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Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Dr. Jiang Yili met with His Excellency Ram Nath Kovind, Governor of Bihar.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Dr. Jiang Yili met with the Honourable Mamata Benerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Dr. Jiang Yili met with Ms. Nirupama Rao and her husband, former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to China of India.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui met with Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Railway Minister of India.



Ambassador Luo Zhaohui met with Mr. Sitaram Yechury, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).



The Chinese Embassy and Chinese enterprises had a friendly basketball match.

CONTENTS

NPC & CPPCC Annual Sessions 2017

1. NPC & CPPCC Annual Sessions 2017 4
2. Transcript of Premier Li Keqiang's Meeting with the Press at the Fifth Session of the 12th National People's Congress 6
3. Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press 16
4. Chinese Leaders Review Government Work Report with Lawmakers 26
5. China's National Legislature Concludes Annual Session 27
6. China's National Legislature Stresses Unity Around Xi as Core 29





External Affairs

1. China, Saudi Arabia Agree to Boost All-Round Strategic Partnership 31
2. President Xi Meets U.S. Secretary of State 33
2. Xi Jinping Meets with King Norodom Sihamoni and Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk of Cambodia 34
3. Li Keqiang and UK Prime Minister Theresa May Exchange Congratulatory Messages on the 45th Anniversary of the Establishment of Ambassadorial Level Diplomatic Relations Between China and the UK 36
4. Yang Jiechi Meets with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson 36
5. 2017 First BRICS Sherpa Meeting Concludes Successfully 37

China India Relations

1. Yang Jiechi Meets with Foreign Secretary Subramanyam Jaishankar of India 39
2. China, India Should Focus on Cooperation Rather than Disputes 40
3. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui Celebrates the Holi Festival with India Press 42
4. Address by H.E. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui at the Holi Reception for Indian Media 44
5. Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui on the Screening of "Kung-Fu-Yoga" 45





Belt and Road Initiative

1. Chinese Leaders Discuss Economy, Belt & Road with Lawmakers 46
2. Belt and Road Initiative Drives Globalization 48
3. Belt and Road Initiative Helps Saudi Arabia Realize "Saudi Vision 2030" — Ambassador 50
4. Belt and Road Initiative to Boost Listed Companies' Profits 52
5. China's Belt and Road Initiative Promotes Connectivity, Development along Ancient Route 53

Indians in China

Delegation from University of Delhi Visited China 57





Culture & Life

1. People View Pinwheel Decoration in NE China's Liaoning 61
2. Scenery of Ancient Village in Yixian County, East China 63
3. "Kung Fu Yoga" Tops Chinese Box Office 65

Tibet Today

1. Lhasa Tops China's Happiest Cities in 2016: CCTV Poll 66
2. Tibet's 2nd Largest Airport Terminal Starts Operation 68
3. Tibet to Spend Big on Fighting Poverty 69
4. Tibet to Open World's Highest Super-long Tunnel 71

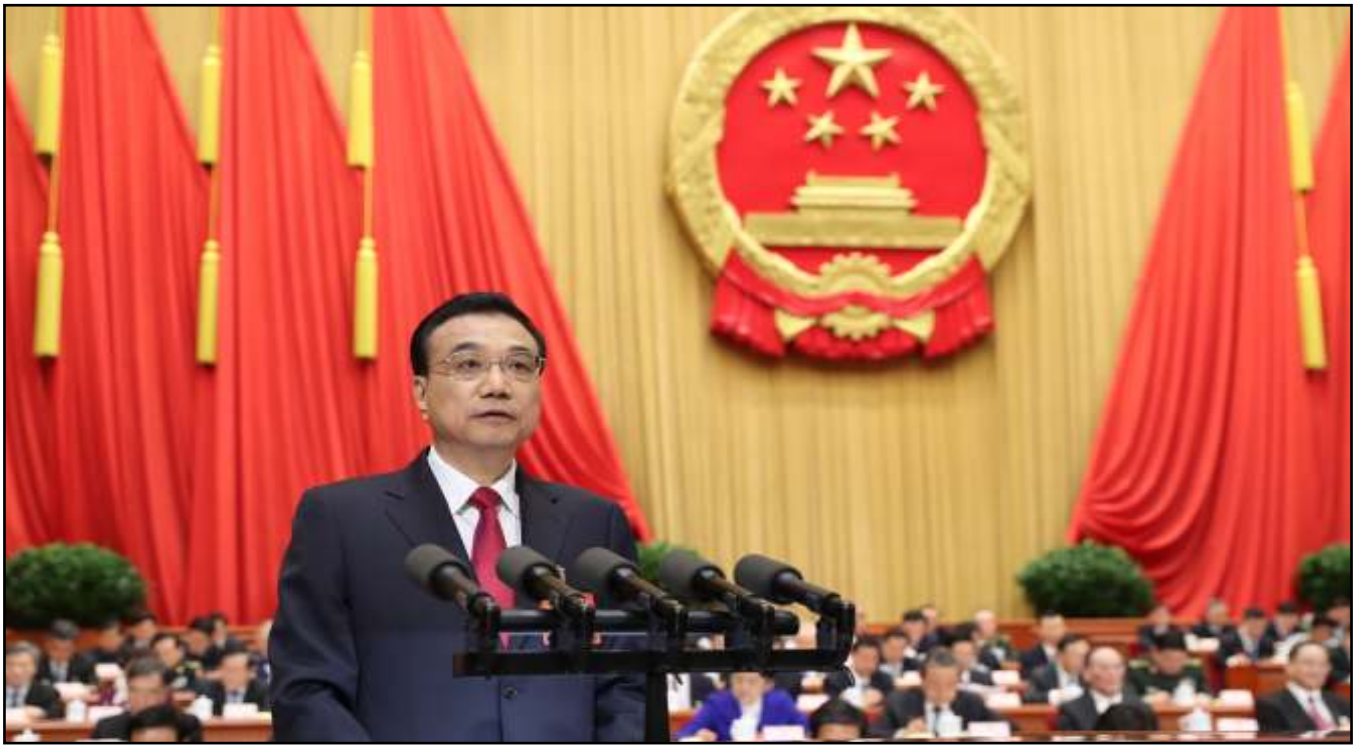
Book Review –Natural Wonders in China 72
Flights Between China and India 73



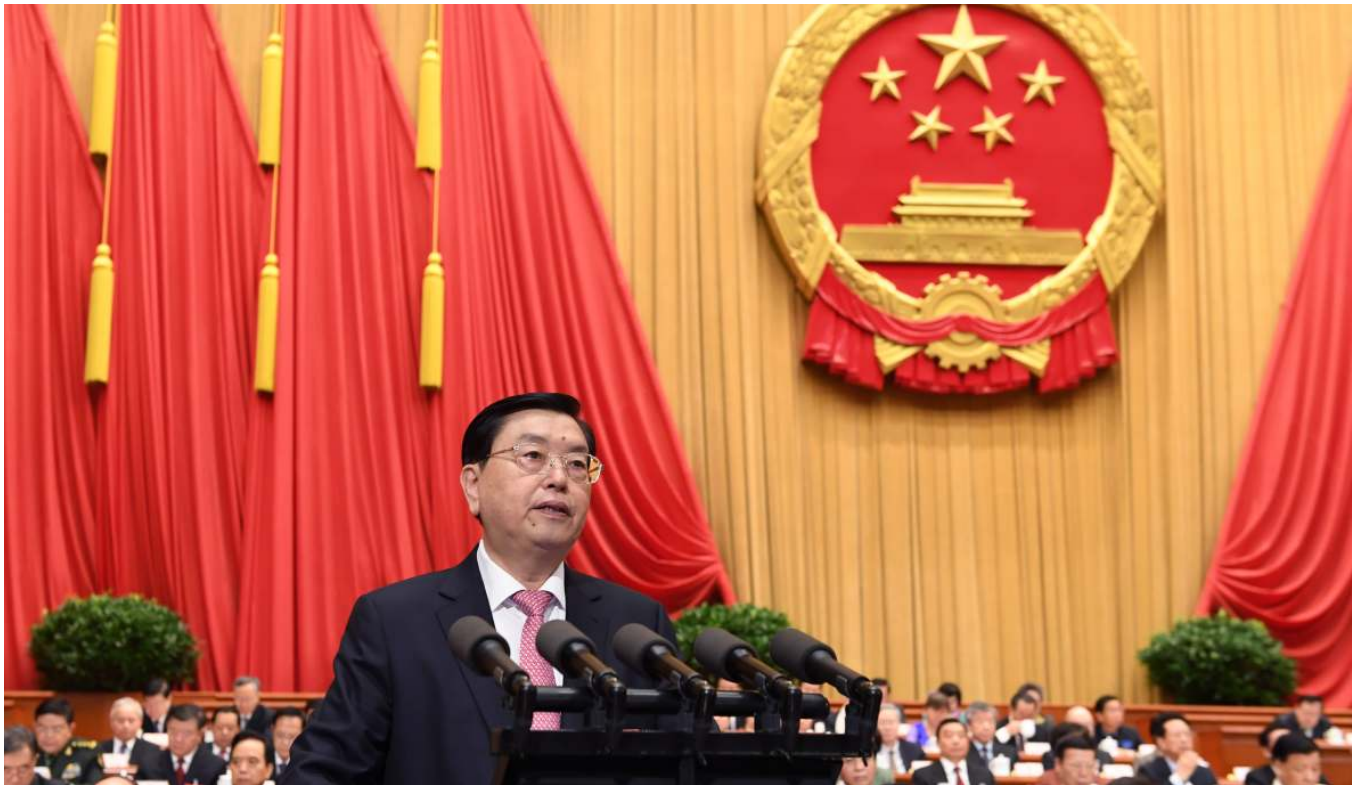
NPC & CPPCC Annual Sessions 2017



The fifth session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), opened at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 3, 2017. The 12th National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, opened its fifth session at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, March 5, 2017.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang delivered Government Work Report during the opening meeting of the fifth session of China's 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, capital of China, March 5, 2017.

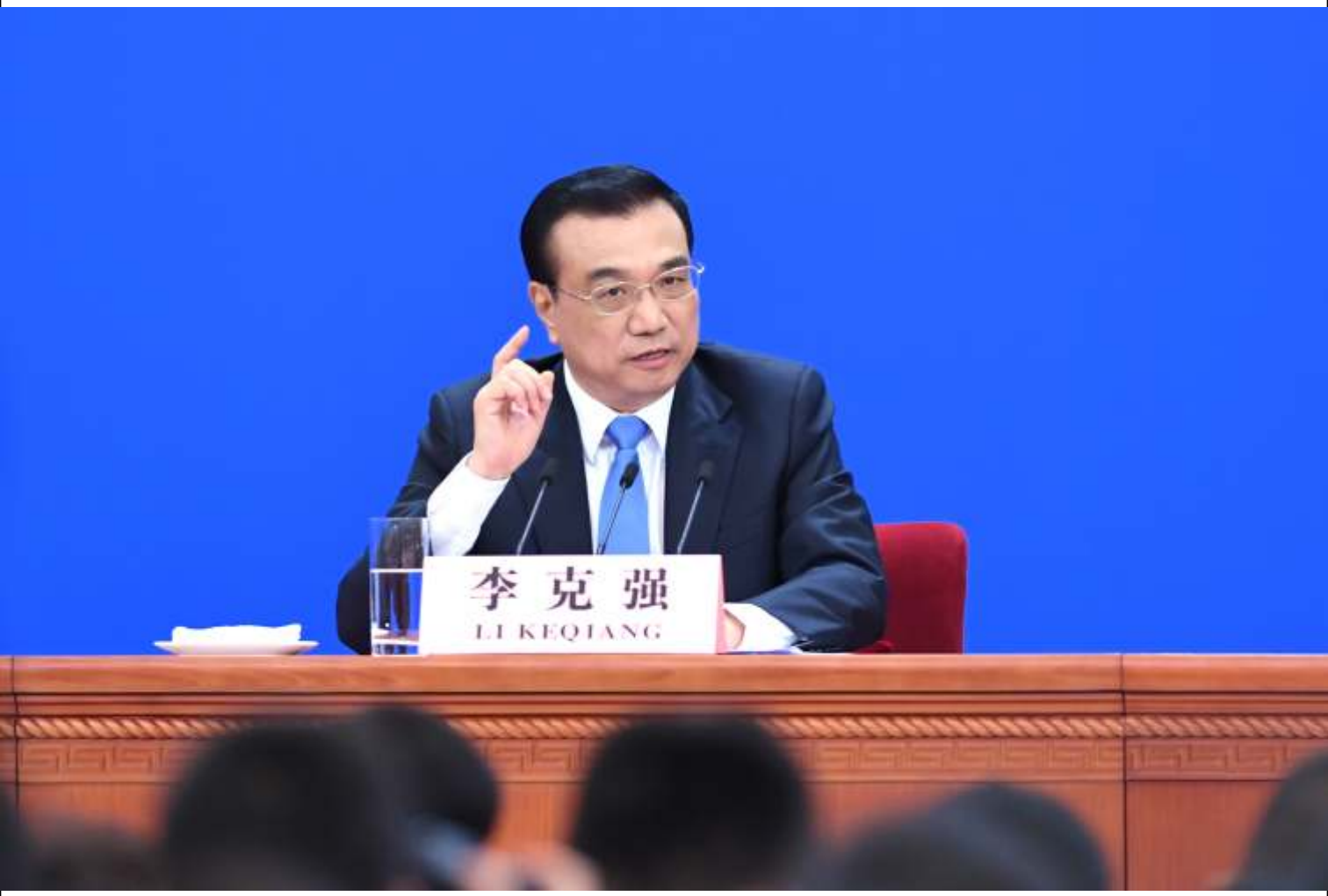


Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC), delivered a work report of the NPC Standing Committee during the second plenary meeting of the fifth session of the 12th NPC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 8, 2017.



Yu Zhengsheng, chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), delivered a report on the work of the CPPCC National Committee's Standing Committee at the fifth session of the 12th CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 3, 2017.

TRANSCRIPT OF PREMIER LI KEQIANG'S MEETING WITH THE PRESS AT THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE 12TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS



Premier Li Keqiang: The moderator told me that some of the journalists came to the Great Hall of the People for this press conference as early as two to three hours in advance. This shows how hard you work and how committed you are to this profession. I want to thank you for your efforts in covering the "Two Sessions" this year. Since we only have limited time, I suggest we get the questions started right away.

CNN: President Trump has been consistently critical of China, claiming that it's stealing US jobs, manipulating its currency and not doing enough for regional security. Now we are hearing that the US-China talk of the highest level may take place as early as next month. We have a good idea of what the US wants from China, but what does China want from the US? What is China's bottom line for a healthy, sustainable Sino-US relationship? Are you confident that you can achieve that or will it be a difficult process?

Premier Li: Your question reminds me of my trip to New York last September for the UN General Assembly meeting and other high-level events. I was asked a question about China-US ties following a speech at the New York Economic Club. It was a time when the US presidential campaign was turning white-hot. I was asked whether there will be significant change in China-US ties when a new president is elected. My reply was that China-US relations have been going forward in spite of twists and turns in the past decades. So I am optimistic about the future of this relationship no matter who gets elected. President Trump has since been elected, and President Xi Jinping has talked with him over the phone. The two presidents agreed to work together for further progress in China-US relations. President Trump and senior officials from the new US administration have explicitly reaffirmed continued US adherence to the one-China policy, which forms the political foundation of China-US relations. This foundation has remained firm and unshaken despite changing circumstances, and it would always remain so in the future. With the right political foundation in place, China-US cooperation enjoys bright prospects.

We feel optimistic about the future of China-US relations on the strength of the extensive common interests that have bound the two countries together in the course of several decades of our diplomatic relations. It is true that there are some differences between the two countries over issues like jobs, exchange rate and security. What's important for both countries is to stay focused on the overall interests, and enhance dialogue and communication to deepen mutual understanding. Foreign relations departments of our countries are now engaged in discussions on a face-to-face meeting between the two presidents. This relationship is crucial not just for the interests of our countries, but also for regional and global peace, security and stability. We must work together to take it forward continuously.

As for China-US trade, I want to share with you what an NPC deputy from a foreign trade company told me during this year's Two Sessions. He said that although China runs a surplus in trade with the US, for his company, over 90% of the profits goes to US firms, and the profit margin of his business is a mere 2 to 3 percent. Statistics show that last year, trade and mutual investment between the two countries created up to one million jobs in the United States. We may have different statistical methods, but I believe whatever differences we may have, we can always sit down and talk about them, and work together to find solutions. And for those differences that cannot be resolved for the time being, they can be shelved and we may continue to focus on expanding common interests, which I believe is the wise choice. And as we do so, the differences will account for a lesser and lesser proportion in overall China-US relations.

I also want to cite a recent article written by a well-reputed international think-tank. It says that should a trade war break out between China and the United States, it would be the foreign-invested companies in China, particularly US firms that would bear the brunt of it. We don't want to see a trade war. A trade war won't make our trade fairer. It will only hurt both sides. I understand the whole world is paying close attention to China-US relations. China hopes that no matter what bumps this relationship may run into, it will continue to move forward in a positive direction. Both our peoples are great people and we believe that we have the wisdom to properly manage differences. There is the need and capacity on both sides to expand common interests.

China National Radio: China's economic growth has been declining in recent years and we have seen that the projected target of GDP growth in 2017 has been trimmed to about 6.5%. Will this adversely affect the global economy? Some people say that China's economy still faces a lot of risks, especially in the financial sector. Do you think that China's economy will remain an engine driving global economy when global economic growth remains sluggish?

Premier Li: I read some foreign media commentary describing the projected GDP growth target of about 6.5% this year as moderate downward adjustment. In fact, 6.5% growth is not a low speed and it would not be easy to meet this target. I can't help but recall a martial art performance I saw at Shaolin Temple, during which a child monk can do over a dozen somersaults at one go quite easily, but several such consecutive somersaults for an adult monk would be quite an accomplishment due to their different size. 6.5% of GDP growth in 2017, if achieved, would generate more additional economic output than last year, as this is a growth attained on the basis of RMB 74 trillion yuan, or US$11 trillion in GDP. And this growth is projected to generate over 11 million new urban jobs. The measures we take are



consistent with the laws of economics, and moreover, slower growth can help us better focus on enhancing the quality and performance of China's economy. I don't think China's contribution to global growth will come down. We believe China's economy will continue to be a strong driving force in the face of sluggish world economic recovery.

