

Xi orders new PLA units to be combat ready

President Xi Jinping asked People's Liberation Army commanders on Tuesday to focus on strengthening their unit's combat capability following the establishment of 84 large units.

Xi, also chairman of the Central Military Commission, met commanders of these new units at the commission's headquarters in Beijing.

The new units must prepare themselves for combat and study wars. They should concentrate on improving their joint operation capabilities and technology level, Xi said.

The president also told the new forces to conduct more combat exercises and give priority to building "new-type" fighting capabilities.

In PLA terminology, new-type fighting capabilities generally refers to capabilities of engaging in electronic, information and space operations.

All 84 of the new units are at combined corps level, which means their commanders have or soon will be promoted to a rank of either major general in the Ground Force, Air Force and Rocket Force or rear admiral in the Navy. Though the PLA has not disclosed how these units were set up, it is likely that they were created through the regrouping of existing forces rather than recruiting new personnel, because the Chinese military is still engaged in cutting its troops by 300,000.

The units' emergence also indicates the PLA's structural shake-up has taken effect. At a Central Military Commission conference in December, Xi ordered the military's structure to be adjusted and optimized, calling for a smaller but capable and flexible military.

The establishment of the units is the latest move in a massive reform the PLA is undergoing. That unprecedented reform began in November 2015, when the Central Military Commission unveiled a blueprint for the PLA's development. The commission pledged to establish a leaner and more efficient command chain, to reduce the number of noncombatant personnel and departments and to build the PLA into a mightier force capable of winning modern wars.

Since then, the PLA has set up a headquarters for its Ground Force, founded a Strategic Support Force dedicated to electronic, information and space operations, and established a Rocket Force to replace the former Second Artillery Corps.

The previous four top PLA departments—staff, politics, logistics and armaments—were dismantled.

Xi demands enhanced supervision over reform efforts

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday stressed the role of supervision in implementing reform, demanding such work be carried out in a wider and deeper scope to detect and solve problems.

All departments and localities should attach greater importance to delivering reforms and devote more effort to examining reform's effects, Xi said during the 34th meeting of the Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform, which he heads.

Regarding major reforms and "intricate matters," authorities should review the results, according to a statement released after the meeting.

The group called for timely corrections to problems uncovered during supervision and those found making insufficient efforts should be called to account.

Leading departments and local authorities should regularly track reform implementation and report the effects, the statement said.

The group also passed guidelines and plans including more policy support for new agriculture business models.

The leading group pledged favorable tax policies, better infrastructure, improved financial services and wider insurance support to foster new business models in rural areas.

Stressing the role of entrepreneurs, the group promised to create a fair legal and market environment to bring out their creativity.

The regulatory mechanisms on money laundering, financing for terrorists and tax fraud should be improved, and regulations should be enhanced to "significantly" reduce the categories and volume of waste imports, according to the statement.

During the meeting, the leading group ordered intensified efforts to prevent forced confessions and illegal collection of evidence, saying it is important in punishing crimes in accordance with law, safeguarding human rights, and preventing wrong verdicts.

The criteria and procedure of excluding illegal evidence should be clarified during the whole process of investigation, arrest and trial, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, a modern hospital system should be established to ensure clear responsibilities, scientific governance, efficient operation and forceful

supervision, the statement said.

More efforts should be made to improve the management and operation of public hospitals as well as to promote healthy development of hospitals run by non-government sectors.

The leading group also decided to reform related sectors to prevent a shortage in medicines by boosting coordination and improving monitoring, early warning and inventory management.

The meeting was also attended by Li Keqiang and Liu Yunshan, members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and deputy heads of the group.

Premier Li stresses shift of growth engines

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Tuesday stressed the importance of accelerating the shift from traditional economic growth engines to new ones.

Li made the remarks at a symposium on new development ideas and developing new growth drivers at the Chinese Academy of Governance, attended by senior government officials and business leaders.

Faced with a challenging world economic recovery and relatively heavy downward pressure in the domestic economy, the old growth pattern will not be able to continue, said Li.

China must speed up replacing old growth drivers with new ones to transform and upgrade the economy, Li said, adding that the key to the shift of growth drivers lies in technology.

The focus should be on new technology, new industries and new business models, supported by the development of new production factors including knowledge, information and data, the premier said.

The Chinese economy has not only been able to avoid "hard landing," but is stabilizing and improving with better structure and more jobs, said Li

He attributed the strong performance to a policy direction, administrative streamlining, mass entrepreneurship and innovation.

While attaching importance to developing promising new industries, Li also highlighted the elimination of excess production capacity, and upgrading traditional sectors using new technologies.

The premier also called for more efforts to let effective investment and

upgraded consumption promote each other and use the domestic market as a "navigation light."

He urged market players to participate in international competition and take the opportunities provided by the new round of science and technological revolution and industrial evolution.

The government should also make innovations in policy making, in areas such as stock option incentive mechanism, insurance, financial support, and government funding, to boost innovation and entrepreneurship, he said.

70% Chinese buy new cellphones every two years

In a survey, 71.8 percent of respondents said they buy new mobile phones every two years or less on average.

A total of 16.8 percent said they change cellphones every year.

According to a survey published by the China Youth Daily Tuesday, among the 2,004 respondents, a total of 42 percent said they may upgrade their handsets even if there are no problems with their current phones.

More than 60 percent of them said brand is a major element when choosing a cellphone.

The newspaper said about 51.6 percent of the people surveyed were born in the 1980s, a total of 21.1 percent were born in the 1990s and 19.6 percent were born in the 1970s.

In the survey, about 82.4 percent of the people said smartphones have become an indispensable gadget in their lives, while they also heavily rely upon laptops, desktops and tablet computers.

About 63 percent of respondents said they would consider buying a new mobile phone if their old one has problems, while 42 percent said they might swap the old for new even though their old phone still works well.

Also, more than 32 percent said they would buy the latest model from their favorite brand.

While choosing a mobile phone, brand is the first element for most consumers, with other considerations being price, processor and camera performance, the survey said.

A total of 59.9 percent of survey respondents said smartphones and other digital products have made their lives more convenient, but 30.6 percent of

the people also blamed them for the negative effects of their heavy reliance on such devices.

China's anti-graft inspection bring changes

The confession of fallen senior leader Su Rong is part of a textbook for Party members in the province he once served as Party chief.

Su, former vice chairman of the China's top political advisory body, is now spending the rest of his life behind bars for graft.

He was also held accountable for serious corruption in Jiangxi Province, where he was Party chief between 2007 and 2013, according to the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

After an inspection team sent to Jiangxi pointed out the delay in handling follow-up issues of Su's case in last October, the provincial CPC committee launched a series of campaigns to educate Party members.

A total of 43 prefecture-level officials involved in Su's case have been investigated so far.

The moves are examples from the changes brought by the 10th round of inspection initiated by the central authority in last July.

Inspections covered 32 central agencies and provincial regions. Inspection teams were also deployed to four provincial regions that have been inspected in previous rounds, including Jiangxi.

Following the inspections, a number of changes have been made.

The Party group of the National Audit Office set up a tracing system to supervise the progress of corrections in response to inspectors' instruction.

The Party group of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee has started dissolving affiliated companies.

The Party committee of the Ministry of Public Security pushed forward regulations and mechanisms to strengthen reforms in selecting officials.