperation envisaged now can have a much wider scope. Priority areas and early-harvest projects may include infrastructural connectivity, trade and investment facilitation, industrial cooperation and cultural and people-to-people exchanges. In the area of industrial cooperation, we can think of agriculture, fishery, science and technology, manufacturing and the service sector. We can also think of traditional and high-end

manufacturing. When it comes to projects that parties have common understanding and common interests, such as road, railway, aviation, river and maritime shipping, energy, resources, pipeline, electricity and telecommunication, as well as FTA negotiations, policies and measures serving personnel exchanges, we must move quickly in consultation and implement them as soon as conditions are ripe. The key pilot zones for development and opening-up as well as the selected border ports and harbors can serve as testing grounds for cooperation. All the projects and modalities of cooperation are designed to translate advantages of political relations, geographical proximity and economic complementarity into strengths of practical cooperation and sustained growth, with the aim of achieving uninterrupted flow of goods, sound governance, social harmony, mutual benefit and common development.

Throughout this process, China will follow the right approach of upholding justice first and pursuing justice and interests simultaneously, provide developing countries and friendly neighbors with assistance as its abilities permit, and earnestly help them to achieve speedier growth. China will step up its input in the neighborhood, actively enhance connectivity there, explore the establishment of a regional infrastructure investment and financing platform, and strive to turn the neighboring land and sea area into those of peace, friendship and harmony. Not only will China upgrade its own economy, it will go for an upgraded version of opening-up through such schemes as the "Belt" and "Road" initiatives and expand its mutually-beneficial cooperation with all countries, neighboring countries in particular.

6. The proposed "Belt" and "Road" initiatives have been well received in the various quarters, but they require further consultation and concerted efforts of implementation.

When President Xi Jinping proposed the "Economic Belt along the Silk Road", Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev expressed welcome and support right away and suggested that an information Silk Road be given priority. Leaders or senior officials from other Central Asian countries, Russia, Afghanistan, Ukraine and some West Asian countries called the Economic Belt along the Silk Road an important, constructive and timely initiative that meets the trend of the times and suits needs of all sides. They expressed readiness for active participation. Foreign Minister Davutoglu of Turkey told the media that the "Economic Belt" initiative would benefit countries along the ancient Silk Road and bring about new opportunities for regional and global economic development. India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries as well as Southeast Asian countries gave their support to the "Belt" and "Road" initiatives. Business communities in many countries followed the development with great interest.

The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives are not a private matter for China alone. They are a cause shared by all countries. China will not be the sole beneficiary. The participating countries are. The "Belt" and "Road" initiatives, along with their preliminary studies, are open to constructive opinions and suggestions by other countries with a view to enriching and improving the concept, vision and planning of the initiatives. Let us pool our wisdom and resources, work together to write a new chapter of the Silk Road and build a happy life for all of us.

CULTURE & LIFE

Lingering Fragrance of the Spring Tea

Introduction

When spring comes, tea trees sprout. The tea-leaf picking girls are busy picking the tender buds in the green hills. For green tea, the most tender buds would best present the quality and taste of the tea liquor.

Mingqian tea and Yuqian Tea

Mingqian tea and Yuqian tea are the names for spring tea leaves according to the picking time in solar terms in the tea planting areas in the south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. In China, Mingqian tea is credited as the best green tea. Mingqian tea refers to the tea picked and processed right before the Pure Brightness, the 5th solar term. As mingqian tea has tender buds and rich fragrant substance, it is superb in quality. However, as the temperature before the Pure Brightness is generally low, the tea buds are limited in number, and the growing speed is slow, therefore, a very limit number of tea buds can reach the picking standard. Hence, mingqian tea is especially rare

Yuqian tea refers to the tea picked and processed after the Pure Brightness and before the Grain Rain, namely, the period from about April 5 to April 20. Though yuqian tea is not as tender as mingqian tea, the buds of the former grow fast and contain rich accumulated substance due to the higher temperature, hence it is usually fresh and thick in taste and enduring while being infused.

Tea Picking

The words “hewing and picking,” which appear in The Classic of Tea indicate that in the early days of tea cultivation people might have climbed up the tea trees and chopped off the tips of the branches. As tea plants in certain southern areas are trees of rather tall stature, some locals trained monkeys to pick tea leaves for them.



A beautiful tea garden in spring

Nowadays, tea leaves can be picked by

machine; nevertheless, hand-picking is still preferred in many places, as it is believed that this is the only way to meet the special tea-picking requirement for preserving the traditional varieties of tea.



Workers are picking up teas

Tea-picking methods vary by regions and seasons. According to the periods when the shoots start and stop growing, tea is defined as spring tea, summer tea, autumn tea, and even winter tea (which is only possible in southeastern China). Tea is also categorized as “first flush”, “second flush,” and “third flush” during the growing season. The time span in a year during which tea can be harvested varies depending on the climate. Tea can be harvested for at least five to six months a year in the area south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, seven to eight months in southwest China, nine to ten months in certain areas in south China, and almost throughout the year in Hainan Province.

Tea-picking Opera

While picking tea, people would often perform beautiful tea-picking dance, which has become the origin of tea-picking opera, a kind of tea-picking dances.

It is a dancing art featuring the subjects and contents of tea production and tea drinking. It is a cultural phenomenon derived from the mainstream culture of tea production and drinking.

Tea processing

Nowdays tea is mostly processed manually, including four processes - baking, stir-frying, rolling and drying, all of which are done in the same pan once for all. Every year when the tea processing period comes, tea peasants and their workers have to work from dawn to dark, as top-quality tea requires to be picked in the morning, selected in the afternoon, and baked in the evening, - all the procedures must be finished within the same day, so as to maintain its tenderness and fragrance.

