

## Former senior Hebei official stands trial for bribery

Zhang Yue, a former provincial-level official in north China's Hebei Province, stood trial Thursday at a court in east China's Jiangsu Province for accepting bribes.

Prosecutors accused Zhang of taking advantage of his positions to seek benefits for others and of accepting money and assets worth more than 157 million yuan (nearly 23 million U.S. dollars) between 2008 and 2016.

Zhang was a former member of the standing committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Hebei Provincial Committee and former secretary of the CPC's Hebei provincial committee for political and legal affairs.

The case was tried at the Intermediate People's Court of Changzhou City in Jiangsu.

Zhang made a statement to the court in which he pled guilty and expressed remorse.

More than 60 people, including legislators, political advisors, journalists and members of the public, were present at the trial.

The verdict will be announced at another date.

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## Xi Jinping elected delegate to 19th CPC National Congress

Xi Jinping was elected delegate to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) by a unanimous vote at the 12th CPC Guizhou provincial congress.

A total of 2,300 delegates to the national congress, slated for the second half of 2017, are being elected by 40 electoral units across the country. The election will be completed by June.

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## Chinese court accepts high-profile telecom fraud case

A court in east China's Shandong Province has accepted a telecom fraud case involving the death of a teenager, which sparked a national outcry last year.

The trial against seven defendants will be held at the intermediate people's court of Linyi City for the lawsuit filed Monday by the city's procuratorate.

Xu Yuyu, a high school graduate in Linyi, died of cardiac arrest in August last year after losing 9,900 yuan (1,440 U.S. dollars) of her university tuition fees to telecom fraudsters.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate has issued a circular urging procuratorates at all levels to tighten crackdowns on telecom and Internet fraud.

Chinese police caught 19,345 telecom fraud suspects last year.

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## Xi: B&R Initiative makes mark in global community



President Xi Jinping visits the Hepu Han Dynasty Museum in Beihai, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, April 19, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative has been widely echoed and accepted by the international community since it was put forward three years ago, President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while visiting the Tieshangang Yard in Beihai city of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

Before inspecting the yard, Xi paid a visit to the Hepu Han Dynasty Museum, where there are collections of relics related to the ancient trade of the maritime route.

Xi held talks with the workers at the yard and told them that both the museum and the yard he had visited had important links with the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative, put forward by Xi in 2013, aims to revive the ancient trade routes and boost the interconnection between the regions.

Mentioning that Beihai played a role in the ancient maritime silk road, Xi told the workers to be dedicated to the implementation of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

China will boost openness and development under the Belt and Road framework, to achieve the goal of great rejuvenation of the nation and fulfill the Chinese dream, he added.

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**China shames rogue firms amid anti-pollution push**



Heavy smog hits Beijing. [Photo/China.org.cn]

In a show of anti-pollution resolve, China has begun shaming rogue firms that had allegedly polluted environment and even blocked government inspections.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection made details of the first case public over the weekend and later listed others. Obstruction of law enforcement was found to be common.

In the update, three more cases were reported in provinces of Hebei, Henan and Shandong where the central government had dispatched the largest air pollution inspection team in history, involving 5,600 people.

In Liaocheng city, inspectors were locked out of a steel company that had allegedly discharged excessive waste water.

In Xingtai, a city with one of the worst air quality records, the inspection team's credentials were taken away by force.

In Puyang city, a textile factory halted operations and ignored inspectors when they came knocking.

Altogether, six people were detained for allegedly obstructing inspectors in these cases.

"It is not just to warn offenders. The action shows inspectors will leave no stone unturned," said Fu Qiang, an environmental lawyer.

China is fighting an uphill battle against pollution. Air pollution, particularly smog, often occurs in north China in winter. A high concentration of heavy industry, use of coal, growth of private car use and climate change are all cited as causes. The battle will not be won without enforcing emission limits on factories.

In early April, 28 teams were sent to cities around Beijing to find polluters. In less than three weeks, the teams checked 405 firms and found 286 of them did not comply with national environmental standards.

The current furor only emerged after the manager of a clean energy firm in Shandong locked up inspectors for an hour. Lyujie Environmental Protection and Energy Saving Technology was accused of using an obsolete boiler and lacking proper emission treatment facilities, resulting in dust and noise.

When inspectors visited last Saturday, the company's general manager Wang Kaisheng refused to allow them to look at the plant, claiming that their credentials were fake. He later refused to allow them to leave the premises. The firm was founded by retired Shandong provincial official Xue Hongmin in 2005 to produce energy-saving boilers, coolers and other environmentally friendly products.

Ma Jijiang, a local environmental protection official, said the firm has not obtained permit for its boiler. The boiler has since been removed. Further investigation is underway to decide if there was any collusion between government officials and the company.

Jinan-based lawyer Cui Lianwei advises enforcers to beware of local protectionism. "Protectionism in some areas is the key cause of poor enforcement in environmental protection, and joint inspection efforts will help improve the effect and efficiency of enforcement," he said.