

## Post-80s judge 'battle-hardened' against corrupt officials



Jiang Wei. [Photo/Official Weibo account of Beijing First Intermediate People's Court]

When talking about open trials of cases involving corrupt officials, Jiang Wei, a post-80s judge from a court in Beijing has had more experiences than almost anybody else.

After graduation from Tsinghua University's School of Law with master's degree in 2005, Jiang joined Beijing First Intermediate People's Court and later became a criminal court judge, according to Beijing Evening News.

In 2014, he was appointed as the vice-presiding judge of the court's No 2 Criminal Tribunal, as he was one of the youngest and brightest judges in the country's judicial system.

In the nationwide fight against corruption launched in 2012, the fall of two "big tigers", or high-ranking officials, impressed him the most.

One was Tian Xueren, former deputy governor of Jilin province, who was in 2013 charged with receiving 85 bribes worth more than 19 million yuan (\$3.1 million) from 1995 to 2011.

Jiang Wei still remembers the morning of Nov 1, when he was sitting across Tian Xueren at the courtroom of No 2 Criminal Tribunal. As the presiding judge of the trial, he announced the judgment in a strong voice that Tian Xueren was sentenced to life imprisonment, deprived him of political rights for life, along with the confiscation of the money he received in bribes.

Tian pleaded guilty and didn't appeal to a higher court.

On July 17, 2014, at the same court, Jiang Wei announced another significant verdict: Wang Suyi, former head of the United Front Work Department in the Party's Inner Mongolia committee, was sentenced to life imprisonment for accepting bribes. He was accused of taking bribes worth more than 10.73 million yuan (\$1.71 million). Like Tian, Wang didn't appeal to a higher court.

Facing the "big tigers", Jiang admits sentencing the "big tigers" was a high pressure job as he had to make sure that the judgment was as fair as possible.

"Sometimes it's like a contest between you and the defendants," Jiang Wei said. When referring to Wang Suyi, Jiang said during the first arraignment, he told Wang that it's him who made Tian Xueren's verdict last year, "When they know you're an experienced judge, they will respect and cooperate with you better." Jiang said.

Jiang has so far handled a dozen of corruption cases concerning ministerial-level officials, with the highest illicit money from a case reaching over 20 million yuan (\$3 million).

"The proceeding of criminal cases usually take seven or eight months, not counting some cases with several supplement investigation," Jiang said. Unlike the civil cases, criminal cases involving corruption and delinquency are more complicated and time-consuming.

In addition, Jiang has dealt with several major white-collar crime cases involving real estate, commerce, internet, among which the highest value of case recorded was 396 million yuan (\$57.7 million).

"In general, a copy of the written judgment contains 20,000 to 30,000 words, and needs at least four or five revisions." Jiang said. "Even a tiny mistake in high-profile cases can have major consequences." he said.

Over the last couple of years, Jiang has dealt with more than 140 cases, and not a single lawsuit or complaint has been filed in any case.

"I like being a judge; it's a mentally challenging work." A competent judge must work hard and make decisions after serious considerations.

"When I became a judge 10 years ago, I decided to devote myself to this job." Jiang said.

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## Shenzhen uses tech to stop jaywalking



A display screen is set up at the crossroad near the Liuxian Primary School. [Photo/sina.cn]

Shenzhen police have set up an intelligent system to stop pedestrians from jaywalking. Violators will be recorded by the country's personal credit system.

The high-tech system created by traffic police of Nanshan District consists of several parts, including a video collector, controller, display screen, turnstile, front-end computer and voice broadcast system.



A turnstile is part of the intelligent system created by Nanshan traffic police. [Photo/sina.cn]

When the red light is on, turnstiles will be closed, and the voice broadcast will remind pedestrians to stop and wait. If anyone forces their way through the turnstiles, his or her face will be captured by the CCTV and the violation will be recorded in the social credit system.

According to a local police officer, the system can also change the rotation intervals of the turnstile based on computation, which will provide more convenience for pedestrians, especially aged and disabled people.

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## [Shop prices down again, disposable income up](#)

Yesterday the BRC published its latest shop prices index. Over the last year prices are down by 1%. This is a smaller fall than recent figures, but shows there is still fierce competition on the High Street and on the internet, with the overall balance of prices under good control.

Asda also published its latest disposable income tracker. This showed disposable income up by 3.5% over the last year. All this has happened at a time when oil prices have risen sharply, with a big effect on domestic fuel and vehicle fuel. Fuels are up 17% over the last year, and are the main force behind the rises in the CPI and the RPI.

I was expecting further rises in inflation as the rise in world commodity prices flows through, and as we get further rises in electricity, services with a large wage component, and the usual local and national government increases in fees and charges. So far UK inflation has been running in parallel to German and US inflation, which have also risen rapidly from a very low base mainly owing to fuel prices.