The Infusion of Spring Tea

As green tea is light in taste, it is not suitable to be infused with boiling water, nor should it be covered with a lid while being infused. While you are gazing at the

transparent glass and see the drifting tender buds in the water, many inspirations would emerge.

Brew the Perfect Tea in Purple Clay

Zisha (purple clay) teapot is one of the best kinds of tea sets. The tea, after being brewed in zisha teapot, has a thick and lingering taste. The zisha teapot has a small mouth, a tight lid and rough inner wall, so it can effectively prevent the fragrance from dispersing.



Workers are baking tea manually in ancient China

Varieties of Spring Tea

Biluochun—-Biluochun tea is among the best of the mingqian tea. There is a saying in China explaining that Biluochun tea is brass-wire and spiral shaped, hairy all over? and has been scarce since the ancient time in that it has tender leaves, and fresh color, fragrance and taste.

Longjing — the best Longjing is gathered several days before Qingming when new twigs have just begun to grow and carry "one leaf and a bud". To make one kilogram (2.2 lbs) of finished tea, 60,000 tender leaves have to be plucked. In the old days Longjing tea of this grade was meat solely for the imperial household; it was, therefore, known as "tribute tea"



Purple clay teapot

Drink Tea according to Physical Fitness

According to traditional Chinese medicine, different people present different physical types such as dry heat and deficient cold. When we talk about tea, it is divided into "cool" and "mild" types according to different manufacture process. Therefore, different people may need to choose differently when it comes to tea drinking. Those of the dry heat type should drink "cool" tea, while those of the other type

should drink "mild" tea.

Expert Recommendation: Those people who smoke, drink alcohol, tend to suffer from excessive internal heat, or have a plump shape (i.e. those of the dry heat type) should drink "cool" tea; while those suffer from deficient cold in stomach, or feel abdominal distention after eating balsam pear or watermelon, or those of weak health should drink moderate or mild tea. Black tea and Puerh tea are better choices for people of old age.

Chinese Kungfu--Shaolin Kungfu



The Shaolin Temple, built in the Nineteenth year of Taihe Period during the Northern Wei Dynasty (495), is a cultural space for the development of the Shaolin Kungfu. The Shaolin Kungfu, which is originally practiced by the Buddhist monks whose duties were to protect the temple, has been gradually developed into an art of perfect technology, abundant meanings and high reputation in the whole world after more than 1500 years of development. According to martial art books registered by the Shaolin Temple, there are several hundred sorts of routines of Shaolin Kungfu practiced by monks of generations, among which, several dozen are the representative of boxing routines that have been handed down. In addition, there are 72 stunts and Kungfu of special sorts like capture, wrestle, discharging bone, point percussion and Qigong. Altogether 255 routines of boxing art, weapon and mutual practice are still practiced today.

The Zen wisdom of Buddhism has endowed the Shaolin Kungfu with profound cultural connotations. The Buddhist commandment has evolved into the commandment of Kungfu practicing, displayed by the Kungfu morals of the practicers. This evolvement has endowed the Shaolin Kungfu with such characteristics as abstention, modesty and reservation, as well as taking regard to the inner strength, terseness and to winning by striking only after the enemy has struck.

The Shaolin Kungfu is an outstanding representative of the Chinese Wushu culture, and is the most representative performance form of the Shaolin culture.

Till today the Shaolin Kung Fu is still the largest and most well-known martial art in China. A Chinese dialect says: "All styles of

Kung Fu come from Shaolin, but the Shaolin Kung Fu is the best one." Nowadays, there are many schools and institutions settled down outside of the Shaolin temple teaching Shaolin Kung Fu for martial-arts-lovers from China and all over the world.



Chinese Shadow Play--Precursor of Modern Cinema



Shadow play, a traditional Chinese folk art with a history of more than 2,000 years, has embarked on a revival path after a period of marked decline, thanks to conservation efforts and lasting interest in rural areas.

Known as a precursor of modern cinema, shadow play is a kind of drama in which silhouettes made of hard paper, buffalo and donkey hide are projected onto a white screen. The performer manipulates the characters behind the screen while singing the libretto to tell the story.

The artistic effect of the play is produced through light, screen, music, singing, and puppetry. The shadow play is widely referred to as "a magic, lightning-like art" that can win people's high praise internationally.

The puppets in the shadow play are made of transparent leather and Chinese shadow artists first carve out the lines of the design and then dye them in bright colors. These

transparent leather puppets become very lively and beautiful under the lantern light. With strong local characteristics, the shadow puppets are folk handiworks and a wisdom crystallization of Chinese shadow play artists through the ages.



Among the many types of shadow play, the silhouette show of donkey leather in Tangshan, Hebei Province and of ox leather in northwest China are renowned for their exquisite cutting and distinctive folk music.

Originating near the end of the Ming Dynasty (1386-1644 AD) and the early part of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD), Daoqing Shadow Play is softer and more melodious than other types due to its use of Tao music, characterized as peaceful and holy. Daoqing shadow play features a single performer who manipulates all of the characters and conducts the orchestra, as well.

Chinese shadow play, which came into being during the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) in northwest Shanxi Province, spread to South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and North Africa in the 13th century. The ancient Chinese art spread to Europe in the 17th century with the famous German poet Goethe staging a European opera in the form of Chinese shadow play, and modern movies derived, in part, from the ancient art.

