

TOP NEWS



Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of preview stories focusing on major issues expected to be discussed at the two sessions — the annual gatherings of the nation's top legislature and its top body of political advisers. The two sessions will start in early March.

CPPCC uses high-tech for consultation

Political advisers finding innovative methods to improve effectiveness

By ZHANG YI
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Information technology has become a valuable tool for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference since it adopted the technology last year as a new way to hold consultations.

The CPPCC, China's political advisory body, held three such remote discussions by video link, allowing political advisers to join the meetings on their computers or mobile phones.

For a discussion on the environmentally responsible development of the express delivery industry, Wei Qingsong, a CPPCC National Committee member from Jiangsu province, used his phone to livestream images from a parcel collection center at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Jiangsu.

More than 1,000 political advisers, together with government officials, were able to participate in the Dec 17 session at five meeting rooms in Beijing and Fujian, Sichuan and Jiangsu provinces.

Wei shared how packaging is recycled at the university parcel center, where more than 5,000 packages are received or sent every day.

During the streaming session, he showed how students left packaging from parcels they received in recycling bins. Students who planned to send parcels could easily find the packaging they needed in those bins.

In the three-hour meeting, the video feed cut back and forth among the venues where 14 other political advisers spoke about the issue.

Wang Xiaodong of the Beijing committee of the advisory body streamed shots of the intelligent sorting equipment at an express

distribution center in suburban Beijing.

Wang, manager of the China Post Group Beijing branch, said, "After the live show, my mobile kept ringing, giving me a lot of feedback from other members. They told me that using these methods, they understood the issues in a direct way, that it was worth a thousand words."

He received other advisers' messages via a mobile application developed by the CPPCC in August for its members. It allows them to submit proposals, discuss issues in a group chat, read news, receive notifications, make contacts and read documents in a secure format.

An hour before the December meeting began, 1,090 political advisers from across the country had logged on to the platform. During the meeting, 221 participants sent more than 780 messages totaling more than 120,000 words to express opinions or give suggestions.

Wang Yang, China's top political adviser, praised the innovation in consultation methods to improve the quality of the advisory body's work. He spoke at an online meeting attended by about 500 advisers nationwide on Feb 20.

"We should sum up the experience and make the method into a formal procedure. More advisers can join the online discussions, which will mobilize their initiative and creativity," said Wang, chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC.

Li Zhiyong, director of the committee for handling proposals with the CPPCC National Committee, said that the use of information technology would be expanded this year, including the development of more functions for the mobile app and the use of big data analytics in the presentation of proposals.

CPPCC basics

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is an important organ for multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China as well as an important means of promoting socialist democracy in China's political activities.

CPPCC members serve as advisers for government, legislative and judicial organs and put forward proposals on major political and social issues.

The main functions of the CPPCC are to conduct political consultation, exercise democratic supervision and participate in the discussion and the handling of State affairs.

With the second plenary session of the 13th CPPCC National Committee starting on Sunday, about 2,100 national political advisers will gather in Beijing to share their insights on China's major political, economic and social issues.

Members include government officials, entrepreneurs, military officers, workers and farmers, members of non-Communist parties, individuals without party affiliations, experts and scholars, individuals from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and representatives of religions and all of China's 56 ethnic groups.

The average age of members is

approaching 56. Some 1,971 members hold university degrees. There are 105 academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering among the members.

Last year, the CPPCC National Committee held 19 regular consultation sessions, joined by political advisers, government officials and industry experts to discuss key issues.

Topics included intellectual property protection, promoting the healthy development of the new energy vehicle industry and the development of artificial intelligence.

The meetings, called biweekly consultation sessions, are an effective way to promote consultative democracy and mutual understanding.

The Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee guides things when the once-a-year meetings of the National Committee are not being held. It usually holds a session every two months.

At those meetings, participants also can make suggestions on difficult problems. Suggestions are sent to State leaders and government departments as a reference for decision-making.

CHINA DAILY

Farmers bailed out



A villager in Yushu, Qinghai province, carries hay on Monday as donations arrive in the region, where fodder fell short after heavy snow made it harder for animals to graze. TIAN WENJIE / XINHUA

Judgment on Huawei should be based on facts, ministry says

By MO JINGXI
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Policymaking and judgment in any country should be "based on facts instead of groundless lies", Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said during a regular news conference in Beijing on Tuesday.

Lu made the remark after Vodafone CEO Nick Read warned on Monday that excluding Huawei from Europe's 5G networks could be "hugely disruptive" to national infrastructure and consumers.

"People are saying things at the moment that are not grounded," Read was quoted by Reuters as saying at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain.

"I'm not saying that is the case for the US, because I have not met them directly myself, so I have not seen what evidence they have, but

they clearly need to present that evidence to the right bodies throughout Europe," Read said.

Vodafone is the world's second-largest mobile operator, with around 700 million subscribers globally.

"I think the comments made by the head of Vodafone are reasonable," Lu said.

"The key is that some people, just as Read said, cannot provide evidence for their statement," Lu said. He added that they also, out of self-interest, are using their national power to destroy the normal and mutually beneficial cooperation between the companies of other countries.

But they should be aware that companies and consumers in other countries will also make choices based on their own vital interests, Lu said.