With respect to risks, we are seeing growing uncertainties in the international economic and political landscape. These are the risks on the external front. As for China, stalled development presents the biggest risk. So it is essential that we maintain steady, medium-high growth and that, in itself, is China's contribution to global stability. We take very seriously the risks we face on the domestic front, including the financial sector. We will take prompt and targeted measures to prevent them from spreading. I should point out that China's financial system is generally secure and we do not foresee systemic risks. We still have a good reserve of policy options and instruments at our disposal. Our deficit to GDP ratio is below 3%. The capital adequacy ratio of commercial banks in China is 13% and their provision coverage ratio is 176%, both above the international standards for financial security. As the express train of China's economy continues to roll along at medium-high speed, we need to fasten our seat belt and ward off acute outbreaks of risks. Still less will we allow regional or systemic risks to break out.

Bloomberg: As the United States pulls back from its roles in global trade deals, such as the TPP, China seems poised to take the leadership role. You and President Xi have become advocates of free trade, open economy and globalization. At the same time, China has come under criticism for unfair trade practices and not opening its economy fast enough. Can you say what steps you are taking in the next year to convince the rest of the world that China is committed to free trade and an open economy?

Premier Li: Although globalization has encountered some bumps in the road, China has consistently upheld economic globalization and free trade. I believe such a position in itself is a good indication of China's commitment to opening-up. It is fair to say that economic globalization has benefited countries across the world. Some problems may have occurred in this process, for example, with respect to distribution of benefits. But we don't think they are the result of globalization per se but more of an issue of how one responds to it. China is ready to work with other countries to further improve the global governance system. We also believe that economic globalization has been deeply embedded in the

global trend of peace, development and cooperation. A closed-door policy or beggar-thy-neighbor approach leads to no solutions.

Like many countries in the world, China has benefited from economic globalization as it has been opening up ever wider to the outside world. China needs to first run its own things well. But the truth is, this cannot be done with our doors shut. Hence we will only pursue greater openness. Naturally opening-up is a gradual process. The important thing is that we have kept moving forward for the past decades.

Last year, China was still the largest recipient of FDI among developing countries and FDI reached US$126 billion. In the World Bank's ease of doing business ranking, China moved up 18 spots in 2016 compared with where it was in 2013. We have launched 11 pilot free trade zones starting from Shanghai, and good experience gained from them will be applied across the country. This year we will hold the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and more steps for opening-up will be introduced. We have proposed to many countries the building of free trade zones or the negotiating of investment and trade agreements. These will all contribute to two-way opening-up.

One thing I should point out is that when one opens itself wider and at a higher level, there will be more frictions, but we are confident that their proportion to overall economic links will only get smaller. So China will open at a higher level and remain a popular destination for investment. We welcome other partners to share in China's development opportunities.

As for liberalization of global trade, we believe all countries need to work together to push it forward. The world belongs to us all and we all need to do our part to make things better. We are open-minded toward the various regional trading arrangements, established or proposed, and welcome progress in them. When they concern China and where conditions are in place, we would follow an open-minded approach and we would be ready to work with others to push them forward. But China has no intention to reach beyond its role or get involved where we shouldn't. China will participate in and support all initiatives that will promote the liberalization of global trade. We the Chinese understand that the opportunities of economic globalization must be seized through opening-up. They should not be missed no matter what challenges we may face.

People's Daily: Mr. Premier, over the past four years, you have been highly focused on the reform to streamline administration and delegate government powers. According to this year's government work report, the target of cutting the items which require the approval of the State Council and State Council ministries by one third before the end of this government's term has been fulfilled ahead of schedule. So what about the remaining two thirds? Will the reform be pushed through, and if so, what specific steps will be taken?

Premier Li: The central goal of the reform is to transform government functions and balance relations between the government and the market. This reform cannot be accomplished overnight. You are right that my government's target for cutting the number of government review items has already been met. But in this process, we have encountered a variety of issues unexpectedly. In addition to government review and approval items, there are all sorts of procedures requiring administrative permits, certification of qualifications, and payment of all kinds of administrative fees. All these will be subject to reform. The reform will help the government focus on performing its due role more effectively and prevent government from overreaching itself, which has tied down our businesses and hurt government efficiency and credibility. It is a self-imposed reform involving sacrifices on the part of the government. I have all along called for boldness of spirit and decisiveness in action in pushing forward this reform. We will not relent until the job is done, no matter what obstacles or resistance may lie ahead. We should draw confidence from our ample strength and resilience.

Streamlining administration, enhancing oversight where appropriate and improving government services: these three tasks reflect our holistic approach. Streamlining administration frees up government energy to improve compliance oversight and provide better services. By widening market access, we can level the playing field for all market entities. At the same time, we must seriously deal with any violation of laws and regulations, such as making and selling fake or substandard goods, cheating at the marketplace, violating intellectual property rights, as well as issues of great concern to the general public such as food and drug safety and the

environment. Besides, the government will leverage the Internet to make public services more accessible to the people. The government will also focus more on poverty alleviation, development of inner cities, providing compulsory education, meeting basic health care needs and all other areas that concern people's livelihood.

In a nutshell, the government should send a resounding message of "yes" to law-abiding market entities, give the green light to hard-working entrepreneurs and innovators, and show a yellow card or even a red card to violators of laws and regulations.

Nikkei: US Secretary of State Tillerson is visiting Japan starting from today and then he is coming to China and the ROK. People believe that one of the key topics for discussion is the Korean Peninsula issue. We have seen that recently the DPRK has once again test-fired missiles and has been pushing forward its nuclear weapons program. All these have heightened tensions in Northeast Asia. I would like to ask what steps will China take to help ease the situation, and how will China work with Japan and other countries concerned to resolve the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue?

Premier: China is committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, to peace and stability there and to resolving issues through dialogue. That has been China's consistent and clear-cut position. With respect to UN Security Council resolutions, China has all along made clear its commitment to and fully complied with these resolutions. China is also a staunch supporter of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is true that recently the situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia more generally has become tense. Tensions may lead to conflict, which would harm all parties involved. We hope that all the parties concerned will work together to de-escalate the situation, get issues back on the track of dialogue and try to find lasting solutions. It's common sense that no one wants to see turbulence at his doorstep.

CCTV: You often say that employment is the foundation of people's livelihood. And of all the economic indicators, it is the statistics concerning jobs that you care the most about. In the government work report, you pointed out that this year, the government may face a more daunting task of providing employment. My question is, do you expect large scale unemployment in particular sectors this year?

Premier Li: If you read the government work report carefully, you will notice that we have adjusted a target upward among all the major economic and social development targets for 2017, namely we will create over 11 million new urban jobs, one million more on top of the target we set for 2016. The fact is, we have projected around 6.5% GDP growth mainly to support job creation. Employment is of paramount importance for such a large country as China with 1.3 billion-plus people. Employment is the foundation of economic development. It creates wealth and is a major source of household income. Over the past four years, we have pursued a proactive employment policy and created over 13 million new urban jobs every year for four years in a roll. This year, we will continue to give high priority to employment. The goal is to achieve fairly sufficient employment and keep unemployment at a low level.

In the past several years, record numbers of job-seekers have entered the labor force, which is a big challenge for us. This year, we are going to have 7.95 million college graduates, the highest number in history. Five million will graduate from vocational schools. And several hundred thousand workers will be laid off in the process of cutting overcapacity.

The government's job is not to hand out the "iron rice bowl" or permanent jobs to the people, but to create enabling conditions for the people to use their own ingenuity and hard work to create or secure "gold rice bowls" so to speak. The employment rate in the past years has been fairly high because we have leveraged the enthusiasm for entrepreneurial and innovation activities. I would encourage the media, in particular foreign media, to report the fact that Chinese jobs are mainly created by the Chinese themselves.

The Chinese government has the ability to support more job creation. There will not be, nor will we allow mass unemployment. For those who have difficulty getting jobs or making ends meet, the government will do its part and provide for their basic needs.

Lianhe Zaobao: Mr. Premier, this year is the last year in the term of this government. My question is, what has been the most important achievement of the past four years? And what has been the greatest challenge?

Premier Li: It's a short but big

question. The most important achievement of the past four years is that under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core and with the joint efforts of our people, we have developed new approaches to macroeconomic management and maintained steady economic performance within the proper parameters and a medium-high growth rate. The variation in annual growth rate, for example, is only about one percentage point. We have achieved such steady growth not by resorting to massive, economy-wide stimulus, but by industrial and consumption upgrading, which has contributed to the improvement of China's economic structure. We have encouraged the new drivers of economic growth to take the place of traditional ones. Most importantly, we have generated as many as 50 million new urban jobs.

Over the years, some people have predicted, once and again, that the Chinese economy will see a "hard landing". The truth is, we managed a medium-high growth rate last year in spite of the fact that world economic and trade growth hit a seven-year low. I hope this will put an end to any more predictions of a hard landing. The Chinese economy will continue to enjoy medium-high growth and move to a medium-high level.

At the same time, we also face many challenges and difficulties, hence the need for continuous reform. This is the biggest challenge for us. The reform to streamline administration, enhance oversight and provide better services is bound to upset vested interests; it also demands a fundamental change in our mindset. There should be no more arbitrary use of government power, the government must not overreach, and the room for rent-seeking must be squeezed. This is easier said than done. We must make sure that all levels of the government move in lockstep to travel the last mile and get rid of any remaining obstacles.

During an inspection trip, I was shown that, instead of requiring a stamp of approval from 108 government departments, the streamlined process required only one. With China being so big, there may be similar situations of excessive requirements for government approval elsewhere. You may remember that a few years ago, a delegate at the Two Sessions produced a so-called Long-March matrix, showing all the intricate procedures for administrative approval. Although things have been streamlined significantly and the long march has been substantially reduced, it's still too much. Let me repeat that no matter what obstacle may lie ahead, we are determined to push the reform through. The goal is to unleash and grow productive forces, bring out the initiative of the people, and deliver greater benefits to the general public. After all, governance is all about letting go of narrow departmental interests for the greater good and always responding to the people's call.

Shenzhen News: Mr. Premier, last October, you attended the National Week of Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Shenzhen. It is estimated that as many as 500,000 people participated in the national week's activities, making it a very popular event. Over the past year, this initiative of mass entrepreneurship and innovation has caught on, and the sharing economy has seen rapid expansion. But some people may see these developments in a different way. Mr. Premier, do you think this public enthusiasm for entrepreneurship and innovation will continue?

Premier Li: We believe that our initiative of mass entrepreneurship and innovation is a response to the call of this age of economic globalization and Internet Plus. The government's further reform of streamlining administration and delegating powers is also designed to boost this public enthusiasm for business start-ups and innovation. Over the past three years and more, on an average daily basis, more than 40,000 market entities have got registered, adding up to 10 million every year. When I share this figure with foreign leaders, they were truly amazed as this is equivalent to the total number of SMEs in their countries. Not only SMEs are doing entrepreneurial and innovation activities. Big companies are actively engaged in this too. They have opened up vast online makerspaces to enable a matching between the innovative capabilities of their employees with the demands of customers in the marketplace. This initiative runs through the development of primary, secondary and tertiary industries and involves businesses of all sizes. So I believe it will continue to thrive.

This initiative has generated a great deal of jobs. It is also an important means to implement the strategy of innovation-driven development. This initiative is a process of reform too because it captures the most important element in productive forces, that is, human resources. It helps bring out the wisdom and motivation of each individual and gives them an opportunity for a fair shot at success

and upward mobility. It has also boosted the development of many new production and business models, like the "Internet Plus" and sharing economy. Some of the new business models appear in the synergy between old and new growth drivers. Others are the result of traditional drivers of growth being given renewed life with the application of new technologies. This initiative has, in a nutshell, responded well to market demand and individualistic needs of our customers.

The growing new business models have also created pressure on the government to enhance its capability, because after all, many of the forms of business are new things. When it comes to such new things, it's only normal for people to have different views. For the government, it needs to exercise careful regulation in an open-minded and accommodating way to promote their healthy development.

I have all along believed that China's nearly 800 million labor force, including the 170 million who have received higher education or possess high professional skills, represents a tremendous source of wealth and energy and enormous opportunities for China itself and the international market too. The Chinese people are intelligent and hard-working and they have an inexhaustible drive for pursuing a better life. The government needs to create an enabling environment for our people to stay enthusiastic for entrepreneurship and innovation. Some people and some enterprises may experience difficulties as this initiative unfolds, which is only normal for the development of new things. But we have the confidence to ensure that our initiative continue to move in the right direction.

Phoenix TV: This year's government work report, for the first time, contains a reference to the notion of "Hong Kong independence", pointing out that Hong Kong independence will lead nowhere. I wonder if this indicates a change in the policy of the central government. Does it mean that the central government, in implementing the principle of "one country, two systems", will put more emphasis on the part of "one country" and downplay the part of "two systems"? Does it mean that the central government will reduce its support to Hong Kong?

Premier Li: The principle of "one country, two systems" needs to be understood and implemented in its entirety. As I have also said in the government work report, this principle needs to be steadfastly applied without being bent or distorted. The central government will continue to enhance its support to Hong Kong's development and will introduce more measures in the interest of Hong Kong's development and its cooperation with the mainland. Last year, we launched the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Stock Connect. This year, we will actively explore greater cooperation over the bond markets. That is what the country needs, and Hong Kong has a platform for it too. We are considering establishing a bond market connect between the mainland and Hong Kong this year, allowing for the first time overseas capital to buy mainland's bonds overseas. Hong Kong stands to be the first to benefit from such arrangement thanks to its unique strengths. We believe this will help maintain Hong Kong's status as an international financial center, diversify investment channels for Hong Kong residents, and contribute to Hong Kong's lasting prosperity and stability.

TASS of Russia: Mr. Premier, how do you evaluate overall China-Russia relations? Do you think that the economic relations between the two countries will enjoy further growth in the face of uncertainties in the international economic landscape and volatility of global energy prices?

Premier Li: China and Russia are each other's biggest neighbors. We enjoy a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. Sound and steady growth of China-Russia relations is good for the region and good for the world. Last year, presidents of the two countries met several times and reached important agreement on many issues. And the prime ministers' annual meeting has been held as scheduled every year for many years. I believe all this is evidence of the stability of China-Russia relations.

Talking about economic relations and trade between our two countries, over the years, we have faced sluggish global economic recovery and anemic growth of global trade. So naturally our economic relations and trade have been affected by the decline in international energy prices and some other factors. I recall that last year, on the same occasion, I expressed the hope for our business relations to turn the corner and achieve strong growth by the end of the year. Thanks to our joint efforts, this has been achieved. In the first two months of this year, there was actually a big surge in China-Russia trade. This shows the tremendous untapped potential of our trade ties

and the great complementarity of our economies. I am confident that the goals we set for our two-way trade can be achieved.

Caixin: China's RMB exchange rate has been under pressure of depreciation. To keep exchange rate stable, one has to either dig into foreign exchange reserves or tighten control on the use of foreign currencies. Among the three scenarios of a weaker currency, drop in foreign exchange reserves and tightened currency control, how would you weigh the costs of each scenario and what choice will you make?

Premier Li: First, on the exchange rate. Last year, there has been some volatility on international currency markets. Many currencies especially major global currencies have depreciated against the strengthening US dollar. The depreciation of the Chinese yuan against the dollar is a quite modest one. China has no intention to devalue its currency in order to boost exports, because that is not good for our companies' transformation and upgrading. China has no intention to fight any trade war either, as that is not good for the stability of global trade and the international monetary system. China will continue to push forward the market-oriented reform of its exchange rate regime, and follow a market-based, managed floating exchange rate regime. As the floating band of the Chinese yuan widens, the RMB exchange rate has remained broadly stable at an adaptive and equilibrium level. That is attributable to the sound economic fundamentals in China. By keeping the RMB exchange rate broadly stable, China will continue to contribute to the stability of global monetary system.

China still has the largest foreign exchange reserves among all countries in the world. As to what is the right size for our foreign exchange reserves, I believe that will continue to be up for exploration. All in all, China has ample foreign exchange reserves for meeting relevant needs, like paying for imports or paying off its short-term external debts. And China's foreign exchange reserves are way above the international standard.

As for our recent authenticity and compliance review of the use of foreign currency, that has been a legal provision for a long time, not something new. I want to emphasize that the need of our businesses for normal use of foreign currency and that of individuals to study or travel overseas is assured. The RMB has solid weight in the international monetary system and the RMB exchange rate will remain generally stable.

Reuters: This year, the Chinese government will further reduce ineffective supply and expand effective supply. While doing that, the government needs to ensure that laid-off workers will be re-employed and their basic living needs will be met. If I were a miner or a worker of a steel plant, what kind of new jobs can I expect to get in my province? In what sectors do you expect an increase in job opportunities?

Premier Li: You have given the employment issue a human face. Last year, we took vigorous efforts to cut excessive and outdated capacity in steel and coal sectors as a priority task for supply-side structural reform. A key concern for us in this process is the proper resettlement of laid-off workers. The central government has earmarked 100 billion yuan in a special fund to provide assistance to them and asked local governments to set up matching funds. Last year, proper arrangements were made for 720,000 workers who were laid off as a result of cutting overcapacity. For various reasons, there are still workers yet to find new jobs. In some cases, given the strong attachment between the workers and their employers, some may prefer to stay on a bit longer with their former employers. Still, their essential living needs are provided for.

This year, effort to cut overcapacity will be extended to the coal-fired power generation sector. Factoring in the number carried over from last year, we need to provide assistance to nearly one million people in total. The key is to continue to generate new jobs, including through our efforts to foster new drivers of growth. As I said before, the initiative of mass entrepreneurship and innovation has both created a lot of new jobs and stimulated job creation in traditional sectors, which has helped to revive these industries.

We will not relent our efforts and will continue to put to effective use the central government special fund complemented by funding from local governments. At the same time, businesses also need to fulfill their social responsibilities. So if you were a coal miner, your mine is going to be closed or its production suspended, and you are capable of flexible employment, I will advise you to find a job in sectors with new drivers of growth or move to new jobs generated in the upgraded traditional industries. Moreover, Chinese companies, whose corporate culture encourages close

employer-employee relationships, will continue to provide subsidies to their loyal employees for some time to give them a leg-up.