Shadow play, with distinctive folklore styles, had long been one of the only entertainment forms in Chinese villages till two decades ago.

But the ancient art gradually fell from the limelight due to the impact of modern audio-visual media such as television and movies. Many shadow play groups have been disbanded, and many of the most talented artists have died. In many areas, certain types of plays and the art of performance are actually nearing extinction.



Fortunately, shadow play is still alive and warmly welcomed among people in some rural areas in China.

Both Chinese artists and the Government are making great efforts to conserve and propagate the ancient art form. China is applying to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) for a certification as an intangible cultural heritage.

Chinese Chef Recipe--Braised Tofu with Dried Shrimp

If you are looking for a quick and easy recipe, this one is definitely handy. It has also boosted my confidence to try cooking another Dried Shrimp dish.



Recipe: Braised tofu with Dried Shrimp

Ingredients for Braised Tofu with Dried Shrimp

* 2 pieces (10 oz) Tofu
* 2 tablespoons Small dried shrimp
* 2 Spring onions
* 1 Red chili
* 1 teaspoon Salt
* 1 tablespoon Sugar
* 1 tablespoon Soy sauce

Method to cook Braised Tofu with Dried Shrimp recipe:

1. Cut tofu into large pieces. Each piece is then cut into 3-4 smaller pieces. Rub each piece with salt evenly.
2. Soften dried shrimp in water.
3. Diagonally cut spring onions into 2 cm pieces. Leave some part of the green leaf portion to shred finely.
4. Remove seeds from the red chili, then shred.
5. Heat 3 cups oil in a wok until boiling hot. Deep-fry tofu over high heat until golden brown. Scoop out and drip dry.
6. Leave 2 tablespoons oil in the wok. Put in dried shrimp, onion and stir-fry until fragrant.
7. Add tofu, soy sauce, sugar and a little water.
8. Braise over low heat for 5 minutes. Turn once during cooking.
9. Sprinkle with shredded spring onion and chili for serving.

Enjoy this great Braised Tofu with Dried Shrimp recipe!

Dragon and Phoenix in Chinese Architecture

The Chinese dragon, an emblem reserved for Imperial China, was heavily used on Imperial architecture, especially on the Imperial Palaces - on the roofs, on the beams and pillars, and on the doors. Dragon and phoenix, called Long and Feng in Chinese respectively, are totems of Chinese people. They were used to represent emperors and their consorts and were the main decorative patterns to be seen on various imperial structures. Palaces, columns, pathways and screen walls were all inscribed or carved or painted with their images. The dragon and phoenix are the symbols of the status, authorities, treasure and emperor or the empress. In ancient time,where decorated with the dragon and phoenix, where the emperor or the empress had reached. People would not know the emperor or the empress but know dragon and phoenix, and they believe that seeing dragon and phoenix is like seeing the emperor and the empress.



In the Imperial Palaces, the dragon and the phoenix are the principal motifs for decorative designs on the buildings. The daily clothing and articles of emperors' and empresses' are decorated with dragon and the phoenix. The throne hall is supported by columns entwined by gilded dragons, the central ramps on marble steps were paved with huge slabs carved in relief with the dragon and phoenix, and the screen walls display dragons in brilliant colors. The names in the Chinese language for nearly all the things connected with the emperor or the empress were preceded by the epithet "dragon" or "phoenix"; thus, "dragon seat" for the throne, "dragon robe" for the emperor's ceremonial dress, "dragon bed" for him to sleep on, and "phoenix carriage", "phoenix canopies" and so on for the imperial processions. The national flag of China under the Qing Dynasty was emblazoned with a big dragon. Almost all of things of emperor's are decorated with dragon. The earliest postage stamps put out by China were called "dragon-heads" because they showed a dragon in their designs. Even today the dragon is sometimes adopted as the symbol of Chinese exhibitions held abroad or the cover designs of books on China printed by foreign publishers. "The Giant Dragon of the East" is becoming a sobriquet for the country.

Belief in the dragon, and drawings of the imaginary animal, can be traced back to primitive society when certain prehistoric tribes in China adopted the dragon among other totems as their symbol and guardian god. Some of the recently unearthed bronze vessels of the Yin Dynasty, which existed more than 3,000 years ago, are decorated with sketches of dragons of a crude form. Earliest legends in China described the dragon as a miraculous animal with fish scales and long beards. As time went on, it became more and more embellished in

the minds of the people, acquiring the antlers of the deer, the mane of the horse and the claws of the eagle — in short, appropriating the distinctive features of other creatures until it became what we see today everywhere in the palace.

The Chinese phoenix, likewise, exists only in legends and fairy tales. Sovereign of all birds, it has the head of the golden pheasant, the beak of the parrot, the body of the mandarin duck, the wings of the roe, the feathers of the peacock and the legs of the crane; gloriously beautiful, it reigns over the feathered world. An early design of the phoenix can be seen on the silk painting discovered in a tomb of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) near Changsha in Hunan Province.

The dragon and the phoenix often served in classical art and literature as metaphors for people of high virtue and rare talent or, in certain combinations, for matrimonial harmony or happy marriage. The dragon and the phoenix are not only the representatives of the emperor and the empress, but also good luck and goodness. As an important part of folk arts, dragon lanterns, dragon boats, dragon and phoenix dances are still highly popular on festivals among the people of all localities.

