



CCAS CHINA NEWS
by JAYADEVA RANADE

1 March 2024

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING PRESIDES OVER
POLITBURO MEETING TO DELIBERATE ON DRAFT GOVERNMENT
WORK REPORT**

The People's Daily (February 29) reported that China's Politburo met on February 29 to discuss the draft Government Work Report, which will be submitted by the State Council at the National People's Congress session in March for deliberation. Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the meeting. The meeting observed that "faced with an extremely complex international environment and the arduous tasks of reform, development and stability, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core united and led the entire Party and the people of all ethnic groups in the country to withstand external pressure, overcome internal difficulties, and make great contributions". It the prevention and control of Covid "achieved a stable transition, the economy has rebounded and improved, people's livelihood has been effectively guaranteed, the main goals and tasks of economic and social development throughout the year have been successfully achieved, high-quality development has been solidly advanced, and solid steps have been taken to comprehensively build a modern socialist country". It emphasized that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and is a critical year for achieving the goals and tasks of the "14th Five-Year Plan". It said the meeting adhered "to the general tone of seeking progress while maintaining stability", implementing the new development concept completely, coordinating new urbanization and comprehensive rural revitalization, and coordinating high-quality development and high-level security, maintaining social stability, and comprehensively promoting "the construction of a strong country and national rejuvenation with Chinese-style modernization". It said the proactive fiscal policy must be appropriately intensified and "the prudent monetary policy must be flexible, appropriate, precise and effective, enhance the consistency of macro policy orientation, and create a stable, transparent and predictable policy

environment". It added "We must thoroughly implement the strategy of rejuvenating the country through science and education, focus on expanding domestic demand, unswervingly deepen reforms, expand high-level opening up, and effectively prevent and resolve risks in key areas. We must continue to do a good job in the work of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers", solidly promote the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas, and promote urban-rural integration and coordinated regional development".

ii) Separately, the People's Daily (February 28) published an article with the caption 'Adhere to seeking progress while maintaining stability, promoting stability through advancement, and establishing first and then breaking (promoting high-quality development to achieve long-term economic stability)'. It said "Adhere to seeking progress while maintaining stability, promoting stability through advancement, and establishing before breaking" is a major deployment made by the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core through an in-depth analysis of the domestic and international situations. It embodies a clear problem-oriented and goal-oriented approach and serves as a basis for this year's economic work has provided important epistemology and scientific methodology". It avers that "The general tone of the work of seeking progress while maintaining stability is an important principle of our party's governance and a methodology for doing economic work well. Making progress while maintaining stability and taking positive actions means that the general direction must be stable". "Stability is the overall situation and foundation. For an economy as large as ours, one year's economic increment is equivalent to one year's total economic output of a medium-sized country. Only by maintaining the economic operation within a reasonable range, consolidating and strengthening the upward trend of economic recovery, and fully ensuring employment and people's livelihood can we create a stable development environment for "advancement"." It urged "Stabilize the overall situation, adapt to the situation, and open a new situation" and recalled that the Central Economic Work Conference held at the end of last year called for "more policies that are conducive to stabilizing expectations, stabilizing growth, and stabilizing employment."

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING PRESIDES OVER POLITBURO GROUP STUDY SESSION ON NEW ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES AND ENERGY SECURITY

Xinhua (March 1) reported that Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the 12th collective group study session of the Politburo on February 29 on new energy technologies and China's energy security. At the meeting Xi Jinping stressed on vigorously promoting the high-quality development of new energy in China to make greater contributions to building a clean and beautiful world. He said China should aim at the frontier of world energy science and technology, focus on key energy fields and major needs. Professor Liu Jizhen, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and Director of the National Key Laboratory of New Energy and Power Systems explained the issue.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING WRITES PREFACE FOR READING MATERIALS FOR SIXTH GROUP OF TRAINEE OFFICIALS

Writing (February 29) the preface to the reading materials for the sixth group of trainee officials, Chinese President Xi Jinping called on 'officials at all levels to foster a Marxist style of learning to integrate theory with practice, thereby contributing to advancing Chinese modernization with solid actions'. Xi Jinping stressed 'that Chinese modernization opens a new path for humanity toward modernization and creates a new form of human advancement, and it is both a glorious historical mission and a severe realistic test for the Party'. He underlined the 'efforts to truly master the key skills of Marxism and to ensure political unity and unity in action with a high-level unity in thinking' and 'urged comprehensively enhancing the officials' political competence as well as their leadership calibre and working ability in line with the advancement of Chinese modernization'. Xi Jinping asserted that the purpose of learning the Party's theoretical innovations is to apply them to practice. The reading materials for the sixth group of trainee officials, currently awaiting publication, consist of nine publications. Among them, four books are intended for theoretical study, while five focus on selected cases concerning the promotion and expansion of Chinese modernization. These cases span a range of topics, including the economy, education, rule of law, culture, and national security.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S ARTICLE ON STRENGTHENING CPPCC PUBLISHED IN PEOPLE'S DAILY ON MARCH 1 AND TO BE REPRODUCED IN QIU SHI

Xinhua (February 29) disclosed that an article by Chinese President Xi Jinping on strengthening and improving the work of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and fully developing consultative democracy will be published on Friday, March 1. The article by Xi Jinping was also published in the March 1, issue of the CCP CC's flagship theoretical journal Qiushi.

ii) Wang Tiemin, Deputy Chairman of the Social Construction Committee of the National People's Congress, published an article in the People's Daily (February 28) under the caption 'Use the whole process of people's democracy to focus on Chinese-style modernization (in-depth study and implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era)'.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING MEETS SIERRA LEONE PRESIDENT IN BEIJING ON FEBRUARY 28