All in all, easing the transition for laid-off workers will remain our top concern in cutting overcapacity and pursuing the supply-side structural reform.

ThePaper.cn: In the run-up to this year's two Sessions, the Chinese government's portal website, together with 27 online media outlets, conducted an online survey on the theme of "What I wish to say to the Premier" to solicit public comments and suggestions for the government. Viewers were further requested by ThePaper.cn and Toutiao.com to vote on entries on people's daily lives. The question of "what will happen to my home when the 70-year term of land use right expires", has received the most votes, or 21.31 million in total. My question is, what will the government do to address this public concern?

Premier Li: Our ancestors believe that one shall have his peace of mind when he possesses a piece of land. So it's understandable for internet users and other members of the general public to feel concerned about the expiry of the 70-year term land use right of their residences. The State Council had asked the relevant departments to respond to these concerns. Specifically, the term can be renewed, and no application or pre-set conditions needs to be filed or met. And the expiry will not affect any transactions over the property. Some people may wonder whether there will be legal safeguards for this right. I want to tell you that the State Council has entrusted relevant departments to speed up their study on relevant laws and come up with a proposal.

Manager Daily of Thailand: The Obama administration adopted a rebalancing policy towards the Asia-Pacific region while the Trump administration is yet to spell out its policy in Asia. Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia hope this region maintains peace and stability. We don't want to see any conflict between China and the US here, even more reluctant to take sides. How do you view China's present role in the Asia-Pacific region? What is China's ideal order and role for the region? How can China and the US live in peace in this region?

Premier Li: The Asia-Pacific is the common home for all countries in this region. China does not want to see any party feeling compelled to choose sides under the influence of the Cold-War mentality. We believe regional affairs should be handled on the merits of each case and in a way that is conducive to continued peace and stability. As for ASEAN, we always put ASEAN in a priority position in China's neighborhood diplomacy, and support ASEAN community building and its centrality in regional cooperation. China hopes to see an Asia-Pacific that enjoys order and stability, that is able to build consensus through consultation and properly manage differences, and has the wisdom to resolve disputes.

China and ASEAN have been pushing forward the consultation on a code of conduct in the South China Sea. Substantive progress has been made in this regard and we will keep working on that. It is our hope that peace and stability in the South China Sea could be maintained, specific disputes be resolved through dialogue by the parties directly concerned and all countries in the region work together for peace, stability and development.

For years, China and the United States have been cooperating in many areas in the Asia-Pacific region. Many US multinationals place their Asia-Pacific headquarters in China. We hope that the areas of cooperation between the two countries will continue to widen, providing more opportunities for ASEAN countries instead of being a cause of concern for them.

Xinhua News Agency: We've discovered that there is growing complaint on the part of businesses about the heavy burden of taxes and fees. They say that even with hard work, they couldn't make much money. And we've also heard complaints from Chinese consumers that some high-end goods are not yet domestically made. What is your response to their complaints, Mr. Premier? And what steps will the government take to resolve the issue?

Premier Li: I devoted a significant portion of my government work report on further cutting taxes and fees, particularly the myriad of excessive administrative fees that are exacting a heavy burden on businesses. These fees are used to cover certain expenses, such as keeping up some payrolls. To cut down fees, the government must tighten its belt. I have made it clear that the central government will take the lead in doing so and cut its general expenditures by no less than 5% this year. And in my discussions with

officials from local governments, they all agreed that this is what they also need to do. So we will use this painful adjustment on the part of the government to make things easier for businesses to enhance their competitiveness. Furthermore, we will take steps this year to cut broadband, electricity and logistics costs. Our goal is to bring down taxes and fees by up to one trillion RMB yuan. A most fundamental measure is to reduce government-imposed transaction cost.

As for the complaints of some Chinese consumers about the quality of domestically made goods, I believe this is an important message to all Chinese businesses to enhance quality control. It is also an important part of the supply-side structural reform. We've launched the Made in China 2025 strategy, which aims to raise the quality of Chinese products and equipment. Some people question if that means China will reduce import and retreat in its opening-up. That is a misunderstanding. On the contrary, raising our own products' quality and upgrading our own industries to a medium-high level would actually require us to open even wider to the outside world and introduce more advanced technologies and products. In this process, we will see to it that intellectual property rights will be well protected for the benefit of their proprietors. As for those high-end products which cannot be manufactured locally for the time being, we may consider lowering tariffs to boost import. In a word, we need to give our consumers more options and more benefits, and most importantly, harden the resolve of Chinese companies to win over consumers with their commitment to high quality and workermanship.

United Daily News of Taiwan: Over the past year, relations across the Taiwan Straits have become complex and grave with an uncertain future. Under such circumstances, what will the mainland do to uphold peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and safeguard the well-being of people on both sides?

Premier Li: People on the two sides of the Taiwan Straits are brothers and sisters. Blood is thicker than water. No matter how the situation on Taiwan may evolve, it cannot sever the fraternal bond between the two sides, or change the history or the reality that both sides of the Taiwan Straits belong to one and the same China. Nor will it weaken our resolve and sincerity for peaceful growth of cross-Straits relations.

Our policy towards Taiwan has been consistent and clear-cut, that is, we will stick to the political foundation of the 1992 consensus, which embodies the one-China principle, firmly oppose Taiwan independence, uphold peace across the Taiwan Straits and peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and improve the well-being of people on both sides.

The peaceful growth of cross-Straits relations has brought new opportunities for people on both sides. According to current statistics, people on Taiwan make 5 million visits across the Straits every year. We will introduce more policies to provide more convenience for people in Taiwan to work and live on the mainland as family. We welcome investment from Taiwan businesses. I recall that at last year's press conference, I was asked whether the mainland will keep preferential policies toward Taiwan businesses. I wish to reiterate here that such policies will be maintained to enable Taiwan businesses and people to share in China's development opportunities with their compatriots on the mainland. After all, we are one family.

Radio France: The European Union is China's second largest commercial partner with a trade deficit of 137 billion euros in favor of China and a large number of European businesses complain about that. What is China proposing to improve market access condition for European businesses? And what about better reciprocity of foreign investments?

Premier Li: You rightly referred to the trade deficit figure as EU statistics. The fact of the matter is, China never goes after trade surpluses. What we want is balanced trade, as unbalanced trade would not be sustainable. Talking about profits, I think European companies have not just earned profits in China, but have also taken the lion's share of such profits, as they are at the higher end of the industrial chain. If the EU could ease its restrictions on high-tech exports to China, I believe that would make a big difference in our trade balance.

China has proposed to the EU to push forward the BIT negotiations. We hope to receive a positive response. A high-standard BIT will help two-way opening-up between the two sides. And pending that, we will continue to widen market access for European businesses and ensure that European-invested companies registered in China receive the same treatment as domestic Chinese enterprises. With respect to trade

frictions between the two sides, we have gained good experience in properly addressing them.

Here I want to emphasize that China has all along supported a united, prosperous and stable European Union, a strong euro, and the European integration process. We believe that is good for economic globalization, for a multipolar world and for diversity of civilizations. We feel optimistic about the future of the EU and the future of China-EU relations.

Beijing News: In recent years, smog has caused great public concern and severely affected people's lives. Yet we also discover that whenever a major event is held, the smog would disappear and people would take pictures of blue skies and post them online with much excitement. So I want to ask you, Mr. Premier, what can you do to make sure that blue skies are no longer a luxury?

Premier Li: I fully understand that the smog is a huge irritant in people's lives. Like air, blue skies treat everyone equally. We all want to see more blue-sky days. In the course of development, China is confronted with severe environmental challenges, smog in particular. In my government work report, I laid out five key measures for smog control and we will push them through with full determination to fight and win the battle on smog. But to be honest with you, that will take time.

The main targets for smog control would be to tackle coal-burning, vehicle emissions and dust. In addition, during this year's Two Sessions, I was told by a scientist that apart from these obvious causes, we have not yet fully understood how smog is formed, which is as important. He said, the smog in Northern China during winter is unique compared to that in other parts of the world. Of course, this is not the proper venue to expand on this subject, and the scientists will have to conduct further research. But one thing I can tell you is that we will set up a special fund to bring in the best scientists to dig into this matter regardless of cost and uncover the unknown factors to make our campaign against smog more effective.

We may not be able to control the weather, but we can adjust our behavior and our way of development. I feel the same way as you all do. Smog must be put under control and blue skies should no longer be a luxury, nor will it be.

China Consumer News: Today is the Consumers' Rights Day. Can you say a few words to consumers, Mr. Premier?

Premier Li: You and I are all consumers, and we all need protection of our rights. To use popular Internet language, we should give "thumbs-up" to quality products and "blacklist" those bad traders. With joint efforts, we will enjoy more quality products and a better life year after year.

FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI MEETS THE PRESS

On 8 March 2017, the Fifth Session of the 12th National People's Congress held a press conference, where Foreign Minister Wang Yi answered questions from domestic and foreign media on China's foreign policy and external relations.

Wang Yi: Friends of the press, good morning. Every year, the NPC schedules my press conference for 8 March. This gives me an opportunity to extend festive greetings in person to all the female journalists in this room. Indeed, I want to wish all women happiness and good luck. I also want to say a big thank-you to all members of the press. You have made an important contribution by building a bridge between the Chinese diplomacy and the public at home and abroad. Thank you for a job well done. Now I'm ready to take your questions.

Xinhua News Agency: In May, China will host the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Why does China want to hold the forum at this moment in time and what does China hope to achieve?



Wang Yi: In about two months' time, we'll hold the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. We foresee that the heads of state and government from over 20 countries, the leaders of over 50 international organizations, over 100 ministerial-level officials and around 1,200 delegates from different countries and regions participating in the forum. In addition to the Leaders Roundtable, there will also be a High-Level Dialogue and six parallel panel discussions on the connectivity of policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people. Beijing will once again be the center of global attention; the Belt and Road Initiative will continue to be a hot topic around the world.

The Belt and Road is China's initiative, but it belongs to the world. The idea came from China, but the benefits will flow to all countries. In the over three years since President Xi announced the initiative, the idea has caught on and cooperation has flourished. It has become the most popular public good and the international cooperation platform with the brightest prospects. The Belt and Road Initiative has been so successful because it meets the partner countries' urgent desire for more mutually beneficial cooperation and follows the open and inclusive principle of planning together, building together and benefiting together. With protectionism and unilateralism on the rise, the Belt and Road Initiative is a common cause where the participating countries roll up their sleeves and pitch in together. The initiative will help to rebalance economic globalization and make it more inclusive and equitable. It also represents an important attempt at building a community of shared future for all humankind.

We hope the forum will accomplish three things. First, review and build consensus, enhance the complementarity of countries' development strategies and set the goal of combining their strengths and achieving common prosperity. Second, examine key areas of cooperation and identify a number of major projects concerning physical connectivity, trade and investment, financial support and people-to-people exchange. Third, announce medium- to long-term initiatives, explore the establishment of an effective cooperation mechanism and build a closer and result-oriented network of partnerships.

NBC: President Trump is a leader quite like no other. How confident are you that compromises can be found on the most important challenges that concern both sides?

Wang Yi: Through the intense communication and joint efforts of both sides, the China-US relationship is transitioning steadily and developing in a positive direction. Last month, President Xi Jinping and President Trump had a very important telephone conversation where they reaffirmed the importance of following the one-China principle and pledged to push China-US relations to greater heights from a new starting point. The phone call has set the direction and paved the way for bilateral relations. The two sides are having fruitful communications on realizing exchanges between our Presidents and at other levels and expanding all areas of cooperation. As long as we act on the consensus reached between our Presidents, follow the principle of no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, then there is no reason why China and the United States cannot become good partners.

The importance of the China-US relationship, one between two major countries with global impact, is self-evident. Preserving and developing the China-US relationship is in the interest of our two peoples and the expectation of the international community. The three joint communique's have laid a solid foundation for China-US relations. Looking ahead, it's very important that we rise above two things.

First, we need to rise above the difference of our social systems. China and the United States have chosen different systems and development paths. The Chinese people have great confidence in our own social system and development path; we welcome efforts to build a better United States. In the age of progress and plurality, there is a compelling reason for China and the United States to respect each other, learn from each other, live together peacefully and realize common development.

Second, we need to rise above the zero-sum mentality. China and the United States have a growing set of common interests. The areas where we need to work together on far outweigh what divides us. In many ways, our interests are increasingly intertwined. We should pull our efforts to enlarge our shared interests rather than building one's success at the expense of the other, because it's just not possible.

It's been 38 years since China and the United States normalized diplomatic relations. The Chinese people often say, "When turning thirty, one should be able to stand firm; when reaching forty, one should no longer have any doubts." We hope that China and the United States can truly rise above the old ideas, open up new horizons and build a more robust and mature China-US relationship as it turns forty, so that we can put the minds of our two peoples and the whole world at ease.

People's Daily: In the last few years, China's diplomacy has been active and dynamic. If you are to use a few words to sum up China's diplomacy since the 18th CPC Congress, what would they be?

Wang Yi: Since the 18th Congress of the CPC, Chinese diplomats have risen to challenges and broken new ground. Under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, we have accomplished a great deal and opened a new chapter in major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. Let me try to sum it up with three key words.

The first key word is vision. Grasping the trend of the times and the course of history, General Secretary Xi Jinping has put forward a series of new ideas and new thinking. For example, he has called for building partnerships that replace confrontation with dialogue, and alliance with partnership. Then, countries can build a new type of international relations underpinned by win-win cooperation. On that basis, we can build a community of shared future for all humankind. These new ideas and thinking reject the old concepts of alliance and confrontation and rise above the old approach of zero-sum games. They have distinct Chinese characteristics and major implications for the world. They are the guide to action for Chinese diplomats in the new era and will have far-reaching implications for human development and progress.

The second key word is initiative. Chinese diplomats have worked creatively to secure and advance our country's and people's interests. We have established a global web of partnerships, and provided an enabling environment and strategic support for China's development. We have advanced the Belt and Road Initiative and opened a new chapter of openness and win-win cooperation. Putting people at the heart of diplomacy, we have



improved consular mechanisms and procedures and effectively safeguarded the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and businesses abroad.

The third key word is consistency. In the face of instability and conflicts in many parts of the world, we have adhered to the path of peaceful development. In the face of skepticism over the existing international order and system, we have called for maintaining it and, where necessary, improving it. In the face of a growing backlash against globalization and rising protectionism, we have championed multilateralism and openness and inclusiveness. It's our responsibility as a major country to maintain consistency and continuity in our foreign policy, which can offset various uncertainties and demonstrate China's confidence and firmness of purpose.

Later this year, the CPC will hold its 19th National Congress. Chinese diplomats will continue to forge ahead, guided by the diplomatic thinking of General Secretary Xi Jinping. China will continue to be an anchor of international stability, an engine of global growth, a champion of peace and development and a contributor to global governance.

Reuters: The situation on the Korean Peninsula at the moment is extremely tense. North Korea has again test missiles this week. Does China think there will be war on the Korean Peninsula? What is China's strategy for preventing war from breaking out?

Wang Yi: Once again, tensions are rising on the Korean Peninsula. On the one hand, the DPRK has ignored international opposition and insisted on advancing its nuclear and missile programs in violation of Security Council resolutions. On the other hand, the US and the ROK are conducting military exercises of an enormous scale and putting more military pressure on the DPRK. The two sides are like two accelerating trains coming towards each other with neither side willing to give way. The question is, are the two sides really ready for a head-on collision?

Given the situation, our priority now is to flash the red light and apply brakes on both trains.

To defuse the looming crisis on the peninsula, China proposes that, as a first step, the DPRK suspend its

missile and nuclear activities in exchange for a halt of the large-scale US-ROK exercises. This suspension-for-suspension can help us break out of the security dilemma and bring the parties back to the negotiating table. Then we can follow the dual-track approach of denuclearizing the peninsula on the one hand and establishing a peace mechanism on the other. Only by addressing the parties' concerns in a synchronized and reciprocal manner, can we find a fundamental solution to lasting peace and stability on the peninsula. China's proposal, fully in keeping with resolutions 2270 and 2321, tries to get to the crux of the matter. To resolve the nuclear issue, we have to walk on both legs, which means not just implementing sanctions, but also restarting talks, both of which are set out in the Security Council resolutions.

The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is mainly between the DPRK and the United States. China is a next-door neighbor with a lips-and-teeth relationship with the peninsula, so we're indispensable to the resolution of the nuclear issue. China has a strong commitment to denuclearizing the peninsula, to maintaining stability there and to resolving the issues peacefully. Indeed, China has done its level best to bring the DPRK and the US together and to chair the Six-Party Talks. We've also contributed to the adoption and implementation of Security Council resolutions. Going forward, to continue my earlier railway metaphor, China will continue to be a "switch-man". We will try to switch the issue back to the track of seeking a negotiated settlement. And I wish to emphasize that nuclear weapons will not bring security, the use of force is no solution, talks deserve another chance and peace is still within our grasp.

CCTV & CGTN: Some people believe that the era of Western domination is coming to an end; it is China and the other emerging economies that hold the key to the future. How does China view the shifting balance of power in the world? Later this year, China will host the BRICS Leaders Meeting. What do you hope to accomplish?

Wang Yi: The BRICS countries are representative of the emerging economies. Over the years, the fortunes of the BRICS may have risen or fallen and BRICS each face their own set of challenges. However, as President Xi Jinping has put it, the BRICS are like five fingers, each with its own strength; when the BRICS come together, we form a fist that can punch. As long as we stay united, the BRICS will not lose its luster; rather, it will shine more brightly than ever.

This year, BRICS will enter into its second decade. As the Chairman this year, China will work with other BRICS countries to review experience, plan the future, usher in the second "golden decade" of BRICS cooperation and provide BRICS' input for world peace and development. We hope to accomplish four things this year.

First, in terms of political and security cooperation, we will make full use of the meeting of national security advisers, build consensus for holding a stand-alone foreign ministers' meeting and demonstrate the strength of BRICS cooperation to the world.

Second, in terms of practical cooperation, we will fully implement the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership, enhance policy coordination at the macro level and the complementarity of our development strategies, announce a number of solid initiatives and add more substance to BRICS cooperation.

