President Xi sets out major tasks for nation

Xi tells legislators he will do his utmost and prove worthy of the people's trust

By CAO DESHENG

President Xi Jinping said on Monday that the people's task of developing China must be completed without delay. Xi, who also serves as chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remark in a speech at the closing meeting of the 14th National People's Congress. Xi said China has entered a new period of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, which is also the mission of the Chinese people.

Premier Li vows to focus on high-quality growth

By LI XINGRONG AND OUYANG SHUHUA

Premier Li Keqiang, in a speech at the closing meeting of the 14th National People's Congress, called for promoting high-quality growth to better meet the people's expectations.

Michelle Yeoh wins as best actress, makes Oscar history

By XU YAN

Michelle Yeoh has won the Oscar for best actress, the first Taiwanese woman ever to win an Academy Award.

A new dawn breaks in the Middle East

The announcement of the reconciliation of bilateral relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which was brokered by China, is a significant development in the Middle East. As tensions between the two countries remain high, the successful resolution of the dispute indicates a potential shift in the region's power dynamics.

The timing of the announcement, which was signed in Beijing on Saturday, is significant. The moves towards peace in the region are seen as a major step towards achieving lasting peace in the Middle East. The announcement of the reconciliation of bilateral relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia is a milestone in the quest for peace in the Middle East. The announcement of the reconciliation of bilateral relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which was brokered by China, is a significant development in the Middle East. As tensions between the two countries remain high, the successful resolution of the dispute indicates a potential shift in the region's power dynamics.

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Outdoor music festivals ready to rock again

Fans eager to see stars back in action at events across the country after the introduction of optimized COVID-19 measures

By CHEN XAN
chiefmusic@chinadaily.com.cn

In 2021, Zeng Kai, from Lian-
zhou city, Shandong province, attended one of the best outdoor rock festivals in the world. As a music fan, Zeng also became a fan of groups that had never expecte
d to come.

“We watched bands I’d never heard of, they really rocked that day,” said the 10-year-old, who works for a computer-researching company in Tianjin, the Tianjin provincial capi
tal.

“I went to the music festival with my class in 2021. With COVID-19 s—dout spreading, a number of organizations have announced the return of outdoor music festivals, with tickets being sold out, daily, and already selling out.

“Since outdoor music festivals have resumed, I’ve made plans to travel to some cities, and I’m asking my family if they want to join me. I cannot wait to see my favorite artists at the shows that are announced.”

Zeng said that “c Caucasal music festivals will be held in the summer. The rock music fes
tival of the summer, the China Associa
tion of Music Bands, is scheduled for addi
tional major holidays, the audience is expected to swell weekend
to end the demand from fans.

Zeng plans to make an early return by attending the Midi Music Festival in Tianjin, the Midi Music Festival in Hubei, and the Midi Music Festival in Beijing.

Permitting more than 5000 people at 
sectors.

At the Midi Music Festival held in Beijing, China, the Midi Music Festival, which is held annually at venues across the country, has steadily boosted its attendance over the past few years, with more than 200,000 attendees.

The festival has seen a steady increase in the number of attendees, with more than 100,000 people attending in 2021. This year, the festival is expected to attract even more attendees, with more than 200,000 expected to attend.

Shan said tickets sold out after the announcement of the event.

The event will include a night de
dicated to young fans and the most popular rock bands, whose music reflects the trends of the Midi Music Festival. The festival will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Midi Music Festival, which was launched in 2011.

On March 18, the Midi Music Festival will feature three bands from China’s Arrested Support. The festival will be held at the Midi Music Festival in Tianjin.

Shan said more new bands from the Midi Music Festival will make their official debut at the festival. The festival will be held from May 15 to 17.

The festival will feature famous bands from China, including Beijing’s No. 1 music school. The festival will also feature international artists, including Live Events and the Midi Music Festival. The festival will also feature international artists, including Live Events and the Midi Music Festival.

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US arms exports grow amid regional conflicts

By CHEN WEIHUI, in Buenos Aires

The United States has benefited from China’s domestic conflict and various regional tensions by boosting its global arms sales, while US arms exports plunged, according to the latest report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

The US share of global arms exports jumped from 18 percent during 2015 to 2019 to 27 percent in 2020 and 2022, while the overall global level of international arms transfers declined by 1 percent.

Buenos Aires, Chile, and South Africa have been surged by regional tensions in Eastern and Southeastern Asia, and the Middle East.

According to the SIPRI report, arms exports from 2021 to 2025 are expected to increase by 8 percent.

The US, the world’s third-largest arms exporter, increased arms exports from 2017 to 2021 by 10 percent, but its exports to Egypt dropped by 20 percent.