Chinese Cheng Yu & Its Story
Mistake the Reflection of a Bow in the Cup for a Snake

During the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD), there was a county magistrate called Ying Chen. One summer day, he invited his secretary Du Xuan to his house and treated him to wine. On the north wall of the hall hung a red bow, which was reflected in Du Xuan's cup. Du Xuan took the reflection for a squirming snake. He was very frightened but dared not turn down Ying Chen's offer because Ying Chen was his superior. He swallowed the wine with his eyes closed.



Back home, he felt so painful in his chest and stomach that he could hardly eat and drink anymore. He sent for the doctor and tried many medicines, but nothing could cure him.

When Ying Chen came to Du Xuan's home and asked him how he became so ill, Du told him that he drank the wine with a snake in his cup the other day. Ying Chen felt so puzzled about that. He returned home and contemplated it but couldn't find an answer. Suddenly, the red bow on the north wall caught his eye. "That's it!" he shouted. He

immediately sent his man to fetch Du Xuan. He seated Du Xuan where he sat before and offered him a cup of wine.

Du Xuan saw the snake-like shadow again. Before Du was scared out of his wits again, Ying Chen pointed at the shadow and said, "The 'snake' in the cup is nothing but a reflection of the bow on the north wall!"

Now that Du Xuan knew what it was, he felt much easier. His illness disappeared the next moment!

This story was later contracted into the idiom, "mistaking the reflection of a bow in the cup for a snake." We use it to describe someone who is very suspicious.

bēi gōng shé yǐng
杯 弓 蛇 影

在汉朝，有个县令名叫应郴。有一年夏天，他请主簿（办理文书事务的官员）杜宣来家里饮酒。酒席设在厅堂里，北墙上悬挂着一张红色的弓。由于光线折射，酒杯中映入了弓的影子。杜宣看了，以为是一条蛇在酒杯中蠕动。他非常害怕，但县令是他的上司，所以不敢不饮。他只得闭着眼睛喝了几口。

回到家里，杜宣只觉胸腹部疼痛异常，难以忍受，吃饭、喝水都非常困难。他赶紧请大夫来诊治。他服了许多药，但病情还是不见好转。

当应郴到杜宣家中，问他怎么会闹病的，杜宣便讲了那天饮酒时酒杯中有蛇的事。应郴觉得非常奇怪。他回到家，反复思考，就是弄不明白杜宣酒杯里怎么会有蛇的。突然，北墙上的那张红色的弓引起了他的注意。"原来是这样！"他大喊道。应郴马上命人把杜宣接来，让他坐在原位上，并递给他一杯酒。

杜宣又看到了那像蛇一样的影子。趁他还没被吓得魂飞魄散，应郴指着那倒影说："你说的杯中的蛇，不过是墙上那张弓的倒影罢了！"

杜宣弄清原委后，感觉轻松多了，病也立刻就痊愈了。

这则故事后来演化为成语"杯弓蛇影"，用以形容那些非常多疑的人。

——成语故事

Stories about Horse



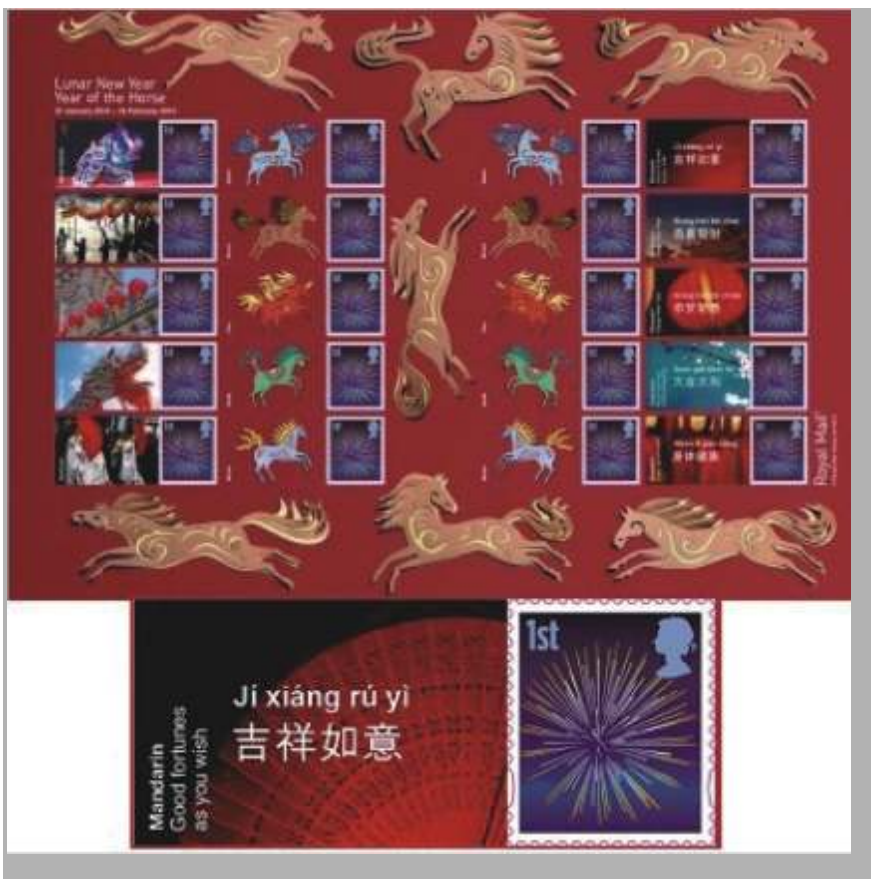






YEAR OF THE HORSE New Zealand Post First Day Cover 2014

The Year of the Horse stamp is not only well accepted in China, but also can be seen in many countries around the world. In order to celebrate the upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year, the Year of the Horse, a number of countries and regions have also released their distinctive the Year of the Horse stamps.







