

# Spring Festival enchants foreigners

Since arriving in Beijing to study in 2014, every Chinese New Year Sabaa Ali El-Tayeb has bought a stuffed toy animal.

This year, the Year of the Rooster, she bought a rooster on Wangfujing, a busy commercial street in downtown Beijing. Last year, the year of the Monkey, she bought a lovely monkey toy.

"I will take these toys back home, and when I finish my degree they will remind me of my time in China," said the Sudanese woman, who is studying literature at Beijing Language and Culture University.

The Chinese zodiac assigns one of 12 animals, either real or mythological, to each year. This lunar year began on Saturday.

"Celebrating Spring Festival in China makes me love China even more," said Tayeb.

On Thursday, Tayeb's university organized an event where foreign students could try their hands at making dumplings, a traditional food eaten during the festival.

Tayeb said she liked this aspect of the festival the most. "Back home we have similar important meals where we eat specific food and extend our best wishes to each other."

Besides dumplings, Chinese New Year is a time for temple fairs, red lanterns, paper-cuts, blessings of good fortune and ancestor worship.

Basma Bayomy, an Egyptian student at the same university, said she planned to visit a temple fair in Chaoyang Park on Sunday.

The girl, who has been in Beijing since 2012, spent one Spring Festival at her Chinese classmate's home in Shijiazhuang, a city 300 km south of Beijing.

Bayomy was deeply impressed with the Spring Festival in 2014. She remembers how her classmate's father left out plates of food for their families' ancestors.

Similarly, Egyptians leave offerings of fruit and bread on the graves of their ancestors. Both traditions, Bayomy said, are rooted in respect for the family.

Like Chinese, many foreigners put couplets, Chinese characters wishing for good fortune, on their front doors.

Marie, a British translator in Beijing, was sent a couplet by her Chinese friend on Thursday. She stuck them on the door of her apartment, took a photo of herself standing in front of it, and shared it with her parents in Britain.

“These couplets are an expression of hope for the future and contain the Chinese spirit of ‘harmony’,” she said.

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## **China to recycle 350 mln tonnes of waste resources by 2020**

China is expected to recycle 350 million tonnes of waste resources including steel, nonferrous metals, plastic and paper annually by 2020, according to an official guideline.

The guideline was jointly released by ministries of industry and information technology, commerce, and science and technology.

China will develop a sophisticated system for renewable resources, said the guideline.

By 2020, China will use 150 million tonnes of waste steel, and 18 million tonnes of waste nonferrous metals annually, according to a plan included in the guideline.

The country also aims to recycle 23 million tonnes of waste plastic and half of all its waste paper by 2020 annually said the guideline.

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## **178,000 policemen on duty to ensure smooth traffic on Spring Festival**



Police officers Gao Yang (C-L) and Nie Yingjie (C-R) patrol at the Changchun Railway Station during Spring Festival travel rush in northeast China's Jilin Province, Jan. 26, 2017. (Xinhua/Zhang Nan)

About 178,000 policemen were on duty nationwide Saturday, the lunar New Year's day, to ensure smooth traffic, according to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

No major traffic accidents or jams had been reported as of 5:00 p.m. Saturday, said the MPS's traffic management bureau, adding that efforts have been made to alleviate traffic pressure on the roads to temples and scenic spots.

The traffic flow is expected to rise on Sunday, the second day of the Spring Festival holiday, as people usually go out to visit relatives on the day.

The traffic management bureau warns drivers against drunk driving and speeding.

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## [Xi's new year inspection indicates poverty relief](#)

As most Chinese are busy preparing for Spring Festival, China's top leader this week was in the snow-covered grassland of northern China, facing the country's arch enemy.



Chinese President Xi Jinping talks with villagers and local cadre at the home of villager Xu Haicheng in Desheng Village, Xiaortai Township of Zhangbei County in north China's Hebei Province, on Jan. 24, 2017. Xi Tuesday pushed for increased efforts on poverty alleviation during an inspection tour to the city of Zhangjiakou. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang)

For the fifth year in a row, Xi Jinping's New Year inspection tour had taken him to the front lines of China's war against poverty.

