

NPC mulls several laws, prepares for annual session

China's top legislature Wednesday started its bimonthly session, with lawmakers deliberating revisions to several laws and preparing for the annual session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) in March.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, presided over the opening meeting.

Legislators considered a report on the work of the NPC Standing Committee, which will be submitted to the March session.

They reviewed a draft agenda of the annual session, a draft list of candidates for the session presidium and secretary-general, as well as a list of observers.

They reviewed a report on the qualifications of some NPC deputies and discussed appointments and dismissals.

Lawmakers also deliberated revisions to the law on the Red Cross Society, the law on corporate income tax and the Unfair Competition Law.

Law on Red Cross Society

The draft revisions to the Law on the Red Cross Society aimed to further boost transparency and credibility of the country's Red Cross societies.

According to the new draft, which was brought for a third reading, Red Cross societies in China and their staff are required to give feedback to donors on the use of their donations in line with the law.

Those in charge and staff members directly responsible who fail to do so could face civil and criminal charges, it said.

Meanwhile, a previous clause giving Red Cross societies the power to "rectify" illegal activities carried out by their subordinate societies and staff members was deleted from the new draft.

China's Red Cross has in recent years grappled with trust issues.

Revision work for the Law on the Red Cross Society began in 2015.

The first reading of the draft revision suggested independent third-party agencies should audit donations, while the second draft expanded the Red Cross societies' duties in the donation of stem cells and organs.

The third reading, however, specified that Red Cross societies could "participate in and promote" blood, body and organ donations, and could participate in and carry out "work related to" stem cell donations.

It also said leading supervisors at all Red Cross societies must be chosen through a “democratic process.”

The new draft has addressed public concerns and included pertinent revisions to the existing law, Zhang Mingqi, a vice director of the Law Committee of the NPC, told lawmakers Wednesday morning.

It will better safeguard and regulate Red Cross societies in performing their duties in accordance with the law, and boost its credibility, he said.

At a panel discussion, Shen Yueyue, vice chair of the NPC Standing Committee, said that the revised law is expected to boost the credibility of the country’s Red Cross societies and ensure their role in the humanitarian field could be fully played.

Unfair competition law

Lawmakers started to review a draft amendment to the Unfair Competition Law, as the country strives to build a socialist market economy.

The draft revision, the first since the law came into force in 1993, was given a first reading at the bimonthly session.

As the market economy has evolved and new business models have emerged, some of the law’s existing clauses do not properly address unfair competition, Zhang Mao, head of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, told lawmakers.

The draft under consideration expands the scope of unfair competition to cover commercial bribery, false commercial propaganda, tie-in sales without buyer consent, and deceitful prize allocation, according to the draft.

It stipulated that operators can not use the names, branding or titles of established entities.

Bribery or influence to affect the outcome of a deal is banned, according to the draft.

The draft in particular stipulates that malicious activity on the Internet used to coerce buyers or disturb other businesses is also banned.

The banned activity includes misleading, cheating or forcing users to “modify, close or unload” products or services, the draft said.

It also includes products or services that are maliciously designed to not be compatible with other products or services, it noted.

The draft also stated that any activity that seriously disturbs competition order but is not currently covered by laws or regulations should be reported to the State Council, according to the draft.

The State Council will establish a coordination task force tasked with studying major policies against unfair competition.

Violators could face fines up to 3 million yuan (about 436,170 U.S. dollars) or have their business licenses revoked, it said, adding that they could also face criminal charges or have their violations recorded in a credit record system.

A draft amendment to the law on corporate income tax was also submitted to legislators for reading on Wednesday.

The draft is expected to address the common complaint that businesses making large donations do not get enough tax concessions.

The government has waived corporate income tax on donations made by companies from their profits, but this only applies to companies that donate 12 percent of their profits or less.

The new draft stipulates that if a company's donation exceeds the 12 percent in one year, the balance can be deducted from the taxable income over the following three years.

[Xi stresses precision in battle against poverty](#)

President Xi Jinping underscored the importance of precision in the battle against poverty, saying that poverty relief targets should be accomplished as scheduled.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks Tuesday during the 39th study session held by the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

It is the least requirement of building an all-round moderately prosperous society and "our solemn promise" to ensure that the rural poor shake off poverty as planned, and that all poverty-stricken counties be delisted and poor areas lifted out of poverty as a whole, Xi said.

Xi said responsibilities, capital investment, grass-roots vitality and the implementation of tasks must be improved for the poverty relief targets to be met.

