

OPINION: ADVOCATING LAW-BASED GOVERNANCE P.26

FEATURES: THE ARTISTIC CPPCC MEMBER P.42

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Cover Photo: The Fifth Session of the 13th National People's Congress opens at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5 (XINHUA)

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The Right Fit

Democracy was a hot topic at the recently concluded National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee sessions.

This world has different races and nations as well as diversified forms of democracy. These diversifications do have something in common, such as the pursuit of freedom and providing citizens with the rights to vote and to be voted for. Similarities aside, the U.S. advocates electoral democracy, whereas China stresses a whole-process people's democracy.

China's version covers elections, consultations, decision-making, management and oversight. In the eyes of the Chinese citizens, the best way to evaluate whether a country's political system is democratic and efficient is to observe whether the succession of its leading body occurs orderly and in line with the law, whether all people can manage state affairs and social, economic and cultural affairs in conformity with legal provisions, whether the public can express their requirements without hindrance, whether all sectors can efficiently participate in the country's political affairs, whether national decisions can be made in a

rational, democratic way, whether professionals from all fields can be part of the national leadership team and administrative systems through fair competition, whether the ruling party can serve as a leader in state affairs in accordance with the Constitution and laws, and whether the exercise of power can be kept under effective restraint and supervision.

True democracy depends on whether citizens can genuinely partake after the votes are cast and counted. China's whole-process people's democracy ensures this. The Chinese Government has offered better opportunities for the people to take part in political affairs so their voices can be heard on diverse issues; China has developed a unique socialist consultative democracy, pooling the wisdom and strength of all political parties, organizations, ethnic groups and sectors of society; the country has also maximized its decision-making transparency to ensure all decisions serve the people's interests and aspirations.

No two political systems are exactly alike. What kind of democracy to practice should be decided by a country's people. No democracy works better than the one that best suits the country's conditions and development. **BR**



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FASHIONABLE CELEBRATION

An employee of China Railway Construction Engineering Group walks the runway at a fashion show hosted by the company to celebrate International Women's Day in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, on March 7.



Waterfall Scenery

Tourists take in the scenery of the Hukou Waterfall on the Yellow River in Shaanxi Province on March 8. The waterfall is witnessing an increased water flow due to warm temperatures.

A Good Start

China's central authorities have accomplished their main targets and tasks for last year and made a good start on the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), according to a government work report submitted to the national legislature for deliberation on March 5.

China secured new and major achievements in the country's development during 2021, with its economy continuing to recover and grow, innovation capacity enhanced, and economic structure and regional development priorities refined, said the report.

Last year, China's gross domestic product grew 8.1 percent year on year to reach 114 trillion yuan (\$18 trillion), while national fiscal revenue exceeded 20 trillion yuan (\$3 trillion), according to the report.

Major advances were registered in research on core technologies in key fields, it said.

China also deepened reform and opening up, enhanced ecological conservation, and raised its people's living standards in 2021.

The report said overall COVID-19 response had been consolidated, adding that the implementation of control measures is now routine and over 85 percent of the population has been fully vaccinated.

Wildlife Protection

China will step up efforts to protect endangered wildlife species and their habitats during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said on March 3.

Emergency measures will be taken to protect 48 critically endangered wild animal species, including the Siberian tiger, and 50 wild plant species with extremely small populations, such as the *Abies beshanzuensis*, a fir tree species, the administration said.

The country will strive to ensure a 10-percent increase in its total area of important habitats during the period, build a breeding base and gene bank for rare and endangered wild animals, and launch the ex-situ conservation of plants with low populations.

In recent years, China has made consistent efforts to protect wild animals and their habitats, and boost the in- and ex-situ conservation of wild plants.

The number of wild giant pandas has grown from 1,114 to

1,864 over the past four decades, and the Asian elephant population has grown from 180 in 1985 to approximately 300 at present.

The wild population of Hainan gibbons has increased from no more than 10 in two groups in 1980 to 35 in five groups.

March 3 marks World Wildlife Day, which was created to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild flora and fauna.