On January 5, 2014, China Post released a Year of the Horse stamp with a face value of 1.20 yuan, marking the upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year (beginning on January 31, 2014 and ending on February 18, 2015.) The stamp features a tri-colored glazed pottery horse to commemorate the Year of the Horse in the Chinese zodiac. The horse is decorated with peony patterns, symbolizing wealth and good fortune. On the saddle, there is a two-bat design, signifying the auspicious concept of "immediate bless" and expressing the sincere wishes of the "Year of the Horse Blessing."



Hong Kong



Macao











South Korea





France

TIBET TODAY

Tibetan Official Slams Obama-Dalai Lama Meeting

Beijing, March 9 (Xinhua) — A senior Tibetan official on Sunday denounced the recent meeting between the U.S. President Barack Obama and the Dalai Lama, calling it "a severe interference in China's internal affairs."

"People of all ethnic groups in Tibet oppose and condemn the meeting with the Dalai Lama by any people or any organization in any form," Padma Choling, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Congress, told reporters after a panel discussion at the ongoing annual session of China's top legislature in Beijing.

Whatever the Dalai Lama is doing, no matter in what name, is aimed at seeking independence of Tibet, he said.

The official said that Tibet needs to develop its economy and improve the livelihood of its people.

"Whatever the Dalai Lama does will not affect Tibet's development and stability," Padma Choling said.

"As Tibetans who have witnessed, contributed to and benefited from the development of the region, we feel that our happy lives today are not easily won," he added. "We should treasure the ethnic unity in Tibet."

Obama met with the Dalai Lama in Washington last month despite China's strong opposition.

Qinghai-Tibet Railway to Reach Panchen Lama's Palace

Lhasa, March 6 (Xinhua) — An extension of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway,the world's highest railway, will reach the residence of the Panchen Lama at Xigaze, Tibet, the contractors confirmed on Thursday.

The Lhasa-Xigaze Railway, will open before October.

With an overall length of 253 km, trains will run at a maximum speed of 120 km per hour, representing a run time of about two hours from the regional capital to the region's second city. All subgrade earthworks, bridges, culverts, tunnels, as and over 93 safer and easier," said the lama.

Both cities are sacred for Tibetan buddhists with important religious centers such as the Potala Palace, Tashihunpo Monastery and Jokhang Monastery.

"Besides saving time, the railway will be much more safe. The current road is frequently troubled by seasonal natural disasters," said Shang Hongwei, a construction foreman on the railway.

Local residents and tourists will have a smooth trip by rail, unimpeded by landslides in summer and ice in the winter, said Shang.

The plateau railway is a particularly problematic construction with difficulties including an oxygen-poor environment, a delicate ecosystem, wildlife migrations, and many complex envzronmental issues.

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway began service in July 2006 and has positively impacted on Tibet's tourism, hospitality and manufacturing sectors.

China Produces Genetic Map of Tibetan Barley

Lhasa, March 3 (Xinhua) — Chinese scientists said on Monday that they have sequenced the entire genome of highland barley, an achievement that can help cultivate better breeds of Tibet's staple food and increase yield.

The genome mapping project, which the scientists said has produced the world's first genetic map of highland barley, was launched in 2012 by researchers with Tibet's Academy of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Sciences and BGI Tech Solutions in Shenzhen.

"We have completed a draft sequence of an old barley variety native to the Tibet plateau," said Nyima Tashi, deputy dean of the Lhasa-based academy.

The study assembled 3.89 billion of the estimated total of 4.5 billion base pairs of the chemicals that make up DNA in the highland barley genome, and included 39,197 protein coding genes, said Nyima Tashi, who was also the chief scientist in the two-year research project.

A genome is the full complement of an organism's DNA, complex molecules that direct the formation and function of all living organisms. The size of an organism's genome is measured by the number of bases it contains — base pairs being the building blocks of DNA.

The wheat genome, for example, has about 17 billion base pairs and soybeans have about 1.1 billion.

Nyima Tashi said the team hoped having a map of all the genes in highland barley would enable breeders to cultivate better varieties of the cereal crop and increase yield.

Highland barley, known in Tibetan as "ne," has been grown on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau for nearly 4,000 years.

It makes up 70 percent of all cereal crops in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, home to the world's leading barley production base as well as a center for barley diversity research.

The barley is used to make tsamba, beer, flour, cakes and noodles.

Last year's introduction of a new, high-yield variety has increased the region's annual yield output to 660,000 tonnes, a record high in the past decade.

Changes in Losar in Old Tibetan Woman's Eyes

Lhasa, March 11 (China Tibet Online) On the 7th Day of the Tibetan New Year, or Losar, 73-year-old Yangzom from Lhoka was dining in a restaurant on Lhasa's main street.

It was her first time to celebrate Losar in Lhasa with two of her daughters who work

there.

Wearing a brown hat, Yangzom was dressed in a dark red coat and a Tibetan style skirt. The emerald earrings also looked striking.

Yangzom began to herd cattle for her master at the age of eight. The four-year life as a serf left her s a miserable memory that she could never forget.

"I didn't have enough to eat when I was young, nor have clothes to wear," Yangzom recalled her life before Tibet's peaceful liberation in 1951. "I could hardly feed myself even in Losar."

Now Yangzom is living a life she could never have imagined before.



