

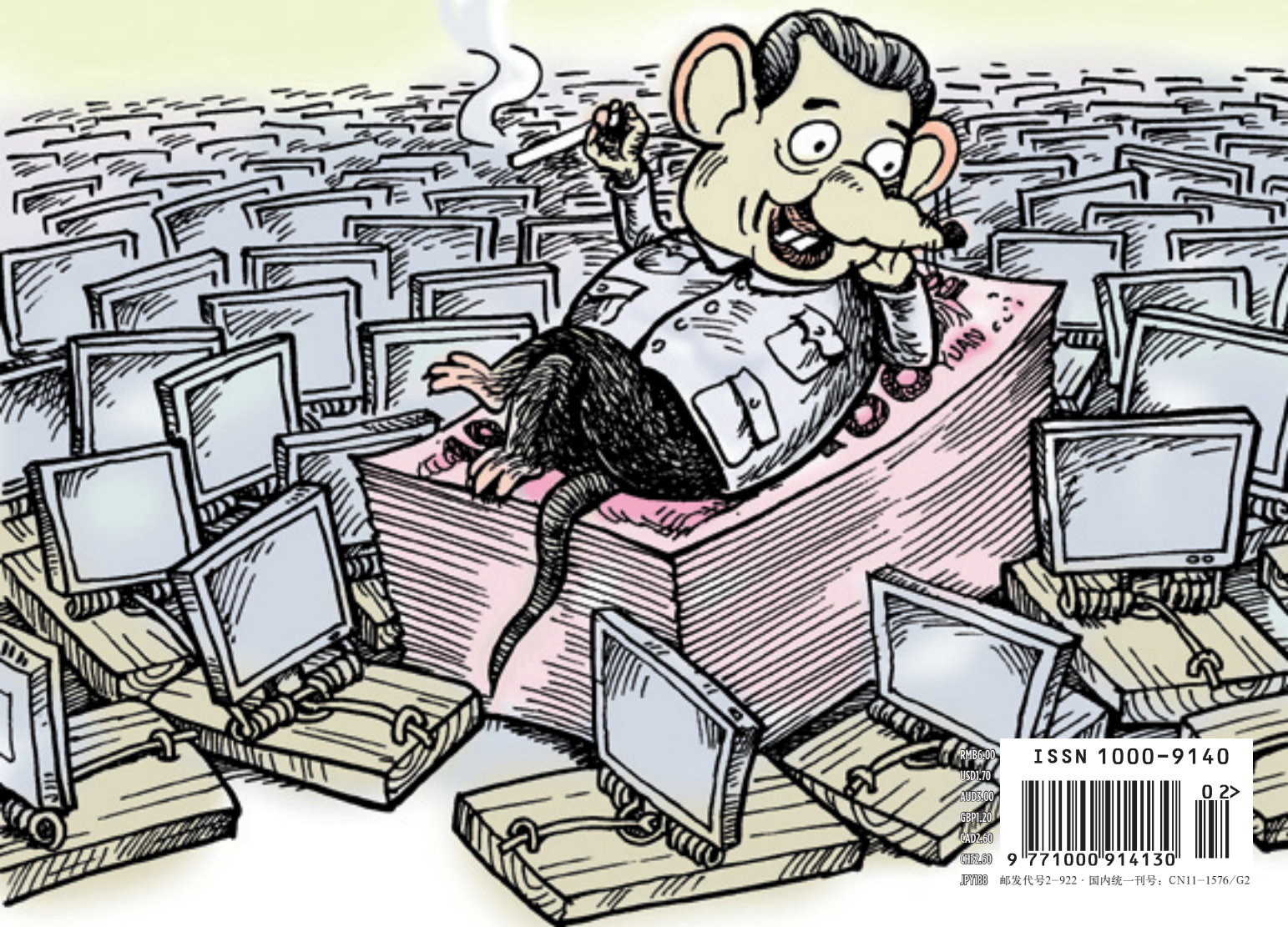
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WEB TRAP

Chinese netizens sniff out corruption online



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14 Cover Story



Now, Watchmen Watching Watches

Netizens on the lookout for corrupt officials



Prosperity for All

China stands firm on win-win policy

THE DESK

» A New Means of Supervision **02**

THIS WEEK COVER STORY WORLD

» Clinton's China Legacy **20**
Hillary Clinton impacts ties

» An EU Opening **22**
Central and Eastern Europe closer to China

NATION

» Talk of the Township **26**
Civic participation in China

BUSINESS

» Time to Settle Tariff Disputes **32**
Progress depends on trade resolution

» More Proactive? **36**
Moving toward tax reform

» Market Watch **40**

CULTURE

» Bridging Cultures **44**
Learning from a veteran translator

FORUM

» How to Make It Easier to Take a Taxi? **46**

EXPAT'S EYE

» The Spirit of Making Do **48**
A holiday away from home

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28 Nation

Show and Tell

Swapping stories in human libraries



38 Business

No Spring Chicken

Scandal over hormone-pumped poultry

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BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader

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EDITOR

A New Means of Supervision

In 2012, the Internet not only changed people's way of life, but also altered the fate of certain Chinese officials. Microblogging offered a new means of exposing corruption online. Some experts say that microblogs have grown from a tool of information publication and social interaction to a means of supervising the government.