Cultural Relic Protection

Cultural relic experts have launched a program to treat water erosion in the Xumishan Grottoes, which date back over 1,500 years, in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

The grottoes, which initially built during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), have 162 caves and more than 1,000 statues on eight hills stretching approximately 2 km.

Most caves have already been closed due to water erosion and safety issues.

Located on the northern road of the eastern section of the ancient Silk Road, the Xumishan Grottoes is one of China's top 10 grotto sites. It was listed by the World Monuments Fund as one of the 100 most endangered architectural and cultural sites in the world in 2007.

Amphibious Aircraft

The development of China's AG600 large amphibious aircraft has gained support from the financial-leasing sector, the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) announced on March 3. The AG600 is a key piece of aeronautical equipment in China's emergency-rescue system.

China Aviation Industry General Aircraft Co. Ltd., a

subsidiary of AVIC, signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Everbright Financial Leasing Co. Ltd. on March 3 to jointly boost research and development of the AG600 and its future operation, said AVIC.

As a special-purpose aircraft, the AG600 has been developed by AVIC to meet the needs of firefighting and marine-rescue missions, as well as other critical emergency-rescue operations.

It successfully completed its maiden flight in 2017, its first take-off from a water reservoir in 2018, and its maiden flight over the sea in 2020.

For 2022, the AG600 project has set the target of seeing three new aircrafts enter the final assembly phase and three aircrafts to take maiden flights, according to AVIC.

Protection of Women and Children

Chinese judicial authorities have stepped up efforts to better protect women and children, according to work reports of the country's top court and top procuratorate.

The reports were submitted to this session of the National People's Congress (NPC) for deliberation on March 8, coinciding

with International Women's Day.

China stands firmly opposed to domestic violence and strictly punishes abusers in accordance with the law, read a work report of the Supreme People's Court (SPC).

The top court, jointly working with the All-China Women's Federation, issued a total of 3,356 personal safety protection writs to fully strengthen the protection of women and children in 2021, the SPC report said.

It also highlighted the severe punishment imposed on crimes related to sexual harassment against, plus abduction and trafficking of women or children, as well as buying those women and children abducted or trafficked, showcasing the reinforced judicial protection, read the report.

Protection of women and children was also underscored in the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) work report. The SPP pledged to take a tough stance in prosecuting suspects involved in human abducting and trafficking, according to the report.

Those buying abducted women or children, refusing to rescue victims, or preventing others from rescuing them will face penalties, said the SPP in the report, which highlighted



Smart Farming

A staff member operates an unmanned crop-protection machine via remote control in a field in Jiangxiang Town, Jiangxi Province, on March 8. Unmanned devices have greatly improved the efficiency of agricultural production there.

cross-department efforts in fighting these crimes.

Deputy Quota

A draft proposal to give more seats in the national legislature to people from the grassroots level and to women was submitted to the Fifth Session of the 13th NPC for deliberation on March 5.

It states that the proportion

of female deputies and grassroots lawmakers in the 14th NPC, especially frontline workers, farmers and professional technicians, should be higher than that in the 13th NPC, and that the number of lawmakers from ethnic minorities shall account for about 12 percent of the total.

The election of deputies shall be completed in January 2023, stated the draft.



Veggie Up!

A farmer harvests balsam pears in Tunchang, Hainan Province, on March 5. The city has been developing its balsam pear production to promote rural vitalization.

Debt to GDP

China's macro leverage ratio, the proportion of debt to GDP, has risen at an average annual rate of 4.8 percentage points over the past five years, the People's Bank of China said in an online statement on March 8.

"Compared with other major economies, the rise in China has been controllable since the COVID-19 outbreak, and a relatively small increase in debt has supported the country's rapid economic recovery," the statement said.

The ratio fell to 272.5 percent in 2021, down from 280.2 percent in 2020.

The drop was due to the country's powerful pandemic prevention and control measures, steady economic recovery and effective macro policies, according to the statement.

"The increase is expected to remain largely stable in 2022, which will create financial

policy leeway to increase support for the real economy," it added.

Reform Priorities

China will carry out major reforms to boost growth and reduce pressure on economic and social development, Lian Weiliang, Vice Minister of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), told a press conference on March 7.

