

## Xi calls on Shanghai to lead way

President Xi Jinping said China will continue to open up in all respects, particularly in further liberalizing and facilitating trade and investment, while calling on Sunday for Shanghai to take a leading role in deepening reform and boosting innovation. Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks during a panel discussion with Shanghai lawmakers at the National People's Congress annual plenary session.

"The door of China's opening-up will not close," Xi said, mentioning that creating the pilot free trade zone in Shanghai was a strategic move by the CPC Central Committee.

The zone, inaugurated in 2013, has seen about 40,000 new enterprises emerge.

Shanghai also should make a difference in deepening free trade zone reforms, advancing the construction of scientific innovation centers and social governance innovation, and strengthening CPC discipline, Xi said.

The president said the city should be bold in its pilot projects, expanding its role as a testing ground for further reform and opening-up. He also urged the city to push forward with free trade and facilitation of investment. Its free trade zone should become a bridgehead for the country's Belt and Road Initiative and help market entities go global, he said. That way, Shanghai can achieve innovative results that can be adopted by other regions.

China faced a complex global situation and downward pressure on its domestic economy in the past year, but the nation kept "seeking progress while maintaining stability", pushed forward on supply-side structural reform, and achieved its goals of economic and social development, Xi said.

The president recognized the achievements of Shanghai authorities in the past year in areas such as boosting innovation, optimizing economic structures and deepening reform.

The key to the supply-side structural reform is innovation, Xi said. He urged breakthroughs in key technology areas. He also advocated educational reform to create the talent needed for the country's development.

Xi said Shanghai should explore new ways of social governance that fit a super municipality. He suggested use of information technology, including the internet and big data, to enhance intelligent city management to make the city more orderly, safer and cleaner.

The president also vowed to strengthen the discipline of the Communist Party of China. Party leaders must shoulder their responsibility in clean-governance supervision, he said.

## Chinese leaders review gov't work report with lawmakers



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC), joins a panel discussion with deputies to the 12th NPC from Zhejiang Province at the annual session of the NPC in Beijing, capital of China, March 5, 2017. (Xinhua/Gao Jie)

Senior Chinese leaders on Sunday joined national legislators in deliberating the government work report, stressing the main theme of "seeking progress while maintaining stability."

The report was delivered by Premier Li Keqiang at the opening of the annual session of China's top legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC).

Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan and Wang Qishan, all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, joined national lawmakers in deliberating the report.

Zhang, also chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, joined lawmakers from east China's Zhejiang Province.

Zhang stressed concrete actions to implement the decisions and policies of the CPC Central Committee, promote the steady and healthy development of the economy and the harmony of the society to create a favorable environment for the 19th National Congress of the Party, slated for later this year.

Yu Zhengsheng, also chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, joined a delegation of lawmakers from central China's Hubei Province during another panel discussion.

Yu urged Hubei Province to apply the new concepts of development and advance supply-side structural reform.

He called for further efforts to conserve energy and protect the environment to provide the people with clean water, fresh air, safe food and beautiful environment.

Liu Yunshan joined NPC deputies from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in their panel discussion.

Liu called for proper understanding of the relations between maintaining stability and seeking progress, stressing efforts to guide social expectations and dissolve risks, while making breakthroughs in reforms. Major tasks in supply-side structural reform should be accomplished to improve growth quality and efficiency, he added.

Wang Qishan, also secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, joined NPC deputies from Beijing.

Wang stressed the need to explore effective CPC self-supervision for long-term governance, deepen reform of the national supervisory system and establish an anti-graft mechanism under the unified leadership of the Party.

The CPC should enhance supervision over itself and state organs to realize full-coverage oversight of all public servants, he added.

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## [Government must put £2bn into the budget for social care – Barbara Keeley MP](#)

**Barbara**

**Keeley MP,**

**Labour's Shadow Minister for Social Care and Mental Health,** commenting on reports of funding for social care in the forthcoming budget, said:

"Reports of any additional money for social care are of course welcome, but the reality is that it is the Tories who have spent the last 7 years cutting billions from council budgets. This has meant the loss of £5 billion for adult social care.

"Labour is calling on the government to put £2 billion into the budget for

social care. There is also an urgent need for a longer-term funding plan to get social care out of the current crisis and on to a more stable footing”

**ENDS**

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## **Tory failure on living standards see earnings fall by £1,100 a year, or £21 a week**

Labour analysis, using House of Common’s Library endorsed modelling, shows that average real earnings are set to fall by just under £1,100 a year, or £21 a week, as a result of rising inflation and lower wage growth.

Inflation has been rising since last summer, with the OBR forecasting in the 2016 Autumn Statement that inflation is set to jump this year and next year. At the same time average earnings was revised down last year, this year and for the next two years.

The combination of higher prices and lower wages is that living standards are being squeezed.

This time last year, at the Budget 2016, the OBR was forecasting real average earnings growth of 9 per cent between 2015 and 2020 (average earnings adjusted for CPI inflation). However, at the 2016 Autumn Statement this was revised down to growth of 5 per cent between 2015 and 2020.

Converting this to income values, Budget 2016 was forecasting that real average earnings would be almost £2,500 higher in 2020 than in 2015. However, at the 2016 Autumn Statement this was revised down to £1,400. This is a difference of just under £1,100 a year, or £21 a week.

Today’s analysis comes on the back of IFS analysis last year which showed that the “outlook for living standards has deteriorated rather sharply”, between Budget 2016 and Autumn Statement 2016, describing the prospects for real earnings growth as “dreadful”.

The Resolution Foundation has also said that the “outlook for living standards in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain does not look promising” and that “weak and regressive nature of income growth in the years ahead should concern us all”.

This analysis looks at the effect on living standards resulting from changes to OBR forecasts at the last Autumn Statement. Tax and benefit changes, as well as previous OBR forecasts will impact on living standards; however, this

analysis focuses on the Government's last fiscal event and therefore highlights the importance that the upcoming Budget could have on living standards.

**Commenting, John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, said:**

"Today's analysis shows the impact of seven years of Tory economic failure.

"Living standards are being squeezed and working people are being hit hard. This is despite the Tories promising at the last General Election that they would raise living standards.

"The truth is that Theresa May has failed working people; with a lower National Living Wage than promised just 12 months ago and massive cuts to Universal Credit still in the pipeline.

"Only Labour will take the action needed to end the Tories' economic failure by introducing a Real Living Wage of £10 an hour by 2020."

**ENDS**

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## **[The idea that this will reverse years of Tory neglect is laughable – Angela Rayner](#)**

**Angela Rayner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education**, responding to the Sunday Times article suggesting that the Budget will contain new money for skills, said:

"Any new funding for vocational education is welcome but it is on this Chancellor's watch that colleges are facing closure due to soaring deficits.

"Much of the Chancellor's plans have already been announced elsewhere, and the T-Levels simply formalise the 15 technical education routes that already exist.

"The idea that this will reverse years of Tory neglect is laughable. It is very much the minimum needed to address the new skills challenges of Brexit."