Third, in terms of people-to-people exchange, we will implement the agreements of our leaders and hold BRICS cultural festival, film festival, sports meet and so on to expand all areas of people-to-people exchange and build stronger public support for BRICS cooperation.

Finally, in terms of South-South cooperation, we will explore the modality of "BRICS plus". By holding outreach dialogues with other major developing countries and organizations of developing countries, we hope to establish a more extensive partnership, widen the BRICS' circle of friends and turn the BRICS into the most impactful platform for South-South cooperation.

TASS: After Trump became US President, the world has made a lot of commentary on Russia-China-US relations. Do you think there will be any change in the triangular relationship?

Wang Yi: Let me tell you at the outset that China-Russia relations are in excellent shape and we have great confidence in this relationship.

We have a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination not because it's convenient; it's a strategic decision reached by both sides on the basis of our fundamental interests. The relationship has stood the test of

international vicissitudes. It is as strong as it's ever been and our mutual trust has reached a historic high. The relationship will not be affected or weakened by any external factor. We welcome any improvement in Russia-US relations, which will be an important piece of good news for the world. This year, the Presidents of China and Russia will have multiple face-to-face meetings, which will take our relationship to new heights. China and Russia will also improve strategic coordination on international and regional issues and act as a stabilizer in the otherwise turbulent world.

As for the China-US-Russia relationship in the new era, it should not be "a seesaw game". The three countries should work with rather than against each other. We should pursue win-win rather than zero-sum outcomes. The three countries can develop a positive and healthy relationship, so that we can jointly fulfill our responsibilities for world peace and development.

Global Times: In 2016, China re-established diplomatic relations with Gambia, and Sao Tome and Principe. Earlier this year, Nigeria demanded that the Taiwan mission there take off its placard and move out of the capital. People in China hailed the news. They believe that should the Taiwan authorities stray further from the one-China principle, they will have no future. Could we have your comment on it?

Wang Yi: There is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is part of China. This is a fact recognized by the world and an important principle enshrined in a series of international documents including UN resolutions. There is no basis in international law for the Taiwan region to establish or maintain so-called "diplomatic relations" with any country. Since such relationships have no legitimacy, surely they have no future! The Taiwan authorities should recognize this major trend. No one and no force can block the eventual and complete reunification of China.

CNN: President Trump has adopted an America First and isolationist approach, and commentators say this is China's opportunity. Is China ready to take on global leadership?

Wang Yi: Let me say this: First, China believes in the equality of all countries, large and small. We don't believe some countries should "lead" other countries. Second, the UN, as the world's most authoritative and credible inter-governmental organization, should play an effective role in coordinating international affairs according to the purposes and principles of its Charter. Third, rather than talking about "leadership", we should really be talking about "responsibility". Large countries have more resources and capability, so they should shoulder more responsibilities and make a greater contribution. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China will fulfill its obligations for international peace and security. As the second largest economy, China will make its due contribution to global growth. As the largest developing country, China will play an even bigger role in upholding the legitimate rights and interests of fellow developing countries.

Yonhap News Agency: The China-ROK relationship is complicated and sensitive at the moment. This year marks the 25th anniversary of China-ROK diplomatic relations. How does China plan to develop the relationship?

Wang Yi: This year marks the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the ROK. China treasures what our two peoples have built together in the past 25 years. We hope the ROK will join China in preserving the mutually beneficial cooperation between the two sides.

The US-ROK deployment of the controversial THAAD system in the ROK is the biggest issue affecting China-ROK relations at the moment. China has expressed its strong opposition to it all along. The monitoring and early warning radius of THAAD reaches far beyond the Korean Peninsula, and it's common knowledge that THAAD undermines China's strategic security. Clearly, deploying THAAD is the wrong choice. It's not how neighbors should behave to each other, and it may very well make the ROK less secure. We strongly advise some elements in the ROK not to pursue this course of action, otherwise they will only end up hurting themselves as well as others. China urges the ROK to cease and desist, halt the THAAD deployment and not to go further down the wrong path.

China Daily: In January, President Xi Jinping visited some international organizations in Switzerland. In contrast, President Trump's criticism of the UN and other multilateral institutions worries a lot of people. Against this background, does China still have

faith in the UN and multilateralism?

Wang Yi: President Xi's visit to international organizations in Switzerland sent out a clear message of China's strong commitment to multilateralism and strong support for the UN-centered international system.

The current international system was built by our forefathers from the ashes of the Second World War. It is the result of our collective efforts and wisdom. It's like a well-designed building with multilateralism being its cornerstone and the UN and other international organizations being its key pillars. Over 70 years has passed, so there has been some wear and tear, to be sure. But the building still shields us from wind and rain and still plays an irreplaceable role in promoting world peace and development. What we should be doing is to renovate the building rather than constructing another structure. On the other hand, the international system cannot stay unchanged; it must be reformed so that it can better reflect the new reality, meet countries' needs and catch up with the changing times.

Tanzania Standard Newspaper: It's been over a year since the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit in Johannesburg. Can you brief us on the implementation of the outcomes for this summit?

Wang Yi: China and Africa are a close-knit community with a shared future. Our cooperation is mutual help between two brothers. No matter how the international situation or the world economy may evolve, there will be no weakening in China's support for Africa.

What distinguishes China-Africa cooperation is that China always keeps its word. Since the Johannesburg Summit more than a year ago, the outcomes have been implemented in a swift and all-round way. Nearly half of the 60-billion-dollar funding support that China promised to Africa has been disbursed or arranged. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway has been completed; the Mombasa-Nairobi railway in Kenya will soon be. Planning has started for the Pointe Noire special economic zone in the Republic of Congo. Integrated port development in Tanzania is making smooth headway. And steady progress is being made in building a number of industrial parks. Responding to Africa's needs, China-Africa cooperation is undergoing three shifts: from government-driven to market-driven, from trade in goods to cooperation on production capacity, and from engineering contracts to capital investment and operations. These three shifts will provide new momentum and opportunities for Africa's sustainable development.

Just as China was Africa's most sincere friend in its quest for national independence and liberation, so China will be Africa's most reliable partner in speeding up industrialization and agricultural modernization and boosting its capacity for home-grown development.

Phoenix TV: Compared to last year, the temperature in the South China Sea has lowered somewhat. Although tension has eased between regional countries, non-regional countries have not stopped meddling. The United States is increasing its military deployment in the South China Sea, leading some people to say that there is bound to be a war between China and the US in those waters. Are you worried about this prospect?

Wang Yi: Tides have risen and fallen over the past year, and the South China Sea has returned to calm. I would go further than saying the temperature has lowered "somewhat" and say that it has lowered "significantly". This is the result of the joint efforts of China and ASEAN countries, and it's welcome news for the region and the world. At present, the DOC is being implemented in a full and effective manner. The directly concerned countries have returned to the right track of settling their disputes through dialogue and consultation. China and the ten ASEAN countries are advancing the COC consultation to work out a common set of regional rules. At the end of February, the China-ASEAN joint working group has made visible progress and produced the first draft of COC framework. China and the ASEAN countries are all happy about it. At this moment, if someone should try to make waves and stir trouble, then he will have no support but meet the common opposition of the entire region. China will never allow the hard-won stability to be disrupted again.

While some people in the world believe in Alfred Mahan's theory of controlling the seas, the Chinese people prefer the approach taken by Zheng He and value maritime cooperation. In the 21st century, we would like to see more maritime cooperation and greater trust between the parties. Even between China and the United States, if we change our mindset, then the vast oceans may well become a broad stage for cooperation.

Agencia EFE: The UK has launched its Brexit procedure, and elections are coming up in France and Germany. How does China see the future of Europe and its cooperation with China?

Wang Yi: The EU was the first regional cooperation mechanism established after the end of the Second World War; it's also the one that has developed the fastest. Contrary to conventional wisdom, we believe the challenges currently confronting the EU may turn out to be an opportunity for the EU to become more mature. China will continue to support European integration and we hope to see a more united, stable and prosperous EU.

We set store by Europe's strategic position and important role. We would like to work with Europe to advance the partnerships for peace, growth, reform and civilization; to respect and address each other's legitimate concerns and promptly remove obstacles to cooperation; to practice multilateralism and move toward a multi-polar world; and to re-energize the world economy, improve global governance and ensure the healthy development of economic globalization.

China News Service: The promotional events held by the Foreign Ministry to present Chinese provinces to the world have been warmly welcomed. In the last few years, the Foreign Ministry has done a lot to serve domestic and local development. Could you talk about it?

Wang Yi: China is still a developing country, so Chinese diplomats are duty-bound to serve domestic development.

In the past few years, we have made great efforts to present the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, thereby helping the world gain a fuller understanding of China and have greater confidence in working with China. We have actively pursued cooperation on production capacity and signed relevant agreements with over 30 countries, thereby facilitating economic and industrial transformation and upgrading at home. We have secured the inclusion of the RMB in the IMF's SDR basket and established the BRICS New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, thereby greatly expanding China's institutional rights in global economic governance. The Foreign Ministry has launched promotional events for Chinese provinces. Over the past year, we have held such events for six western and central provinces and autonomous regions. These events help the provinces to discuss cooperation with foreign partners without going abroad. They also help foreign diplomats in China to have a better knowledge of local opportunities without traveling outside Beijing. Every day, our missions around the world send back information and serve as bridges for business cooperation between China and other countries. Since the G20 Summit last year, Zhejiang Province and the city of Hangzhou have taken on a new look and made new progress in their economic and social development. People say that hosting the summit has given the city a major lift, and eventually it's the local residents who have benefited the most.

Development is of paramount importance, and serving development is our paramount task. The Foreign Ministry will continue to work with various localities and government departments to do a better job in this regard.

Philippine News Agency: Since President Rodrigo Duterte came into office, the China-Philippines relationship has made a big turnaround. What will China do to boost further its relations with the Philippines? What development we can expect on China-ASEAN relationship in the coming year?

Wang Yi: Since President Duterte came into office, he has appropriately handled the South China Sea issue and actively improved relations with China. This not only serves the interests of the Philippines, but also meets the expectation of the region. The Philippines has extended a hand of friendship, so of course, China has embraced it with open arms. The turnaround of China-Philippines relations lifts our friendship and benefits our two peoples and the wider region. None of this has happened by accident; it merely reflects what the relationship is supposed to be like.

At present, the two countries are tapping the full potential of our bilateral cooperation to make up for lost time. In the less than six months since President Duterte's visit to China, nearly 1,000 Chinese tourist groups have visited the Philippines and China has imported over 200,000 tons of tropical fruits from the Philippines. The two sides are having intensive discussions on a range of infrastructural projects, including railways, bridges and dams,

and some of them may begin construction within this year. The new Commerce Minister of China is visiting the Philippines even as we speak. This shows China's desire to strengthen friendship and cooperation with the Philippines. The two sides have agreed to establish a bilateral consultation on the South China Sea issue and set up a cooperation mechanism between our coast guards. In short, the China-Philippines relationship has returned to the right path, one that serves the interests of both peoples. Together, the two sides should march forward with unity of purpose.

The turnaround in China-Philippines relations has scattered the dark clouds over China-ASEAN relations. Last year marks the 25th anniversary of the China-ASEAN dialogue relations, and this year marks the 50th anniversary of ASEAN's founding. The silver anniversary and the golden anniversary are especially auspicious for regional cooperation. China will support the Philippines in fulfilling its responsibilities as the ASEAN Chair, and we will help build the ASEAN Community.

We would like to work with ASEAN to pursue greater mutual benefit, intensify cooperation on connectivity and production capacity, make sure our peoples benefit from the upgraded China-ASEAN FTA as soon as possible, and wrap up the RCEP negotiation at an early date.

We would like to work with ASEAN to strengthen our bonds of friendship, make a success of the China-ASEAN tourism cooperation year, strive to meet the target of 30 million mutual visits by 2020, and make people-to-people exchange a new pillar of China-ASEAN relations.

We would also like to work with ASEAN to enhance Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC), speed up work on the 45 "early harvest" programs, and invite applications for the LMC special fund. The China Secretariat for LMC will be set up in a few days' time. We hope LMC will become a flagship initiative in China's efforts to build a community of shared future with our neighbors and contribute more to the narrowing of disparity and the promotion of integration in our region.

Beijing TV: More and more Chinese people are going abroad. Whenever they run into difficulty, they would turn to the motherland for help. What has the Foreign Ministry and its overseas missions done to ensure their safety?

Wang Yi: Your question about consular protection reminds me of the recent shipwreck in Malaysia. One of the Chinese persons who has been rescued said to the journalists that when they were floating in the vast ocean and with food and water about to run out, she encouraged her fellow Chinese by saying, "if the embassy knows about us, it will come looking for us, and we will be saved. " Now at a moment of life and death, our people pin their hopes on the embassy, and it's what helps them persevere. Our people have great trust in Chinese diplomats: this is an enormous responsibility for us. We must never betray their trust and we spare no effort to meet our responsibility.

In 2016, the Foreign Ministry and its overseas missions handled over 100,000 consular cases. We successfully rescued mainland and Taiwan compatriots who had been held by Gulf of Aden pirates for almost five years, evacuated over 1,000 of our countrymen and women from the conflict in South Sudan, and transferred over 1,000 of our people trapped by earthquake, fire or blizzard in New Zealand, Israel, Japan and so on. Whenever there is difficulty or danger for Chinese people overseas, there would appear Chinese diplomats and the five-starred red flag of China.

Currently, mainland residents make over 120 million outbound visits every year. For six years, the number has been growing at an annual rate of 10 million and counting. Consular protection is becoming a more formidable task for us. But whatever the difficulty or challenge, the Party central leadership and the general public can count on us doing a better in consular protection.

TV Asahi: This year marks the 45th anniversary of normalized relations between China and Japan. The economic relationship is fine but our political relations have stalled. What's China's view?

Wang Yi: This year marks the 45th anniversary of normalized relations between China and Japan, but it also marks the 80th anniversary of the so-called "Marco Polo Bridge Incident". These two anniversary dates represent two totally different paths, the one leading to peace and friendship and the other to war and confrontation. Eighty years ago, Japan launched full-scale invasion of China, inflicting horrendous suffering on

the people of China and other Asian countries and pushing itself into the dark abyss. Forty-five years ago, Japanese leaders drew the right lesson from history and mended relations with its neighbor, thereby realizing fast development at home. Several decades on, however, some people in Japan are still torn between the two paths and try to reverse the course of history. We hope all peace-loving people in Japan will make sure their country will head in the right direction in this important anniversary year.

As for China-Japan relations, China's position has been consistent and clear-cut. Of course, we want to improve relations with Japan for the benefit of our two peoples. But first of all, Japan has to adopt the right frame of mind, be sensible and come to terms with the fact of China's development and revitalization.

China National Radio: Yang Xiuzhu, the fugitive at the top of the list of 100 most wanted persons of China's anti-corruption campaign code-named Sky Net, returned to China last November. The news caused quite a stir both at home and abroad. What has the Foreign Ministry and its overseas missions done to help bring back fugitives and recover their assets?

Wang Yi: Under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee, various government departments have worked together to bring back corruption fugitives and recover their assets. The Foreign Ministry has played an important part in this. Since the 18th CPC Congress, the Foreign Ministry and its overseas missions have done all we can and worked closely with the relevant authorities to bring back over 2,500 fugitives from more than 90 countries and regions on charges of corruption and economic crime, and 38 of them are on the list of 100 most wanted fugitives. We have concluded extradition treaties and mutual judicial assistance treaties with 70 countries, knitting a web that basically covers the major countries on all continents. When hosting APEC and G20 meetings, we have built international consensus on anti-corruption cooperation. The international community has praised China's determination and progress in this regard, which is a big plus for our international reputation.

The CPC Central Committee and the general public care greatly about bringing back fugitives and recovering their assets. The Foreign Ministry will continue to do its best to shatter the illusion of fugitives and make them understand that there is no safe haven abroad and they cannot escape justice wherever they may be.

Al Jazeera: The situation in the Middle East is becoming ever more complicated. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, what role will China play on the regional issues?

Wang Yi: Once again the situation in the Middle East has reached a crucial crossroads with both risks of growing instability and the promise of peace.

In China's view, to nudge the regional situation in the right direction, three things are of crucial importance. First, we need to maintain the important consensus on fighting terrorism. Second, we need to adhere to the right goal of seeking a political settlement of the regional issues. And third, we must put the UN in the driver's seat of the Middle East peace process.

The Iranian nuclear agreement is a fine example of settling disputes by political and diplomatic means. The relevant parties should all honor their commitment, fulfill their obligation and effectively implement that agreement.

The issue of Palestine is an open wound in the Middle East. Peace may be delayed, but justice cannot be denied. China firmly supports the two-state solution and will continue to do what we can to help restart the peace talks.

The Paper: New media is changing the world profoundly. How is China's diplomacy responding to this new reality?

Wang Yi: The Foreign Ministry never shies away from new things. As soon as new media was gaining momentum, we began to make use of it. Diplo-Chat, our new media account, has attracted 12 million followers. Various Foreign Ministry departments and overseas missions have opened over 130 new media accounts, including the very popular China Consular Affairs account on WeChat. Through these new media platforms, we are able to deliver useful information concerning world affairs, consular protection, external cooperation and so on to the smart devices of our followers; almost immediately, we can get their comments, suggestions or complaints. So new media has built a direct, two-way bridge between the Foreign Ministry and the general public. It has make China's diplomacy more down-to-earth and better understood by our people.

Serving the people is the abiding goal of China's diplomacy. Going forward, we will make still greater use of new media to set up more "antennas" to pick up public opinion, operate more "through-trains" to provide direct services for the people and offer more "lifelines" of consular protection. I want to make an announcement here. In two weeks' time, the Foreign Ministry will launch the WeChat version of 12308. In the future, apart from dialing the consular hot-line, people who run into difficulty in another country can seek real-time advice and help from the WeChat platform. I'm sure this will make things much easier for our people.

The press conference lasted two hours and was attended by more than 500 Chinese and foreign journalists.

CHINESE LEADERS REVIEW GOVERNMENT WORK REPORT WITH LAWMAKERS



Beijing, March 5 (Xinhua) — Senior Chinese leaders on Sunday joined national legislators in deliberating the government work report, stressing the main theme of "seeking progress while maintaining stability."

The report was delivered by Premier Li Keqiang at the opening of the annual session of China's top legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC).