The reforms will focus on stimulating the vitality of market entities, stabilizing growth, expanding domestic demand, promoting high-level opening up and pushing green transition, he said.

To stabilize growth, social capital will be better leveraged to increase effective investment, according to Lian.

The commission has emphasized that market entities will play a larger role in

infrastructure development nationwide, and pledged lower thresholds, stronger policy support and a more enabling business climate for social capital.

Standard Setting

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has unveiled guidelines for setting standards related to the Internet of Vehicles (IoV), as part of efforts to protect the industry's Internet and data security.

A system of network and data security standards for the sector should be initially established by late 2023 and further improved by 2025, with over 100 standards completed, the ministry said.

The IoV is an emerging business form that integrates the new generation of network communications technology with the fields of automobiles, electronics and road transportation.

Board Shift

The two major bourses on the Chinese mainland have respectively released their board-transfer regulations for companies listed on the newly established Beijing Stock Exchange (BSE).

Companies seeking to shift to the sci-tech innovation board of the Shanghai Stock Exchange and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange's board of growth enterprises need to be listed continuously on the BSE for more than one year, according to the Shanghai and Shenzhen bourses.

For those transferred from the selected layer of the National Equities Exchange and Quotations (NEEQ), also known as the "new third board," their listing time on the NEEQ will be calculated together.

Other requirements include a share capital of at least 30 million yuan (\$4.74 million) and a number of shareholders of no

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.32 yuan)

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



fewer than 1,000.

The BSE began trading in November 2021, marking a key step in China's efforts to deepen capital market reform and support small businesses. It adopts the registration-based initial public offering system, in line with the Nasdaq-style sci-tech innovation board, also known as the STAR market, on the Shanghai Stock Exchange, and the tech-heavy ChiNext market on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

Bond Connect

The monthly trading volume under the Bond Connect program reached 540.1 billion yuan (\$85.3 billion) in February, with the average daily turnover at 33.8 billion yuan (\$5.3 billion), data released by the Bond Connect Co. Ltd. showed.

The program, launched in July 2017, is a mutual market access scheme that allows overseas investors to invest in the Chinese

mainland's interbank bond market.

The program saw a total of 6,282 trade tickets last month, the data showed.

Chinese government bonds and policy financial bonds were investors' major focus, accounting for 50 percent and 38 percent of monthly trading volume, respectively.

By the end of February, Bond Connect had 3,370 approved investors, according to the data.

NEV Sales

Sales of new-energy vehicles (NEVs) in China soared 180.5 percent year on year to 272,000 units in February, the China Passenger Car Association said on March 8.

NEV manufacturers saw strong wholesale figures in the month, with five exceeding 10,000 units. BYD topped the list with 87,473 units, followed by Tesla China's 56,515 units,

according to the association.

The NEV market penetration rate stood at 21.8 percent in the month, up from 9.6 percent during the same period last year.

China's NEV exports also remained strong. Tesla China exported 33,315 NEVs, and SAIC Motor, 4,325 units.

Growth Champion

Online retail sales in Tibet Autonomous Region totaled at 18.97 billion yuan (\$3 billion) in 2021, up 61.1 percent year on year, the regional commerce department said. The growth rate was the highest in China.

Agricultural products alone accounted for 1.72 billion yuan (\$272 million) of the volume.

Live-streaming has become a popular method of online retail in the region, contributing 2.95 billion yuan (\$467 million) in overall sales.

Improved online access and courier service coverage have

provided advantages for Tibet's e-commerce expansion. All of its 74 counties and districts are now able to enjoy the convenience of rural e-commerce.

