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al parks. At least 10 are in trial operation. A Giant Panda National Park, spanning three provinces, is three times the size of America's Yellowstone National Park.

Environmental protection features prominently in Xi's five-sphere integrated plan to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social and ecological advancement.

The Party's leadership over all work is vital to turning plans into action, observers said.

Also "cleaner" is the public office as Xi declared war on another age-old human cancer: Corruption.

In 2013, Xi described corruption as an existential threat — capable of bringing down the Party and the State. And he was serious about it.

The ensuing crackdown achieved spectacular success. Every corner of the system was examined, leading to punishment of more than 1.5 million officials in five years. A total of 440 centrally administrated officials had been investigated since November 2012, according to figures in the work report of the 18th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC.

Sun Zhengcai, a former member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and former Party chief of Chongqing, in Southwest China, was the latest senior official to be charged for graft.

Other "tigers" brought down include Zhou Yongkang, Bo Xilai, Guo Boxiong, Xu Caihou and Ling Jihua.

The campaign continued after the 19th CPC National Congress last October, with the Party's disciplinary watchdog having announced investigation into nine other senior officials — including former State Councilor Yang Jing — in a little more than 100 days since then.

Corrupt low-ranking officials — referred to as flies — were swatted too. The anti-corruption drive was immensely popular. A public opinion poll showed an approval rating of a whopping 93.9 percent.

To install institutional checks, Xi initiated the supervisory reform. Supervision commissions were set up at the provincial, municipal and county levels just in four months after the 19th CPC National Congress. The reform aims to bring everyone in public office under oversight.

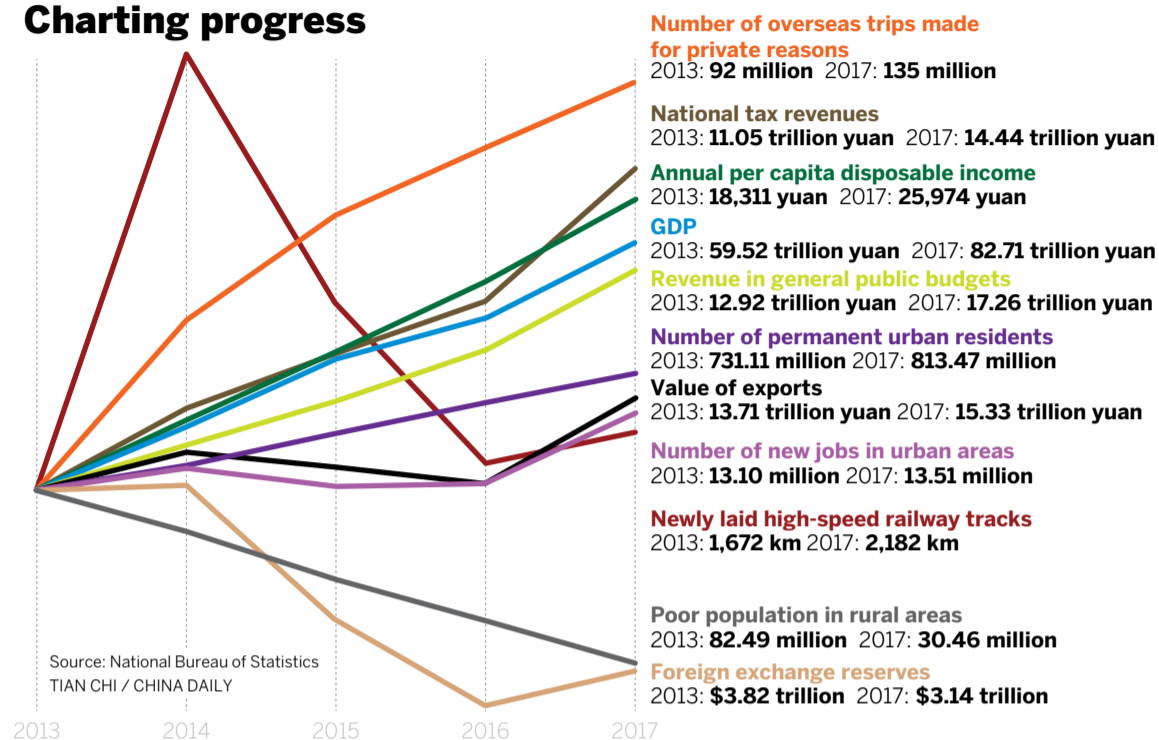
Jiao Hongchang, a law professor at China University of Political Science and Law, said the reform will help lock power in the "cage of institutions".

These moves denounce the hype of "power struggle" drummed up by people overseas attempting to smudge China's anti-corruption campaign.

Two action films recently rose to stardom of China's film industry.

The plots of *Wolf Warrior 2* and *Operation Red Sea* were similar: Chinese soldiers fighting hard in fictional war-torn Africa or the Middle East to rescue Chinese citizens and

## Charting progress



their downtrodden local friends.

However, the plots were not pure fiction. In 2015, as war flared in Yemen, the People's Liberation Army Navy was ordered to repatriate Chinese citizens there. More than 600 Chinese nationals and 200 foreigners were evacuated in just days.

*Wolf Warrior 2* was the country's highest grossing film ever. It ended with a picture of the Chinese passport with a line: "To Chinese nationals, when you run into danger overseas, don't give up! Behind you, there is a strong motherland!"