Meeting Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio on a visit to Beijing, Chinese President Xi Jinping said (February 28) "China has always regarded solidarity and cooperation with African countries as an important cornerstone of our foreign policy." He said the two countries should boost their coordination in the UN Security Council and "jointly safeguard the interests of Africa and developing countries." The President of Sierra Leone was accorded a ceremonial welcome on the North Hall of the Great Hall of the People and a 21-gun salute was fired in Tiananmen Square. Peng Liyuan, wife of President Xi Jinping, Wang Yi, member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, and others attended the welcome ceremony.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING SENDS LETTER CONVEYING CHINESE NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF IOWA'S MUSCATINE HIGH SCHOOL

Xinhua (February 24) disclosed that Chinese President Xi Jinping on February 24, or the Chinese Lantern Festival of the Year of the Dragon, replied to a letter from students of the U.S. Iowa's Muscatine High School who visited China in late January and sent them New Year cards in return. Xi Jinping extended holiday wishes to the teachers and students of the school, and encouraged more U.S. youth to come to China for exchanges and study.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING CHAIRED MEETING OF THE CCFEA IN BEIJING ON FEBRUARY 23

Chairing a meeting of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs (CCFEA) on February 23 in Beijing, Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed the importance of lowering logistics costs and promoting a new round of large-scale equipment renewals and trade-ins of consumer goods. He emphasized that the acceleration of product upgrades is an important measure to promote high-quality development, and that the logistics sector serves as arteries and veins of the real economy. Efforts must be made to effectively lower logistics costs across the board, enhance the core competitiveness of industries and improve the efficiency of economic operations. The meeting stressed that in order to serve the real economy and the people, the country must lower logistics costs by reducing expenses related to transport, warehousing and management. PBSC member and Chinese Premier Li Qiang, who is also Deputy Director of the CCFEA and PBSC member and Executive Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang attended the meeting.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER LI QIANG MET DELEGATION OF AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE ON FEBRUARY 28

The state-owned CCTV (February 28) telecast a report on the meeting between Chinese Premier Li Qiang and a visiting delegation led by Clark, President and CEO of the American Chamber of Commerce, on February 28 at the Great Hall of the People. Observing that this year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China

and the United States, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said "China is willing to work with the United States to implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state and promote the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations. The economies of China and the United States are highly complementary, and their interests are deeply integrated. Strengthening economic and trade cooperation is a win-win situation for both countries". He added that "Decoupling and breaking links" and "small courtyards and high walls" are not in the fundamental interests of both sides. CCTV quoted Clark as saying that the relationship between the United States and China is extremely important, and decoupling the two countries is not a feasible option. He said the American Chamber of Commerce is willing to play a bridge role to make efforts to deepen U.S.-China economic and trade relations and mutually beneficial cooperation, and promote the stable development of U.S.-China relations. State Councillor and Secretary General of the State Council Wu Zhenglong attended the meeting.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER LI QIANG CHAIRED STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 23

Chinese Premier Li Qiang chaired a State Council executive meeting on February 23, which heard a report on the handling of suggestions from deputies to the National People's Congress and proposals from members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference last year. The meeting studied measures to attract and utilize foreign investment with greater efforts, and arranged work for further forestalling and defusing local debt risks. The meeting also approved a number of government documents, including a guideline on further improving payment services and making payments more convenient.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: PBSC MEMBER AND CPPCC CHAIRMAN WANG HUNING CALLS FOR MORE INTENSIFIED EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE TAIWAN QUESTION

Xinhua (February 23) Politburo Standing Committee member and CPPCC Chairman Wang Huning, during a meeting on Taiwan affairs held in Beijing on February 22 and 23, emphasized "the need to advance national reunification efforts. Wang Huning highlighted the importance of implementing the Party's policies for resolving the Taiwan question and the decisions made by the CCP CC regarding Taiwan". He called for strengthening China's strategic initiative for reunification, especially in the context of the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China

and the goals set in the 14th Five-Year Plan. He stressed the significance of upholding the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, advocating for peaceful development of cross-Strait relations through increased exchanges, cooperation, and cultural promotion. Wang Huning "also emphasized the need to combat "Taiwan independence" forces and external interference to maintain peace in the region, underscoring the Party's leadership in Taiwan-related work. Politburo member and Director of the CCP CC Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission Wang Yi, presided over the meeting.

(Comment: Wang Huning's remarks are a call for intensified United Front work inside and relating to Taiwan. They suggest more direct action against the DPP and its leaders. The report figured on the front page of the People's Daily on February 23.)

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE POLITBURO MEMBER AND FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI MEETS CO-CHAIRMEN OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON UNSC REFORM IN BEIJING ON FEBRUARY 28

Chinese Politburo member and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Tareq M. A. M. Albanai and Alexander Marschik, co-chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Reform of the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly, in Beijing on February 28. Xinhua (February 28) quoted Wang Yi as saying that 'as the first founding member to have signed the UN Charter and a permanent member of the UNSC, China has always firmly upheld the authority of the UN and supported the central role of the UN in international affairs'. He added that 'China supports the steady progress of Security Council reform in the right direction, increasing the representation and voice of developing countries, giving more small and medium-sized countries the opportunity to participate in decision-making, and enabling all member states to benefit from the reform'. He said 'In a world that is undergoing both transformation and upheaval, countries expect the UN to effectively play a leading role in addressing global challenges and the Security Council to shoulder the important responsibility of maintaining international peace and security entrusted to it by the UN Charter'.