Securities Profits

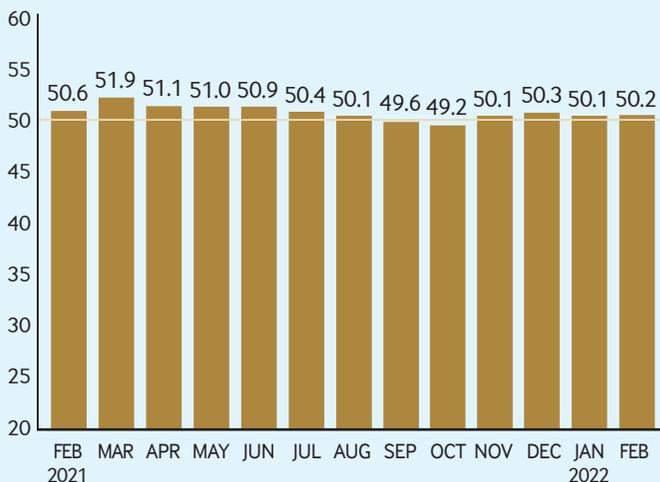
Securities brokers saw their net profits expand to 191.1 billion yuan (\$30.3 billion) in 2021, up 11.9 percent from the previous year, according to the Securities Association of China.

The 140 firms reported 502.41 billion yuan (\$79.5 billion) in operating revenue.

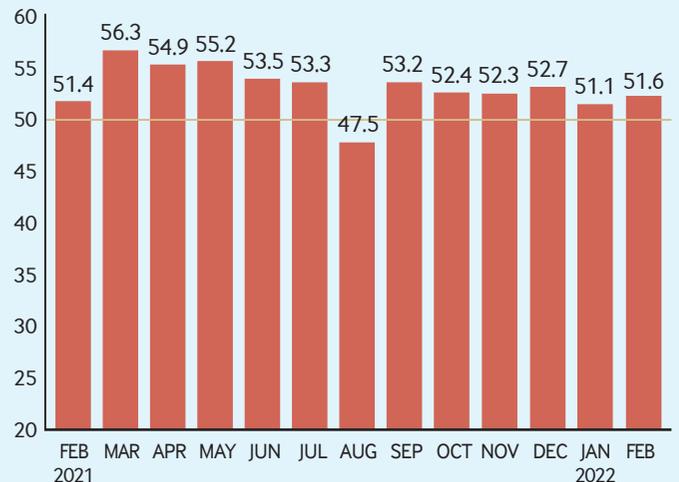
Their total assets reached 10.59 trillion yuan (\$1.7 trillion) at the end of 2021, up 19.07 percent year on year. Net assets of the firms stood at 2.57 trillion yuan (\$406.8 billion), an increase of 11.34 percent year on year.

The sector's risk control is solid, with net capital of securities firms totaling around 2 trillion yuan (\$316.6 billion), according to the association.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



THIS WEEK **WORLD**



JAPAN

People enjoy the cherry blossom sights in Tokyo on March 9



TURKEY

Tourists visit Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul on March 4. Turkey eased COVID-19 restrictions in public spaces as the country entered a new phase in its pandemic response



AUSTRALIA

People stack baskets for flood control in Willoughby, New South Wales, on March 8. Flash floods, wild winds and storms continue to batter Australia's eastern coast





UNITED STATES

A man refuels his car at a gas station in Arlington, Virginia, on March 8. The U.S. national average price of gasoline hit a record high as the country announced a ban on energy imports from Russia



SAUDI ARABIA

Jets of the Al Fursan aerobatic team put on a show during the First World Defense Show in Riyadh on March 8



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Yoon Suk-yeol of the opposition People Power Party waves after winning the presidential election in Seoul on March 10



↓ NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY ENGINEER DIES AT 91

On March 6, **Mao Yongze**, a nuclear technology engineer and an academician with the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), passed away in Beijing at the age of 91.

Mao was born in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, in 1930. In 1949, he was accepted by Shanghai Jiao Tong University as a chemical engineering major.

Later, he pursued further studies at the Department of Chemical Engineering at Peking University, and then at Tsinghua University.



After graduating from Tsinghua in 1953, he was assigned to the Institute of Modern Physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He participated in the creation of technologies for China's first nuclear test.

He was selected as a CAE academician in 1995.

Manufacturing Staff Shortage

Guangzhou Daily
March 7

Young people today prefer to work in sectors like food delivery, e-business, live-streaming, etc., and feel increasingly reluctant to do factory work. This phenomenon has led to a shortage of 22 million workers in the manufacturing sector in 2020, and the gap keeps widening. In contrast to factories losing 1.5 million people every year in the past five years, the express delivery sector has rounded up more than 10 million couriers.