Members of a Tibetan Buddhist band perform during a Cham dance ritual held to celebrate the Losar at the Tsurphu Monastery in Doilungdeqen County of Lhasa, capital of southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, Feb, 28, 2014 (Xinhua/Chogo)



Women of the Tibetan ethnic group wearing traditional costumes visit the square of the Potala Palace in Lhasa during the Tibetan New Year (Xinhua/Liu Kun)

She has two sons and three daughters. The two sons are living in Lokha, while the eldest and youngest daughters living in Lhasa. She usually does some gardening at home and looks after her grandsons.

"This year my two daughters invited me to spend Losar with them in Lhasa," Yangzom said smilingly.

"There have been a lot of changes in our life. Look at the fashions the young people wear, and the Tibetan costumes have also become more stylish. And we can buy everything we want in the stores."

Lhasa's modernized look combined with the traditional architecture impressed Yangzom most in her sightseeing during Losar. And the two- or three-storied houses with the traditional Tibetan style in color and window looked "gorgeous" in Yangzom's eyes.

"Dozens of years ago, I had to go a long distance to visit my relatives or friends in Losar. Now I call them with my cell phones," Yangzom said.

Among her five children, her second daughter is the one who calls Yangzom most

of the time because she lives in Zhengzhou in central China's Henan Province after graduating from college 20 years ago.

"Believe it or not, I had spent one Losar in Zhengzhou," Zangzom said proudly. And besides Zhengzhou, she has been to many cities in inland China such as Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu with her children.

She said that many friends of ethnic Han came over to extend New Year greetings to her during her special Losar celebration in Zhengzhou with her daughter and son-in-law, who is a ethnic Han.

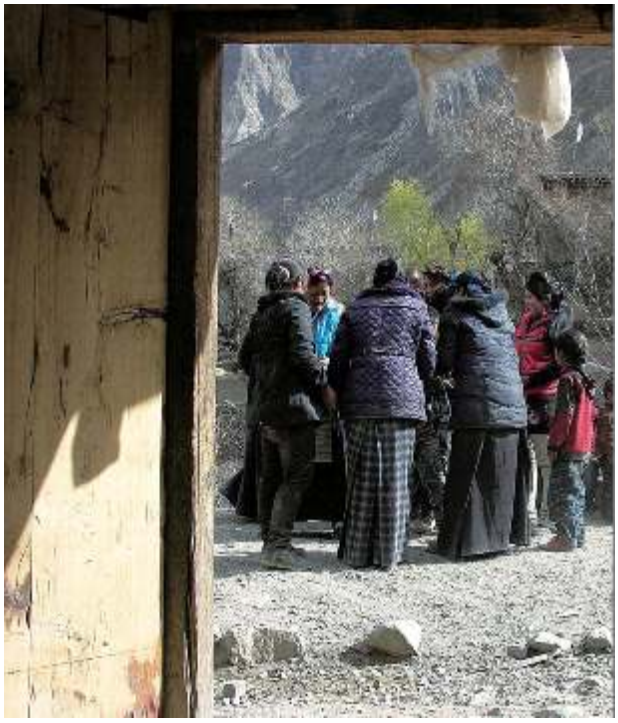
"Although the customs are different between the lunar New Year and the Tibetan New Year, they both are festivals to send best wishes and enjoy family reunions," said Yangzom.

Langmar Hall in Yerpa Village

Text & Photo by Jigme Phungyel

Langmar Hall is a "Tibetan KTV". As in other cities like Lhasa, it is a very crowded place and also a big draw card for tourists. Different from KTVs in the mainland, Langmar Hall does not charge admission. It makes money from beer consumption, so the waitresses are happy to open beers for customers. They often stand beside you, raise your glass and propose a toast to you. Friends from the mainland are not aware of this trick, and believe it is required etiquette, so they are happy to drink as much as they can. People in Lhasa make fun of this and say that the waitresses may be vexed at not being able to grasp you by your neck and pour beer down your throat. Another characteristic of Langmar Hall is that customers are not separate from performers; everyone gets a turn on the stage and all play together,enjoying themselves to the fullest.

Before entering the village, we were told by some village cadres that Yerpa was a good place to go. It was warm, and included Langmar Hall.From this, we immediately imagined that by the Nujiang River, there was a village and in the village there was a Tibetan building facing the river,where people were hurrying to and fro. After we came to the village, we found that what they called "Langmar Hall" was right by the house of the village doctor Chosphel, where we stayed overnight after we first arrived at Yerpa. In use of Qulho(the local power generator), Chosphel opened a video hall, which was actually a vacant room downstairs in his yard.



The Langmar Hall in Chosphel's yard was an important place for villagers to gather and spend their leisure time.

A few logs were put in the room as benches. Villagers would like to gather together there.

During festivals a small dance can be held in the yard. Chosphel lives between Sengo and Yulo, in the center of Yerpa, so this smart fellow runs a store there. He cemented over his yard and offered the place for villagers to spend their spare time and exchange gossip. A common sight is a child buying snacks from the store and sitting in the video room watching Pilgrimage to the West and Kungfu films. Boys sit on the ground in the yard playing a Tibetan game called "Show", drinking soft drinks and speaking loudly. "Show"is a dice game played by two, five,six or more players. The one who sends his chips to the end first wins.Playing "Show" has a very special role because as the players roll the two dice, they will recite the score that they want using different idioms,proverbs, and slang. Generally, the vocabulary they recite is very rich,and also there are some wits that can invent new words referring to people and things on the spot, imbuing the activity with a cultural hue. In Tibet, there are special publications collecting such "Show" vocabularies.Separate from the young, the aged sit in a circle drinking homemade barley or grape wine, exchanging all kinds of news from the village and totally unaffected by the loud dice rolling and shouting coming from beside them.