Zhang Dejiang, Yu

Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan and Wang Qishan,all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, joined national lawmakers in deliberating the report.

Zhang, also chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, joined lawmakers from east China's Zhejiang Province.

Zhang stressed concrete actions to implement the decisions and policies of the CPC Central Committee, promote the steady and healthy development of the economy and the harmony of the society to create a favorable environment for the 19th National Congress of the Party, slated for later this year.

Yu Zhengsheng, also chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, joined a delegation of lawmakers from central China's Hubei Province during another panel discussion.

Yu urged Hubei Province to apply the new concepts of development and advance supply-side structural reform.

He called for further efforts to conserve energy and protect the environment to provide the people with clean water, fresh air, safe food and beautiful environment.

Liu Yunshan joined NPC deputies from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in their panel discussion.

Liu called for proper understanding of the relations between maintaining stability and seeking progress, stressing efforts to guide social expectations and dissolve risks, while making breakthroughs in reforms.P Major tasks in supply-side structural reform should be accomplished to improve growth quality and efficiency, he added.

Wang Qishan, also secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, joined NPC deputies from Beijing.

Wang stressed the need to explore effective CPC self-supervision for long-term governance, deepen reform of the national supervisory system and establish an anti-graft mechanism under the unified leadership of the Party.

The CPC should enhance supervision over itself and state organs to realize full-coverage oversight of all public servants, he added.

CHINA'S NATIONAL LEGISLATURE CONCLUDES ANNUAL SESSION

Beijing, March 15 (Xinhua) — The National People's Congress (NPC), China's national legislature, concluded its annual session Wednesday morning.

Among 2,838 NPC deputies present at the closing meeting, 2,812 voted in favor of the government work report; 2,793 for the work report of the NPC Standing Committee; 2,606 for the work report of the Supreme People's Court; and 2,606 for the work report of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

Lawmakers also approved the General Provisions of the Civil Law, the decision on the quota and election of deputies to the 13th NPC, and the methods for electing deputies to the 13th NPC from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

Other documents approved by the lawmakers included the 2017 national economic and social development plan, and the 2017 central and local budgets.

The lawmakers also approved the resignation of NPC Standing Committee member Xu Xianming.

Leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the state Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli attended the closing meeting at the Great Hall of the People.

In his closing remarks, Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, hailed the achievements made under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the



core since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012.

President Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, has attained great prestige among the Party, the military and people of all ethnic groups, and become the core of the CPC Central Committee and the entire Party, according to Zhang.



Zhang called for maintaining a high degree of consistency with the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core in thoughts, politics and actions, upholding the authority of the CPC Central Committee and its centralized and unified leadership, as well as faithfully implementing the Party's policies and the CPC Central Committee's decisions.

The General Provisions of the Civil Law, which take effect on Oct. 1, is the opening chapter of a long-awaited civil code.

The civil code will include individual books that deal with property, contracts, tort liability,

marriage and inheritance, according to the legislative plan.

Zhang called for stepping up work on the books to ensure a civil code that has Chinese characteristics and reflects the spirit of the time and the will of the people be enacted in 2020.

Zhang also called on NPC deputies to always bear the people's wishes in mind, perform their duties effectively, and make new contributions in upholding, implementing and developing the people's congress system.

The people's congress system, a fundamental institutional arrangement that integrates the principles of upholding the Party's leadership, the people being the master of the country and the rule of law, demonstrates the characteristics and advantages of China's socialist democracy, said an editorial published by Xinhua Tuesday.

The editorial stressed better use of the system to ensure that the country is effectively governed under the Party's leadership, decisions by the CPC Central Committee are implemented and all sorts of work is pursued according to the law.

CHINA'S NATIONAL LEGISLATURE STRESSES UNITY AROUND XI AS CORE



Beijing, March 8 (Xinhua) — China's top legislator on Wednesday pledged further conformity to the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the core.

National lawmakers should unite more closely "around the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the core," to develop the system of the people's congress and realize the dream of national rejuvenation, said Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, while delivering a work report of the NPC Standing Committee.

The endorsement of Xi as the core "reflects the will of all members of the Party, all members of the armed forces and all the people of China," Zhang told nearly 3,000 NPC deputies gathered at the Great Hall of the People.

The NPC, the highest body of state power, opened its annual session on Sunday to set the national development agenda for this year.

The system of the people's congress enables the people to exercise their power as "masters of the state."

It was at the first session of the 12th NPC in March 2013 that Xi was elected Chinese president. He had been elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee in November 2012 at the 18th CPC National Congress

Zhang's remarks echoed Yu Zhengsheng, China's top political advisor, who also voiced conformity to the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core when the annual session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee opened on Friday.

Dubbed as the "two sessions," the dual meetings are among the most important political events where development agendas are reviewed and discussed, and key policies adopted.

In reviewing the work last year, Zhang said the NPC Standing Committee advanced legislation in key areas, including developing the system of national security laws, drafting general provisions of civil law and making the law on environmental protection tax.

Decisions were made on major issues, including disqualifying 45 NPC deputies elected by the Liaoning Provincial People's Congress for bribing voters and interpreting Article 104 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to oppose any attempt at secession of Hong Kong from China.

Zhang announced the national legislature's major tasks for 2017, a crucial year in the journey toward a moderately prosperous society by 2020. The CPC will convene the 19th National Congress later this year to elect new leadership for the next five years.

In 2017, effective legislation will be produced to promote national development under the leadership of the Party.

The Leading Party Members' Group of the NPC Standing Committee must promptly request instructions from and submit reports to the CPC Central Committee on major issues in legislation, Zhang said.

According to the plan, the legislature will revise the Law on Administrative Supervision to turn it into a national supervision law amid efforts to establish a "centralized, unified, authoritative and highly-efficient" national supervision system.

The draft general provisions of the civil law was submitted for review after three readings last year. If adopted, it will bring China one step closer to the country's first civil code. Compiling of the individual books will be stepped up so that the civil code could be enacted in 2020.

The legislature will also formulate laws on e-commerce, nuclear safety, intelligence and soil pollution prevention, among others, according to the report.

"Good laws are a prerequisite for good governance. The legislation plans this year will help crack hard nuts in future reforms which have entered the deep-water zone," said NPC deputy Sun Xianzhong, a researcher with Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "It reflects Xi's governance thought and the common will of the people."

The Party's leadership is also highlighted in the legislature's oversight over the work of the State Council, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

The NPC and its Standing Committee will strengthen oversight of the implementation of plans for supply-side structural reform and poverty alleviation, both fundamental to building a well-off society, according to the work

report.

This has been the fifth and last session of the 12th NPC. The legislature will ensure well-organized elections of deputies to people's congresses, including those to the 13th NPC, Zhang said.

The election of deputies to the 13th NPC shall be completed in January 2018, according to the draft decision.

The legislature will also work to understand, explain, and communicate the new theoretical and practical accomplishments that the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core has made in upholding and improving the system of people's congress and in advancing the rule of law, Zhang said.

"We are closer than ever in history to realizing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and we have greater confidence in achieving this goal and greater capacity to do so than ever before," he said.

China stresses the unity of Party leadership, people being masters of the country and the rule of law.

"Chinese philosophy of governance includes two concepts: 'minyi,' or public opinion, and 'minxin,' or the hearts and minds of the people," said Wen Yang, a researcher with the Institute of China Studies at Fudan University.

"New ideas, thought and strategies of state governance under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core have solid foundation of public opinion. Proven successful by experience, they have won the people's hearts," he said.

External Affairs

CHINA, SAUDI ARABIA AGREE TO BOOST ALL-ROUND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP





Beijing, March 16 (Xinhua) — Chinese President Xi Jinping and visiting Saudi Arabian King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud have agreed the two countries will step up cooperation in all areas and push forward their all-round strategic partnership.

In their talks Thursday in Beijing, Xi recalled his visit to Saudi Arabia last year, during which he reached consensus with King Salman in advancing bilateral ties and cementing cooperation in international and regional affairs.

Xi said he was happy to see that consensus had been implemented by both sides.

China supports Saudi Arabia as it advances on a development path suitable to its national conditions, maintains national sovereignty, security and development interests, and plays greater role in regional and global affairs, Xi said.

China supports Saudi Arabia in its "Saudi Vision 2030" plan, and welcomes the country to be a partner in the Belt and Road Initiative, Xi said.

China is a reliable and stable market for Saudi Arabia's oil, Xi said, calling for closer cooperation in such areas as energy, communication, aviation, finance and investment, culture, education, public health, technology, tourism, media and security.

Xi said China and Muslim countries respect each other and set an example of harmonious coexistence between civilizations.

In Middle East affairs, China advocates respecting national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, Xi said.

China advocates solving disputes through dialogue, easing tensions on hot issues, giving full play to the United Nations' key role and paying more heed to the voice of regional organizations and countries, he added.

The solution to many issues in the Middle East lies in development, Xi said.

China hopes to boost the Belt and Road Initiative with countries along the route including Middle Eastern countries, he added.

King Salman voiced adherence to the one-China policy, and vowed to cement cooperation with China in the areas of trade, investment, finance and energy, in order to upgrade their all-round strategic partnership.

Saudi Arabia highly values China's stance of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, and solving disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, he said.

King Salman also appreciated China's role in maintaining international peace and security, expressing his hope for China's greater role in Middle Eastern



affairs.

After their talks, the two heads of states witnessed the signing of cooperative agreements on trade, economy, energy, capacity, culture, education and technology.

They also attended the closing ceremony of an exhibition of archeological relics from Saudi Arabia.

King Salman is on a state visit to China from March 15-18 at Xi's invitation. It is his first China visit since becoming king of Saudi Arabia in 2015.

PRESIDENT XI MEETS U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE

Beijing, March 19 (Xinhua) — President Xi Jinping met here Sunday with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, saying that cooperation is the only correct choice for both countries.

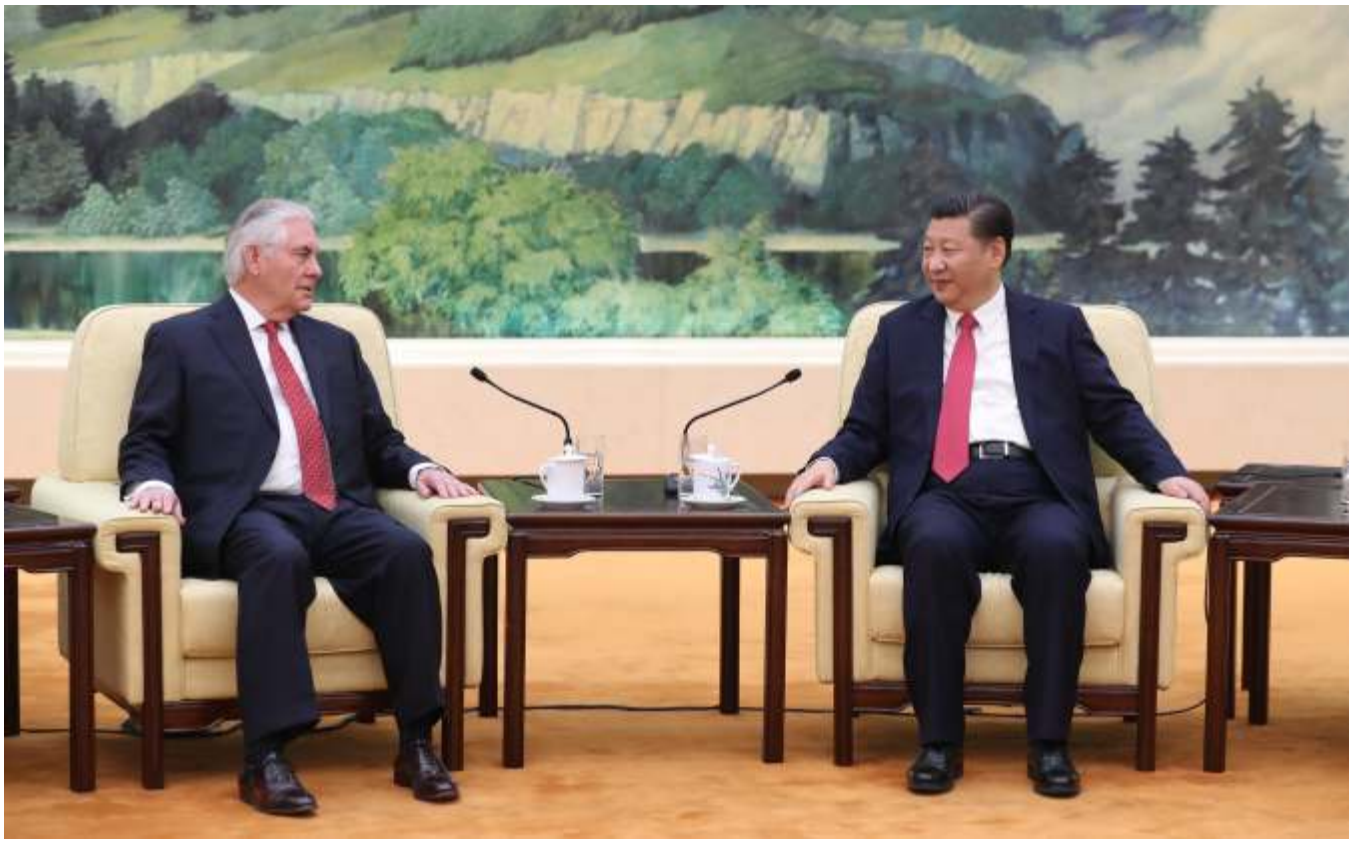
There are important development opportunities resulting from China-U.S. relations, said Xi during the meeting in the Great Hall of People in Beijing.

Xi said he had maintained sound communications with his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump through telephone calls and messages, and that they had agreed that the two countries could be good cooperative partners.

To advance China-U.S. ties in a healthy and steady manner, both sides, Xi expressed, could enhance exchanges at high level and various levels; expand cooperation in bilateral, regional and global fields; and properly address and manage sensitive issues.

The two sides should grasp the general direction for the development of China-U.S. relations in an attitude responsible for history and future generations, said Xi.

Xi suggested that the two countries increase strategic trust and mutual understanding, review bilateral ties from long-term and strategic perspectives and expand



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) meets with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 19, 2017. (Xinhua / Ju Peng)

fields of cooperation for win-win outcomes.

The two countries should also enhance coordination on regional hotspot issues, respect each other's core interests and major concerns and encourage friendly exchanges between the two peoples, said Xi.

Xi also extended welcome to President Trump for a visit to China.

Tillerson said President Trump valued communication with President Xi, and looked forward to meeting Xi and the opportunity for a visit to China.

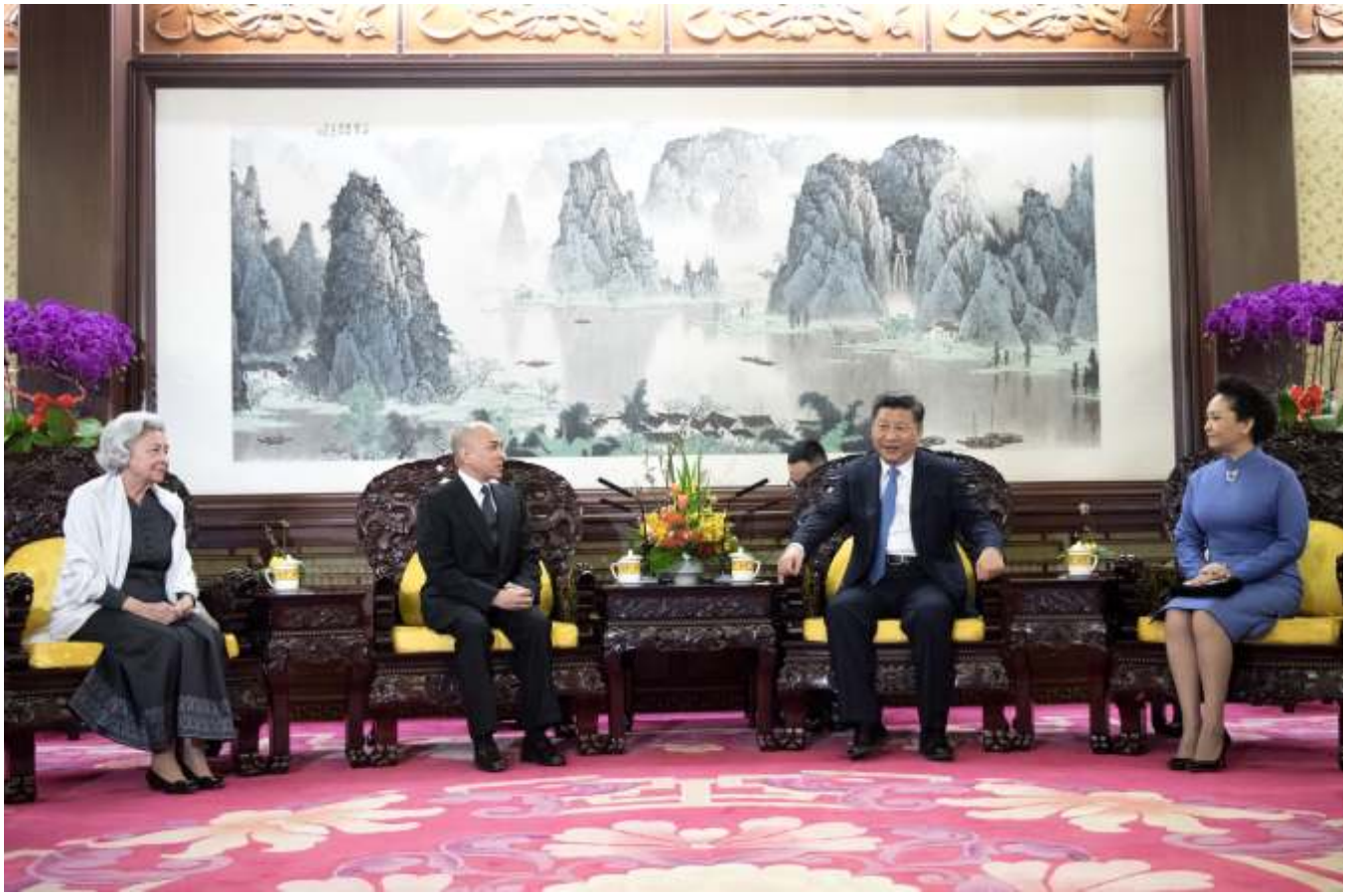
The U.S. side is ready to develop relations with China based on the principle of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, said Tillerson.