(Comment: Wang Yi made no reference to expansion of the UNSC or giving states a meaningful say in UNSC deliberations, but reiterated China's position of increasing the representation of developing countries and giving small and medium countries an opportunity to participate in decision making.)

CHINA-STATE COUNCIL: STATE COUNCIL INFORMATION OFFICE HELD PRESS CONFERENCE ON 'TRANSPORTATION SERVES MODERNISATION OF CHINA'

The State Council Information Office held a press conference on February 28, 2024, where briefings were given by the Minister of Transport Li Xiaopeng, Director of the State Post Bureau Zhao Chongjiu, Director of the National Railway Administration Fei Dongbin, and Deputy Director of the Civil Aviation Administration of China Han Jun asserting that 'The high-quality development of transportation serves China-style modernization'.

CHINA-NPC/CPPCC: CHINA'S 'TWO SESSIONS' COMMENCE ON MARCH 4 AND MARCH 5 IN BEIJING

China's 'Big Two' or the approximately 2000-strong Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and nearly 3000-member National People's Congress (NPC) meetings will begin in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 4, and March 5, 2024, respectively. This will be Chinese Premier Li Qiang's first 'Two Sessions' since he was appointed Premier in March 2023. At the time, hopes were high among the business community that Li Qiang would usher in concrete improvements to the business environment, but these have been belied. The National People's Congress (NPC) session will outline the Government's national economic and development programme for 2024 and also set an economic growth rate. Chinese Premier Li Qiang is expected to announce the growth rate on the opening day of the 'Big Two' session i.e. on March 5. Observers will also be watching for: the central government's budget deficit target; the annual quota of local government special-purpose bonds (SPBs) – used mainly to fund infrastructure investment; and measures to boost consumer confidence. Senior government appointments will also be announced at this 'Big Two' Session.

(Comment: Consumer confidence remains at a record low with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) consumer confidence index scoring 87.6 in December, close to its all-time low of 85.5 from November 2022 when zero-COVID controls were still in place and most major cities nationwide were in some form of lockdown. While the 'Big Two' sessions focus mainly on domestic issues, there will be indications of China's approach to global affairs. The Government Work Report will touch on China's foreign policy and the CPPCC Chairman will discuss Taiwan policy. It is possible that Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders touch

on the geopolitical situation and foreign policy during the sideline meetings at the Two Sessions.)

CHINA-CPPCC: 14TH MEETING OF CPPCC NATIONAL COMMITTEE STANDING COMMITTEE DECIDED THE AGENDA FOR THE 14TH NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPPCC

Xinhua (March 1) said that the fifth meeting of the Standing Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held on March 1 in Beijing, had decided that the second meeting of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference will be held in March 2024. The main agenda is to: review the work report of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee and the report on the work of proposals since the first session of the 14th CPPCC; attend the second session of the 14th NPC to listen to and discuss the government work report and other relevant reports.

CHINA-NPC/ CPPCC: FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER QIN GANG AND CASIC SUBSIDIARY'S CHAIRMAN RESIGN FROM NPC

Xinhua reported on February 27, that China's ex-Foreign Minister, Qin Gang, has officially resigned from the National People's Congress (NPC). The report did not say why he resigned.

(Comment: The resignation means he will lose immunity from criminal prosecution, although he has not been officially accused of any wrongdoings.)

ii) Feng Jiehong, Chairman of China Space Sanjiang Group Corporation Ltd., a key developer and manufacturer of carrier rockets ASIC-affiliated with the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (CASIC) resigned from the NPC on February 27. His resignation was accepted by the Hubei People's Congress.

CHINA-NPC/ CPPCC: CPPCC MEMBER XIONG SHUILONG PROPOSES COMPLETE SCRAPPING OF BIRTH LIMITS

The People's Daily (February 26) said that CPPCC member Xiong Shuilong has suggested that China scrap its birth limit completely to boost the country's birth rate, and give equal birth support policies to single parents, as well as children born out of wedlock. He said in the face of rapidly declining birth rates, it is no longer appropriate to continue restricting the number of children families can have. He proposed to completely abolish the limits on the number of children residents can have and truly return the right to have children to families. He also appealed to local governments to provide subsidies for families with multiple children, and accelerate the building of public kindergartens and nursing homes, in order to relieve the burden of parents.

CHINA-CCP: CENTRAL AND STATE ORGANS WARNING EDUCATION CONFERENCE HELD ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN BEIJING

A lengthy full-page report in the Supervision News (February 23) of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) disclosed that the Annual Central and State Organs Warning Education Conference was held in Beijing on February 20, to discuss "Implementing the Eight-Point Regulation of the Central Committee and Strengthening the Work Style Construction of Central and State Organs". It focused on reporting 45 typical cases of violations of the Eight-Point Regulation of the Central Committee investigated by central and state organs over the past three years. The meeting cautioned everyone that central and state organs are not "firewalls" against misconduct, nor are they "safe havens" free from corruption and misconduct. It disclosed that in the past three years, violations of the Eight-Point Regulation of the Central Committee have accounted for the highest proportion of various disciplinary violations among party members and cadres in central and state organs. It said some cadres ignore the repeated instructions of the Party Central Committee, especially concerning problems such as accepting banquets in violation of regulations, accepting gifts and benefits improperly, and irregular official tourism. Wang Aiwu, member of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) and the National Supervisory Commission, Deputy Secretary of the Central and State Organs Working Committee, and Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection and Supervision Committee, said that violations of the Eight-Point Regulation of the Central Committee are more likely to occur in central and state organs and tend to be concentrated during holidays such as New

Year's Day, Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, National Day, "beyond the eight-hour workday".