Chosphel's house has become an activity and news center in the village. In this way, the clever man draws everyone to his yard and his store business does well of course. He confesses this much to us. Anyway, it is free to watch video and play "Show"there! Chosphel, boss of Langmar Hall and the village doctor, is an important person in the village.Before we came, cadres (whether from the county or from the township or village) would live in his home when they came to the village,because he has a house for guests and a telephone available at any time.All meetings, no matter big or small,are held in his house as well. It can be said that many decisions related to the development of Yerpa are made in his house. Though Chosphel is not a village leader, his influence is greater than many leaders in the village.After we began to stay in the village and set up the village committee,it was natural for us to hold our meetings in the committee office.From then on, Chosphel's house lost its status as a meeting center. He is not very happy about it and seldom comes to our committee.

In like manner, we seldom go to his Langmar Hall. We don't have any opinions about his "disagreeable behavior", but think that as the village doctor, he gets a subsidy every month, yet he has no medical knowledge at all. It is common that villagers will get ill and cannot be treated in time; some may have sequela in their later lives. After we were stationed at the village, most people who called on the committee were looking for medicine and diagnosis. At first, we only prepared some common drugs for ourselves.However, as villagers regarded our office as the clinic, we bought a blood pressure monitor, stethoscope and increased our stock of medicines.More than that, we made efforts to study medical knowledge as soon as possible, thus helped give treatment for some small diseases, such as headache, fever or minor trauma,and completely re-placed Chosphel,which he took calmly and appeared indifferent. We reserved our view about him on this point.

Occasionally, we bought some lighters or beer in his store. Except for lighters and beer, there is nothing but bad quality snacks.The snacks are in showy packages and have vague identification of their producers. The junk foods tease the children's throats, and the empty non-degradable packaging bags are dropped everywhere in the village. Later, the villagebased Patriotic Health Committee regarded those plastic bags as a key target for elimination. Also, in his store, soft drinks in various plastic bottles have doubtful

trademarks and manufacturers. Only the beer is more secure, yet twice as expensive as in the city. Once a member of our work team went to buy a lighter in his store, he gave Chosphel a one hundred RMB note. Chosphel said he had no change to give him. So the next time Chosphel met this person,he acted as if nothing had happened.

Sometimes, young guys would stay very late in Langmar Hall. Even on a quiet night, they would ride their motorcycles (with earsplitting stereos playing and lights on full). We said to ourselves that it is unnecessary to ride motorcycles with only a few walks in the village; besides, in some places, their motorcycles cannot get through. Moreover, it is definitely a waste of gasoline. Due to all this, we acquired an even deeper prejudice against Langmar Hall.

One day it rained heavily in the formerly drought-stricken Yerpa from 4 to 5:30 pm. A flood broke out from the upstream valley. The turbulent mountain torrents carried a great deal of erosion, stones and wood, and roared into the river valley of Gogo Lungpa. Almost all canals were blocked, as were the Qulhos in the village. The two Qulhos used by Chosphel to run his Langmar Hall could not escape the fate. On the next day, as some village cadres and our work team checked the damage and we found the once crowded Langmar Hall had become cold and cheerless. Many villagers hung about Chosphel's front gate for a long time,looking blank and lost, then finally left in disappointment. Suddenly,it occurred to us how important Chosphel's Langmar Hall occupied in the villagers' hearts. It doesn't matter whether the Hall is very shabby or not. It matters that the Hall brings happiness to everyone in his or her common lives. The happiness is some warmth unable to be exchanged and measured with material goods.In fact, Chosphel's Langmar Hall is a place that the village cannot do without.

Form IV

(See Rule 8)

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I, Mme. Xie Liyan, hereby declares that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: March, 2014

Mme. Xie Liyan
Signature of Publisher

Flights Between China and India

Airlines	Flight No.	Route	Dep.	Arr.	Frequency
Air China	CA947	Beijing-Delhi	2050	0140+1	1,3,6 (Jul-Aug 2013)
					1,3,5,6 (Sep 2013-Mar 2014)
	CA948	Delhi-Beijing	0315	1225	2,4,7 (Jul-Aug 2013)
					2,4,6,7 (Sep 2013-Mar 2014)
	CA429	Shanghai-Chengdu-Mumbai	1700	0010+1	1,3,5,7 (Jul-Oct 2013)
					3,5,7 (Nov 2013-Mar 2014)
	CA430	Mumbai-Chengdu-Shanghai	0140	1240	1,2,4,6 (Jul-Oct 2013)
					1,4,6 (Nov 2013-Mar 2014)
China Eastern Airlines	MU563	Shanghai (Pudong)-Delhi	2105	0125+1	Daily
			Jul 2013-26Oct 2013		
			2120	0205+1	
			27 Oct2013-27 Nov 2013		
			1350	1940	
			29 Nov 2013-29 Jan		
			2120	0205+1	
			30 Jan 2014-29 Mar		
	MU564	Delhi-Shanghai (Pudong)	0245	1100	Daily
			Jul 2013-26 Oct		
			0320	1105	
			27 Oct 2013-28 Nov		
			2125	0530+1	
			29 Nov 2013-29 Jan 2014		
			0320	1105	
			31Jan 2014-29 Mar		
	MU555	Kunming-Kolkata	2355	2345	Daily
			Dec 2013-Dec		
	MU556	Kolkata-Kunming	0035	0510	
			Dec 2013-Dec		
China Southern Airlines	CZ359	Guangzhou-Delhi	1830	2215	Daily
	CZ3027	Guangzhou-Delhi	0730	1130	Daily
	CZ360	Delhi-Guangzhou	2325	0630+1	Daily