It is Tillerson's first visit to China since he assumed office last month. State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held separate meetings with Tillerson on Saturday.

XI JINPING MEETS WITH KING NORODOM SIHAMONI AND QUEEN MOTHER NORODOM MONINEATH SIHANOUK OF CAMBODIA

On March 6, 2017, President Xi Jinping met with King Norodom Sihamoni and Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk of Cambodia at Zhongnanhai.

Xi Jinping pointed out that the traditional friendship between people of China and Cambodia enjoys a long-standing history. China-Cambodia friendship is fairly precious as it was jointly initiated and meticulously fostered by the older generations of Chinese leaders and King Father Norodom Sihanouk. Entering a new historical period,



China-Cambodia relations has again been endowed with vitality and thus achieved substantial development. I successfully exchanged visits with King Norodom Sihamoni last year. At present, the two countries share high political mutual trust and mutually beneficial economic cooperation, help each other to realize respective national development and intensify coordination in international and regional affairs. Having been actively committed to promoting the cause of China-Cambodia friendship for a long time, the Cambodian royal family has made important contributions to the development of bilateral relations. The Chinese side is willing to make joint efforts with Cambodia to constantly push forward China-Cambodia comprehensive strategic cooperation to new highs, so as to better benefit the two peoples.

Xi Jinping stressed that in order to push China-Cambodia relations for continuous and in-depth development, both sides should maintain the momentum of high-level contacts, frequently visit each other like relatives and intensify communication and exchanges. Both sides should deepen mutually beneficial and practical cooperation, strengthen the integration of development strategies and vigorously advance cooperation in key projects. The two sides should also enhance coordination in multilateral affairs and constantly make contributions to safeguarding regional stability and the overall situation of China-ASEAN cooperation.

Norodom Sihamoni and Norodom Monineath Sihanouk expressed that with deep roots, Cambodia-China friendship becomes newer as time goes by. President Xi Jinping's historic visit to Cambodia last year has effectively consolidated Cambodia-China friendship and advanced Cambodia-China cooperation. The Cambodian royal family, government and people thank China for the long-lasting and profound friendship to the Cambodian royal family and the vigorous support for the national economic and social development of Cambodia. The Cambodian royal family will inherit King Father Norodom Sihanouk's friendly policy towards China and actively boost the continuous development of bilateral relations.

President Xi Jinping's wife Mme. Peng Liyuan, State Councilor Yang Jiechi and others were present at the meeting.

LI KEQIANG AND UK PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY EXCHANGE CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES ON THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UK

On March 13, 2017, Premier Li Keqiang and Prime Minister Theresa May of the UK exchanged congratulatory messages, celebrating the 45th anniversary of the establishment of ambassadorial level diplomatic relations between both countries.

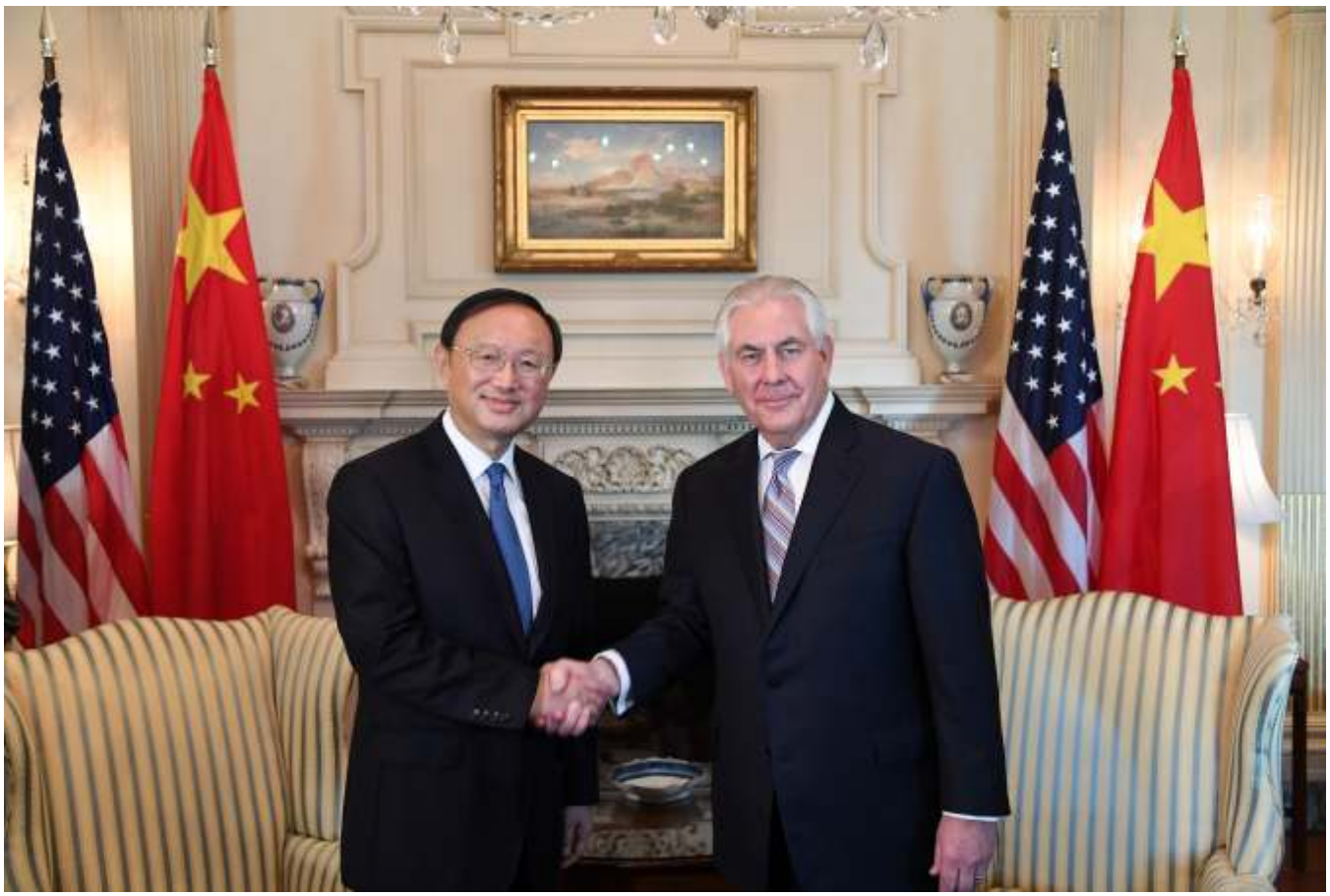
Li Keqiang expressed in the congratulatory message that over the past 45 years, the interest integration between China and the UK has been continuously deepened. Both countries have made fruitful achievements from mutually beneficial cooperation and increasingly intensified people-to-people and cultural exchanges, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples. Currently, China-UK relations stand at a new starting point in history and share a solid cooperation foundation as well as a broad development space. China is willing to make joint efforts with the UK to further consolidate bilateral political mutual trust, pursue new achievements in mutually beneficial and practical cooperation, and push bilateral relations for further and steadier development along the track of mutual trust, mutual complementarity and mutual benefit, so as to better benefit the people of both countries.

Theresa May extended best wishes to the Chinese government and people in her congratulatory message. She said that the UK-China partnership enjoys a sustained development. Both sides maintain frequent high-level exchanges, achieve fruitful outcomes from high-level dialogues, increasingly intensify trade and investment communication, and constantly deepen people-to-people and cultural exchange, which has greatly improved the well-being of the two countries. Looking into the future, the UK-China cooperation will surely score more fruitful achievements.

YANG JIECHI MEETS WITH US SECRETARY OF STATE REX TILLERSON

On February 28, 2017 local time, State Councilor Yang Jiechi, who was visiting the US, met with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson of the US at the US State Department.

Yang Jiechi noted that when President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump held telephone talks not long ago, they unanimously agreed to make joint efforts to push China-US relations for greater development. In the next phase, China is willing to, together with the US, in accordance with the consensus reached by the two heads



of state, adhere to the principles of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, enhance exchanges at high level and all levels, deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation in various fields, expand communication and coordination on international, regional and global issues, respect each other's core interests and major concerns and push China-US relations for constant, healthy and stable development, so as to benefit the two peoples as well as people of various countries in the world.

Rex Tillerson expressed that President Donald Trump and President Xi Jinping set a positive tone for the development of US-China relations. The US is willing to make joint efforts with China to view bilateral relations from a wider perspective, strengthen high-level dialogues and exchanges, constantly expand cooperation in various fields and properly handle sensitive issues through consultations, so as to make US-China relations achieve better development and make more contributions to promoting international and regional peace and prosperity.

Both sides also exchanged views on international and regional topics of common interests.

2017 FIRST BRICS SHERPA MEETING CONCLUDES SUCCESSFULLY

From February 23 to 24, 2017, the first BRICS Sherpa meeting was held in Nanjing of Jiangsu province. State Councilor Yang Jiechi attended and addressed the opening ceremony. China's Sherpa for BRICS Affairs and Vice Foreign Minister Li Baodong presided over the meeting. Nearly 100 people including Sherpas and Sous-Sherpas of BRICS countries, foreign diplomatic envoys in China



as well as representatives from the New Development Bank were present.

Centering on the theme of Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future, the meeting conducted in-depth discussions on world political and economic situation, 4 major topics including the key points of 2017 BRICS cooperation, cooperation in political security, economic cooperation and people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation as well as the work plan in 2017, reaching extensive consensus. Representatives of all countries appreciated China's leading role as the presidency, and expressed their unanimous approval on the theme and topics of the Xiamen Summit and the annual work plan. All parties agreed that the current international political and economic situation is undergoing complicated and profound changes. As the BRICS cooperation enters into a new decade, it faces new opportunities and challenges. BRICS countries should fully make use of the high representative meeting for security affairs, Foreign Ministers' meeting and other mechanisms to enhance communication and coordination in international and regional issues and play a constructive role in safeguarding global peace and security. BRICS countries should deeply implement the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy, strengthen coordination on macroeconomic policies under the G20 framework, build an open world economy, improve global economic governance, deepen practical cooperation in trade, investment, finance and other fields among BRICS countries, reinforce people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation, and hold cultural festivals, film festivals, sports games, high-level meeting on traditional medicine and other activities to consolidate the public opinion foundation of cooperation. We should advance the construction of cooperation mechanisms and beef up the synchronization of practical cooperation in all fields to form effective synergy.

All parties unanimously agreed to support China to well host the Xiamen Summit. It is believed that under joint efforts of China and all parties, the BRICS cooperation in 2017 will achieve fruitful outcomes, which will open up a brighter future for the common development of BRICS countries, the economic and social development of emerging markets and developing countries as well as the cause of global peace and development.

On January 1, 2017, China officially assumed the BRICS presidency, and will hold the 9th BRICS Summit in Xiamen of Fujian province from September 3 to 5. The Sherpa meeting this time is the first official event held by China as the BRICS presidency in 2017, and it aims to make political preparations for the convening of the Xiamen Summit. The Sherpa meeting charted the course and key points for the BRICS cooperation in 2017, clarified the "roadmap" for the advancement and laid a foundation for earnestly advancing the preparation for the Xiamen Summit.

China India Relations

YANG JIECHI MEETS WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY SUBRAMANYAM JAISHANKAR OF INDIA

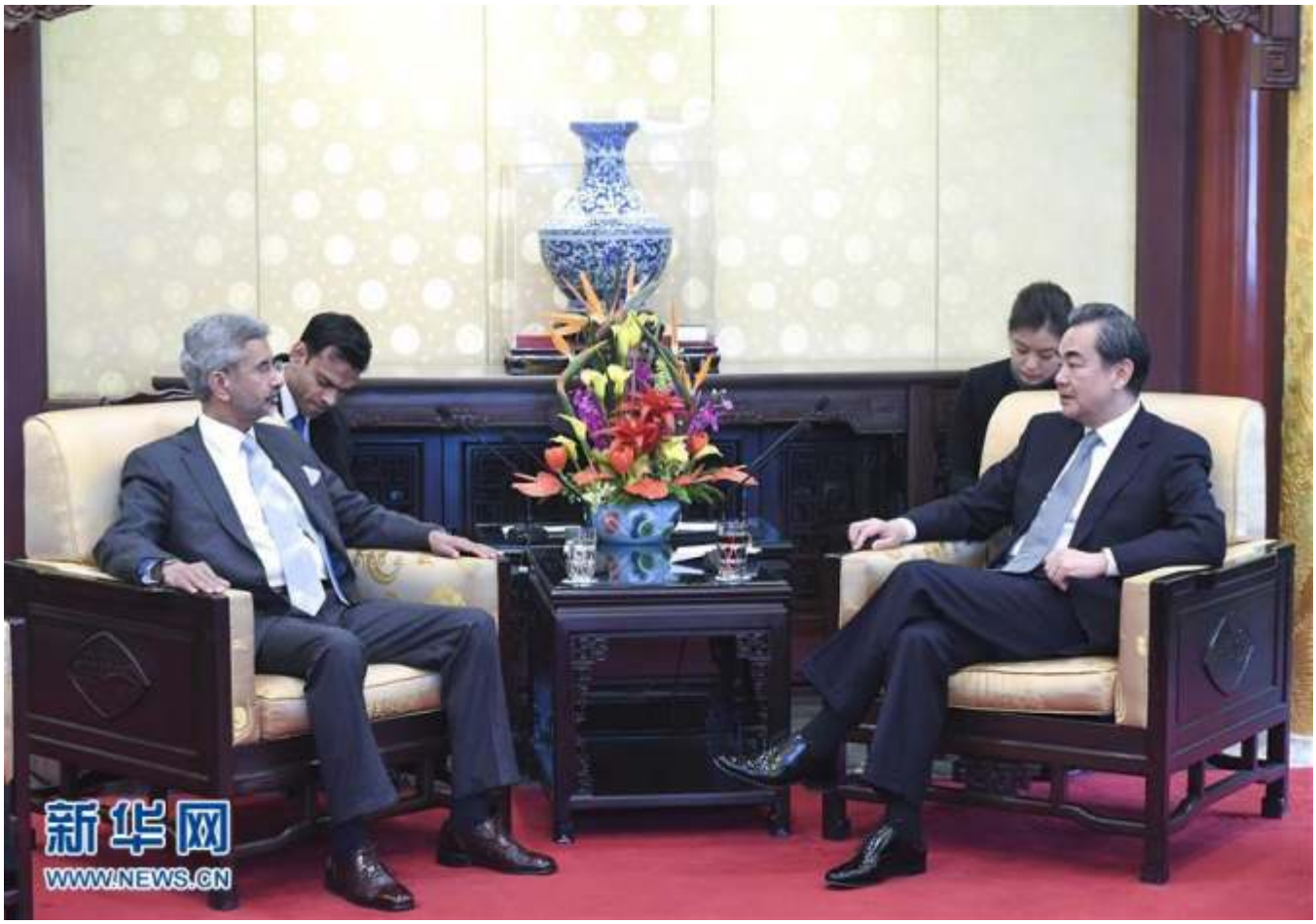


On February 21, 2017, State Councilor Yang Jiechi met at Zhongnanhai with Foreign Secretary Subramanyam Jaishankar of India, who was in China for the China-India Strategic Dialogue.

Yang Jiechi expressed that current China-India relations maintain a sound development momentum. China is willing to work with the Indian side to well implement the consensus reached by leaders of both countries, maintain high-level exchanges, enhance strategic communication and expand practical cooperation, so as to promote China-India relations to further develop.

Subramanyam Jaishankar said that attaching high importance to its relationship with China, India stands ready to strengthen dialogues and communication at all levels and in various fields, as well as expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation with China to push bilateral relations for new progress.

Both sides also exchanged views on the international situation and other topics of common interests.



CHINA, INDIA SHOULD FOCUS ON COOPERATION RATHER THAN DISPUTES

Beijing, March 4 (Xinhua) — China and India as the world's two largest developing countries should focus on enhancing mutual understanding and boosting cooperation rather than dwelling on disputes, said a spokesperson for China's top legislature Saturday.

At a press conference a day before the National People's Congress (NPC) convenes its yearly meeting, spokesperson Fu Ying said China and India have over the past decades witnessed rapid development of bilateral trade, which surged from two billion U.S. dollars in the 1990s to last year's more than 70 billion dollars.

Air connectivity has improved remarkably, with 40 direct flights between the two countries every week, Fu said.

There have also been frequent exchanges of visits by leaders of the two countries, and the two militaries visit each other every year, the spokesperson said, adding China and India have also established a mechanism to jointly combat cross-border crimes and terrorism.

Fu said the two countries have a lot of consensus on regional and international issues. While some disputes remain, the issues have been discussed properly through diplomatic channels.

She said China and India both face different challenges in development. The two countries should understand each other more and not let disputes stand in the way of bilateral cooperation.


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Speaking of the China-India strategic dialogue held in Beijing in February, Fu said the dialogue had been extensive and deep. "I felt it was quite positive," she said.

Fu added that projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative are designed to promote economic development. "Ultimately, India will also benefit from it. We must bear in mind the bigger picture when looking at issues."

The initiative was proposed by China in 2013, aiming to become a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient trade routes.

Official figures show that more than 100 countries and international organizations have joined the initiative, while Chinese businesses have helped build 56 economic and trade cooperation zones in 20 countries along the Belt and Road, with total investment exceeding 18 billion U.S. dollars, helping generate over 1 billion U.S. dollars in tax revenue and more than 160,000 jobs.

AMBASSADOR LUO ZHAOHUI CELEBRATES THE HOLI FESTIVAL WITH INDIA PRESS



On March 9, H.E. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui and his wife Dr. Jiang Yili held the Holi Festival celebration with India press in Chinese Embassy.

The celebration is cosponsored by Indian Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents and the Foreign Correspondents' Club of

South Asia, which are two influential correspondent institutes in India. Two hundred people from India newspapers, news agency, TV channels and think tanks attended the celebration.

H.E. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui extended warm festival greetings to India friends and mainly introduced the two sessions which are being held in Beijing.