CHINA-CCP: TOUGHLY-WORDED ARTICLE BY CENTRAL DISCIPLINE INSPECTION COMMISSION (CDIC) REVEALS CDIC CADRES ARE UNDERGOING INSPECTION AND RECTIFICATION

The CDIC's 'Supervision News' (February 27) published a lengthy, 2630-word, toughly worded article captioned 'Keep the blade inward to eliminate the bad apples: The team of disciplinary inspection and supervision cadres is purer'. It said "Under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission and the disciplinary inspection and supervision agencies at all levels carry forward a thorough self-revolutionary spirit, insist on turning the blade inward, confronting the tough with the most clear-cut attitude, and the most powerful Measures and the most decisive actions were taken to clean up the door without mercy, and the team of disciplinary inspection and supervision cadres continued to be purified". It disclosed that the CDIC in Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Gansu and other places were having "heart-to-heart talks at different levels and categories" to "guide disciplinary inspection and supervision cadres to dare to face problems head-on and correct mistakes". It said the CDIC in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region issued a "Letter to Discipline Inspection and Supervision Cadres in the Region" to organize and publicize the importance of educational rectification and tht "A series of extensive and in-depth ideological mobilizations have effectively enhanced the political consciousness of self-examination of discipline inspection and supervision cadres". Similarly, it said the Yunnan Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision issued a checklist of self-examination issues for discipline inspection and supervision cadres, breaking down and detailing specific issues from six aspects including lack of faith, and simultaneously organized self-examination of the cadres at the four levels of provinces, cities, counties and townships; the Jiangxi Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision issued the "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Management of Task Force Personnel of the Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision", which clarified that all task force members will be organized to focus on self-examination and self-correction on whether they have violated case handling disciplines; the Shandong Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision has sorted out the common problems discovered in the special inspections of the annual inspection and supervision system in the

past three years and issued a list of cues to the problem of resolutely eliminating "two-faced people" and prevent and control "darkness under the light"; the Chongqing Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision has established weekly data reporting and monthly progress reporting. Discipline inspection and supervision agencies at all levels actively guide cadres to repeatedly "pass through the sieve", and generally carry out more than two rounds of self-examination and self-correction, and dig deep into the root cause. It asserted, in conclusion, that "since the education rectification, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission and the disciplinary inspection and supervision agencies at all levels have insisted on using hard work, turning the blade inward, and weeding out the bad apples with a zero-tolerance attitude". It also referred to the progress made by the Provincial Discipline Inspection organisations in Hebei and Shanxi. The article said a number of outstanding problems have been discovered and solved and "the majority of disciplinary inspection and supervision cadres have received an unforgettable revolutionary forging and soul-deep spiritual baptism". It added that "The high-quality development of discipline inspection and supervision work in the new journey has achieved new progress and new results".

CHINA-CCP: CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL'S 'STUDY TIMES' PUBLISHED ARTICLE BY WANG GUANGHUA, CHINA'S MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Central Party School's Study Times (February 28) published an article by Wang Guanghua, China's Minister of Natural Resources, under the caption 'Promote the new journey of natural resources work with higher administrative efficiency'. The article said General Secretary Xi Jinping comprehensively summarized the economic work in 2023 at the Central Economic Work Conference, deeply analysed the current economic situation, and systematically deployed the economic work in 2024, pointing out the direction and providing fundamental guidelines for the next step of economic work. It said, 'We must study deeply, grasp accurately, go all out to push the natural resources cause to a new level, and contribute the power of natural resources to the advancement of Chinese modernization'.

CHINA-CCP: PEOPLE'S DAILY PUBLISHED ARTICLE BY LI ZHAOZONG, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL SECRETARIAT OFFICE ON 'BUILDING A STRONG DEFENCE LINE FOR NATIONAL SECRET SECURITY IN THE NEW ERA'

On February 28, the "People's Daily" published a signed article by Li Zhaozong, Director of the Central Secretariat Office and Director of the National Secretariat captioned "Strengthening the Construction of the Rule of Secrets and Building a Strong Defense Line for National Secret Security in the New Era." The article stated that information disclosure and state secret protection are two aspects of the same issue. It said, "Failure to disclose things that should be made public and making things public that should not be made public will harm the interests of the country and the people." The article also referred to the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding State Secrets", which is to become effective from May 1, 2024.

CHINA-CCP: EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF NINGXIA PARTY SCHOOL HAO TONG PUBLISHED ARTICLE IN 'RED FLAG' ON 'SELF-REVOLUTION'

Hao Tong, Executive Vice President of the Party School of the Ningxia District Committee of the Communist Party of China (Ningxia Administration College), published an article in the Red Flag (2024/4; February 28) captioned 'Effective ways to improve the system of comprehensive and strict governance of the party'. It called for improving "the system of comprehensive and strict party governance, and comprehensively promote the party's self-purification, self-improvement, self-innovation, and self-improvement, so that our party can adhere to its original mission." It said, "the party's self-revolution, one of which is "to improve the comprehensive and strict party governance system as an effective way."

CHINA-CCP: CHINA'S NATIONAL ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION PUBLISHES NEW TEXTBOOK TO HELP STUDENTS GET CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF CHINESE HISTORY

Xinhua (February 29) reported that China's National Ethnic Affairs Commission has published a new textbook on the subject of the community of the Chinese nation. It described it as of great significance to building a modern Chinese civilization and guiding young students to cultivate and consolidate a correct understanding of the Chinese nation's history. The

publication encapsulates the latest theoretical achievements of adapting Marxist ethnicity theories to the Chinese context and the needs of the times. The textbook was released by China's Higher Education Press and the Ethnic Publishing House and contains 16 chapters and over 400,000 words. It is available nationwide.