This time, the battleground was Desheng, a small village in Zhangbei County, Hebei Province.

Left out of China's headlong rush to riches following decades of economic reform, Zhangbei – just 200 kilometers north of Beijing – has been classed as a deprived county since 2013, with one eighth of its population still living on less than one dollar a day by October last year.

Fighting poverty is the fundamental task in building an all-round moderately prosperous society," Xi told villagers in Desheng days ahead of the traditional Chinese New Year.

China is striving to become "Xiaokang," or a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, by 2020, just before the centennial anniversary of the founding of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

One aim is to make sure that those yet to be lifted out of poverty, about 45 million by 2016 year-end, could take their rightful place as citizens of a well-off society with the rest of the nation.

In Xi's own words, "no one should be left behind.

Though Xi's words hardly deviated from what had been said on previous occasions, the timing nonetheless gave them a little extra weight.

Chinese leaders have made it a tradition to visit ordinary people in both urban and rural areas ahead of Spring Festival.

Xi himself visited Gansu Province and Beijing in early 2013, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 2014, northwest China's Shaanxi Province in 2015, and east China's Jiangxi Province in 2016.

Most of the places he has visited during the festive seasons have been locked in a relative development backwater.

Xie Chuntao, a professor from the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said Xi's new year visits underscored the current leadership's greater commitments to achieving "Xiaokang."

His words were echoed by Xu Yaotong from the Chinese Academy of Governance.

"Xi is first and foremost concerned with 'Xiaokang' of all Chinese people," said Xu.

In addition to inspection tours, Xi has raised poverty alleviation with national lawmakers during the annual March sessions of the top legislature.

The country's 13th Five-Year Plan, which outlines priorities for national development from 2016 to 2020, also proposes support for poor villages to develop signature products and services.

In early December, guidelines were issued calling for enhanced collaboration between developed eastern regions and under-developed western regions to bridge the regional development gap and meet 2020 poverty-reduction targets.

Already, all these efforts have been translated into encouraging signs of achievements. China had seen its rural population living in poverty decrease from 770 million to 55.75 million between 1978 and 2015.

An additional 10 million people shook off poverty last year, and China is aiming to help at least another 10 million become members of the well-off society this year.

In Zhangbei alone, 20,700 of its 372,000 residents were lifted out of poverty in 2016. Thanks to a major poverty-alleviation program, the county is receiving support, including measures to promote profitable agricultural products and emerging industries such as solar power.

But as Xi himself admitted in Hebei this week, "poverty alleviation is getting more and more difficult as it progresses to the end," Xi said.

Nonetheless, he insisted that local Party and government authorities must make sure that all must be lifted out of poverty "in time."

He stressed the importance of making sure every poor family had a program for increasing their income and every poor person had a way of casting off poverty.

The president pointed to relocation as an important supplementary approach when fighting poverty and highlighted the role of ecological compensation, which would not only help improve the ecological environment but also boost incomes.

Stressing the importance of education in poverty alleviation, Xi said, "Making sure children of impoverished families enjoy access to high-quality education is a fundamental solution to poverty."

Xie Chuntao agreed. "If we compare China's development to a wooden bucket, the amount of water a bucket can hold is determined by its shortest plank," Xie said, adding that poverty is one of the short planks.

"President Xi has just spelt out the way to fix those short planks," he said.

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## [China vows to get tough with duty-related crimes](#)

The Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) will strengthen prosecution of duty-related crimes and maintain the momentum of the crackdown on corruption in 2017, an official said.

Chen Guoqing, head of the public prosecution division of the SPP, said that the SPP will improve prosecution procedures and handle cases of duty-related crimes with higher standard and efficiency.

The SPP will take part in the campaign of locating officials who have fled overseas and recovering their ill-gotten gains, Chen said.

The SPP will continue to reform the trial-centered litigation system and improve the leniency system for those who confess to their crimes, Chen said.

Procuratorates at all levels have been urged to follow instructions by the SPP and perform their duty based on advanced science and technology, Chen added.