Mr. Vijay Naik, Convenor of India Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents and Mr. Venkat Narayan, President of the Foreign Correspondent's Club of South Asia delivered warm speechs.

H.E. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui also presented prize to the winners of social media competition for"Visit to China".









ADDRESS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUO ZHAOHUI AT THE HOLI RECEPTION FOR INDIAN MEDIA

(March 9, 2017, Chinese Embassy)

Mr. Vijay Naik, Convener of Indian Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents,

Mr. Venkat Narayan, President of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaste!

As an old Chinese saying goes, rain always comes with the noble people. The rain this afternoon is certainly to honor the guests.

Today we are gathered here to celebrate the Holi Festival. First of all I would like to welcome you all to my Embassy. You represent more than 50 media and think tank institutes. I am grateful for Mr. Naik and Mr. Narayan for co-hosting the reception.

Holi originally was an agricultural festival celebrating the arrival of spring. It also provides a temporary opportunity to disregard social norms. Holi reminds us that Great Lord Vishnu, Shiva and Krishna celebrate together with the secular world of ordinary people.

Right now people in many countries are participating in the "color run" which is originated from Holi. Like Yoga, this is another gift from India to the world.

On this special occasion, I wish you all happiness and good health.

I have been here for almost half a year this time. What impressed me most is the big progress of the media, compared with my first term in India 28 years ago.

Firstly, the Media has developed very fast. Traditional media, social media, 24-hour Television shows a lot of breaking news. It really means information explosion, and freedom of speech in India.

Secondly, the Media covers not only many domestic events, but also foreign affairs news. It shows India is such an open society, integrated deeply with the world.

Thirdly, India media pays more attention to China and China-India relations. It promotes better understanding between our two peoples, and also helps China to understand Indian perspectives. I appreciate what you have done to bridge China-India interactions and friendship. As a diplomat and reader, I read almost 10 newspapers and watch TV programs and get a lot of valuable information every day.

At the same time, I humbly request the media here to report on China-India relations in a more balanced way. I also wish the media to cover more and more news related to China. Now China's parliament NPC and CPPCC are in session. Premier Li Keqiang delivered a government work report. Last year China's economy has registered a slower but stable performance. The economic growth scored 6.7% and the GDP totaled 11 trillion USD and the GDP per capita reached 8000 USD. This year we set a target of around 6.5%. India's GDP growth last year is estimated at 7.1%. China and India are the fastest growing economies.

Friends,

Diplomats and correspondents share a lot of similarities. Both are close observers and participants of the global and domestic big events. Both are pioneers of advanced social philosophy. Both have strong sense of social responsibility. Let's work together to make the world brighter, to make China-India relations better and to make our lives as colorful as the Holi.

Thank you all and enjoy the evening.

REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUO ZHAOHUI ON THE SCREENING OF "KUNG-FU-YOGA"

(Sirifort Auditorium, March 16, 2017)

Mrs. Namrata S. Kumar, Deputy Director General of ICCR,

Mr. Senthil Rajan, Director of DFF,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaste.

As we all know, Yoga is not only a physical practice, but also a way to purify our soul. It is an Indian cultural heritage with global influence. Today Yoga is so popular in China, many people especially young people practice it, and many Yoga institutes, associations are established. This is one example of people-to-people interaction between our two countries.

In China there are many schools of Kung Fu. The most famous school named Shaolin Kung Fu is believed to be originated from India. The Indian Great Monk Budhidharma traveled to China in early 6th century, just 200 years before Chinese monk Xuanzang to India. Budhidharma meditated for 9 years at Shaolin Temple, and created Shaolin Kung Fu. This is another example for people to people interaction between our two counties.

Today we will watch the movie Kung Fu Yoga, co-produced by the artists from China and India. It is a perfect combination of two unique cultural symbols. In China, it has attracted a lot of fans and the box



office has reached more than 200 million USD. I wish you will enjoy it.

Both India and China are countries with a long history of civilization. Our cultures not only developed independently but also interacted very closely for centuries. We have learned a lot from each other. Along with the spread of Buddhism, the exchanges in religion, culture, trade and education flourished along the silk road and through land and oceans.

A few months ago, I visited the Ajanta caves. The architecture, fresco and sculptures reminded me of the Dunhuang Caves in China. We should not forget the many people including Budhidharma and Xuanzang, for their historic contribution to the development of cultural exchanges. We should build on their legacy.

More than 1 million people traveled across the two countries last year. They are the friendly envoys of our times. We welcome more and more people to visit each others countries.

Last but not least, I would like to thank ICCR and DFF for co-hosting today's event with us. I would also like to thank Kung Fu Star Jackie Chan and Bollywood Star Sonu Sood for their video messages. Of course I appreciate everyone present here for sharing with us the beautiful evening.

Thank you.

Belt and Road Initiative

CHINESE LEADERS DISCUSS ECONOMY, BELT & ROAD WITH LAWMAKERS

Beijing, March 9 (Xinhua) — Premier Li Keqiang and other leaders on Thursday discussed economic upgrading, Belt and Road Initiative, people's congress system, poverty alleviation, anti-corruption campaign and other topics with national lawmakers.

They joined deputies to the National People's Congress (NPC) in separate panel discussions at the NPC annual session.



Joining NPC deputies from Shaanxi Province, Premier Li called for developing high-end equipment manufacturing, information industry, modern logistics and rural e-commerce. Tourism and culture should also be boosted to create more jobs.

The provincial government should further streamline administration, delegate power to lower levels, improve services, play well the province's role as a key junction in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, and take a lead in the development of China's western region.

Joining lawmakers from Jiangsu Province, Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said people's congresses at various levels should implement the decisions made by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee to ensure effective state governance under the Party's leadership.

He called for innovation in theory and practice of the people's congress system, which is China's fundamental political system.

Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, joined NPC deputies from Guizhou Province in a panel discussion.

Yu urged the province to continue optimizing the environment for developing private businesses, invigorating the private economy, and supporting private businesses' efforts to speed up transformation and upgrading.

Yu also highlighted targeted poverty alleviation, stressing more effective measures, enhanced implementation of policies and mobilization of all resources to win the battle against poverty.

Wang Qishan, secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, joined NPC deputies from Yunnan Province, calling for advancing the anti-corruption campaign, which accords with the aspirations of the Party and the people.

Calling inspections a kind of "political checkup," Wang said undesirable working styles including formalism and bureaucratism during the implementation of CPC Central Committee decisions must be rooted out.

Senior officials at key positions must guard against perfunctory working style and endeavor in a pragmatic way to live up to the people's expectations, he said.

Joining lawmakers from

Chongqing Municipality, Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli highlighted the city's role as a strategic pivot in China's "Go West" strategy and asked the municipal government to actively fit into the Belt and Road Initiative and the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

He also urged Chongqing to push forward the supply-side structural reform, promote innovation-driven development and high-end manufacturing, coordinate rural and urban development, and protect the Three Gorges Reservoir and the Yangtze River.

Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli are all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE DRIVES GLOBALIZATION



Beijing, March 10 (Xinhua) — Chongqing in southwest China does not produce any potassium fertilizer itself, but it will become a sales hub for it thanks to rail routes linking the city to Europe.

"In late March, the first train loaded with 500 tonnes of potassium fertilizer produced in Kazakhstan will reach Chongqing on its return from Germany," said the city's economy and information technology commission.

The city plans to import 3 million tonnes of fertilizer from Kazakhstan each year through the Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe Railway by 2020, for domestic distribution and delivery to Japan and Southeast Asia.

"The Belt and Road Initiative creates enormous opportunities for bilateral economic and trade cooperation," said Zhang Jun, board



chairman of a potassium company in Kazakhstan.

Chongqing had 420 freight trains to and from Europe last year.

The city has been one of the most active provincial-level regions to implement the China-proposed initiative aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient Silk Road trade routes.

Since 2013, the increasingly influential initiative has boosted trade and investment between China and countries along the routes and offered a solution to global economic difficulties.

China's combined imports and exports with countries along the Belt and Road topped 6.3 trillion yuan (about 912 billion U.S. dollars) in 2016, up 0.6 percent from 2015, according to China's Ministry of Commerce.

Chinese businesses helped build 56 economic and trade cooperation zones in 20 countries along the routes with a combined investment surpassing 18.5 billion dollars, generating nearly 1.1 billion dollars in tax revenue and 180,000 jobs in those countries.

For example, Chinese-operated Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia has attracted 102 companies from China, Japan, the United States and Europe.

"The economic zone served as a platform for Chinese enterprises to participate in the Belt and Road," said Zhou Haijiang, president of HoDo Group based in China's eastern Jiangsu Province, the developer of the 5-square-kilometer zone.

"Chinese enterprises went global and boosted local development in countries along the Belt and Road on a win-win basis," said Liu Zhibiao, a national political advisor and professor in economics at Nanjing University.

"The Belt and Road Initiative has become the most popular public goods and the platform for international cooperation with the brightest prospects in the world," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Wednesday on the sidelines of the annual legislative session.

More than 20 heads of state and government, over 50 leaders of international organizations, over 100 ministerial-level officials, as well as over 1,200 delegates from various

countries and regions will participate in the Belt and Road Forum for international cooperation in May in Beijing.

"The Belt and Road Initiative is against narrow-minded protectionism and isolationism," said Sergei Luzyanin, director of the Far Eastern Studies Institute under the Russian Academy of Sciences. "We only had the Western European-American option of integration and economic development in the 1990s, now there is a new option from China."

BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE HELPS SAUDI ARABIA REALIZE "SAUDI VISION 2030" — AMBASSADOR



Beijing, March 14 (Xinhua) — The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative is expected to make "creative" contributions to helping Saudi Arabia realize its "Saudi Vision 2030" plan, Saudi Ambassador to China Turki Bin Mohamed Al-Mady has said.

"Saudi Arabia attaches great importance to China's Belt and Road Initiative," Al-Mady told Xinhua in a recent interview, referring to the initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient

Silk Road trade routes.

"Both countries have great potential, whether in infrastructure construction or in financial innovation," he added.

In a bid to diversify its heavily oil-dependent economy, Saudi Arabia announced a "Saudi Vision 2030" growth strategy last year, which includes privatizing some state-owned companies.

Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud will pay a state visit to China from Wednesday to Saturday after Xi paid a state visit to Saudi Arabia in January 2016, during which both nations agreed to lift their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

During the king's visit, the two sides will discuss enhancing cooperation in areas such as culture, economy, trade, technology, security and defense. They are expected to sign several agreements and memoranda on education, investment, transfer of technology, industry and trade.

"The king's visit shows that China and Saudi Arabia enjoy a close relationship and share broad common interests," the ambassador said.

"The good relations between China and Saudi Arabia are vigorous, fruitful and pragmatic, and are continuing to move forward," Al-Mady said, adding that he believes "the visit will further consolidate the fruits both countries have yielded."

In recent years, with great complementarity in their industrial structures and wide common interests in economy and trade, the two countries have furthered cooperation in such fields as energy, trade, investment and infrastructure construction.

In 2015, China became Saudi Arabia's largest trade partner and Saudi Arabia has been China's biggest crude oil supplier and largest trade partner in West Asia and Africa for years.

The two countries have seen a sound development of bilateral ties since they established diplomatic ties in 1990, the ambassador said, hailing the China-Saudi Arabia relationship as a paradigm of bilateral relations.



"Observing the development model of the China-Saudi Arabia relations in the past 26 years, we've found that bilateral ties have always enjoyed positive development and this is unique," he said. "We hope such momentum can be maintained."

"During the king's visit, the two countries will discuss counter-terrorism," Al-Mady said. "Both nations have common understanding about anti-terrorism and the elimination of the origin of terrorism. They are trustworthy and responsible partners in this area."

Besides, the ambassador highlighted the importance of cooperation in the spheres of education and culture, saying that "it should be conducted in parallel with bilateral economic and trade exchanges."

"In the past several years, Saudi Arabia successfully held dialogues between youth delegations from the two countries in Beijing, and it is trying to cooperate with National Museum of China to hold activities to attract more Chinese tourists," he said.

He said the two countries have also witnessed academic and technological cooperation between universities and exchanges between students.

"Saudi Arabia is one of the first countries that have responded positively to the (Road and Belt) initiative," he said. "In terms of strategic location, Saudi Arabia serves as the central hub connecting three continents — Asia, Africa and Europe, and has been an important part of the initiative."

Al-Mady said he hopes Saudi Arabia can play a more central and positive role in promoting the initiative in the future, so as to strengthen the in-depth integration of the initiative and the "Saudi Vision 2030."

The ambassador also praised the "two sessions" — the annual gatherings of China's national legislature and political advisory body — held in Beijing this month.

"It's a natural thing for us to attach great importance to the 'two sessions' since China has become the engine of the global economy and plays a key role in international affairs. I expect the meetings will achieve fruitful results and thus benefit China and all other countries in the world."

BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE TO BOOST LISTED COMPANIES' PROFITS



Beijing March 10 (Xinhua) — Listed companies are expected to see profits grow this year as the Belt and Road Initiative advances steadily, Shanghai Securities News quoted analysts as saying.

Companies in the infrastructure construction and energy sectors are among the first group of listed companies to benefit from the Belt and Road Initiative this year, said He Xin, analyst with Huatai Securities.

Boosted by rising demand for power equipment along the Belt and Road, energy equipment producer Tebian Electric Apparatus Stock Co.(TBEA) made breakthroughs in its international business last year with newly signed overseas orders totaling more than 3 billion U.S. dollars., said He.

Additionally, companies in the infrastructure construction sector are also expected to increase profits this year as regional connectivity was highlighted as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, according to Haitong Securities.

A trans-continental cargo link connecting eastern and central Asia with Europe, known as the "China Railway Express," has raised interest among companies that want to transport Chinese products to Europe while tapping markets along the Belt and Road routes, and freight volume has increased substantially.

The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by China in 2013 in the hope of creating a trade and infrastructure network to connect Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient trade routes.

The Belt and Road Initiative has won support from over 100 countries and international organizations, with nearly 50 cooperation agreements signed between governments, said He Lifeng, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, at a press conference on the sidelines of the annual parliamentary session.

To further strengthen cooperation, China will host a high-level forum on the Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing in May.

CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE PROMOTES CONNECTIVITY, DEVELOPMENT ALONG ANCIENT ROUTE

Beijing Jan. 2 (Xinhua) — More than three years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road.

Looking back at 2016, the Belt and Road Initiative has gained fruitful early achievements, promoting connectivity and opening up possibilities and potentials for development along the ancient trade route.

SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT STRINGS ROADS TOGETHER

One day in golden October in Kashgar of China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, a fleet of 50 trucks of a joint trade convoy carrying large containers started to roll along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

After passing the Pamirs, crossing the Har goolun Range, and threading Pakistan's western region, the fleet finally arrived at its destination — the Gwadar Port of Pakistan, concluding its 3,115-km journey in a month.

The containers carried by the fleet were shipped to the United Arab Emirates and other countries, marking the Gwadar port's first export of containers to overseas destinations, and showing that the port has restored the designed handling capacity.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that CPEC is destined to transform the entire country and open up a world of possibilities for not just Pakistan but also Central Asian states.

In February 2016, China Railway Tunnel Group completed building the Qamchiq Tunnel in Uzbekistan, the longest tunnel in



Central Asia. It is part of the 169-km Angren-Pap railway line, a major state project. After completion of the rail line, Uzbekistan's domestic transport will no longer have to go through foreign territories.

"If we say 2013 is the year of proposal, 2014 is the year of guideline, 2015 is the year of top-level design, then 2016 is the year of implementing landmark projects of the Belt and Road Initiative," said Zhao Lei, a professor at China's Central Party School. "Many European countries have high approval rates on the Belt and Road Initiative."

Perhaps the busy-running China-Europe trains give the best illustration to people's acceptance. Since the Belt and Road proposal, trains running between Europe and China have been burgeoning. By June 2016, trains had been running nearly 2,000 times between China and Europe, with a total of import and export value of 17 billion U.S. dollars.

Many other projects are also under way. The China-Belarus industrial park is in development, the Hungary-Serbia railroad is to be constructed by the Chinese side soon, cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries has been further expanded.

The Silk Road Economic Belt, with a nature of inclusiveness and openness, has become a vital link connecting regional development and China's transformation.

21ST CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD CONNECTS ROADS AND PORTS

In October 2016, the contract for the second phase of the China-Laos railway project was signed in Lao capital of Vientiane.

Kicked off in late 2015, the construction of the project is expected to be completed in five years. Upon completion of the railway, a trip from Vientiane to the Chinese border will take only four hours, turning Laos from a landlocked country into a land-linked nation.

On Jan. 21, 2016, at the ground-breaking ceremony of the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway, Indonesian President Joko Widodo launched the country's first ever high-speed railway project in Walini, West Java Province.

With a maximum design speed of 350 km per hour, the travel time between Jakarta and Bandung will be cut from over three hours to less than one hour once the project is finished.

The Belt and Road Initiative provides opportunities not only for a new round of China's opening-up, but also for the growth of world economy.

On Aug. 10, 2016, Chinese shipping giant COSCO acquired 67 percent stake of Piraeus Port Authority through the Athens Stock Exchange, officially becoming the controlling shareholder of the Greek port.

Piraeus is expected to operate as a hub in Europe for the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and to connect the Silk Road Economic Belt with the China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line.

According to Chinese ambassador to Greece Zou Xiaoli, Piraeus was not merely an economic project, but also a bridge to connect the peoples of Greece and China.

In Africa, the Chinese-built Ethiopia-Djibouti railway has officially opened service, marking a milestone in cooperation between China, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

In Cambodia, the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone has attracted hundreds of enterprises, providing a model of China-Cambodia cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

In Myanmar, a consortium of six foreign companies led by China's CITIC has won two bids to build an industrial park and a deep-sea port in the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone in Rakhine State, which will improve the country's infrastructure, local people's employment and livelihood.

In Sri Lanka, the green light has been given to the delayed Colombo Port City. Through the Maritime Silk Road, China will support the country in becoming a shipping, logistics and even financial hub in the Indian Ocean.