Moreover, as rural areas are starting

to prosper, some young people choose to engage in organic farming, or operate online shops or indulge in agritainment. Even agriculture's appeal today outshines that of the industrial sector.

Manufacturing makes up a country's industrial foundation, playing a crucial role in economic growth and international competition. The Chinese economy, and the nation's future for that matter, demands the injection of new blood into this sector.

To attract the young, factories must improve working conditions, raise wages and give them opportunities to grow into their most skillful and capable selves.



The Goal Is Stable Growth

China Newsweek
March 7

In 2022, China's primary economic undertaking is to maintain stable growth. Governments at various levels should take responsibility in stabilizing the macro-economy, while new policies, too, should focus on the goal at hand.

"We cannot emerge from the pandemic with the clock spinning backward on gender equality...

We need to turn the clock forward on women's rights.

The time is now."

UN Secretary General **António Guterres**, in a video message for International Women's Day on March 8

"The Belt and Road Initiative projects will be the major contributors to Cambodia's economic growth in the post-pandemic era."

Neak Chandarith, Director of the Cambodia 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Research Center, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

The lingering COVID-19 pandemic casts the biggest uncertainty. As long as it has not completely ebbed into oblivion, it might still cause economic shockwaves. This year's 5.5-percent growth target was calculated based on the global COVID-19 situation, and will change as the pandemic changes.

Employment is crucial. One GDP percentage point rise represents an increase of 1.8 million jobs.

China, as a major economy, possesses the capability to self-adjust and maintain stability. It needs to make judgments and decisions based on international capital flows, the global industrial chain, as well as trade and value chains.

A coordination of fiscal and monetary policies is vital in the quest for stable growth. China's currency policy features much room for adjustment, and will not be exclusively tied to the U.S. dollar policy. China's monetary policy for 2021 was tight on the whole. This year, the country needs to return to a stable monetary policy, meaning the growth of total social financing should move toward the nominal GDP growth rate.

A Celebration of Women

China Women's News March 8

Female workers took to the streets of Chicago on March 8, 1909, demanding fairer pays, shorter working hours and the right to vote. On March 8, 1911, this date would henceforth be known as International Women's Day. China granted International Women's Day the status of legal holiday in December 1949. The concept of "women hold up half the sky" has encouraged generations of Chinese females to cherish the spirit of self-respect, self-confidence, and independence. March 8 marks a celebration of women

around the world, very different from the "Goddess Day" or "Queens Day" hailed by many Chinese businesses and e-commerce platforms.

The date reminds society to respect women and safeguard their legitimate rights, reject job discrimination, curb domestic violence, eradicate the trafficking of women and say no to gender discrimination. This objective should never deviate toward the goal of entertainment—or shopping.

The best way to celebrate is to create more opportunities for women to realize their own personal and professional dreams and help them cope with life's various difficulties. Labeling it "Queens Day" or "Goddess Day" will be of no use in this regard.

↓ INSPIRATIONAL ROLE MODEL

Jiang Mengnan, a doctoral candidate at Tsinghua University in Beijing, was honored as an inspirational role model at this year's Touching China awards, China Central Television announced recently.

Jiang was born in Mangshan, a Yao ethnic township in Chenzhou, Hunan Province. She was diagnosed with nerve deafness at only six months old. She subsequently lost the ability to hear or speak. Despite her disabilities, she studied hard and worked her way up. After graduating from the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Jilin University with a master's degree in 2018, Jiang was admitted to Tsinghua, one of China's most prestigious universities, as a bioinformatics major.

Another nine prominent figures received the title, including Nobel Prize-winning physicist Chen-ning Yang and Su Bingtian, the first Chinese sprinter to compete in the men's 100m sprint final at the Olympic Summer Games Tokyo 2020.



"The right way forward lies in greater solidarity and cooperation under the banner of multilateralism and joint efforts to build a community with a shared future for humanity."

Wang Yi, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister, at a press conference via video link on the sidelines of the Fifth Session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 7

"We once again urge the U.S. side to fully clarify its biological military activities both at home and abroad, and accept multilateral verifications."

Zhao Lijian, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, during a news briefing on March 8