Microblogging has become a powerful anti-corruption weapon due to its ability to quickly and widely spread information. A photo or video exposing corruption, uploaded to a microblog, can grab enormous amounts of attention with considerable effect.

Successful anti-corruption cases in 2012 followed similar lines: an insider would expose corruption via a microblog, the message of which would spread far and wide before other media channels picked up on the incident. Such efforts have ultimately led to the expulsion of corrupt officials.

Thanks to the rapid development of information technology, microblogs are playing an increasingly important role in keeping tabs on government wrongdoing, human trafficking and violence, actively involving the Chinese people in politics.

However, despite exposing corruption, microblogs still offer little in terms of solving the problem. China needs to make governmental affairs more transparent, enhance supervision, strengthen disciplinary inspection and restrict official power according to law.

Xi Jinping, newly elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said that if corruption goes unchecked, Party rule will be jeopardized. He stressed that anti-corruption will remain a top priority for the Chinese Government. In November 2012, immediately after the 18th CPC National Congress, a number of government officials, including some at the ministerial level, were investigated for corruption. Li Chuncheng, former Deputy Secretary of the Sichuan Provincial Committee of the CPC, was expelled from his post for serious disciplinary violations only 18 days after being elected as an alternate member of the 18th CPC Central Committee. Such anti-corruption efforts reflect the Party's increasing determination to fight the problem.

It is hoped that microblogs would continue their role in fighting corruption and that an effective system will be established to prevent such incidents. ■

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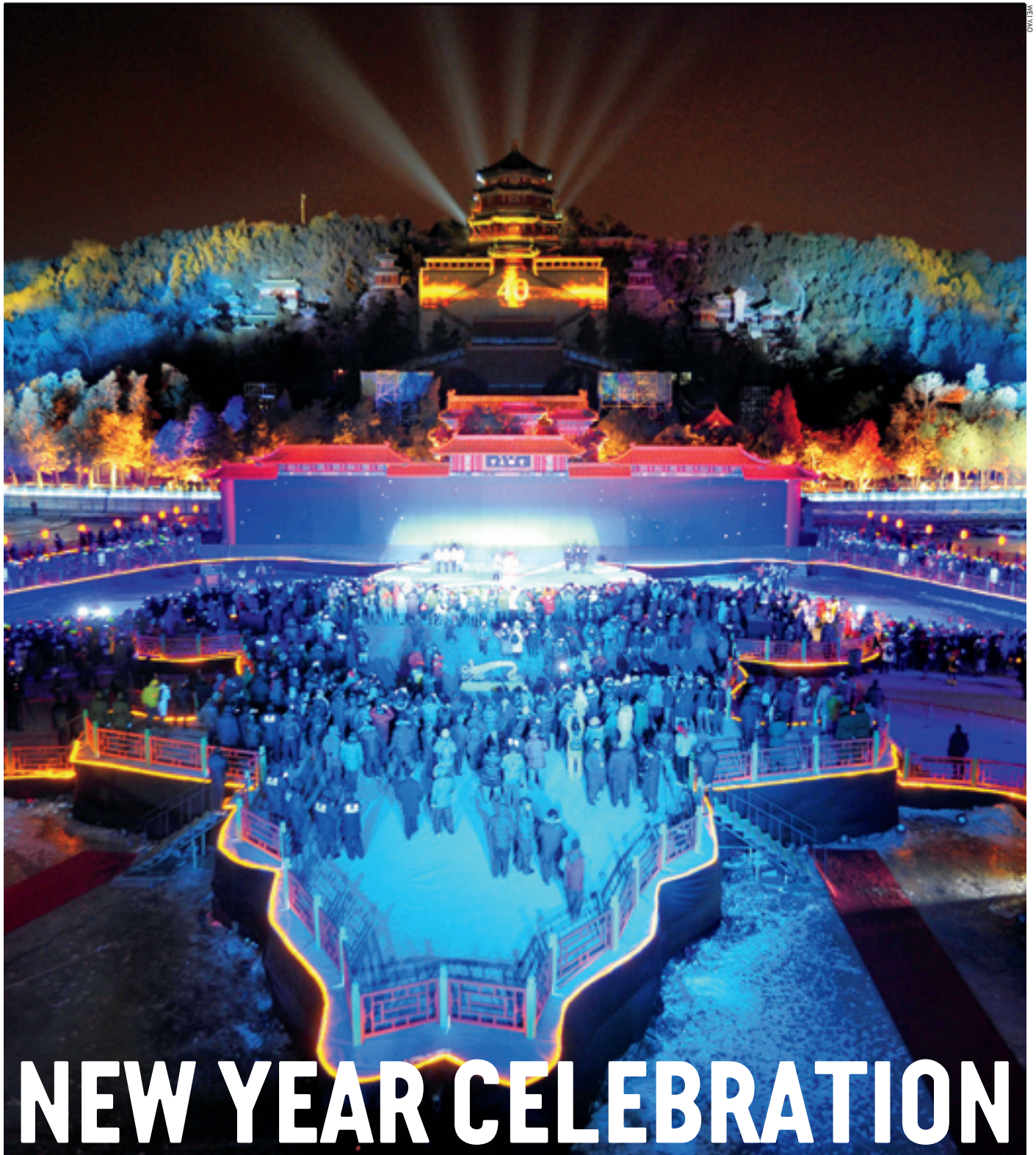
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NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