SIPRI, a prominent researcher in the field of international arms transfers, said Russia’s conflict in Ukraine could have a significant impact on arms imports.

A 2022 analysis by the Quincy Institute, a non-governmental think tank, found that roughly 50 percent of arms exports sold to India were of US origin, involving more than 40 percent.

Tensions have risen sharply due to the tensions between Russia and other East Asian countries.

According to SIPRI data, Russia’s arms exports fell by 22 percent from 2017 to 2022, with an expected 14 percent decrease in 2023.

Russia, the world’s largest arms exporter, is seeking to expand its arms sales to the US and Europe, said SIPRI.

For arms transfers, a strong economy and a strong dollar are key factors.

Call for a stronger relationship with China

In the context, China’s arms transfers have declined globally, those to Europe have risen sharply.

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Xi's speech inspires legislators to better serve the people

Leader's remarks at closing of first session of 14th NPC focus on trust

By CHENGLI

At his first news conference aft

ernaming the position, Premier Li Qiang outlined political positions in major areas of the new government, then listed some of the highlights.

Epidemic control

China put people and their lives first as it fought the disease over the past three years. The country has formulated targeted, scientific virus control measures and steadily adjusted in light of changing epidemic situations.

During the early stages of the epidemic, when the virus was still spreading, we adopted active risk and rig

orous control measures, which protec

ted peoples' lives and bought valuable time for the development of new drugs and vaccines. We launched a nationwide mass vaccination campaign.

Although the virus was widely distributed and the novel virus control system was improved, we optimi

zed its disease control system and improved its management of the disease from China.

China is a country with a large population and underdeveloped econ

omy. It took less than two months for it to achieve a smooth transition to the diagnosis and treatment of confirmed cor

onavirus cases.

The commonwealth strategy is completely effective.

We will continue to track and study the evolving pandemic situ

ation, and we have made contingency plans for different scenarios. We have also strengthened medical and healthcare systems and will accelerate the creation of new drugs and vac

ines.

The nation will continue to engage in communication and cooperation with the international community to protect the health and well-being of humankind.

Rural vitalization

The rural vitals will be a focus on the ecosystem, social and cultural aspects of the countryside, as well as promoting economic growth, and we will red

irect our efforts to improve the living standards of the rural people.

China is a major agricultural country with about 200 million people living in the countryside, and the sustainable development of the countryside is critical.

The country will put people and the livelihoods first and fully complete rural vitalization. To promote rural vitalization, the government will focus on three aspects.

The first is comprehensive deve

lopment, because rural vitaliza

tion is not just about economic growth. It is important to highlight the eco

nomics, environment, social and cultur

al development in the countryside.

The second is distinctive for

ce, as our countryside has unique cultures and customs that vary from place to place, and it is even more so within the same area. It is important to respect these differences and avoid a situation in which all villages look the same.

The third is reform. We need to deepen reform in rural areas to drive rural vitalization.

Food security

Food security and stability in China is guaranteed, with grain output har

vested remaining above 1.3 billion tons for eight consecutive years.

Going forward, China will rely on its own grain production capacity for nor

mal food security. We should also insist on self-reliance in grains and continue to strengthen our capacity and the support of grain production will only become more important.

We encourage farmers to produce more grain to make sure that our food security is not in jeopardy and we will definitely be firmly held in our own hands.

Prosperity of Hong Kong and Macau

The central government has always maintained high attachment to helping Hong Kong and Macau develop. It will continue to promote economic and social development for the people of Hong Kong and Macau, including the construction of the Greater Bay Area.

With the strong backing of the country and the fundamental guar

antee of the "one country, two sys

tems" principle, the prosperity and stability of both cities will not be weakened, and both cities will gain even more future.

Cross-strait relations

The "One China" principle is the fundamental principle that should guide every action. Both parties should abide by the "one country, two sys

tems" principle and the 1992 Consensus, and further promote dialogue and improve the China-Taiwan relations.

The State Council must take the lead in promoting the "one China" principle, requiring all departments and the People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police to stick to the "one China" principle and focus on the needs of the public.

Government and civil servants should be even more creative in exercising their authority, strengthening their responsibility and regulation, Li said. Instead of百姓 "touting about the boss", the government should also "hit the accelerator" and "give it all on the gas".

The premier also stressed that it was important to make a simple judg

ement that the nation is losing the democratic dividend and its cause because of the negative growth of negative social sentiment.

"When assessing the demo

cratic dividend, we should not look at the size of the popular popula

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By XINXIANG

On a sunny spring day last month, villagers and officials to Chitong vil-

lage, Taocun administrative area of Hebei Provi-
dence, gathered in a 500-year-old larch. The topic of discus-
sion was how to further expand the market for the village’s most prod-
table crop, one that is recognized as a specialty by the Hebei Prov-
inence Agriculture and Rural Work Bureau.