Lots of forecasters are still refusing to look at the figures that are coming out. Many still say there will be a sharp rise in prices from lower sterling, which they wrongly think has mainly occurred after the referendum vote instead of before. This they think will then remove all real growth in incomes and weaken the economy. They are overdoing the gloom.

The property valuers have some explaining to do. They have been warning of immediate post referendum declines in City offices. Yesterday British Land announced it has sold the Cheesegrater, a large modern well let City office block, for £1.15bn, which is 25% above the September 2016 valuation! The yield is only 3.4% on the good rents signed up. Will we have some apologies over all that red ink they spilled last summer?

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## [Left-behind girls struggle for education](#)

“Left-behind” girls in rural China, whose parents have moved from their hometown in search of work in cities and towns, have a smaller chance of attending school than their male counterparts, due, in part, to a long-held perception that men are entitled to more privileges than women, according to a recent research.

The Annual Report on Left-behind Girls in China’s Rural Areas (2016), issued on Wednesday by the China Social Welfare Foundation, found that 78.9 percent of parents in villages are inclined to bring their sons with them to bigger cities for better education. In addition, when they only have finances to pay for one child’s higher education, 97.5 percent of them would choose sons over daughters.

China’s compulsory basic education system waives most fees for elementary and middle schools, resulting in 96.1 percent of girls in rural areas attending school from ages 6 to 11. However, only 79.3 percent have access to high school education when they are aged 15 to 17, the research found.

“Dear Mom and Dad, please do not treat me and my brother differently. When my brother does something well, he gets rewarded. What about me? No reward at all. Even when I do something well, you will say, ‘This is not good enough, it should have been done better’,” one girl wrote on a questionnaire issued by the research team.

Liu Yan, of the foundation, said that when his team first started the research, they thought they could draw parallels between left-behind girls and girls in poverty.

“I was wrong. There is no such correlation. Financially, they can be doing fine. What makes their situation different is the lack of parenting. They crave their parents’ love, just like any child, but they do not have it,” Liu said.

“Some girls are told money means happiness, so they associate making money with being happy, but no one tells them why. That situation can easily drive young girls in the wrong direction,” he added.

Yuan Guilin, a professor at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s International Research and Training Center for Rural Education, described left-behind girls as the “underdogs of underdogs”.

“The organization has found a good angle to help the girls, by paying attention to details like whether they put on underwear, what they eat and drink, and how fairly they feel they are being treated,” Yuan said.

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## **Strong stimulus plan not expected**

China does not intend to introduce a “flood irrigation” type of strong stimulus plan and should avoid new excessive capacities and redundant construction projects, said a senior official of the country’s top economic planner.

“Some people might have confused the definition of total fixed assets investment and the concept of ‘investment stimulus plan’,” the National Development and Reform Commission’s secretary-general, Li Pumin, said at a news conference on Wednesday.

Li made the remarks amid vigorous discussion, and even skepticism, about the widely reported, massive amount of fixed asset investment set as targets by 23 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions for this year. The targets were recently released.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that China’s fixed asset investment rose by 7.9 percent to 60.65 trillion yuan (\$8.82 trillion) last year. In the meantime, the country was giving priority to the implementation of step-by-step reform to boost consumer or investment demand in the short term to stimulate economic growth.

“At such a growth pace, the figure might exceed 65 trillion yuan by the end of 2017 – larger than the media’s prediction,” Li said.

Unlike the stimulus package that China leveraged to anchor the economy years ago, investments in fixed assets will boost economic development in a healthy and steady way and will promote social harmony and stability, Li said.

He added that fixed asset investment is the summation of investment from different sources including the government, nongovernment organizations and foreign investors.

It refers to the "aggregation" rather than the "increment" of investment, Li said. By contrast, an "investment stimulus plan" is only applied when a country takes the initiative to increase the size of governmental investment to stimulate domestic demand and stabilize growth, he said.

The comments followed Li's elaboration at a news conference on the country's 13th five-year plan for a modern transportation system worth at least 2.6 trillion yuan. In addition to the huge investment target, China has set goals to extend the railway network by 30,000 kilometers, more than 30 percent of which will be high-speed railway, add 320,000 km of roads and build more than 50 new civil airports.

He Jingtong, a business professor at Nankai University in Tianjin, said that in the long run, China's growth will be less capital intensive and investment driven, indicating that government decision-makers will increasingly evaluate projects based on their economic, environmental and operational efficiency.

"Overall, the modernization of China's transportation and infrastructure development will gradually push local governments as well as domestic and international companies to pursue quality projects and market high value-added products and services in China while creating new competition," He said.