A light show illuminates the Summer Palace, a well-preserved imperial garden in Beijing, on the night of December 31, 2012. Thousands of revelers gathered there to welcome the New Year.

Navigation Service Launched

The China Satellite Navigation Office announced the Beidou Navigation Satellite System's availability for civilian use at a press conference in Beijing on December 27, 2012.

Spokesperson Ran Chengqi provided technical specifications for China's indigenous navigation system, which is comparable to the United States' Global Positioning System in general functionality and performance, but more cost-effective.

Beidou provides positioning, navigation, timing and short message services, with positioning accuracy of 10 meters, velocity accuracy of 0.2 meters

per second and one-way timing accuracy of 50 nanoseconds.

The office issued a document in Chinese and English specifying signal-interface relations between the Beidou system and receivers. Release of the specifications is expected to facilitate the development of Beidou applications by Chinese and foreign enterprises.

China launched the system's first satellite in 2000, and a preliminary version of Beidou has been used in traffic control, weather forecasting and disaster relief work on a trial basis since 2003. Beidou consists of 16 navigation satellites and four experimental satellites.



Internet Regulation

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, adopted legally binding regulations to strengthen online information protection on December 28, 2012.

The decision is meant to ensure information security, protect citizens' lawful rights, and safeguard national security interests. Among the 12 articles is an identity management policy requiring Internet users to use their real names to identify themselves to service providers.

According to the regulation, "Network service providers will ask users to provide genuine identification information when signing agreements to grant them access to the Internet, fixed-line telephone or mobile telecommunication services or to allow users to post information publicly."

Air Quality Data

The China National Environmental Monitoring Center released air quality data including intensity of fine particulate matter less than 2.5-micron diameter (PM2.5) on New Year's Day.

On January 1, 2013, 496 sites in 74 major Chinese cities began monitoring PM2.5 data. Information on particulate matter in China used to be limited to particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter.

Live air quality data are provided at the center's website, www.cnemc.cn. A mobile phone application is also available.

China's urban air quality monitoring will proceed in stages, with all prefecture-level cities slated to begin PM2.5 monitoring by 2016.

Tariff Exemptions

The Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) provided tariff-free treatment to an additional 14 types of mainland goods and 30 products from Taiwan, as the third stage of tariff exemptions took effect under the Early Harvest Program on January 1, 2013.

A total of 806 items—539 mainland goods and 267 products from Taiwan—have been designated for tariff-free treatment since 2011.

Implemented two years ago, the



UNDER CONTROL

A policewoman directs traffic at an intersection in Yinchuan, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, as China's revised traffic regulations impose harsher penalties from January 1, 2013



MIGRATORY RESIDENT

Seagulls fly over a lake in Cuihu Park in Kunming, southwest China's Yunnan Province, on January 1, 2013. More than 35,000 seagulls from Siberia will spend the winter in Kunming this year



CHEN HANING

program is designed to allow people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits to enjoy the boons of the ECFA before the full liberalization of mainland-Taiwan economic ties.

Signed in June 2010, the ECFA is a preferential trade deal to reduce tariffs and commercial barriers.

From January 2011 to October 2012, the program has exempted Taiwan's businesses from \$551 million in tariffs, according to Xinhua News Agency.

Disaster Warnings

China is leading a cooperative effort to set up a tsunami and hurricane warning system in the South China Sea, according to the State Oceanic

Administration (SOA).