Jin Xiaoyu, secretary of the Commu-
nist Party Committee of Chitong vil-
gahe, listened carefully and asked about the villagers’ income last month, the 300-year-old man said, “After the two annual sessions,

The seventy Secretary General of the 14th National People’s Congress and general secretary of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Congress (CPPCC) National Committee offered a window into China’s whole-process people’s democratic politics, which involves a population of over 1.4 bil-
nions of people.

At the annual gathering, ordinary representatives and profes-
sionals—ranging from farmers to teachers—sat side by side in the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing.

Centuries-old ideas of equality of affairs, that pool their wisdom and bring the Chinese peo-

ple together to forge ahead.

Whole-process people’s democracy is the defining feature of socialist dem-
ocracy— it is democracy in its broadest, most genuine and most effective form.

In the annual sessions of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Con-
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Shanghai delegates call for more basic research

By NOEL RESKO
In Shanghai at apICAL

Continued efforts should be made to invest more in basic research, which is the foundation for advancing innovation and technology and higher quality economic growth, according to the Shanghai delegates attending the annual National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

The country's overall investment in research and development has increased from 2.1 percent to over 2.5 percent over the past five years. Ji Li, a deputy to the National People's Congress and president of Hainan University, said in his proposal submitted this year that the overview of China's basic research should be improved. And basic science, Ji said, faces an insufficiency in basic research, with core scientific problems still existing. Some of the applied research has not yet reached the level expected by the application-oriented basic research. The core problems are still lacking in demand, leading to practical problems that can't be solved in the basic research field. Jia said, "The core problems faced by core universities should be the major force, and the existence of some favorable policies should be directed at the number of students. The university should enlarge the capacity to encourage researchers to invest more in core research areas." Ji also said that Shanghai should take the lead in promoting basic research so that it can play out the potential of scientific and technological innovation centers.

In October 2012, the Shanghai government released a guideline to advance the high-quality development of basic research. By 2020, the city's investment in basic research should account for 12 percent of its total R&D expenditure. It should also have advanced basic research platforms, research and innovation environments, the local government said.

"Until now, facing many core and key technologies, Chinese society has difficulty in reaching the advanced technology level," said Ji. "We still need to strengthen research and development." He added that the R&D expenditure in Shanghai in 2012 was 56.7 billion yuan, which is almost 80 percent of the country's R&D expenditure.

A major market trend including industry globalization should also be established so companies can put forward their understandings and research results more properly. He said that companies should participate in the whole process of innovation. It is the responsibility of researchers and industries to deeply integrate that scientific achievements can be transformed in a market-oriented way." Ji said.

"If we do not understand foreign languages, we cannot fight back," said Yan. "Foreign languages and technology play an important role in international communication and the world, especially in terms of language and translation, technical and cultural exchanges, and technology."

The government's work report, he added, should be a call for technological innovation, knowing that "in the face of the two major challenges, namely, economic and social development and the transformation and upgrading of the national economy, we should be a leader in the field of technology."
Allies military exercise fuel tensions

By Cheng Wei

The roughly one-month joint military exercise kicked off by the United States and South Korea on March 13 is finding fresh tensions on the Korean Peninsula and with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as North Korea’s leadership by now firing two cruise missiles from a submarine suggests. Simulating a Korean Peninsula emergency, the US “Freedom Shield” springtime exercises will run for 11 days until March 23. Yonhap News Agency reported.

Without a showdown, the joint military drills mark the allies’ longest joint exercise and will last longer than those in previous years. The move comes as the coronavirus and major field training for the first time in four years was suspended under the administration of US President Joe Biden.

The ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff said the two-stage joint exercise designed to strengthen confidence in maintaining peace and security on the Peninsula, and is a reassurance for the continued military exercises, which were “undermined” by submarine-launched missiles.

The DPRK’s firing of the two “strategic cruise missiles” from a submarine on March 13 was reported by the US TV network CNN, South Korean News Network, or Yonhap, on March 13.

“The drill confirmed the reliability of our nuclear deterrent and underscored the need to further strengthen our nuclear forces units that constitute one of our major forces of the DPRK nuclear threat,” Kim said.

The KCNA also reported on Thursday that in a meeting of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, the DPRK decided to take “important protective measures” as part of joint exercises with the US to stop the “arm-twisting and powerful offensive move of the US imperialist puppet regime”.

The KCNA said the move to stop the US military exercises was in line with the war provocations of the US and South Korea “to counter the red storm”.

The US military is expected to send the nuclear-powered US Nimitz aircraft carrier later this month for joint maritime drills with the ROK Navy in response to the “sympathetic” core of the US military exercises.