A CHINESE MATTER, ALSO A WORLD MATTER

It has been nearly two years since the Chinese-owned company Southeast Asia Telecommunications entered the Cambodian market. With an investment of 150 million U.S. dollars, a fiber network extending 10,000 km, and over 1,000





base stations, the company has improved the efficiency of communications in Cambodia, and was spoken highly of by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Apart from opening up a new market in Cambodia with the dedication to high-speed Internet and high-quality phone calls, the company is also shouldering social responsibility by launching the Youth Sci-Tech Education Base and the Cloud Data Center.

"Previously, people saw most 'Belt and Road' programs in areas such as energy and infrastructure. In 2016, cooperation between China and those countries along the routes have been expanded to education, culture, medical care and telecommunications," said Zhao of the Central Party School

If the "hard connection" of the Belt and Road draws countries geographically closer, then the "soft connection" brings people together.

Till now, over 100 countries and international organizations have expressed willingness to actively support and join the initiative, 40 of which have signed cooperation deals with China.

In 2017, a Belt and Road summit will be held to further map out the blueprint of the initiative, explore business opportunities and deepen alignment of development strategies between China and the relevant parties.

On June 22, 2016, during a speech at the Legislative Chamber of the Uzbek Supreme Assembly in Tashkent, Xi called for building a green, healthy, intelligent and peaceful Silk Road, laying out the future of the initiative.

According to Huang Rihan, Executive Director of the Belt and Road Institute at the Center for China and Globalization think tank, a green Silk Road urges environmental protection and intensive cultivation for sustained development.

A healthy Silk Road means closer cooperation in medical care and health among related countries. An intelligent Silk Road calls for people cultivation and exchanges. A peaceful Silk Road aims at implementing a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept in Asia, then promoting world peace and stability, Huang added.

While addressing the Uzbek Parliament, Xi invited other countries to attend the 2017 Belt and Road summit. The summit will not only look back at the fruitful harvest made so far under the initiative, but also set up a new starting point for the future, observers said.

"The Belt and Road Initiative will not be a flash in the pan, nor will it be formalism," said Zhao, "China will go deep with the initiative and turn it into real benefits."

"The agreement reached in November by the UN General Assembly to further promote the Belt and Road Initiative worldwide shows that its construction involves not just China, but also countries along the routes and the world at large," said Wang Yiwei, a professor at Renmin University of China.

Indians in China

DELEGATION FROM UNIVERSITY OF DELHI VISITED CHINA

by Salvi Singla

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this delegation to china was to understand the bi – lateral relations of India and China and to understand china from their perspective. China and India are the two most populous countries and fastest growing major economies in the world. Growth in diplomatic and economic influence has increased the significance of their bilateral relationship.

- Beijing Foreign Studies University, interacted with the students from Journalism College





After a lavish lunch, we headed to Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). BFSU has been there for more than 70 years and in 2014 , they introduced School of International Journalism and Communication (SIJC). We got an opportunity to interact with graduate journalism students and we talked about campus media, internships, curriculum and video products. 107 Investigation is a Chinese newspaper published by the students featuring in-depth reporting along with First Mover, an english newspaper focusing on national and world news.

- Visit China Radio International

Day 2 began with a visit to CRI (China Radio International) CRI which was established in 1941 and currently it broadcasts in 65 languages through radio ,television, internet and mobile phones. They have been broadcasting in Hindi language since 1959, everyday on short wave in the morning and evening.. We got an opportunity to meet the Director ,South Asian Division of CRI ,where we discussed about the role of media in development and education and how radio can be used a medium to strengthen Indo-Sino relations. We also met two Indian Hindi service foreign correspondents, Mr. Anil Pandey and Mr. Akhil Parashar who gave us an insight about the type of programmes ranging from Chinese-Hindi language learning to special programmes on Indian festivals.

- Visit Great Wall

After 2 days of interactive sessions we got a chance to explore the rich heritage of china on day 3 at Beijing .Out of the seven wonders in the world , The Great Wall of China is one of the greatest sights in the world — the longest wall in the world, an awe-inspiring feat of ancient defensive architecture. Its winding path over rugged country and steep mountains takes in some great scenery ,with the facility of cable car .The Great Wall of China is an amazing work of mankind all the time. This wall showcases Chinese expertise, their strength and hardwork. This wall has attracted many tourists from all over the world, every year thousands of people from all age of life young and old, comes


广州大学


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to China to see The Great Wall of China. The original wall was built in Qin dynasty 2000 years ago and later separate walls built by other kingdoms were linked together. There are various parts of the wall, we visited Mutianyu 90km northeast of Beijing, famed for its Ming-era guard towers and excellent view. We travelled in a cable car instead of toboggan ride/hiking to see China's greatest man-made wonder made with efforts of hundreds of thousands of workers.

- Visited the Forbidden City and Palace Museum

  Forbidden City, also known as the Palace Museum, and Gu Gong in Chinese, and once served as the imperial palace for 24 emperors during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368 - 1911). It is well known for its high walls and architecture covering the passage from North gate to the South gate.

- Visited National big data center

  Exploring the Guiyang ,we first went to National Big Data Center , which is the largest hub of collecting and analyzing data We can explore big data sharing, data center integration, the whole industry agglomeration, besides big data flow and dissemination he habitat is fully functional – the cloud service platforms, open data resources and a wide range of big data industry clusters .

- High Speed Railway(D211) to Guangzhou

  To our last stage of China delegation, arriving at Guangzhou through High Speed Train covering a distance of 857 km from Guiyang to Guangzhou with speed of 300km/h. The train presented the best example of commuting from one place to another with the help of science and technology. It was well furnished with comfortable seat, leg room, plugpoints for charging etc.

- Visited Guangzhou University, interact with the students

  We had a wonderful exchange meeting with Guangzhou university students. The university is fully committed to consolidating and expanding its undergraduate program, graduate programs and international students program. We Exchanged our views on new media and old media talked about the changing phase of journalism from old media to new media .



Culture & Life

PEOPLE VIEW PINWHEEL DECORATION IN NE CHINA'S LIAONING



People take photos with the pinwheel decoration in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, March 11, 2017. (Xinhua / Ding Hongfa)



People view the pinwheel decoration in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, March 11, 2017. (Xinhua / Ding Hongfa)



People view the pinwheel decoration in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, March 11, 2017. (Xinhua/Ding Hongfa)



People view the pinwheel decoration in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, March 11, 2017. (Xinhua/Ding Hongfa)

SCENERY OF ANCIENT VILLAGE IN YIXIAN COUNTY, EAST CHINA



A villager works at a cole flower field in Yixian County of Huangshan City, east China's Anhui Province, March 15, 2017. (Xinhua / Zhang Duan)



Tourists visit Yuezhao, or Moon Pool, at Hongcun, an ancient village in Yixian County of Huangshan City, east China's Anhui Province, March 15, 2017. (Xinhua / Zhang Duan)



A tourist takes photos at Hongcun, an ancient village in Yixian County of Huangshan City, east China's Anhui Province, March 15, 2017. (Xinhua/Zhang Duan)



Ducks swim in a stream in Yixian County of Huangshan City, east China's Anhui Province, March 15, 2017. (Xinhua / Zhang Duan)

"KUNG FU YOGA "TOPS CHINESE BOX OFFICE



Beijing, Feb. 7 (Xinhua) — "Kung-Fu Yoga," a domestic comedy featuring Hong Kong action star Jackie Chan, ruled the Chinese box office in the week ending Feb. 5, earning 963 million yuan (140 million U.S. dollars), China Film News reported Tuesday.

Domestic fantasy movie "Journey to the West: The Demons Strike Back" landed in second place for the week, taking 822 million yuan. It has grossed 1.4 billion yuan since its release on Jan. 28.

"Duckweed," a domestic adventure film directed by writer Han Han, placed third in the week with sales revenue of 503 million yuan.

"Buddies in India," a domestic comedy, sat at fourth place for the week, generating 360 million yuan.

Rounding out the top five was domestic animation "Boonie Bears: Entangled Worlds," which grossed 266 million yuan in the week.



Tibet Today

LHASA TOPS CHINA'S HAPPIEST CITIES IN 2016: CCTV POLL



Lhasa, capital of southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, led China's 2016 Happiest Cities list, according to big data analysis and a survey polling more than 100,000 families conducted by China Central Television (CCTV).

Last year, China's top 10 cities are as follows:

1. Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region
2. Chengdu, Sichuan province
3. Changchun, Jilin province
4. Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
5. Tianjin, Municipality
6. Hefei, Anhui Province
7. Changsha, Hunan province
8. Wuhan, Hubei province
9. Haikou, Hainan province
10. Shijiazhuang, Hebei province

The cities were ranked based on several indicators, including family, marriage or emotional life, health conditions, social security, income, environment, education, etc.

Big data analysis reveals that 70% of Lhasa citizens felt 'extremely happy' in the past year, whose main concerns with the family (62.12%), marriage or emotional life (52.31%), and health conditions (46.92%). Income factor was given by only 36.15% of the respondents, while professional achievement is reportedly of minor influence.

Nationally, the top 3 happiness indexes are health conditions (54.19%), family (47.79%), and income (43.81%), the survey says.







TIBET'S 2ND LARGEST AIRPORT TERMINAL STARTS OPERATION



The second-largest airport terminal in southwest China's Tibet autonomous region started operation Monday.

The new terminal, the sixth to open in Tibet, is located at Nyingchi Mainling Airport. It covers an area of 10,300 square meters and will be able to handle 750,000 passengers and 3,000 tonnes of cargo throughput annually by 2020.

The Nyingchi airport will open new air routes to Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, resume routes to Beijing and increase more round trip flights to Lhasa, Guangzhou, Kunming, Chongqing and Shenzhen after the new terminal comes into service, said Liu Wei, deputy director of Civil Aviation Administration of China in Tibet.



The airport has seen year-on-year increases in passenger flow since it was put into service in 2006. Passenger volume hit 390,000 in 2016, bringing the total passenger number to 2 million in past years, Liu said, adding that the new terminal will effectively alleviate pressure brought by the growing number of passengers.

Nyingchi is located in southeast Tibet at an average elevation of 2,950 meters above sea level. The city has attracted more visitors in recent years thanks to tourist attractions such as its peach blossom festival.

TIBET TO SPEND BIG ON FIGHTING POVERTY



Lhasa — The government of Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region plans to allocate 30 billion yuan ($4.3 billion) in 2017 to improve the lives of local residents.

According to the regional finance department on Thursday, nearly half of the funds will be channeled to eradicate poverty and subsidize residents in border areas.

About 6 billion yuan will be used to boost development in border areas and residents in border areas will see their living subsidies rise to up to 2,700 yuan.

Additionally, the standards for the minimum living allowance for urban and rural residents in the region have been raised to 700 yuan and 3,311 yuan a month, respectively, said Jiang Guojie, deputy head of the department.



The rest of the funds will also be used to improve financial aid in areas such as education, medical care, and social insurance.

Over the past four years, the regional government has earmarked over 70 percent of its revenue to improve people's livelihood, leading the country in providing 15 years of free education, collective support of poor senior citizens and orphans, and full and equal coverage of endowment insurance in urban and rural areas, Jiang said.



TIBET TO OPEN WORLD'S HIGHEST SUPER-LONG TUNNEL



The Mila Mount Tunnel on the Lhasa-Nyingchi Highway is expected to be opened in September, when it will become the world's highest super-long tunnel.

The tunnel is located at the junction of Lhasa and Nyingchi in the Tibet autonomous region at an average altitude of 4,740 meters above sea level, according to the Mila Mount Tunnel Project Headquarters.

As a key section of the Lhasa-Nyingchi Highway on the National Highway 318, the two lanes of the tunnel are 5,727 meters and 5,720 meters long respectively, according to the project headquarters.

Construction of the tunnel started in April 2015, and the project is about 70 percent complete to date, it said, adding that, hampered by the natural environment at high attitude, the construction process has encountered many obstacles.

"With a lack of oxygen and temperature lows of - 30 Celsius in winter, we require highly skilled workers," said Wang Liang, chief engineer of the project headquarters.

Wang said many workers suffered from attitude sickness during the tunnel's construction, and that much time and effort has been spent on recruiting qualified workers.

In order to overcome such difficulties, there are 15 oxygenators, an oxygen tank and five boilers on the project site, he added.

After it opens, traveling time between the cities of Lhasa and Nyingchi will be halved, Wang said.

"Driving from Lhasa to Nyingchi will take just three to four hours instead of about eight, and it will be much safer," Wang said.

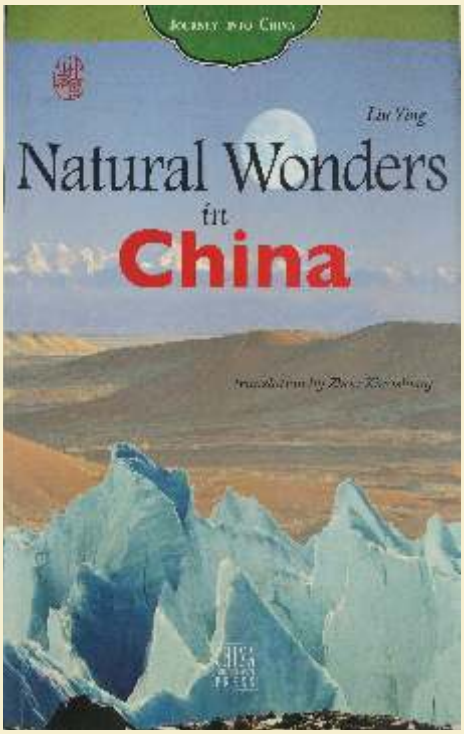
"It will also have a positive impact on the social and economic development of these places, and it will make life much more convenient for local ethnic groups."



BOOK REVIEW

Natural Wonders in China

China is located in east Eurasia and on the Pacific west coast, covering 9.6 million sq. km of land and 3 million sq. km of sea. It stretches across four time zones east to west and covers 5,500 km north to south, while the elevation gap between its highest peak and lowest point reaches nearly 9,000 meters. The great geographical differences and contrasts have made this land both dynamic and magnificent. There are snow-capped mountains, glaciers, evergreen rain forests, desolate gobis and deserts, vibrant lakes and coasts, spectacular valleys and waterfalls, and boundless grasslands and wetlands. In China, almost all types of natural scenery that exist in the world can be found, and this book intends to help you learn something about its beauty.



We hope you will find this book useful.

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

Editor
News From China
E-mail: newsfromchinadelhi@gmail.com
Address: 50-D, Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021
Tel: 0091-11-26116683

FLIGHTS BETWEEN CHINA AND INDIA

Schedule of China Southern Airlines Flights

ROUTING	FLIGHT NO.	DEPARTURE TIME	ARRIVAL TIME	FLIGHT DATES
New Delhi-Guangzhou	CZ3028	12:45	19:50	Daily
Guangzhou - NewDelhi	CZ3027	7:30	11:30	Daily
New Delhi-Guangzhou	CZ360	23:40	6:50+1	Daily
Guangzhou - NewDelhi	CZ359	18:50	22:30	Daily

Schedule of China Southern Airlines Flights (Summer Season)

ROUTING	FLIGHT NO.	DEPARTURE TIME	ARRIVAL TIME	FLIGHT DATES
New Delhi-Guangzhou	CZ3028	11:50	19:30	Daily
Guangzhou - NewDelhi	CZ3027	7:30	11:50	Daily
New Delhi-Guangzhou	CZ360	23:10	6:50+1	Daily
Guangzhou - NewDelhi	CZ359	18:50	22:10	Daily

China Eastern Time Table

ROUTING	Flight Number	Dep.	Arr.	Frequency	Aircraft	Remarks
Delhi-Shanghai(Pudong)	MU564	0230	1100	Daily	Airbus 330-200	Shanghai Pudong: Terminal-1 Delhi IGI: Terminal-3 Kolkata NSCBI: Terminal-2
Shanghai(Pudong)-Delhi	Flight Number MU563	Dep 2110	Arr 0125+1	Frequency Daily	Aircraft Airbus 330-200	
Kolkata-Kunming	Flight Number MU556	Dep 0035	Arr 0510	Frequency Daily	Aircraft Boeing 737	
Kunming-Kolkata	Flight Number MU555	Dep 2355	Arr 2345	Frequency Daily	Aircraft Boeing 737	

Schedule of Air China Flights Between India and China

ROUTING	FLIGHT NO.	DEPARTURE TIME	ARRIVAL TIME	FLIGHT DATES (JUL- AUG)	FLIGHT DATES (SEP-DEC)	FLIGHT DATES (JAN-MAR)
DEL-PEK	CA948	0310	1140	TUE/THUR/SUN	TUE/THUR/SAT/ SUN	TUE/THUR/SAT/SUN
PEK-DEL	CA947	2040	0140+1	MON/WED/SAT	MON/WED/FRI/SAT	MON/WED/FRI/SAT
BOM-SHA	CA430	0150	1325	MON/TUE/THUR/ SAT	MON/TUE/THUR/ SAT(NOV –DEC MON/TUE/SAT)	MON/THUR/SAT
SHA-BOM	CA 429	1650	0050+1	MON/WED/FRI/ SUN	MON/WED/FRI/ SUN (NOV –DEC WED/FRI/SUN)	WED/FRI/SUN
BOM-PEK	CA 890	0230	1120	MON/WED/FRI/ SUN	MON/WED/FRI/ SUN	MON/WED/FRI/ SUN
PEK-BOM	CA 889	1940	0100+1	TUE/THUR/SAT/ SUN	TUE/THUR/SAT/ SUN	TUE/THUR/SAT/ SUN

Address and Contact Numbers of Chinese Airlines

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
	Ground Floor, C&B Square,127 Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri (east), Mumbai 400069	Tel: 022-61175555 Fax: 022-61175566
China Eastern Airlines	Thapar House, 124, Janpath, New Delhi 110001	Tel: 011-43513166 Fax: 011-43513155
	228A, Land Mark Building, A.J.C. Bose Road, Kolkata 700020	Tel: 033-40448887/88 Fax: 033-22875173
China Southern Airlines	118, New Delhi House, 27, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi 110001	Tel: 011-43596075/77/78 Fax:011-23737453
Cathy Pacific	G123, Tolstoy House, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi	Tel:011-23321286/3332 Fax: 011-23721550

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TEL: +86-10-68509473,68507842
FAX: +86-10-68511149
Add: No.11,Fuxing Road,Beijing,China 100859
E-mail: intl@cctv.com ; distribution@cctv.com

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www.fmprc.gov.cn
E-mail:webmaster@mfa.gov.cn

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