"Tsunamis don't occur frequently, but they always result in significant damage. In the South China Sea, earthquakes and tsunamis in the Manila Trench near the Philippines are a real possibility," said Zhang Zhanhai, head of the SOA's International Cooperation Department, at a press conference on December 27, 2012.

Zhang said that China is capable of sending tsunami warnings to other countries around the South

China Sea, adding that these countries have reached a consensus on China leading the establishment of the warning system.

The move came after the SOA released an international cooperation framework for the South China Sea and other neighboring sea areas in January 2012.

The framework included plans for China to cooperate with neighboring countries to explore and utilize maritime resources, reduce oceanic disasters and develop the maritime economy.

Water Investment

China spent a record 430.3 billion yuan (\$69 billion) to improve water utilities in 2012, said Minister of Water Resources Chen Lei on December 28, 2012.

Investment in water conservation amounted to 775.5 billion yuan (\$124 billion) in 2011 and 2012, surpassing the amount invested during the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2006-10), according to Chen.

"In 2012, China reinforced 5,400 small reservoirs and harnessed critical stretches of 2,209 small

and medium-sized rivers, bringing death tolls from floods down by 50 percent," Chen said.

The government aims to build dams and levees on more than 5,000 rivers by 2015 and speed up the construction of early warning systems for floods and storm tides, according to a 2011 Central Government statement.

The government plans to double annual spending on water conservation during the 2011-20 period. In 2010, 200 billion yuan (\$32 billion) was invested.

Curbing Fraud

A regulation aimed at punishing academic fraud took effect on January 1, 2013. The regulation specifies buying, selling or organizing the trade of academic degree theses as fraudulent behavior subject to punishment in addition to plagiarism and fabricating data.

According to the regulation, colleges shall revoke degrees and ban applicants from postgraduate study for three years if they plagiarize or commit fraud in their undergraduate theses.

Going to Sea

Tourists spend New Year's Day on a beach in Sanya, south China's Hainan Province.

The National Tourism Administration of China launched the Year of Marine Tourism in Sanya on January 1, 2013.

Zhu Shanzhong, deputy head of the administration, said that he hoped the program will help boost the development of marine tourism resources, as well as bring Chinese citizens closer to the ocean throughout the year.



HOU JIANSEN

A Connection At Last

A freight truck travels on the Qinzhou-Chongzuo Expressway in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which was put into use on December 31, 2012.

The 129-km expressway is the first one to link Guangxi's mountainous areas to the outside world.



LANG FUJING

PMI Rebounds

China's Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the manufacturing sector remained at 50.6 percent in December, said the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP) on January 1. The data are based on a survey of purchasing managers in more than 820 companies and 20 industries.

It was the third consecutive month the PMI figure was above 50 percent, which demarcates expansion from contraction, said the CFLP.

Cai Jin, Vice Chairman of the CFLP, said the continued expansion suggested a moderate economic recovery trend and a positive start for the economy in the new year.

However, Zhang Liqun, an analyst with the Development Research Center of the State Council, said the economic rebound was still weak as the December PMI data stayed at the same level as November.

Judging from the decline in the sub-index of new export orders, Zhang said the country's export sector remained precarious.

December's HSBC China

final manufacturing PMI rose to a 19-month high of 51.5, thanks to stronger new business in-take and expansion of production, according to figures released by HSBC on December 31, 2012.

Activities in the non-manufacturing sector also continued to improve in December.

The PMI for the non-manufacturing sector was 56.1 percent in December, up 0.5 percentage points from November, according to the CFLP.

Permits Canceled

Chinese postal authorities said the permits of 116 express delivery companies were canceled in 2012 and urged greater supervision amid a series of reports on problems with the booming sector.



DIGGING DEEPER

A machine of the Shanxi Xishan Lanyan Coal-bed Methane Co. extracts coal-bed methane, a type of clean energy, from a well in Gujiao, Shanxi Province, to cope with surging energy demand in winter

"Some media have reported lost mail and problems with sorting among some express delivery companies," said the State Post Bureau on December 31, 2012.

More investigations should be carried out in response to the media reports and consumer complaints, and local postal branches should further supervise the sector in order to improve service, said the bureau.

As online shopping continues to boom, China's express delivery

industry is expected to witness galloping growth over the next few years.

Deliveries will rise 21 percent annually, with revenues expected to grow 20 percent on average, according to the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15) for the Express Delivery Industry.