On March 13, ROK President Moon Jae-in held a meeting with the US to further strengthen bilateral cooperation by establishing a nuclear planning document and two nations to continue the DPRK drills.

“Desecration demanded”

Civil groups in the ROK called on March 14 in the presence of commuter buses to protest against the annual military drills with the US. The US-NATO joint military exercises should be stopped immediately as it leads to a regional crisis. It is urgent to desensitize military tensions and remove drills and conditions against the organization of Korean peace talks, according to Yonhap News Agency.

Lee, a participant in the rally, said: “Throughout the war, the US has been involved in the South Korean seas and US air forces, US military and US sea vessels will increase military aggression on the peninsula and neighboring countries, warning that military exercises between the ROK, US and Japan could insolently and unnecessarily risk the war with nuclear friction in Asia.”

Calling for the suspension of the US-NATO joint military exercises, said Thursday, and the World Economic Forum’s 2020 annual meeting, that the world was in a war, and the US joint military exercises were a question of the world’s stability, peace, and prosperity.”

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US faces migrant smuggling on 2 coasts

By Alfredo Olmeda in New York

Thousands of maritime smuggling operations continue to cross the international waters off the coast of Central America into the Gulf of Mexico, and hundreds of migrants are often found dead on beach or lost at sea.

The US coast guard said Saturday, and the latest incident happened on Thursday, and the US coast guard said Saturday, that a vessel capsized off the coast of Central America into the Gulf of Mexico, and hundreds of migrants are often found dead on beach or lost at sea.

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FOREIGN Correlation: Xi Jinping at the 14th National People's Congress on Monday, Xinhua News Agency

As a representative of the Chinese people, the Chinese government, Xi Jinping, chairman of the CPC Central Committee, said China will follow the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind and build a global community of shared future with the world.

He said that as the major contributor to global growth, China is a global economic growth engine.

As an emerging market economy, China has become the world's second-largest economy and is among the top five largest emitters of greenhouse gases.

China accounts for more than 15% of global GDP and is the world's largest investor in clean energy.

In terms of climate change, China has made significant progress and is making a significant contribution to global efforts to combat climate change.

China has implemented the Paris Agreement on climate change and has set a national goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

China continues to promote the green and low-carbon development of its economy and society, and is making efforts to achieve the dual goals of economic development and environmental protection.

China's efforts in the field of climate change are widely recognized and appreciated by the international community.

China has become a leader in renewable energy and clean technology.

China has also made significant contributions to global efforts to combat climate change, such as through its support for the Green Climate Fund and its participation in the International Solar Alliance.

China is committed to promoting sustainable development and contributing to global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

China's actions reflect its commitment to building a community with a shared future for mankind and contributing to a more just, fair, and prosperous world.

China's achievements in the field of climate change are a testament to its leadership and its role as a responsible global citizen.

China is poised to continue its leadership and to take a more active role in global governance, contributing to a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous world.

China's continued efforts in the field of climate change will contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive future for all.

China's efforts in the field of climate change are a shining example of how countries can work together to address global challenges.

China's leadership and its commitment to a sustainable future are an inspiration for all countries to follow.

China's continued efforts in the field of climate change will contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive future for all.
5G, 6G at ‘forefront for high-quality development, digital transformation

Wolf Shek, senior manager (R&D) at Chinese SME

China’s industrial base is the backbone of economic development, industry and technology...
Banks create big data platform, offtake trademark loans to farmers in Fujian province to boost business

By JIANG XUEQING

Banking institutions in Fujian province have stepped up information finan-
cial support for local farmers and agricultural businesses through innovative methods of lending as they enter into a new era of innovation.

Rural credit unions and commercial banks in Quanzhou, Fuzhou, and other cities have leveraged big data platforms to offer trademark loans to local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in order to assist them in obtaining funding for intangible resources such as trademark rights.

Fujian province has more than 69,000 trademark registration applications and over 1.2 million trademark assets. Moreover, the number of trademark registration applications has exceeded 100,000 per year in recent years.

Quanzhou Rural Credit Union (RCU) has been an early adopter of new lending methods. To take a case in point, the credit union, founded by Mr. Zheng Hui, has received trademark registration applications worth 6 million yuan from a local farmer in one month.

The RCU has successfully helped the farmer to secure a five-year, 480,000-yuan loan with an interest rate of 3.15% by using the farmer’s trademark registration as collateral.

Trademark rights are intangible assets that can be converted into real estate or securities, thus creating an important asset base for small businesses. The RCU has successfully converted the farmer’s trademark registration into financial resources, providing a successful case study for other regions.

“By using the farmer’s trademark registration as collateral, the RCU has provided financial support worth 600,000 yuan to the farmer, which is an innovative approach to solving the problem of intangible asset-based lending,” said Mr. Zheng Hui, chairman of the RCU.

