

Premier: Tibet's stability, development a priority

Premier Li Keqiang called for maintaining the stability and development of the Tibet autonomous region when he joined a panel discussion with National People's Congress deputies from the plateau region on Tuesday.

Tibet has a special place in the country's overall development, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, "with Comrade Xi Jinping as its core", has further made the region a priority since the 18th Party Congress in 2012, the premier told deputies during the ongoing NPC annual session.

This year will see further endeavors in promoting Tibet's stability and development, which complement each other through focusing on key ways to improve local people's livelihood, Li said. He vowed to improve public services in areas such as education, healthcare and heating.

He also said this year will see more efforts to develop Tibet's special and competitive industries such as tourism, clean energy and ethnic medicines, under the premise that the ecology must be stringently protected at the world's roof.

At an average altitude of about 4,000 meters, Tibet is sparsely populated [about 3.75 million people in multiple ethnic groups living on 1.2 million square kilometers of land, which accounts for one-eighth of China's landmass.

Last year, Tibet's annual GDP growth hit 11.5 percent, ranking first among China's provincial-level regions.

In addition, the country will strengthen support and funding for Tibet's transportation and power-grid infrastructures, he said.

The premier also vowed to intensify efforts in poverty alleviation, especially for those living near the nation's borders, by creating better living conditions and industries.

He said unity should be strengthened to help all ethnic groups get along with each other, promote religious harmony as well as safeguard social stability and long-term peace.

On Tuesday, three other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee—Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan and Wang Qishan—also joined discussions of NPC deputies.

Yu, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, met with deputies of the Taiwan delegation. He called for adhering to the policies of peaceful reunification and one country, two systems, as well as the 1992 Consensus that is characterized by the one-China policy in dealing with cross-Straits ties.

Yu said that any form of separatist actions to achieve Taiwan's independence will be opposed and contained to safeguard peace and stability across the Straits.