

[President of India Condoles the Passing Away of Shri Altamas Kabir](#)

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee has condoled the passing away of former Chief Justice of India, Shri Altamas Kabir.

[There is a renewed and more focused effort to give a dynamic impetus to our relations with African nations: Vice President](#)

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has said that after the India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) conference in India

[Greenhouse vegetables harvested on S. China Sea islets](#)

Chinese staying on a group of islets in the South China Sea have lately harvested tomatoes and leafy vegetables they grew from a new greenhouse.

The authorities of Sansha City, Hainan Province, announced over the weekend the first harvest of Yongle islets greenhouse farm. Yongle, composed of 13 islets, lie some 40 sea miles southwest to the Sansha municipal government seat on the island of Yongxing.

Yongxing built its own greenhouse farm last year.

The Yongle harvest ended the area's shortage of vegetables, which used to be supplied by ferries. In time of tropical storms or rough waves, ships were halted and the people on the islets might go days without eating vegetables, an important part of the healthy Chinese diet.

The greenhouse, covering 567 square meters, was built with materials that can withstand heat, storms, gales, and erosive seawater. The ceiling is equipped with solar panels absorbing excessive sunlight to produce electricity.

Inside the greenhouse, a cooling and moisturizing system runs by the hour during the day to make the environment favorable for vegetables to grow.

The first few harvested vegetables include tomatoes, red spinach and water spinach. The farm's managers expect output to reach 200 kilograms a week after they expand the farming scale.

[China to start construction on 35 railway projects](#)

It is full steam ahead for China's railway sector as construction on 35 new railway projects will start in 2017 as the country plans to expand the network, according to a recent report in Xinhua-run Economic Information Daily.

Construction will begin on 2,100 km of new rail line, 2,500 km of double-track lines and 4,000 km of electrified railways this year, the report cited unnamed authorities as saying.

To achieve the targets, China Railway Corp. (CRC) has been assigned a budget of 800 billion yuan (116.8 billion U.S. dollars) by the central government, the same as in 2016.

The vice minister of transport, Yang Yudong, disclosed earlier that China will spend 3.5 trillion yuan on railway construction during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020).

By 2020, China will have increased the length of high-speed railways in operation to 30,000 kilometers, connecting more than 80 percent of its big cities.

By the end of 2016, China had a 124,000 km railway network, featuring the world's largest high-speed rail network of more than 22,000 km.

While the vast network has enhanced connectivity in large swathes of the country, construction lags behind in the less developed western regions. The government wants to address this gap.

Much of this year's construction projects will happen in China's central and western regions, to support the wider poverty-relief campaign, according to CRC.

Prison officers pay deal “is policy making on the hoof and shows the Tories have no plan”

Richard

Burgon MP, Labour’s Shadow Justice Secretary, commenting on the pay deal for prisons officers in London and the South East, said:

“It is no surprise this announcement comes the same week as figures showing prison officers are still leaving faster than they can be recruited.

“It is policy making on the hoof and shows the Tories have no plan.

“Prison officers in the rest of the country will wonder why they don’t deserve the same increase. Prison understaffing is a national issue that needs a national response.”