

Xi urges continued efforts to build strong military

President Xi Jinping has called for building a strong military by further enhancing the military's political awareness, pushing forward reform, and governing it according to law.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, underscored the importance of improving combat readiness through troop training.

The president made the comments while visiting the 65th Army Group stationed in northern China's Hebei Province on Monday.

Hard-working people don't want an NHS where they are charged for treatments – Jonathan Ashworth

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Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health, commenting on reports that GPs are drawing up plans to charge patients for evening and weekend appointments, said:

"The fairest, most efficient and most equitable way of delivering healthcare is to ensure it is publicly funded and free at the point of use.

"Reports that GPs are now considering introducing charging would allow wealthier patients to jump the queue. It is an intolerable consequence of Government under-funding of General Practice and the Tories' wasteful re-organisation of the NHS.

"This is yet another stark revelation about the reality of Tory mismanagement of the NHS. The Prime Minister simply cannot keep blaming everyone other than her own Government for the scale of this crisis. Hard-working people don't want an NHS where they are charged for treatments. Theresa May needs to get a grip and

fast.”

[Chinese leaders extend festival wishes to predecessors](#)

President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders have visited their predecessors with seasons greetings ahead of the Spring Festival.

Former leaders including Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao got personal visits either from the current leaders or from their representatives, according to a statement from the General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Wednesday.

The visitors wished their hosts a happy Spring Festival, good health and long lives, the statement said.

The leaders of the older generation fully endorsed the outstanding achievements the country has made since the 18th CPC National Congress under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with comrade Xi Jinping as the core, and expressed hope that Chinese people would unite to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Spring Festival, or the Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on Jan. 28 this year.

[Shanghai railway police seize over 50 ivory products](#)

Shanghai railway police arrested two men illegally carrying more than 50 ivory products, bought in Zimbabwe, as they were about to board a train.

A thin man, who appeared to have a disproportionately large stomach, raised the suspicions of security staff at Shanghai Railway station Tuesday night.

Inspectors found a long cloth bag, wrapped around his midriff, contained 10 ivory products and a further three strings of ivory products in his backpack.

Meanwhile, police captured the man's companion, who attempted to flee, finding more than 30 ivory products in his suitcase.

The pair, from Taihe County, eastern China's Anhui Province, flew to Shanghai

from Zimbabwe where they worked for the last year, and planned to return to their hometown by train.

The thin man, surnamed Li, said he had made the cloth bag to hide the ivory products on his body, hoping to avoid police checks.

Zoologists with the local wildlife conservation association said that the products were made from African elephant ivory.

Premier Li stresses poverty relief

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has urged faster progress in poverty relief, saying that innovative mechanisms are needed and more funds should be collected to fight poverty.

He made the remarks during an inspection tour of southwest China's Yunnan Province from Monday to Wednesday.