Ensuring Gas Supply

China National Petroleum Corp., the country's largest natural gas sup-



YAN YAN

Numbers

8%

The growth target for China's foreign trade in 2013, according to the Ministry of Commerce

92

The number of passenger trains that were added to meet the needs of travelers during the three-day New Year holiday (January 1-3), according to the Ministry of Railways

78.7 mln

The passenger throughput from the Shanghai Pudong Airport and Shanghai Hongqiao Airport in 2012, nearly triple that of a decade ago, according to the Shanghai Airport Authority

40 mln tons

The amount of crude oil produced by PetroChina's Daqing Oilfield in northeast China in 2012, according to the China National Petroleum Corp., the parent company of PetroChina



APPEALING FOLK ARTS

Visitors observe the production of the traditional Chinese decorative knot in Ji'nan, capital of east China's Shandong Province on January 1, 2013

plier, pledged to increase its output to meet surging domestic demand amid the current gas crunch caused by a colder winter.

The company has asked its major oil and gas fields to operate at full capacity and started purchasing liquefied natural gas to meet surging needs.

In addition, it will boost gas imports from central Asia to address the shortage.

The demand for natural gas has increased substantially, driven by the continuous rain and snow that fell on north China this winter.

In response, the authorities have urged major gas producers to give priority to residential needs, public facilities and transportation.

Fitch Given Go Ahead

Global rating agency Fitch Solutions announced on January 2 that it will distribute its credit ratings, data and research services on the Chinese mainland.

"We are pleased to be certified as one of 80 official foreign institutions providing financial information in China," said Oliver Putz, head of

Fitch Solutions Asia Pacific.

He said China is a leader in the financial information service industry, with a market value of \$25 billion a year.

The State Council relaxed regulations on the distribution of financial information services by foreign institutions in October 2012.

Putz said China-based investors and market participants are increasingly hungry for real-time financial information, offering a ready market for Fitch Solutions' products such as credit research and ratings and quantitative risk and performance tools.

Fitch Solutions is a division of the Fitch Group, as well as the distribution channel for Fitch Ratings content.

Fuel Surcharge Cuts

A plane waits to be refueled in Changchun Longjia Airport in northeast China on January 1, 2013.

On that day, many airlines cut their fuel surcharges. Air China's fuel surcharge on routes from the Chinese mainland to Hong Kong, for one, was reduced from 203 yuan (\$32.58) to 186 yuan (\$29.85).



THIS WEEK WORLD



INDIA

Indians attend a candlelight vigil to mourn the death of a 23-year-old gang rape victim in New Delhi on December 29, 2012. Protesters demanded swift justice for the woman, who died in a hospital in Singapore after clinging to life for 12 days



THE UNITED STATES

Vanessa Natalie Manjarrez (top center), a local student, reigns as Rose Queen at the 124th annual Rose Parade in Pasadena, California, the largest New Year celebration in the western United States, on January 1, 2013



AFGHANISTAN

An Afghan refugee carries winter relief supplies distributed in Kabul on January 1, 2013





JERUSALEM

Israeli pianist Arie Vardi (right) performs together with a Chinese girl at the Jerusalem Music Center on January 1, 2013 as part of a China-Israel joint piano course



BRAZIL

People play at the Arpoador beach in Rio de Janeiro on December 29, 2012. Hot weather has baked the Southern Hemisphere city, with the temperature three days earlier hitting a record high of 43.2 degrees Celsius

SHUTTERSTOCK



SHUTTERSTOCK



NEPAL

Elephants play a game of soccer during the International Elephant Festival in south Nepal's Chitwan on December 27, 2012

“People should enjoy equal political, economic and cultural rights, regardless of whether they live in cities or in the countryside.”

Xie Chuntao, a professor with the Party School of CPC Central Committee, responding to new rules of some provinces concerning migrant workers' children taking college entrance exams, on December 30, 2012, in Beijing



“Ideas of morality are influenced by religious beliefs. In our survey, fewer than 13 percent of people had religious beliefs and most of them were in the high-income group.”

Wu Jianping, a professor with the China Institute of Industrial Relations, responding to a survey on the religious life of local people in Beijing. The study shows fewer than four in every 100 people have a clear understanding of social morality



“Economic rebound is still weak as December Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data remains the same as during the previous month. Export conditions are still not good.”

Zhang Liqun, an analyst with the Development Research Center of the State Council, in an interview in Beijing on January 1, 2013, warning that China's economic situation is still less than optimal even though its PMI for the manufacturing sector stayed above 50 percent for three consecutive months



“Someone wants to profit from the Diaoyu Islands issue, and bully people by flaunting powerful connections. All of it is futile.”