Also on Monday, the Financial Times said in an opinion piece that there are thousands of cyber attacks

on networks, but Huawei has never been found to have inserted a software "back door" to facilitate one.

Lu said, "5G mobile communication technology is the result of all countries' communication and cooperation amid globalization, and it is a high-tech, innovative product shared by the international community."

He also said that China considers it in line with the fundamental interests of all parties to safeguard multilateral cooperation with win-win results and maintain an open and inclusive market environment.

"We believe that all parties will independently make the right choice that is in line with their own interests and the trend of the times," Lu added.

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Face from the past

A visitor admires a replica of an ancient Chinese painting in Beijing on Tuesday at an exhibition featuring reproductions of over 130 ancient Chinese paintings from Buddhist temples and caves. Many of the paintings are cultural relics lost overseas.

DU JIANPO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Nation aids joint desertification fight

By LI HONGYANG in Guiyang
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China will continue to boost cooperation in prevention and control of desertification with other nations, especially with those involved in the Belt and Road, through sharing technology, facilities and professional training, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Beijing is encouraging the application of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for project funding from the China South-South Cooperation Fund, according to Zhang Jianlong, head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

The project aims to prevent and control desertification and its negative effects, such as severe sandstorms that cause problems along transportation arteries in eight countries in Central Asia and Africa, Zhang said.

Without giving the names of the countries, he said the investment under discussion is about \$2 million.

Zhang spoke at the intersession meeting of 13th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD in Guiyang, Guizhou province, which started Tuesday.

“In the future, more effective and innovative mechanisms of cooperation will be taken to face challenges.”

Zhang Jianlong, head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration

Part of the fund will be used to plant trees and grasses along transportation arteries for sand control, said Sun Guoji, director of the department of combating desertification with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration. Sun, speaking on the sidelines of the meeting, declined to give more details, saying the project is still under discussion.

Zhang said strengthening policy communication, sharing experiences and carrying out practical cooperation is needed in order to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030. The goal means that the amount and quality of land would

remain stable or increase.

"In the future, more effective and innovative mechanisms of cooperation will be taken to face challenges," he said.

Desertification is a challenge for many countries and regions. In 1994, the General Assembly of the UN adopted its convention to fight the phenomenon.

China has made great efforts and achieved remarkable results in the control of desertification in recent decades, officials said. Desert areas in China have shrunk by 2,424 square kilometers annually during the past decade, the administration said.

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD's executive secretary, praised China's achievements on Tuesday, especially in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and Guizhou province, adding that he hoped China would continue to share its experiences and practices globally.

A knowledge management center was established by the UNCCD secretariat and the Ningxia Hui autonomous region's forestry and grassland bureau during the meeting on Tuesday in order to share technologies and train professionals from developing countries. The center will be based in Yinchuan, Ningxia.

Trade: Resolution of frictions critical for companies

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Kevin Li, a Deloitte partner, added that finding a comprehensive and enduring resolution of the current trade frictions is critical to creating a more positive, predictable environment for companies, which in turn will benefit the citizens of both countries and the world as a whole.

In addition to big-ticket investment made by US companies such as Exxon-Mobil Corp, Tesla Inc and Cargill Inc in China last year, US investment in China more than doubled in January, an indication that the two countries may reach a deal to prevent wider trade friction.

Total foreign direct investment in China last month rose by 2.8 percent year-on-year to \$12.41 billion, while investment from the US grew by 124.6 percent, said the Ministry of Commerce.

As China has taken fresh measures, including introducing new foreign investment laws to better protect the interests of non-Chinese firms and offer more access to foreign enterprises in a number of sectors, the survey said China remains an important market for most US companies responding to the questionnaire. More than 80 percent of member companies surveyed said they expected positive industry growth in China in 2019.

Gong Jiong, an economics professor at the University of International Business and Economics, said if China and the US can settle their trade disputes through dialogue, China's measures to unleash its domestic consumption potential will continue to attract foreign companies to invest in the country.

Summit: Challenging task to make a road map

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Whether the two will hold a joint news conference after the talks — which experts believe will occur if the two leaders reach a satisfactory deal — is a possibility being keenly monitored by international media outlets.

On Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China welcomes the second Kim-Trump summit and hopes substantive outcomes will be achieved. China is a keen promoter of a denuclearized, peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula, but the goals cannot be achieved without joint efforts from the DPRK and the US, he said.

Shi Yuanhua, a professor of Korean Peninsula Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said holding a second summit is a positive signal that US-DPRK ties have improved. Although the two countries' relations have not always been smooth, the overall trend has been upward since the two leaders' first summit, he said.

"And what comes next after those ice-breaking gestures will be the real bargaining process between the two."

The second summit should be a suitable time for the two to discuss how to reach a consensus on a phased, synchronized approach to denuclearization, and to formulate a comprehensive and detailed road map within a short time frame will be challenging for the two sides, he said.

Koo Kab-woo, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said he did not anticipate the Hanoi summit to end with a deal that sees the DPRK immediately abandon its nuclear weapons, but he urged Washington to be open to taking interim steps for any agreement to be possible.

Koo said the talks in Hanoi will see Washington give Pyongyang some concessions on the political, military and economic fronts, but he also warned against ending the summit in the same "vague" manner as the Singapore summit.