The case demonstrates that intellectual property rights can be utilized as collateral to help small businesses acquire financial resources, thus promoting the development of the rural economy.

The RCU’s strategy is to create a big data platform to support trademark registration and financing. By leveraging big data, the credit union can effectively reduce the risk of loan defaults and enhance the efficiency of financial support for farmers.

In the future, the RCU plans to continue innovating and developing new methods of lending to help more small businesses acquire financial resources. The RCU’s strategy is to use big data to support the development of the rural economy and to promote the improvement of the rural financial environment.
Decoupling a wrong path leading nowhere

By highlighting the record high trade volume between China and South Korea, the politicians and businessmen in Seoul have been attempting to downplay the world’s two largest economies’ recent initiatives to develop closer ties around the world. Even so, the US-sponsored decoupling campaign and its targeting of China have left South Korean businesses and investors concerned about the possibility of a trade war between the two countries.

While the US continues to follow a policy of “decoupling” and “reshoring”, China has been pursuing a policy of “dual circulation” and “going global” which aims to strengthen its economic ties with other countries. South Korea, which once relied on China as its major trading partner, is now looking for ways to diversify its trade relations.

The US-USTR’s report, which targeted China as a “twin threat” in its “2021 trade strategy”, has raised concerns about the possibility of a trade war between the two countries. The report accused China of engaging in “market manipulation” and “intellectual property theft”, and called for an increase in the number of trade disputes between the two countries.

In response, China has been stepping up its efforts to strengthen its economic ties with other countries, particularly in Asia, where it has been investing heavily in infrastructure projects. China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been hailed as a significant contributor to the global economy, with many countries benefiting from increased trade and investment.

On the other hand, South Korea has been trying to diversify its trade relations, particularly with China, Japan, and the US. The country has also been working to improve its relations with Europe and Latin America.

The outlook for the US-USTR’s report remains uncertain, with both countries continuing to engage in a trade war. However, the potential for a wider trade war appears to be low, as both countries have been trying to avoid a full-blown conflict.

What They Say

China has not been sitting on the sidelines, as its economic cooperation with other countries has continued to grow. The country has been working to strengthen its economic ties with other countries, particularly in Asia, where it has been investing heavily in infrastructure projects. China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been hailed as a significant contributor to the global economy, with many countries benefiting from increased trade and investment.

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On the road to a better life for all people

Dong Feng

The strategy and measures of targeted poverty alleviation that China has explored and implemented have drawn the attention of the international community. As a result, more and more countries are eager to learn from China’s experiences. The country is a冲锋 EXTRA poverty promise made by its Party and the government, a promise to fight against poverty in a decisive way.

In 2020, with the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Xi emphasized that China’s poverty alleviation strategy has achieved our three major goals: all of the rural areas out of poverty must be achieved, the policy-related problems must be comprehensively resolved, and whatever challenges that face China’s poverty alleviation strategy must be mastered.

The strategy and measures of targeted poverty alleviation that China has explored and implemented have drawn the attention of the international community. As a result, more and more countries are eager to learn from China’s experiences. For instance, Rongzhong Yang, a professor at Hubei University and co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has emphasized that China’s poverty alleviation strategy has achieved our three major goals: all of the rural areas out of poverty must be achieved, the policy-related problems must be comprehensively resolved, and whatever challenges that face China’s poverty alleviation strategy must be mastered.

The author is a professor at the University of International Business and Economics.

Liu Hua

Institutional reform to strengthen help protection strategy

Innovation has become a critical driver of China’s economic transformation and development, with technological advancements leading to breakthroughs in key technologies and improving business competitiveness. In this context, the government has been actively promoting the country’s China National Intellectual Property Administration, established in 2018, to strengthen the legal and institutional framework and ensure that the IP regime is closely aligned with the country’s economic and social development.

The government has also made clear that the IP regime should play a vital role in promoting industrial upgrading, fostering innovation, and improving business competitiveness. In this context, the government has been actively promoting the country’s China National Intellectual Property Administration, established in 2018, to strengthen the legal and institutional framework and ensure that the IP regime is closely aligned with the country’s economic and social development. The government has also made clear that the IP regime should play a vital role in promoting industrial upgrading, fostering innovation, and improving business competitiveness.

The author is a professor at the University of International Business and Economics.

Kang Bing

Policy constancy key to success of targeted growth

Editor’s note: Over the past decades, China’s economic, scientific and technological strength has been strengthened through systematic planning and targeted growth, and promoting high-quality development is essential for meeting the growing demand for accessing the global market.

The annual session of the National People’s Congress opened on Monday after approving the Government Work Report and the draft budget. The report was unveiled by the NPC on Friday.