Yang Yujun, spokesman for the Chinese Defense Ministry, in a news briefing in Beijing on December 27, referring to the U.S. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, which contains controversial sections related to the Diaoyu Islands and arms sales to Taiwan



“The European sovereign debt crisis shows us how important this balance is. The reforms we have agreed to are beginning to take effect. But we still need a lot of patience. The crisis is far from over.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in a taped address broadcasted on December 31, 2012, in Berlin, noting that the three-year-long crisis shows how important it is to strike a balance between prosperity and solidarity



OUTSTANDING ATHLETE



Chinese fencer Lei Sheng was rated one of the 10 best athletes of 2012 by Xinhua News Agency. The 28-year-old beat Alaaeldin Abouelkassem of Egypt 15-13 to win gold in the men's foil event at the 2012 London Olympics, grabbing the first ever such medal for the Chinese team.



BEST ACTRESS



Chinese star Sun Li won the best actress award for her outstanding performance in the TV series *The Legend of Zhenhuan* at the National TV Drama Awards Ceremony on December 31, 2012. It was the fourth such award Sun won last year for starring in the program. The drama centers on the growth of Zhenhuan, played by Sun, from a simple girl to a resourceful imperial concubine. It has won high acclaim from audiences for its truthful and moving representation of imperial life.



China's Future in Foreign Eyes *Oriental Outlook* December 20, 2012

The five to 10 years following the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China will be a critical juncture for China's rise and renewal. To become a stronger country, it needs to utilize wisdom and adopt diverse perspectives and rational attitudes.

Li Cheng, a senior researcher with the John L. Thornton China Center at Brookings Institution in the United States, said the most salient feature among new Party leaders underlines basic-level experience and high ideals. They have shown the courage to pursue reform and make breakthroughs. The biggest challenge facing China concerns reaching national consensus on key issues such as the country's slowed economic growth and

its strained relations with certain neighbors. Such consensus would mean confidence in the future.

The Indian-American economist Arvind Subramanian said the world is paying close attention to see if China's top decisionmakers take the necessary measures to rebalance the economy and accelerate development. However, he believes, the temporary slow-down in growth is necessary. The economist pointed out that, although many people do not believe it, the yuan will become the first-choice reserve currency in the next 10 to 15 years. Subramanian said it is imperative for China to further reform its financial field and state-owned companies.

School Bus Incidents *Workers' Daily* December 28, 2012

In late December, four people died after a minibus carrying 15 kindergarten children drove into a pond in Guixi, south China's Jiangxi Province. The accident follows one in Zhengning, northwest China's Gansu Province, in November 2011, and one in Fengxian County of east China's Jiangsu Province in December the same year.

Following the incidents, Zhengning and Fengxian counties soon banned the operation of unlicensed school buses. As a result, children have been left without a means to get to school. In Fengxian, parents have begun taking their children to school by tricycle. In other parts, due to insufficient finances, unsafe school buses continue to run.

Standardizing school bus operation is essential, but in rural areas, this seems to be a hard task. The fact that parents have to take children to school themselves reveals just how terrible current bus services are. The problem indicates a serious shortage of financial input in rural education.

Law on Online Business *China Youth Daily* January 3, 2013

Online shopping platforms like Taobao are very popular with consumers and quite lucrative to businesspeople in China. However, some people are taking advantage of loopholes in the network to steal personal information. This practice has damaged online

shops and caused losses to owners. The more prosperous an online business is, the more regulations need to be put in place.

Recently, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed a legal decision on the protection of private online information. It targets the abuse of personal information to ensure a safe online environment for Internet users.

Recent years have seen more college graduates start online businesses. In 2012, 68 percent of those operating on the Web were born in the 1980s, with those born in the 1990s also joining the trend. For these young businesspeople, it's very important to win trust from consumers in the process of doing business and a safe Internet environment is a

precondition. They need an orderly and sound online space for fair competition.

Apart from these youngsters, big portal websites and network operators have all expressed support for strengthening legislation on online business.

The legal decision comes at the very moment it is demanded. It offers network operators legal support in protecting personal information. The obligations and rights of organizations and individuals have been clearly expounded.

Both online shops and consumers expect safer online transactions. This decision is only a start. To ensure long-term development and prosperity, we need more such legal regulations.

The Power of the Public

Lifeweek
December 31, 2012

Public strength was given full reign in 2012: On the one hand, microblogs inspired and pushed it to voice opinions on social and political issues; on the other, individual interests were recognized after more than 30 years of rapid economic development. Rationality and maturity have combined to push forward and deepen national reform.

Step-by-step investigations by netizens, followed by relevant government department response, constituted public anti-corruption efforts in 2012. Online anti-corruption moves enabled the public to secure social justice via informal means. The Internet has proved a new channel of supervision. Public measures reflect both indignation against corruption and distrust of traditional supervision systems. However, fighting the problem online is still far from adequate and necessitates strict laws.



