

Post-80s judge 'battle-hardened' against corrupt officials



Jiang Wei. [Photo/Official Weibo account of Beijing First Intermediate People's Court]

When talking about open trials of cases involving corrupt officials, Jiang Wei, a post-80s judge from a court in Beijing has had more experiences than almost anybody else.

After graduation from Tsinghua University's School of Law with master's degree in 2005, Jiang joined Beijing First Intermediate People's Court and later became a criminal court judge, according to Beijing Evening News.

In 2014, he was appointed as the vice-presiding judge of the court's No 2 Criminal Tribunal, as he was one of the youngest and brightest judges in the country's judicial system.

In the nationwide fight against corruption launched in 2012, the fall of two "big tigers", or high-ranking officials, impressed him the most.

One was Tian Xueren, former deputy governor of Jilin province, who was in 2013 charged with receiving 85 bribes worth more than 19 million yuan (\$3.1 million) from 1995 to 2011.

Jiang Wei still remembers the morning of Nov 1, when he was sitting across Tian Xueren at the courtroom of No 2 Criminal Tribunal. As the presiding judge of the trial, he announced the judgment in a strong voice that Tian Xueren was sentenced to life imprisonment, deprived him of political rights for life, along with the confiscation of the money he received in bribes.

Tian pleaded guilty and didn't appeal to a higher court.

On July 17, 2014, at the same court, Jiang Wei announced another significant verdict: Wang Suyi, former head of the United Front Work Department in the Party's Inner Mongolia committee, was sentenced to life imprisonment for accepting bribes. He was accused of taking bribes worth more than 10.73 million yuan (\$1.71 million). Like Tian, Wang didn't appeal to a higher court.

Facing the "big tigers", Jiang admits sentencing the "big tigers" was a high pressure job as he had to make sure that the judgment was as fair as possible.

"Sometimes it's like a contest between you and the defendants," Jiang Wei said. When referring to Wang Suyi, Jiang said during the first arraignment, he told Wang that it's him who made Tian Xueren's verdict last year, "When they know you're an experienced judge, they will respect and cooperate with you better." Jiang said.

Jiang has so far handled a dozen of corruption cases concerning ministerial-level officials, with the highest illicit money from a case reaching over 20 million yuan (\$3 million).

"The proceeding of criminal cases usually take seven or eight months, not counting some cases with several supplement investigation," Jiang said. Unlike the civil cases, criminal cases involving corruption and delinquency are more complicated and time-consuming.

In addition, Jiang has dealt with several major white-collar crime cases involving real estate, commerce, internet, among which the highest value of case recorded was 396 million yuan (\$57.7 million).

"In general, a copy of the written judgment contains 20,000 to 30,000 words, and needs at least four or five revisions." Jiang said. "Even a tiny mistake in high-profile cases can have major consequences." he said.

Over the last couple of years, Jiang has dealt with more than 140 cases, and not a single lawsuit or complaint has been filed in any case.

"I like being a judge; it's a mentally challenging work." A competent judge must work hard and make decisions after serious considerations.

"When I became a judge 10 years ago, I decided to devote myself to this job." Jiang said.

Shenzhen uses tech to stop jaywalking



A display screen is set up at the crossroad near the Liuxian Primary School. [Photo/sina.cn]

Shenzhen police have set up an intelligent system to stop pedestrians from jaywalking. Violators will be recorded by the country's personal credit system.

The high-tech system created by traffic police of Nanshan District consists of several parts, including a video collector, controller, display screen, turnstile, front-end computer and voice broadcast system.



A turnstile is part of the intelligent system created by Nanshan traffic police. [Photo/sina.cn]

When the red light is on, turnstiles will be closed, and the voice broadcast will remind pedestrians to stop and wait. If anyone forces their way through the turnstiles, his or her face will be captured by the CCTV and the violation will be recorded in the social credit system.

According to a local police officer, the system can also change the rotation intervals of the turnstile based on computation, which will provide more convenience for pedestrians, especially aged and disabled people.

[Shop prices down again, disposable income up](#)

Yesterday the BRC published its latest shop prices index. Over the last year prices are down by 1%. This is a smaller fall than recent figures, but shows there is still fierce competition on the High Street and on the internet, with the overall balance of prices under good control.

Asda also published its latest disposable income tracker. This showed disposable income up by 3.5% over the last year. All this has happened at a time when oil prices have risen sharply, with a big effect on domestic fuel and vehicle fuel. Fuels are up 17% over the last year, and are the main force behind the rises in the CPI and the RPI.

I was expecting further rises in inflation as the rise in world commodity prices flows through, and as we get further rises in electricity, services with a large wage component, and the usual local and national government increases in fees and charges. So far UK inflation has been running in parallel to German and US inflation, which have also risen rapidly from a very low base mainly owing to fuel prices.

Lots of forecasters are still refusing to look at the figures that are coming out. Many still say there will be a sharp rise in prices from lower sterling, which they wrongly think has mainly occurred after the referendum vote instead of before. This they think will then remove all real growth in incomes and weaken the economy. They are overdoing the gloom.

The property valuers have some explaining to do. They have been warning of immediate post referendum declines in City offices. Yesterday British Land announced it has sold the Cheese Grater, a large modern well let City office block, for £1.15bn, which is 25% above the September 2016 valuation! The yield is only 3.4% on the good rents signed up. Will we have some apologies over all that red ink they spilled last summer?

[Civilian casualty figure in Iraq tops 1,000 – UN reports](#)

2 March 2017 –

More than 1,000 civilians were killed or injured last month in Iraq, the United Nations mission in the country has announced.

According to the latest figures from the UN Assistance Mission in the country (UNAMI), at least 392 civilians were killed and another 613 were injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict.

The head of UNAMI, Ján Kubiš, condemned the deliberate targeting of civilians by the Islamic State (ISIL), and saluted the Iraqi security forces for professionalism in pursuing the terrorists while seeking to minimize civilian casualties.

“As the Iraqi security forces stepped up the military operations to liberate the remaining parts of Mosul from Daesh control, the terrorists struck again, targeting civilians with cowardly bombings to ease the pressure on the frontlines,” Mr. Kubiš said referring to ISIL by its Arabic acronym.

“Daesh’s sinister attempts have failed to weaken the resolve of the people and Government of Iraq to rid the country once and for all from the scourge of terrorism,” added Mr. Kubiš, who is also the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

The figure of 392 is slightly lower than 403 civilians killed in January, when an additional 924 civilians were injured.

Perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Kabul must be brought to justice, stresses UN Security Council

2 March 2017 – Strongly condemning yesterday's terrorist attacks in the Afghan capital, Kabul, the United Nations Security Council underscored the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of such reprehensible acts to justice.

At least 15 people were killed and dozens more injured in attacks in two areas of the capital. The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the incidents.

In a statement issued late yesterday, the 15-member Security Council stressed that terrorism in all its forms is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of its motivation and wherever, whenever and by whomsoever it is committed.

[It] should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, the Security Council highlighted.

Also in the statement, Council members voiced serious concern over threats posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and other illegal and armed groups to the local population, National Defense and Security Forces and the international presence in the country.

No violent or terrorist acts can reverse the Afghan-led process along the path towards peace, democracy and stability in Afghanistan, which is supported by the people and the Government of Afghanistan, and by the international community, the Council added.

It also stressed the need for all UN Member States to combat by all means, in accordance with the UN Charter and other obligations under international law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

Further in the statement, the members of the Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the people and Government of Afghanistan. They also wished a speedy recovery to those injured.