### Powerful message

Across cinemas, audiences went wild, giving standing ovations, singing the national anthem, and many were even brought to tears. Such was the power of the film.

Indeed, traveling with a Chinese passport is easier than ever before. More than 65 countries and regions have scrapped pre-travel visa requirements for Chinese passport holders.

Chinese travelers made more than 100 million overseas trips each year in recent years. Companies were eager to do business abroad as well. Last year, Chinese invested \$120 billion in 6,236 enterprises in 174 countries and regions, providing jobs and stable salaries to locals.

It is the fifth year since Xi proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to benefit the world through trade and infrastructure cooperation. In 2017, trade between China and Belt and Road countries reached 7.4 trillion yuan. More than 80 countries and organizations have signed deals with China under the initiative.

In early 2016, the world's first China-initiated multilateral financial institute — the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank — started operating. Its membership has since expanded to 84.

A stronger China also has much to offer within its boundaries.

The country's foreign direct investment hit an all-time high in 2017, reaching 878 billion yuan. More investment went to the tech sector, both in services and manufacturing.

Trading hubs across the country — from Yiwu, in East China's Zhejiang province, to Guangzhou, in the southern Guangdong province — have seen more foreign businessmen than ever before. Some, with foreign nationals from over 100 countries, are being turned into an international marketplace.

In the trading port of Shishi, in East China's Fujian province, Yemeni businessman Marwan Aqlan Saeed runs a trading firm that sells Made-in-China garments, toys and suitcases to the Middle East.

He has been living in China for many years and still cannot stop admiring the country's progress.

"Five years may just be enough for us to build a road back home. In China, they can build an entire city from scratch. The speed is breathtaking," said Saeed, who now calls Shishi home.

He said he would like to expand into Africa, riding on the opportunities from the Belt and Road Initiative. "The opportunities are not restricted to Chinese firms. We all benefit."

Xi's idea of building a community of shared future for mankind has won worldwide recognition and plaudits. It was included in United Nations resolutions and inspired the theme of the 2018 World Economic Forum in Davos. Beijing is seen playing a constructive role in thorny regional issues from the Middle East to the Korean Peninsula.

A general goal of China's diplomacy is to foster a new type of international relations and to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The goal can trace its roots to the

ancient Chinese philosophy of "a just cause should be pursued for common good", in the core values of a foreign policy of peace which China has been following for more than six decades, and in Xi's pursuit of common well-being for the Chinese and people around the world.

Donald Trump, president of the United States, was the first foreign head-of-state to visit China after the 19th CPC National Congress. During their Beijing meeting, Xi said he and Trump had in-depth exchanges of views on bilateral ties and issues of common concern and reached broad consensus.

The visit took place just a few months after their Mar-a-Lago meeting in the United States. The meeting, which lasted seven hours in two days, set the tone for developing the bilateral ties.

Xi's interactions with Russian President Vladimir Putin have been frequent since the 18th CPC National Congress. The Sino-Russian relations have become a cornerstone for world peace. Xi told Putin during their meeting in Da Nang, Vietnam, that China and Russia set a model for a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation.

Over the past five years, China hosted a series of global summits including the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the 22nd APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Economic Leaders' Meeting, the G20 2016 Summit in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and the BRICS Summit (for the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in Xiamen, Fujian province.

Under Xi, people have seen a further rise in China's international influence, ability to inspire, and power to shape; and China has made great new contributions to global

peace and development.

Zheng, the Fudan professor, said China achieved fundamental and across-the-board progress under Xi's leadership in economic and social development, rule of law, State governance, Party building, cultural revitalization and environmental protection.

The philosophy underpinning the profound changes in China over the past five years was crystallized as Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

Zheng said that China as a socialist country had overcome many modernization challenges facing the developing world and overtaken Western developed countries in many fields, showing the strength of the socialist system.

"Xi has led China into a new era, and a Chinese model to advance human civilization is in the making," he said. "As China moves closer to the center stage of the world, this model will make a bigger contribution to humanity."

### Looking to the future

In a workshop attended by senior officials in January, Xi used a metaphor to describe the work for them.

"To meet the test of our time, we are like exam takers and the people will judge our performance," he said.

The test is yet to finish. Xi laid out a two-step approach to future development: From 2020 to 2035, working to basically realize socialist modernization; from 2035 to the middle of the century, developing China into a great modern socialist country.

There are, of course, challenges ahead. China's per capita GDP has exceeded \$8,000 but lags far behind that of the United States, which is \$57,000. Chinese industrial structure remains outdated, ability to innovate is not strong enough. Risks in the financial system have not been eliminated.

Xi defined the "principal contradiction" facing Chinese society as one between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life.

In his New Year speech this year, Xi said: "I am aware of the people's biggest concerns, such as education, employment, income, social security, healthcare, old-age security, housing and the environment."

He said the efforts at improving people's well-being had not always been satisfactory and the success of yesterday was no guarantee of success forever.

Xi kept reminding fellow Party and government cadres that the new era belongs to those who work hard and urged them to open a new chapter in the history of the Chinese people's great struggle.

Actions to follow Xi's orders will be unveiled at the NPC session. Under Xi's leadership, China will go from strength to strength.