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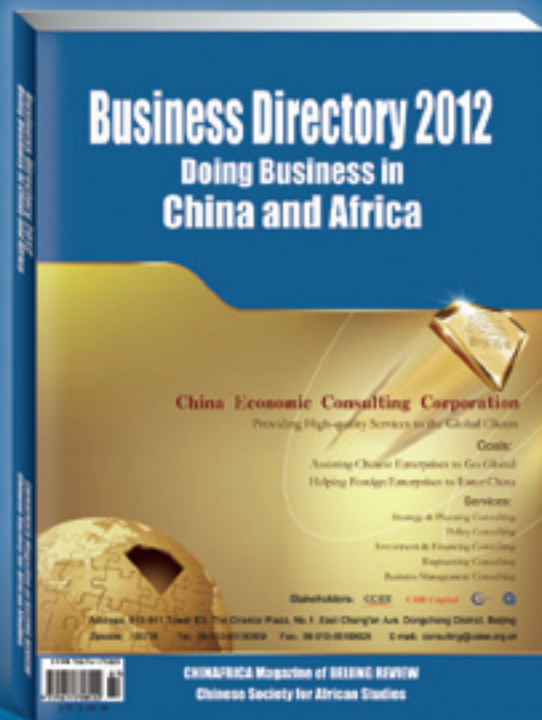
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COVER STORY

NOW, WATCHM WATCHES



EN WATCHING

Discipline authorities increasingly responsive to netizen scrutiny of corrupt officials By Li Li



The fate of Yang Dacai, former head of the Work Safety Administration of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, took an unexpected turn after he grinned inappropriately at the scene of a fatal accident. When Yang inspected a car crash in which 36 people died on August 26, 2012, he was photographed wearing a broad smile while surveying the collision and listening to reports from investigators.

Angered by Yang's apparent insensitivity, netizens resorted to online vigilante tactics, known in China as the "human flesh search engine," and launched an all-out Internet assault on the previously unknown civil servant.

Flesh searchers trawled the Internet for more embarrassing poses but instead found photographs of Yang sporting a dazzling array of luxury wristwatches. Watching watches is a Chinese Internet pastime; one netizen, pseudonymously referred to as Huaguoshan Zongshuji, struck fear into the hearts of corrupt officials in past years with his uncanny ability to identify brands and models of timepieces based on government publicity photos.

Yang's claims that he bought each of his five luxury watches with his own "legal income" fell upon deaf ears. Arguing that a civil servant could not possibly afford such expensive watches, Internet users continued to probe Yang's luxury wardrobe, also identifying what they claimed was an equally costly collection of belts, suits and glasses.

The online campaign prompted an official inquiry into Yang's financial dealings. On September 21 last year, the Shaanxi Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Supervision announced Yang's dismissal from his position for serious violations of discipline and said that further investigation was underway.

Yang's downfall is just another example of

the rising role of Chinese netizens in the country's fight against corruption.

Online whistleblowing

Corrupt officials often fall from grace along the same trajectory. After their wrongdoings were publicized on the Internet, anti-corruption agencies stepped in and removed them from their posts pending criminal investigations.

On October 9, an anonymous whistleblower posted records of 21 properties owned by Cai Bin, an official in Panyu District in Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, along with photos of Cai's undisclosed real estate holdings.

Later investigations showed that Cai and his family owned 22 properties in two districts of Guangzhou, including a villa, a factory building, apartments and commercial properties.

Cai failed to disclose personal assets as required by Party discipline. Under current circumstances, officials must disclose assets but are not obligated to publicize them. In his reports, Cai, 56, had twice told authorities that his family owned only two properties.

Cai was suspected of receiving huge bribes when he served as deputy chief of the Panyu District Public Security Bureau and head of the district's Urban Management Bureau. He had been removed from his position, said Mei Heqing, a senior official with the Guangzhou Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC, at a press conference on October 22.

One of the most talked about cases last year was the sacking of Lei Zhengfu, a top Party official of Beibei District in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality, 63 hours after a sex tape featuring Lei and a young woman exploded on the Internet in November.

The gaze of the public eye has never been as palpable as it is in the age of the microblog. Professor Huang Zongliang at Peking University ►►

told national broadcaster CCTV, "Every netizen can be a journalist responsible for exposing wrongdoing. Anti-corruption agencies have been acting faster to respond to public tip-offs, which is an encouraging trend."

The message from the top is just as clear. Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the 17th CPC Central Committee, said in his report to the 18th CPC National Congress last November that the fight against corruption is a clear-cut and long-term political commitment.

Xi Jinping, who was elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee at the 18th CPC National Congress, said after his election that the Party must solve problems of "corruption, being divorced from the people, going through formalities and bureaucracy."

Official channels

Amid a microblogging boom in China, a grow-

ing number of people have spread first-hand materials exposing officials' misdeeds on their microblogs with great alacrity and precision.