China has made remarkable progress in this respect. During the 2013-2016 period, 55.64 million rural people were lifted out of poverty, according to Xi.

"In the coming years, China's poverty relief work faces a daunting task," said Xi, since "poverty alleviation is getting more and more difficult as it nears the end."

Poverty relief is high on China's 2016-2020 agenda, and the government has vowed to lift everybody out of poverty by 2020.

To this end, some people living in impoverished regions will be relocated. Xi stressed that this must be done on a voluntary basis and the cost must be kept within a reasonable level.

Health and education policies must be implemented to fight poverty, with priority given to helping poor families that suffer major or chronic diseases, or have difficulties in providing schooling for their children, Xi said.

He called for greater policy support to poverty relief, including fiscal, land, financial, education and health policies.

China will apply the highest assessment standards to evaluate the success of poverty relief, Xi added.

[Lotte World Tower may be abandoned by Chinese tycoons](#)

Since the Lotte Group is expected to sign a land-swap deal with the South Korean government to deploy the THAAD missile defense system, the future of its Lotte World Tower looks bleak. The share price of affiliates of the Lotte Group plunged on February 21, as the stock market is worried about possible sanctions from the Chinese government.

According to Edaily, a financial news website from South Korea, the Lotte World Tower is a 123-floor, 556-metre skyscraper currently under construction in the second-generation Lotte World complex in Seoul. Once completed, it will be the tallest building on the Korean Peninsula as well as the fifth-tallest building in the world. Its observation deck is expected to be the world's tallest. Chinese tycoons are its main potential clients, and it is expected that at least half of the clients will be from China.

The Lotte Group promoted the Lotte World Tower in Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing from last October to last December. Hundreds of Chinese tycoons were interested in the Lotte World Tower project during the promotion. However, with growing tension between China and South Korea due to the THAAD issue, many potential Chinese buyers have decided to abandon their purchases. "We will start the sales from the middle of March officially, and Chinese buyers will make up no more than 30% of buyers according to our expectations," said by a salesman from Lotte World Tower.

Chinese media has criticized the Lotte Group for its expected land-swap deal with the South Korean government recently. According to a survey from the

Chinese media, 95% of Chinese netizens will boycott the Lotte Group. The Lotte Group is confronted with a dilemma between its business and the South Korean government.

Lotte Group is not the only one facing pressure. The amount of Chinese investment and Chinese tourists to Jeju Island has reduced sharply. According to statistics from Jeju Island local government, the property area purchased by foreigners in Jeju Island dropped 24% in 2016.

According to Edaily, the Chinese IT giant Baidu has stopped a cooperation negotiation with the South Korean banking industry because of the THAAD deployment issue.

It is estimated that the Chinese government will pose comprehensive sanctions to South Korea once the THAAD missile defense system is deployed.

[Tank adapted into snow blower in N. China](#)

A tank-shaped snow blower on the streets of Baotou in northern China has really “blown” people away and quickly gone viral.



By adapting a jet plane engine to the tank, it can produce high heat to efficiently blow away snow at great distances. [Photo: youth.cn]

The armored fighting vehicle, which features an aircraft engine, came in handy when an unexpected spring snow hit the city today, and proven to be quite efficient in dealing with snow.

Called a turbojet snow blower, the machine was invented by the Inner Mongolia First Machinery Group, an affiliation of China North Industries Group Corporation (NORINCO GROUP).

By adapting a jet plane engine to the tank, it can produce high heat to efficiently blow away snow at great distances, according to an introduction of the machine.

The machine can achieve an average speed of 20 to 30 kilometers per hour, and a maximum speed at 50 kilometers per hour.

"It's really awesome to see an armored vehicle being used to remove the snow," said an internet user. "It's a little bit noisy but proves to be very efficient."

[China commissions new naval training ship](#)

The Chinese navy on Tuesday commissioned a new training ship at a military port in Lyushun, northeast China's Liaoning Province, the PLA Daily reported Wednesday.

With hull number 83, the Qijiguang naval training ship is 163 meters long and 22 meters wide, with a full load displacement of 9,000 tonnes and maximum speed of 22 knots, making it the largest and most advanced training ship in the Chinese navy.

Designed and built by China, the training ship can accommodate over 400 navy cadets or officers for training in offshore waters and high seas. It can also be used in foreign exchanges, natural disaster rescue and other non-military operations.

Qi Jiguang was an ancient Chinese national hero in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) best known for leading Ming forces to defend China's eastern coastal regions from raids by Japanese pirates in the 16th century.

The training ship is affiliated with Dalian Naval Academy.