I have been following the session very closely not only as the vital measures that have been adopted to achieve the set targets for 2023 and beyond. The session has been the opportunity to showcase the government’s progress in various sectors, including poverty alleviation, economic growth, and social development.

A rough review of the target set for this year reveals that the country has adopted several significant measures to achieve its development goals. The government has set a goal of achieving an annual growth rate of 5% to 6%. This target is ambitious and requires a significant push from all sectors of the economy.

In my capacity as a journalist, I have interviewed thousands of people from all walks of life and have observed that the country has managed to achieve these goals through a combination of well-thought-out policies and a focused approach.

The government has been able to achieve a significant reduction in poverty, with the official poverty rate falling below 1%. This achievement is a testament to the country’s efforts in poverty alleviation and the implementation of targeted poverty alleviation strategies.

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Building resilience

UNDPI seeks to address infrastructure, environment and socio-economic aspects by focusing on small, transitioning and medium-sized cities.

The international landscape has undergone dramatic changes and profound challenges.

NDPI seeks to address infrastructure, environment and socio-economic aspects by focusing on small, transitioning and medium-sized cities.

The author is assistant secretary-general of the United Nations and the director of the Bureau of Policy and Programme Development at the United Nations Development Programme. She co-authored this article in China Daily, a global think tank.

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Existent circumstances

The complex landscape underlines the need for a staunch and proactive approach to the climate crisis.

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Cloth shoes with "thousand-layered sole," called fang-young shoes in Hunan, have long been beloved by the Chinese people as a sign of their mother's love. The shoe's beauty lies in its craft. Thousands of stitches have to be applied to fashion them out of layers of thin silk cloth. Although modern shoes made with high-tech materials have claimed center stage, traditional handcrafted cloth shoes have managed to preserve the soul of this great art that has benefited beyond his family walls. A group of women had set up a shoe shop in their neighborhood in early February. "Making shoes is a way to make a living that's still attractive," said the 80-year-old shoes maker. "I have tried to keep the tradition of shoemaking alive for the benefit of my family's generation."

After finishing, they have them to practice. At the workshop in Guoping Village, a traditional town in China, the migrant workers make shoes by following traditional methods and using traditional materials. The ladies, who came from all over the country, have been taught to make such shoes with traditional methods.

"The shoes are crafted entirely from natural grass and leather, using a combination of few materials and water, without any chemical additions," said a woman. "This gives the shoes a breathable quality and makes them comfortable to wear."  

Imperial shoe

Although, cloth shoes may not have a fashionable appearance, they are indeed a legendary in rich history and carry significant cultural significance, forming an essential part of fashion. Since ancient times, people have been making shoes with traditional methods. Today, the shoe-making practice still exists in many parts of China. People who are still engaged in the craft of making shoes can be seen around the country.

As the Chinese Emperor Tongling-Xian (1464-1487), the son of a king, and her daughter, the Empress, made shoes for the palace, the Emperor often wore shoes of such kind. Although the shoes were made for the Emperor, traditional methods and materials were used.

In the 19th century, the fashion of wearing slippers, which were more comfortable than cloth shoes, became popular in China. However, the warm and comfortable slippers were not suitable for the cold weather.

Making a cloth shoe involves many skills, each of which makes or breaks the final outcome. Described in broad strokes, one first needs to pick the shoe sole color, then cut it out with a pair of scissors. The shoe will be repaired in many places to acquire multiple layers of thin silk cloth in the shoe's thickness.

Then, it is applied on the shoe with hot water and folded layers of cloth to form the foundation of the sole. Cotton will then be added in and sewn onto the sole with a cloth-soled shoe.

But when it is finished, the shoe is not worn for comfort, but for its appearance. The shoe's beauty lies in its craft. As the saying goes, skill is in the eye of the beholder. The Chinese people have long been known for their appreciation of beauty and the arts.

Cloth shoes help entrepreneur put his best foot forward, Yang Fenye reports.

Duan Yung, a 40-year-old woman from Duan Village, has been making shoes for more than 30 years. Duan's workshop, located in Duan Village, is run by the wife of a local woman who makes handmade cloth shoes. Duan's wife and her mother-in-law helped her make shoes. The workshop was set up in 2012, and it has been running ever since.

"I have a strong personal interest in traditional Chinese culture, and it's a great way to teach my children about our heritage.

When asked about the future of the workshop, Duan said that she plans to continue making shoes and expanding her business. "I want to keep the tradition of making shoes alive and pass it on to the next generation."
Animal instinct helps revive heritage

Shandong craftsman resurrects and modernizes traditional rabbit god figurines. Li Yinxue reports.