In response, anti-corruption agencies around China have been opening official microblogs to receive tip-offs from the public about officials' misdeeds.

Last August, the official microblog of the CPC discipline watchdog of Zhongshan City in Guangdong received a message, saying that Liang Guoying, a senior official with the city's Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security, ordered a change to her son's score in the written test of the 2012 provincial civil service exam in order to make him qualify for the interview round.

The CPC Zhongshan Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection set up an investigation team the day after they received the report. Within one week, the commission's official

microblog updated information about the investigation with four messages, to the approval of netizens.

An anonymous official of the commission told *China Economic Weekly* that investigators received a plethora of detailed messages revealing Liang's misconduct during the investigation. "Maybe the same whistleblower registered different accounts to hide his or her identity and avoid revenge," said the official, who regarded the investigation into Liang's case the speediest and easiest during his career due to the wealth of details, clues and evidence provided by microbloggers. Liang was sacked for abuse of power on September 6, 2012.

A report released by China's leading microblogging site Weibo.com said that it had verified 11,450 microblog accounts run by police authorities, procuratorates and courts, as well



OBSCURED OWNERSHIP: A community in Guangzhou in south China's Guangdong Province is the site of one of the 22 properties not disclosed to discipline authorities by Cai Bin, an official ousted in 2012 amid corruption allegations



HALL OF SHAME: Liang Guoying, formerly a senior human resources official in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, Lei Zhengfu, former Party chief of Beibei District in Chongqing Municipality and Yang Dacai, former head of the Work Safety Administration of Shaanxi Province, are among officials sacked thanks to efforts by Internet whistleblowers in 2012

as 6,100 accounts belonging to their individual staff, by the end of October 2012.

Geographically, the provinces with the largest numbers of these accounts are Henan, Jiangsu, Shandong, Fujian and Zhejiang, mostly located in the eastern part of the country.

According to the website of *People's Daily*, a leading Chinese newspaper, 45,030 Party and government organizations and 25,054 Party and government officials have opened accounts on another major microblogging site in China, T.qq.com.

"The microblogs of Party and government departments are most active in coastal regions such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu, symbolizing more advanced social progress. Meanwhile, this trend is developing fast in China's central and northern areas, showing the increasing recognition from the public," Shan Dangang, a media monitoring expert at the *People's Daily* website, told *China Economic Weekly*.

The microblog account of the Yunnan Provincial People's Procuratorate on T.qq.com has 230,791 followers, more than any of its counterparts. Zhao Anjin, Publicity Department chief of the procuratorate, told *China Economic Weekly* that although there were internal concerns that opening a microblog might invite rumors to spread, the procuratorate's leaders decided to give it a go in an effort to increase judicial transparency and build a tighter bond with the public.

"In the future, microblog whistleblowing will become more common than via telephones

and letters, and receive a speedier response," Zhao said.

Legal guarantee

Ma Huaide, Vice President of China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, said that the prominence of microbloggers also highlights inadequacies of traditional anti-corruption mechanisms.

"For example, there have been loopholes in enforcing the law, and a lack of supervision over law enforcement institutions. Meanwhile, even though we have set up a number of laws to ensure clean governance, the regulations are not complete," Ma told CCTV.

Zhang Zhenliang, a long-time observer of the development of government microblogs in China, said that many officials now avoid wearing wristwatches or luxury suits at public occasions and allegedly forbid their relatives from revealing family wealth in their own microblogs.

"Scrutiny over officials through microblogging should only be supplementary while the key of supervision should be preventing officials from lying about their wealth or not disclosing their assets," said a microblog post regarding Yang Dacai's expulsion.

Officials' property declaration has long been a major public concern in China. A law in this regard was listed in the legislative agenda of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, as early as in 1994, but drafters cite "immature conditions" impede its progress.

Han Deyun, an NPC deputy and a lawyer from Chongqing Municipality, has handed over the same legislative proposal seven times since 2006, calling for a law forcing civil servants to declare personal assets.

Last July, the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection replied that the legislation on officials' property declaration remains in the research stage as public responses to pilot programs are being collected and case studies from other countries are being examined. The commission also pledged to accelerate the process to meet actual needs.

Dozens of local governments have also run initiatives making officials' wealth known to the public, but most efforts have ceased and vanished from public attention as officials are unwilling to participate.

During a recent meeting with officials of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Ma proposed three further laws to restrain power and make government affairs more transparent.

"The message from the top is that in further combating corruption, the CPC will put more emphasis on building systems to uproot corruption, filling loopholes in existing laws and regulations and establishing a long-term strategy, rather than relying on sporadic action," Ma said. ■

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