CHINA-CCP: 'MAO ZEDONG EXPO' WEBSITE CLOSED DOWN BY CHINESE AUTHORITIES

Radio France International (February 21) disclosed that the "Mao Zedong Expo" website, which was established by Chinese pro-Maoist leftists and is one of the Maoist leftist online fronts, announced on February 20, that it received a notice from "relevant departments" that day, stating that "the information contained on the site is not suitable for dissemination" and required it to be closed in the near future. It aroused discussion among Maoist leftists and netizens. The site was inaccessible the next day.

(Comment: While many Maoist websites were forced to close by the authorities, Maoist websites such as "Utopia" and "Red China" are still operating normally.)

CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: CDIC CHIEF LI XI ASSERTS THAT FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE WILL BE A PRIORITY

A report released by China's Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) on February 25, asserted that fighting corruption related to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will be among the priorities for the CDIC for 2024. South China Morning Post recalled that while meeting his Vietnamese counterpart Tran Cam Tu in Beijing last November, CDIC Chief Li Xi had said China was committed to a clean Silk Road.

CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY OF SHANXI PARTY COMMITTEE UNDER INVESTIGATION

The official website of the CDIC and National Supervisory Commission on February 29, announced that a case review and investigation had been launched into Shang Liguang, former Deputy Secretary of the Shanxi Provincial Party Committee, for serious violations of discipline and law.

CHINA-AGRICULTURE: XINHUA BACKED MAGAZINE SAYS REPORTS OF HIGH CROP YIELDS IN CHINA ARE FALSIFIED

According to the South China Morning Post (February 22) China Comment, a bimonthly magazine produced under the state-backed Xinhua News Agency, revealed in its first issue of 2024 that reports of the record-breaking yields of newly developed food crop varieties that have frequently hit the headlines in China's official media recent years, were exaggerated for publicity purposes. It said local authorities and agricultural companies fabricated results to either enhance their image or secure financial support as China has heavily invested in biotech research and seed development. The criticism came as Beijing has placed a growing importance on food security, with President Xi Jinping labelling it as a “top national priority”, amid food export bans, geopolitical uncertainty and extreme weather events. The report listed a series of falsified tests organised by unnamed organisations, involving some of the most high-profile species, including so-called seawater rice -which grows in salty, alkaline soil – and giant rice – with stalks that can reach around 2 metres (6.6 feet) tall. It claimed that to improve giant rice figures, some firms included straw and leaves in their yields!

CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA STRONGLY PROTESTS AGAINST SANCTIONS AGAINST CHINESE FIRMS BY EU AND UK

China strongly protested (February 26) sanctions by the EU and UK against 4 and 3 Chinese firms respectively.

CHINA-ECONOMY: RED FLAG PUBLISHED ARTICLE TITLED 'STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE IN CHINA'S ECONOMY' BY CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL ECONOMICS PROFESSOR ZHAO ZHENHUA

Red Flag (2024/4; February 28) published an article by Zhao Zhenhua, Director and Professor of the Economics Teaching and Research Department of the Central Party School (National School of Administration), under the caption 'Strengthen confidence in China's economy'. It recalled that the 2023 Central Economic Work Conference had emphasized that "the basic trend of my country's economic recovery and long-term improvement has not changed, and we must enhance confidence and confidence" and "sing the bright theory of China's economy." It argued: (i) the economy has entered a new normal, and the economic growth rate has shifted

from high-speed growth to medium-high speed growth. (ii) it is relatively stable. (iii) China has emerged from the trough of the three-year epidemic and begun to enter the recovery and upward range of the cycle. (iv) the economy is more sustainable. China's economic growth is achieved under the trend of decreasing energy consumption and pollution emissions per unit of GDP year by year. It is achieved under the condition of continuous improvement of the economic structure. (v) indicators such as unemployment rate, inflation rate, and balance of international payments continue to improve; from the perspective of inflation rate, the CPI related to residents' lives increased by 0.2% year-on-year. The current account surplus remains at around US\$300 billion, which is within a reasonable and balanced range. China has embarked on a path of high-quality economic development.

CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA'S CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ORDERS 12 HIGH-RISK PROVINCES TO SUSPEND OR HALT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AND ANOTHER SIX TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND SUCH PROJECTS FROM FEBRUARY 22

A recent policy document issued by China's Central Government titled 'Measures for Strengthening the Management of Government Investment Projects in Key Provinces (Trial)' required 12 high-risk debt provinces and cities across the country to suspend or halt infrastructure projects, including those related to transportation, municipal infrastructure, industrial parks, various public facilities, and shantytown renovations. Apart from essential projects such as schools, hospitals, water supply, electricity, and heating, no new projects are allowed in 2024. The 12 provinces and cities include Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Guangxi, Chongqing, Guizhou, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai, and Ningxia, all of which have high debt levels. The Measures state that beginning February 22, unless special approval is granted by the central government, local authorities are not allowed to initiate new projects such as highways, subways, or light rail. At the same time, first-tier cities like Shanghai are also required to temporarily suspend the approval of projects related to shopping malls, offices, industries, and research and development. Relevant departments emphasize the need to "stop large-scale demolition and construction" and improve the efficiency of existing assets. It said these 12 provinces and cities have relatively high local government debt-to-GDP ratios. Some provinces and cities cannot even afford to pay off their debt interest or provide salaries for government employees. The Measures also added that currently, among the 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government, only six

provinces and cities Shanghai, Beijing, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, are net contributors to the central finances, meaning their tax revenue exceeds their expenditure. The rest are running deficits and need financial subsidies from the central government to sustain their operations and development. It acknowledged that the downturn in the real estate market has led to a significant reduction in land sale revenue, which was only 5.8 trillion yuan in 2023, compared to 6.7 trillion yuan in 2022 and 8.7 trillion yuan in 2021. Land sale revenue usually accounts for over 50% of fiscal revenue in most places, so the 33% drop in land sale revenue over two years has put immense pressure on local governments. It estimated that these provinces and cities will not be able to reduce their debt risks to a medium-low level within ten or eight years.

CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA'S CCCFEA MET ON FEBRUARY 23 TO FINALISE PLANS TO BOOST CONSUMPTION AND IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

The Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs (CCFEA), the Party's top economic policymaking body, met on February 23, and laid out plans to boost consumption, increase business investment, and improve profitability. The meeting was chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping, and he delivered an "important" speech when he said "Logistics is the "string" of the real economy, connecting production and consumption, domestic trade and foreign trade." The meeting decided to boost consumption, for which officials want to develop old-for-new trade-in programs for: Automobiles; Home appliances; and Other durable consumer goods. The CCFEA implied central authorities will provide fiscal support for such programs by "Linking local governments with central financial [resources] to support all links in the supply chain." The CCFEA also indicated it wants to reduce logistics costs, particularly for transportation, warehousing, and management and wants to: Improve connectivity between road freight, rail, and shipping; Reduce congestion; and Encourage new logistics models that make use of autonomous vehicles and low-altitude transportation. It also called for "large-scale" upgrading of equipment to drive investment. Chinese Premier and Deputy Director of the CCFEA, Li Qiang; PBSC member, Secretary of the CCP CC Secretariat and Member of the CCFEA, Cai Qi; and PBSC member, Vice Premier and Member of the CCFEA, Ding Xuexiang attended the meeting. The Xinhua (February 23) report added that the meeting heard reports from the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology on large-scale equipment updates and trade-in of consumer goods, and reports from the National Development and Reform Commission,

the Ministry of Transport, and the Ministry of Commerce on effectively reducing logistics costs for the whole society. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the State Administration for Market Regulation, and the State Railway Group made written reports. Members of the Central Financial and Economic Commission attended the meeting, and responsible comrades from relevant departments of the central and state agencies also attended the meeting.

CHINA-PLA: PLA SOUTH XINJIANG MILITARY DISTRICT'S CULTURAL TROUPE TRAVELS TO BORDER DEFENCE COMPANIES IN SPANGUR AND OTHER AREAS

Reports show that the Xinjiang Military Region's Southern Xinjiang Military Region's Literary Qingqi Troupe recently went from the area under the jurisdiction of the Xinjiang Military Region's 365th Border Defense Regiment (69313 Unit) (LJ23) to the Xinjiang Military Region's 362nd Border Defense Regiment (32160 Unit) Spangur and other border defense companies.

CHINA-PLA: PLA COMBAT ARMS BRIGADE CONDUCTS ASSASSINATION TRAINING ON PLATEAU AT 4000 METRES

A Combat Arms Brigade of the 77 Group Army (Combined Corps) conducted assassination training on a plateau at 4,000 metres to hone the close combat skills of officers and soldiers. The training focused on refining combat abilities of the PLA forces in adverse conditions with restricted spaces and specific targets.

(Comment: The 77 Group Army is located in the Southern Theatre Command, but the training was conducted in the hinterland of a high plateau.)

CHINA-PLA: PLA BATTALION EXERCISES AT 4500 METRES NEAR QIANGTANG IN NAGQU MILITARY DIVISION IN NORTHERN TIBET

The PLA Daily (February 25) disclosed that a PLA battalion conducted a training exercise in the Nagqu military division of Tibet. The exercise was conducted in altitudes exceeding 4,500 mtrs, along with low oxygen levels and temperatures dropping to minus 40 degs C. The

exercise also included unexpected challenges like enemy aircraft attacks triggered by detected communication frequencies. The report indicated that the PLA Battalion was located in, or near, Qiangtang in northern Tibet.

CHINA-TIBET: CHINESE ARREST OVER 100 TIBETANS PROTESTING CONSTRUCTION OF A 2,240MW DAM ON UPPER YANGTSE RIVER

Radio Free Asia (February 22) reported that Chinese authorities reportedly made mass arrests in Wonpotod (Tibetan: དབོན་པོ་རྫོང་, Chinese: Wangbuding) township, Derge (Chinese: Dege) County in Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, to prevent continuance of amid major protests against the planned construction of the 2,240-megawatt Kamtok (Gangtuo) hydropower station on the Drichu (Jinsha) River, located on the upper reaches of the Yangtze. The project that would force two villages to vacate and destroy several Buddhist monasteries and ancient murals. It said the protests began on February 14. The Chinese authorities arrested over 1000 Tibetan monks and other Tibetans on February 22.

CHINA-XINJIANG: NEW REPORT BY ADRIAN ZENZ CLAIMS COMPULSORY TRANSFER OF UYGHURS TO OTHER PROVINCES HAS INCREASED

Adrian Zenz has released (February 26) a new report about “Forced Labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: Assessing the Continuation of Coercive Labor Transfers in 2023 and Early 2024.” Quoting mostly documents from the CCP itself, Zenz reports that in 2023 the authorities set a goal of increasing transfer of Uyghur workers to other provinces by 38%. The report says that Uyghurs are transferred through the “Pairing Assistance” programme for poverty alleviation connecting Xinjiang to other regions and provinces where Uyghur workers are transferred.

