

Expertise valued in promotions



From left to right: Hou Jianguo, Li Ganjie and Wang Menghui. [Photo/China Daily]

The central government has announced the appointments of several senior officials in the past week, which experts said reflect the trend that China will have more senior officials with expertise related to their posts.

Among the newly appointed, Hou Jianguo, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was appointed Party chief of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, the country's top quality watchdog, on Thursday.

The 58-year-old worked at the University of Science and Technology of China in the Anhui provincial capital Hefei for 15 years and was president of the university from 2008 to 2015 before becoming vice-minister of science and technology.

He then was transferred to the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region as the regional deputy Party chief in 2016.

On Wednesday, Li Ganjie, former deputy Party chief of Hebei province, was named Party chief of the Ministry of Environmental Protection after his predecessor, Chen Jining, became Beijing's acting mayor.

Li, born in 1964, holds a master's degree in nuclear reactor engineering from Tsinghua University. He worked as an environmental protection official for about 16 years and was vice-minister of environmental protection from 2008 to October last year before he was transferred to Hebei province.

In addition, Wang Menghui, 57, was appointed Party chief of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-rural Development on Wednesday.

Wang got a doctor's degree in engineering after he studied urban planning and

design in Tsinghua University from 2002 to 2007 when he held various posts in Guangdong province, including mayor of Shanwei city.

Generally speaking, Party chiefs of central government departments also serve as the agencies' executive chiefs. But the appointment of ministers needs approval from the National People's Congress, so the announcement of Party positions sometimes come first. The next meeting of the congress's standing committee is scheduled for late this month.

Ma Qingyu, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Governance, said that the appointment of these senior officials shows the general trend of the central government to nominate more officials with expertise related to their posts.

"Personally, I feel excited to hear this news and I know many people welcome the appointments as well," he said.

The acceleration of China's modernization and the development of science and technology have resulted in a larger need for officials with special expertise in addition to governing capacity, Ma said, adding that officials with special expertise may be in a better position to make decisions that are in accord with the latest situation.

Song Shiming, a professor also with the Chinese Academy of Governance, said that both expertise in certain fields and governing capacity are needed by the best modern public administrators. The appointments of these senior officials well meet the needs of the times.

"It's a general trend to transform the public administration in China to be law-based and scientific with high efficiency," he said.

"The appointment of technocrats as high-level officials is one of the preconditions for the transformation and could help accelerate the modernization of public governance of the Chinese government."