

[China pledges enhanced livelihood for people in difficulties](#)

Chinese government has pledged enhanced efforts to ensure the basic livelihoods for people in difficulties.

A circular issued by the General Office of the State Council and published on Thursday said the work to guarantee basic livelihoods for people in difficulties matters to fairness, morality and harmony in society, noting that there should be no decline or weakening in help.

The circular called for intensified efforts to identify people of such groups and streamline policies for assisting those affected by natural disasters.

The document said housing problems should be solved by the end of this year for those who were resettled in temporary residences last year due to floods and other disasters.

Also, program will be launched to help rural residents who are caught in difficulties by serious illnesses.

The assistance efforts for those who are in extreme need, disabled people, left-behind children, orphans and vagrants will also be strengthened, according to the circular.

[Snowfall disrupts Spring Festival travel in NE China](#)

Snow disrupted the trips of Spring Festival travellers in northeast China on Thursday, causing multiple accidents and temporary closure of an airport and expressways.

Two people were killed and three injured in collisions which damaged more than 40 vehicles on a section of the expressway linking Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang, to Suihua City on Thursday, due to sudden snowfall, local government sources said.

At least 74 inbound and outbound flights were delayed at the Longjia international airport in Changchun, capital of Jilin, due to the snowy weather.

Thirty-two flights were forced to land in alternate airports. The airport started a red alert and closed for about three hours before reopening at 6

p.m. Thursday.

Most expressways in Jilin and 13 expressways in Liaoning imposed traffic control measures. Some flights were delayed at the Taoxian airport in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning.

Spring Festival, or the Lunar New Year, is the most important occasion for Chinese, who have a weeklong holiday period, placing a tremendous strain on railways, airports and expressways.

This year's Spring Festival falls on Saturday. About 3 billion trips are expected to be made during "chunyun," the travel rush that lasts this year from Jan. 13 to Feb. 21, the National Development and Reform Commission said.

[Chinese leaders extend Spring Festival greetings](#)

President Xi Jinping, on behalf of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council, extended Spring Festival greetings to all Chinese Thursday at a reception in Beijing.



The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council hold a reception for the Spring Festival in Beijing, capital of China, Jan. 26, 2017. The Spring Festival, or the Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on Jan. 28 this year. (Xinhua/Zhang Duo)

Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivered a speech at the gathering at the Great

Hall of the People, greeting all Chinese in the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and at abroad.

Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli were also present.

This year's Spring Festival, or Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on Jan. 28.

9 Chinese think tanks among world's best

A report released on Wednesday shows that the number of Chinese think tanks has grown rapidly in the world during the past year.



Wang Huiyao, president of CCG, delivers a speech at the release of 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report in Beijing, on Jan 25, 2016. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Nine Chinese think tanks were included among the world's top think tanks in the 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report, published by the think tank and civil societies program at the Lauder Institute of University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP).

Selected from a list of 175 top think tanks in the world, these nine think tanks are China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations; Chinese

Academy of Social Sciences; China Institute of International Studies; Development Research Center of the State Council; Shanghai Institute for International Studies; Institute of International and Strategic Studies Peking University; Unirule Institute of Economics; Center for China and Globalization; and Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, with China Institute of Contemporary International Relations ranking the highest at 33.

The report shows the United States at the top with the largest number of think tanks, at 1,835, while China holds the second place with 435, followed by UK, 288, and India, 280.

The 2016 study was subdivided into 52 lists based on such categories as region, area of research and special achievement, in which 41 Chinese think tanks were selected with 18 of them also outstanding in the Top Think Tanks in China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

"It's very meaningful that a number of Chinese think tanks are influencing the world," said Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization. "More think tanks are needed to help our government in making decisions accurately and scientifically. Meanwhile, think tanks serve more like a 'soft power', which can also help enhance our country's international stature," he said.

According to the report, three Chinese think tanks have made their mark Think Tanks to Watch. They are Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance, Unirule Institute of Economics, and Center for China and Globalization.

Another four are among the Best New Think Tanks, including Alibaba think tank, 21st Silk Road Collaborative Center, Qianhai Institute for Innovative Research, and Center for Eco-Financial Studies, with Alibaba think tank ranking the highest at 23.

Referred to as "think tanks' think tank", TTCSP manages and supports a global network of close to 7,000 think tanks and trains future think tank scholars and executives.

"Since 2006, our ranking process has been refined and streamlined, and the number and scope of the institutions and individuals involved has steadily grown." said James McGann, director of the TTCSP.

The 2016 report shows continued expansion of think tanks in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Besides, there is increasing diversity among think tanks in these regions with independent, political party affiliated, and corporate and business sector think tanks that are being created with greater frequency.

Shooting gallery owner given 3-year suspended sentence

A Chinese woman who ran a small recreational shooting gallery in north China's Tianjin Municipality has received a suspended three-year prison sentence for illegal gun possession.

The sentence was handed down by Tianjin No. 1 Intermediate People's Court.

Zhao Chunhua, 51, opened a roadside shooting gallery to help support her family but was arrested in October. Among the model guns seized from her stall, six were identified as real guns.

She was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for illegal gun possession by a district court in Tianjin in December last year, triggering a public outcry, with many calling the verdict harsh. It caused widespread debate about the criteria for legally defining guns.

The Intermediate People's Court took over the case after Zhao appealed against the initial verdict.

According to the court, Zhao knew that the model guns could cause injuries and could not be purchased through legal channels, therefore, she had the subjective intention to possess them.

Given that Zhao showed remorse and the guns she owned were for recreational shooting, posing little threat to society, Zhao was given a three-year probation.

Zhao pleaded guilty and was immediately released.