CHINA-SHANDONG: BINZHOU MUNICIPALITY PARTY SECRETARY CONVENES 'EMANCIPATION OF THE MIND' MOBILISATION MEETING

The Paper (February 20) said that the Binzhou Municipal Party Secretary Song Yongxiang convened a large-scale discussion and mobilization meeting on emancipating the mind with the theme: "Emancipate the mind on 'Ten Openings'" on February 19. It said Song Yongxiang,

Binzhou Party Secretary, delivered a mobilization speech, emphasizing the need to liberate thoughts on the "Ten Openings" consciously standing by the "three maps" of the world, China, and Shandong, to contemplate and plan for Binzhou's open development. It said this is to promote the construction quality of Binzhou with great openness, reform, and development, ensuring steady and far-reaching progress.

(Comment: Hunan Provincial Party Committee Secretary Shen Xiaoming, while presiding over a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee, on February 2, had launched the "Emancipation of the mind" campaign. He was followed on February 18 by the Heilongjiang Party Secretary.)

CHINA-QINGDAO: QINGDAO ISSUE JOB STABILISATION REBATE SUBSIDIES TO 7634 COMPANIES TO REDUCE FISCAL BURDEN ON THEM

Qingdao News (February 24) reported that Qingdao had issued job stabilization rebate subsidies to 7,634 companies in the first 11 months of the year to reduce the burden on enterprises and strengthen their confidence in development.

CHINA-QINGDAO: QINGDAO ISSUE JOB STABILISATION REBATE SUBSIDIES TO 7634 COMPANIES TO REDUCE FISCAL BURDEN ON THEM

Qingdao News (February 24) reported that Qingdao had issued job stabilization rebate subsidies to 7,634 companies in the first 11 months of the year to reduce the burden on enterprises and strengthen their confidence in development.)

CHINA-SHANDONG: SHANDONG PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE CONVENED FINANCIAL WORK CONFERENCE

The Shandong Provincial Party Committee's Financial Work Conference was held in Jinan. Shandong Party Secretary Lin Wu delivered a speech, Zhou Naixiang, Governor of Shandong, presided over the conference, which resolved to accelerate the promotion of high-quality financial development.

CHINA-QINGDAO: QINGDAO ISSUE JOB STABILISATION REBATE SUBSIDIES TO 7634 COMPANIES TO REDUCE FISCAL BURDEN ON THEM

Qingdao News (February 24) reported that Qingdao had issued job stabilization rebate subsidies to 7,634 companies in the first 11 months of the year to reduce the burden on enterprises and strengthen their confidence in development.

CHINA-SHAANXI: 1980-BORN ZHAO XIAO, A MANCHU, APPOINTED DEPUTY SECRETARY OF SHANGLUO MUNICIPAL PARTY COMMITTEE

Shaanxi's "Shangluo Daily" reported on February 24 that Zhao Xiao has been appointed Deputy Secretary of the Shangluo Municipal Party Committee and Secretary of the Party Working Committee of Shangluo Economic and Technological Development Zone. Zhao Xiao is of Manchu ethnicity and was born in August 1980. He has a PhD in Engineering.

CHINA-HONGKONG: RARE PROTEST BY CITIZENS IN HONGKONG AGAINST NATIONAL SECURITY LAW

One of Hong Kong's last remaining pro-democracy groups has raised concerns about the city's impending homegrown national security law, in a rare demo citing the legislation's potential impact on freedoms. On February 27, three members of the League of Social Democrats (LSD), who were stopped and searched by police officers as they approached the government headquarters in Admiralty, held a protest later that day. Chan Po-ying, Chairperson of the group, said the enactment of legislation of Hong Kong's domestic security law should only come after the city implemented democratic elections for the city's leader and legislature.

(Comment: The LSD's protest was a rare public expression of concern about the potential impact of Article 23, following a press group's proposal on February 24 urging the government to provide protection for journalists under the proposed legislation.)

CHINA-TAIWAN: CHINESE STATE COUNCIL SPOKESMAN WARNS TAIWAN'S DPP AUTHORITIES TO MAKE PUBLIC THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT

Xinhua (February 28) said Zhu Fenglian, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, at a press conference had "slammed the DPP authorities for not having apologized since the incident, which happened half a month ago, and criticized the DPP authorities for attempting to shirk its responsibilities". Zhu Fenglian said "the incident seriously hurt the feelings of compatriots across the Taiwan Strait", and sparked widespread doubts on the island. He added "We strongly urge the Taiwan side to make public the truth about the incident as soon as possible, severely punish those responsible, apologize to the families of the victims, meet their legitimate demands and give an explanation to the bereaved families and compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. We are resolute in protecting our compatriots' legitimate rights and interests, and never allow such incidents to happen again." Zhu Fenglian added that the mainland reserves the right to take further measures, and that all consequences shall be borne by the Taiwan side.