Airlines	Flight No.	Route	Dep.	Arr.	Frequency
	CZ3028	Delhi-Guangzhou	1245	1950	Daily
Cathy Pacific	CX697	Hong Kong-Delhi	2015	2335	Daily
	CX698	Delhi-Hong Kong	0105	0905	Daily
Air India	AI349	Shanghai-Delhi-Mumbai	2200	0525+1	2,4,6,7
	AI348	Mumbai-Delhi-Shanghai	0750	2020	2,4,6,7
	AI315	Hong Kong-Delhi	1805	2110	2,4,6
	AI317	Hong Kong-Delhi	1805	2110	1,3,5,7
	AI310	Delhi-Hong Kong	2315	0650+1	2,4,6,7
	AI314	Delhi-Hong Kong	2315	0650+1	1,3,5

Note: Frequency: 1=Monday, 2=Tuesday,...,7=Sunday

(+1): Flight arrives next day.

Departure & Arrival Times: In local time of departure / arrival destination.

The flight schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the airlines booking data for updates.

Airlines	Address	Contact No.
Air China	Ground Floor, E-9 Connaught House, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001	Tel: 011-43508888 Fax: 011-43508899
	Unit No. 9/2, Queen's Road, Bangalore 560001	Tel: 080-43587900 Fax: 080-43587999
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BOOK REVIEW

Dear Readers,

In this lovely spring, we gladly present you another two books—-'TAO TE CHING' & 'GOVERNING CHINA' hoping that you may know something about Chinese traditional culture and China's governing today. If you find interests in any book here, you are most welcomed to come to the gate No. 1 of our Embassy to get the book for FREE.

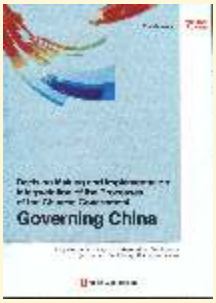
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Lao Tzu is one of the greatest thinkers during the Spring and Autum Period, the founder of Taoism. His thought is an integral part of the great Chinese tradition which has exerted great influence throughout the history of China. The great German sociologist Max Weber remarked in his *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*: "As a matter of fact, in the history of China, whenever Taoism or Taoist thoughts were generally accepted, the economy grew stronger, and the people were better off".

With the widespread dissemination of Lao Tzu's thoughts, a great number of western scholars of different periods have invariably discovered Lao Tzu. Early in the late 18th century, the German priest Gramont translated *Tao Te Ching* into Latin, and introduced it to Germany. Kant once said, "Spinoza's pantheism and his affinity for nature have a lot with Lao Tzu's thoughts." Hegal once noted in his Philosophy of History, "The basic Principle accepted by Chinese is reason by the name of 'Tao'. Tao is the source of heaven and earth, the origin of all things. The Chinese regard the learning of various forms of Tao as the highest academic achievement…Lao Tzu's work, especially his Tao Te Ching, was highly respected by the Chinese people." Nietzsche once made such comment on Lao Tzu, "As a comprehensive expression of Lao Tzu's thoughts, *Tao Te Ching* is like an inexhaustible well of wisdom. As long as you lower down your bucket, you will be bound to get plenty of spring water of wisdom easily." A recent survey conducted by a German TV shows that Lao Tzu is still the most famous Chinese known to German people, and *Tao Te Ching* is the most well-known Chinese work to them.



China is now experiencing a government innovation process of the largest scale in history, which includes both administration system reform and the adjustment of government operation patterns. Any government in actual operation is not just a regime or system but a process. Needless to say, China is carrying out government innovation because the government needs to be reformed and it has something that does not adapt to the demands of reality. Besides, the Chinese government and China's government administration have their own characteristics.

The book explains how the Chinese government rules China, and how its processes function in the following areas: political and governmental structures, expression and collection of public opinions, government decision making and implementation, information transmission and supervisory systems of government affairs, the basic framework of relations between central government and local governments, governance in rural areas, and governance in urban areas.

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Meet Beautiful China at Exhibitions

For the tourism industry in India, February can be named as Month of Exhibitions: SATTE, OTM, ITM, TTM, etc. The campaign of Beautiful China went on continually through such tourism exhibitions. The themes of Year of China-India Friendly Exchanges and Beautiful China, 2014-Year of Smart Travel were promoted far and wide.

Nowadays, China and India are developing very good relations in many fields including people-to-people and tourism exchanges. "China-India cultural exchanges continue to deepen with more and more people favoring each other's country as their tourist destination," said H. E. Mr. Wei Wei, Chinese Ambassador to India (Open up a New Chapter for China-India Relations, News from China, January 2014). For the Month of Exhibitions 2014, a large number of travel agents, tour operators and local residents in India had showed great enthusiasm in knowing and



exploring Beautiful China as tourist destination. They bombarded the China Tourism stalls with countless questions and picked the DVDs, posters, pamphlets and souvenirs with endless interest. Some young boys and girls even earnestly expected to learn some tricks of Chinese Kungfu or cuisine from the on-the-spot exhibitions!

In order to provide authentic and rich information for the tourists across the world including India, a new website of www.travelchina.gov.cn has been recently inaugurated by China National Tourism Administration. The website of www.cnto.org.in has also been further improved. They serve to make the online exhibition of Beautiful China go on continuously.

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A scenery of Huangshan Mountain after a snowfall in east China's Anhui Province .

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