

China's top legislature closes bi-monthly session

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) closed its bi-monthly session Saturday, adopting a new law on public libraries, revisions to several laws, and decisions on reforms.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, presided over the closing meeting, as well as a meeting attended by the chairman and vice chairpersons beforehand.

Zhang urged members of the NPC Standing Committee to study and implement the spirit of the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress and push forward relevant legislation work.

"The NPC Standing Committee will firmly support the centralized and unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core and completely implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," he said.

New Library Law to promote reading

The new law aims to promote the development of public libraries and help boost reading among ordinary Chinese.

The law asks the governments to increase input in public libraries, listing it in their budget and development plans.

Libraries are pushed to apply modern technology including digitalizing content and improving online services, better protecting ancient books and promoting traditional culture.

Libraries will be punished if hosting or allowing others to host activities undermining state security and the public interest. Those directly responsible for the offences will face penalties.

Law revision for updated, clearer standards

The top legislature adopted a revision to the standardization law, 28 years after it took effect.

The revised law clarifies what standards are compulsory and what are recommendations, expands the scope of standards from industrial products, construction and environmental protection to much broader sectors, including agriculture, industry, services and social programs.

Technical standards concerning health and life and property safety, as well as national and ecological security are prioritized.

The government is required to better exercise their duty of coordinating

different standards to avoid overlapping and duplication and supervising implementation of standards.

Lawmakers also adopted the revision to the law against unfair competition, an amendment to the country's criminal law to punish acts of gravely disrespecting the national anthem, as well as minor amendments to several clauses of 11 laws that facilitate cutting red tape.

Decisions on reforms

The top legislature passed a decision to extend a pilot program of reforming land use rules in selected areas for one year, from Dec 31, 2017 to Dec 31, 2018.

Approved in February 2015, the pilot program involves reforms to the way rural land is expropriated, easing restrictions on rural construction land trading, and reforming the administration of rural residential plots.

It also adopted a decision to expand across the country a pilot project to reform the supervision system, launched in Beijing, and Shanxi and Zhejiang provinces in January.

Other decisions adopted include temporarily adjusting application of laws and regulations during armed police reform, and applying the new National Anthem Law in Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.