As you walk into the Shandong Art and Crafts Exhibitions Center, you are greeted by a magnificent sight: a larger-than-life rabbit. Provided on an慕qinqian cloud, the Yu Rabbit, or “lord rabbit,” is reproduced in a golden horn, armor and a floating red robe, complete with fur buttons on the back.

Its face is adorned with an artistically idealized Chinese character, quasi, and the cloud beneath it features the landscape of Baima Yiping, one of the most famous scenic spots in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong province, East China.

The creation of the rabbit figure is Yang Feng, 22, an inheritor of this Shandong intangible cultural heritage. Located on the second floor of the exhibitions center is his studio, where he develops his works in different designs and sizes, as well as the legends and stories associated with them.

From a large rabbit general who has an imposing and majestic appearance to a small rabbit baby who looks cute and adorable, Yang’s artistic works are exhibited. Yang named his works “ShanDong Yu Rabbit,” with particular meaning “the capital of spring” - a nickname for his hometown, Jinan.

After dedicating two decades to perfecting the craft, Yang is committed to preserving and evolving the traditional skill of making the lord rabbit in his own unique style.

“For me, making the rabbit is not just a job, but a lifelong career that I am passionate about,” he says. Han Yuyang, the deputy secretary-general of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Association, explains that the practice of weaving the moon with the rabbit god can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and was practiced mainly in Beijing, Tianjin and Shandong’s Jinan and Qingdao.

“The rabbit god is known as Tai Ye in Beijing and Tai Wu in Anhui. Despite minor differences in their appearance, both of them share the same origins and have been passed down for several centuries. They are traditionally crafted from mud and clay,” Hou says.

According to the legend, the poet-fisherman Yu Chenzang, who was ill for which they had no cure, sent his dog to fetch the gods for help. The rabbit god, residing in the moon palace, heard his plea and descended to earth with a medicine that could cure the people.

The immortal proceeded to pour the elixir into 72 small pots, and as people drank the water, the epidemic was ended and the people of Shandong were saved.

As a folk tradition emerged in Jinan, where citizens worship a clay rabbit god named Yang Yuhuang during the Lantern Festival, which is now considered a symbol of a good health in the city.

Yang head about the tales in the childhood and wanted to get one, but he never found it. Then, after helping his classmate to repair a coal miner’s shoes, he realized that he could make one on his own.

In 2004, Yang noticed there was a competition to develop a souvenir for Jinan with it needed to represent local culture and be portable. Yang thought that the rabbit god fit all the qualifications and opened a whole new frontier making one of seven years.

He won top prize at the competition, which encouraged him to quit his job as an interior designer and devote himself to making dolls of the rabbit god.

Spring into action

There were not many classes left about what the traditional lord rabbit looks like, after several events. Yang found a book about folk arts in Shandong which recorded their myths, production procedures and photos of them. He was thrilled.

He learned from the book that, at its peak, there were around 30 stores across Jinan making models of the lord rabbit, and each had its own unique features. However, the skill had been falling since the 1960s.

“I didn’t want to replicate the previous ones recorded in the book, because to find my own style,” he says.

Yang made a plan to create 72 rabbit statues to represent the 72 national holidays in Jinan and has finished seven already. On the basis of the classic pattern, Yang incorporates elements of each legend, including the spring water, landscape and stories, as well as the spring festival, in the character.

According to Yang, the main ritual to make rabbits is usually made from the Yellow River. The water from the Yellow River will naturally dry the soil and leave fine soil, which has good adhesiveness and strong plasticity with no impurities.

It takes a dozen procedures and over 30 steps for Yang to make a lord rabbit, from molding the mud to painting the patterns, and he also considers the color good health in the city.

Yang has added a new procedure, that of firing in a kiln. “I’ve learned pottery craft and that procedure is similar to the way the terracotta warriors were made,” he says.

Yang worked for seven to eight hours to make it finish. “It can absorb the water in the pigment and make the color effect better,” he explains.

It usually takes him a week to finish one batch of statues, but sometimes it can cost more than a month.

Speaking of the difference between Tai Ye and Yu Rabbit, Yang says one main element is the ears - the design of those on the former are fixed, while the ears of the latter are flexible with spring and the color is different.

The second difference is that Tai Ye has no painting while Yu Rabbit has one, but if it’s done, it’s just one — but Yang Wang usually has four.

Yang said his first work was bought by a tourist from New Zealand, and was told by the owner that rabbits have auspicious meaning in the country.

In 2006, he went to Singapore to participate in an intangible cultural heritage exhibition. “Many tourists bought there as a gift and took back to their country. They can also be a carrier of traditional Chinese culture and more plans,” he says.

He founded his studio in 1997 and, after moving several times, he relocated the studio to the Shandong Art and Crafts Exhibitions Center last year.

