

Nation calls for greater poverty relief effort

The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee held a meeting Friday, calling for greater effort on poverty alleviation.

Members of the bureau heard reports on provincial Party committees and governments' achievements and evaluation work on poverty relief in 2016 during the meeting, presided over by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee.

China has set 2020 as the target year to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, and "the hardest part is to lift poor rural population and counties out of poverty and eradicate poverty on a regional basis," said a statement issued after the meeting.

The meeting agreed that achievements made during the past years showed that the goal could be accomplished as long as practical and solid effort was made and current policy and work intensity maintained.

Salient problems, however, remain, including low quality poverty relief, a lack of targeted measures and lax supervision of funds, according to the statement.

Stressing strict requirements during poverty elimination, the CPC leadership said the work report system and responsibility system for poverty elimination must be effectively enforced.

In addition, strict evaluation and inspection of poverty alleviation must be carried out to ensure goals are achieved.

The people's interests should be put in first place in advancing poverty relief, while leading officials at various levels should strengthen their sense of mission and responsibility and synergize efforts, the statement said.

Poverty relief is the historical mission of the CPC and the responsibilities of heads of Party committees, governments and departments at various levels, it said.

The meeting also called for effort to consolidate the foundations of precise poverty alleviation, take corresponding measures and inspire officials and people in areas with poverty.

The requirements of strict Party governance should be implemented comprehensively and responsibilities on poverty elimination should be fulfilled faithfully, the statement said.

Evaluation of poverty relief should play its role and pragmatic work styles be followed, it noted.

China aims to reduce the number of rural residents living in poverty by over 10 million in 2017, including 3.4 million relocated from inhospitable areas.

62 overseas NGOs set up offices in China after registration under new law

A total of 62 overseas NGOs have registered with public security authorities and set up representative offices on the Chinese mainland after a new law regulating overseas NGOs took effect Jan. 1.

Among the 62 NGOs, which include those in fields such as the economy, education and environmental protection, 27 are from the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the US-China Business Council.

The other 35 come from 14 regions and countries, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Britain, Germany and Switzerland.

“With simplified procedures and less time spent, the registration went smoothly under the new law,” said Jacob Parker, vice president of China Operations of the US-China Business Council, an organization of American companies in business with China.

The new law, which was adopted last year, requires all overseas NGOs to secure approval from Chinese authorities before they operate on the Chinese mainland.

The Ministry of Public Security and provincial police departments are responsible for registration and regulation, according to the law.

To facilitate the process, public security authorities have interviewed a number of overseas NGOs about their problems during registration and responded to over 12,000 questions from more than 780 overseas NGOs.

Besides the registered NGOs, there are now more than 170 others going through the registration procedure.

China issues over 98m chipped

passports in five years

China has issued more than 98 million e-chip passports, which contain the personal information of the bearer, the Ministry of Public Security said Saturday.

Since chipped passports were launched in March 2012, 6.6 million were issued that year alone and the annual average rate of issuing new passports grew by 20 percent.

The ministry estimates that it will have issued in excess of 100 million e-chip passports by the end of April.

At present, smart cards have replaced the paper permits issued to Hong Kong and Macao residents commuting between the Chinese mainland and the two regions, said the ministry.

The ministry has simplified procedures and delegated power to local administrations aiming to provide convenience to people who made such application.

In 2016, 79 million residents of the Chinese mainland held chipped passports for exit or entry, 30.6 percent of the residents who travelled outside the mainland.

Car crashes kill seven in central China

Seven people died and another was critically injured in a series of car crashes in central China's Henan Province, police with Xinyang City said Saturday.

The accident occurred early Saturday at an expressway section in Xixian County of Xinyang. More than 40 vehicles were involved in the crashes, which happened within a two-km-long area. Eight people were trapped in six separate vehicles, the police said.

Three fire engines and 17 fire fighters were sent to rescue the people. Seven died at the site and one person was gravely injured and sent to the hospital.

Fog and low visibility are suspected to be the cause of the accident. Further investigation is under way.

China to set up Xiongan New Area in Hebei

China announced Saturday it would establish the Xiongan New Area in Hebei Province, as part of measures to advance the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei (BTH) region.

This is another new area with national significance after the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and the Shanghai Pudong New Area, according to a circular issued by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council.

The move is a “major historic and strategic choice made by the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core,” said the circular.

The New Area, about 100 km southwest of downtown Beijing, will span three counties that sit at the center of the triangular area formed by Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei’s provincial capital Shijiazhuang.

The move will help phase out non-capital functions from Beijing, explore a new model of optimized development in densely-populated areas, and restructure the urban layout in the BTH region, according to the circular.

The New Area will cover around 100 square km initially and will be expanded to 200 square km in mid-term and about 2,000 square km in the long-term.