CHINA-INDIA: GUANGMING DAILY ARTICLE SAYS UNLESS MODI FACES SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE UNLESS HE PROPERLY HANDLES FARMERS PROTESTS IN INDIA

A report in the Guangming Daily (February 29) said that in April to May of this year, India will hold elections for a new Lok Sabha (House of the People), and Prime Minister Modi has announced his candidacy for a third term, with little doubt of his re-election according to previous expectations. It said on the one hand, Modi plays the economic card, touting "India's strong economy" and the achievements of the past decade's reforms, shaping his image as a strong leader. On the other hand, he is accelerating the promotion of the Hindu nationalist agenda, using the defence of traditional Hindu values to boost his popularity. However, the BJP's election strategy has long relied on public welfare, with the massive farmer population being particularly important to Modi's camp. The current farmer protests erupted two months before the general election. If the Modi government fails to properly address the dissatisfaction of farmers, it may pose a significant challenge to its continuous rule. In recent years, India's industrialization has continued to advance, but the country's largest rural and agricultural population has not felt the benefits of social development. After the failure of agricultural

reforms, India's agricultural problems have become a long-standing challenge for the Modi government. Indian protesting farmers are deeply agitated and prepared to continue their protests to the end. Facing the upcoming elections, how the Modi government will respond remains to be seen.

CHINA-PAKISTAN: CHINA COMMENCES CONSTRUCTION OF SECOND HANGAR CLASS AIP SUBMARINE AT KARACHI SHIPYARD

A report (February 19) reproduced in the Chinese media disclosed that China has commenced the construction of the second "Hangar" class Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) submarine for Pakistan, marking a development in their defense collaboration. The keel laying ceremony, a crucial milestone in Pakistan's indigenous submarine development project, took place at the Karachi Shipyard. Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of Staff of the Pak Navy, attended the event, emphasizing the importance of the project. According to the defense agreement between China and Pakistan, eight "Hangar" class AIP submarines will be introduced, with the first four built by China and the remaining four through technology transfer, with the Pakistani side handling assembly and construction.

CHINA-NEPAL: NEPAL ARMY TO HOLD 17-NATION MILITARY EXERCISE AND HOST HIGH-LEVEL PLA DELEGATION THEREAFTER

The Asia News Network on February 26 reported that the Nepal Army is hosting the fourth edition of Shanti Prayas Exercise (Feb 20-March 4), which brings more than 1,100 military personnel from 17 nations. Sources at Nepal's Ministry of Defence have revealed that after the Shanti Prayas Exercise concludes, a high-level delegation led by a Lieutenant General of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is due to arrive in Kathmandu. The agenda of the March visit is yet to be fixed. It quoted sources as suggesting that some pending issues are likely to be taken up with China like military procurement, installation of an ammunition plant for the Nepal Army, another joint military exercise, training for Nepalese Army officials, and military-to-military cooperation. Nepal Army spokesperson Brigadier General Gokul Bhandari, however, said that he has no information about the PLA delegation's visit to Nepal.

CHINA-MALDIVES: FUJIAN HOLDS TOURISM PROMOTION FORUM WITH MALDIVES GOVERNMENT

The Maldives News Network (February 15) reported that China's Fujian Province in collaboration with the Maldives government, held a 'Starting Point of the Maritime Silk Road Tourism Industry Forum (Maldives)' on February 15, with the aim of increasing tourist arrivals from China's Fujian Province. Several agreements were signed during the forum, involving four tour operators from China and Maldives. These agreements are expected to contribute to a rise in the number of tourists visiting Maldives from China's Fujian Province. 90 stakeholders from Maldives and China participated in the forum. The forum served as a platform for networking and discussions, especially with the launch of direct flights to Maldives by China's Xiamen Air from Xiamen City in Fujian Province. Xiamen Air have initiated charter flights to Maldives and the airline's inaugural flight brought 230 tourists to Maldives, following discussions during President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's official visit to China. The government's objective is to further augment tourist arrivals from China to Maldives.

ii) Separately, on February 26, Maldives Ministry of Tourism disclosed that the Maldives has welcomed over 50,000 tourist arrivals from China so far this year. A total of 378,245 tourists visited the Maldives as of February 24. Furthermore, a record number of tourists arrived in the Maldives on February 10, with 10,213 arrivals recorded on that day. While the government's target is to attract 2 million tourists this year, the tourism ministry anticipates the actual number of tourists will surpass this target and reach approximately 2.3 million.

CHINA-UKRAINE: CHINESE ENVOY LI HUI TO EMBARK ON SECOND ROUND OF SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY ON UKRAINE CRISIS

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning announced during a press briefing on February 27 that starting from March 2, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs Li Hui will visit Russia, the EU headquarters, Poland, Ukraine, Germany and France for the second round of shuttle diplomacy on seeking a political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. She said it has been two years since the full escalation of the Ukraine crisis began and the conflict drags on. The most urgent priority now is to restore peace. The sooner peace talks begin, the less the damage that is done. She added that in the past two years, China has never given up on promoting peace or slackened its efforts to facilitate talks, and China has

had in-depth exchanges with countries, including Russia and Ukraine, playing a constructive role in addressing the crisis.

CHINA-US: U.S. REP GALLAGHER HAS SUGGESTED THAT SPACEX IS WITHHOLDING SATELLITE SERVICES IN AND AROUND TAIWAN

The Wall Street Journal (February 24) reported that U.S. House Representative Mike Gallagher (R., Wis.) has suggested SpaceX is withholding satellite service in Taiwan potentially in violation of its obligations to the U.S. government. In a letter to Musk, Mike Gallagher (R., Wis.) said that multiple sources told a committee he leads that the satellite broadband provided through the company's Starshield unit is inactive near and in Taiwan. "SpaceX is possibly withholding broadband internet services in and around Taiwan—possibly in breach of SpaceX's contractual obligations with the U.S. government." Gallagher made clear in the letter that his concern relates to communications, including for U.S. military personnel, in the event of Chinese "military aggression against Taiwan."