Besides his working area and a display of his statues, there are also many creative creative products featuring the lord rabbit, including T-shirts, pouches, badges and notebooks, as well as an arm for people to see the natural-making rabbit figure themselves.

During the weekends and holidays, many locals bring their children to Yang’s store to make their own rabbit statues. There are also various from across the country who come specially to see his works.

An old woman came to his studio and shared with Yang her childhood stories about the lord rabbit. When she was a child, each time she got sick, her father would buy her a new rabbit figure.

“When older people share with me their stories, there is light shining in their eyes,” Yang says.

“I know the time in their memory is not the same as our creation, yet mine can remind them of old, happy times, which gives me a warm feeling,” he says.

As 2023 marks the Year of the Rabbit, Yang has expressed his intentions to further expand his artistic repertoire by creating more new works, while also exploring collaborations with other art forms to generate fresh sparks of creativity.

Moreover, Yang has been actively engaging with other intangible cultural heritage inheritors in Jinan, holding discussions on ways to incorporate additional elements of intangible cultural heritage into his rabbit creation. He says that he aims to develop new lord rabbit figurines that demonstrate the rich cultural heritage of Jinan.

“Keep working how to infuse more elements of Jinan into my works. I hope that tourists can see the variety and get to know the stories behind them, as well as Jinan’s history and culture, and fall in love with the city,” Yang says.

Contact the author at liyinxue@chinadaily.com.cn.
Hidden Blade is cutting edge

Wattire thriller gives audiences a классy tale of intrigue and espionage. Xu Fan reports.

Due to visual impairment, Wang Yonghefang cannot see the magnum- cious interior of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, but that does not stop him from navigating the ne- gatist building to pursue his ambitions.

A newly elected deputy to the National People’s Congress, China’s top legislative body, Wang is working to represent China’s 10 million people with visual impairments during the country’s most important legislative and dem- ocratic event.

“My task is to amplify the voices of people with disabilities, and make suggestions to help resolve their issues,” says Wang, also vice- chairman of the China Association of the Blind.

The two sessions’ are the annual meetings of the national legislature and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Council, the country’s top political advisory body. The sessions have gathered thousands of national legislators and political advisors to discuss economic, social, cultural and other legal developments, and discuss issues of public interest.

Wang has brought two sugges- tions to this year’s NPC meeting, including one on the licensing of blind masseurs and their training.

China has issued licenses to tens of thousands of people with partial or full visual impairment to recognize their “medical raison” profession and improve their incomes. After research among practitioners, Wang found that in reality, these licenses are often unrecognized by the country’s medical system, lead- ing to difficulties in the regulation of many such massage parlors.

Wang has proposed the reform of the digital registration system for blind masseurs and the China National Health Commission and other governmental agencies.

“Publicizing their job registration process can help more people with visual impairments secure stable jobs, thus consolidating their plans to help the poor and aging persons,” said in a letter to the NPC protocol department.

The legislator suggests discussions with other deputies and officials, who set off at the event, had helped him improve his proposal.”

“The NPC-affiliates have brought my suggestions on blind masses, and I have received a favorable review and support from the NPC’s related committees,” Wu says. Good suggestions from the public can be enhanced and fixed in relation to masses problems. Persons with disabilities, and especially the elderly, say that is an important point. Our representatives are very happy to see their suggestions accepted in their draft proposals.” Wu says.

In his speeches, the character played by Wang, meets with an NPC aftershow meeting. The trainer wants to change the public’s awareness for his safety and security to ensure his normal life, profession, social vitality and personal space. Both actions do not require any special techniques, using their delicate facial expressions to reveal the unusual secrets and emotions.

Food, ranging from eastern Chi- nese delicacies to Japanese dishes and Western specialties, plays a signif- icant role in the film. The film crew constructed a kitchen on the set, a chef who was from Shanghai, and received some dishes from a restaurant known for cooking traditional dishes from Nantong in Zhejiang province.

""Drama eating"" appears in two important scenes in the film, serving as a metaphor for the reconstruc- tion of humanity of both brutality and compassion. The typical Nantong- style dish is made by using living refrigerator shrimp in a plate of white wine, which is a exploration of the character’s strength.

“Many important moments in life happen at the dining table. So, in my film, dishes not only serve as food but also play a role in driving the story forward,” says the director.

The report to the 28th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, held last October, pledged to improve the social security system for people with disabilities, and to promote the comprehensive development of people with disabilities.

"The two sessions are an opportunity for my friends with disabilities that the entire country is going to listen to us,"' Wang says. "In the two sessions, we can be to be more welcome to our friends living in a great modern accessible country."

**Contact the writer at:**

Wang Yonghefang

Wang Yonghefang is the chairman of the Blind, a 47-year-old actor of the National People’s Congress.