

# CHINA

## Olympic memories

A student displays his drawing of 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic gold medalist Gu Ailing at a primary school in Handan, Hebei province, on Monday. As the new semester began, the school dedicated the first class to a session sharing students' thoughts on the Games.

HAO QUNYING / FOR CHINA DAILY



# IPR strengthened to help maintain market order

National-level court aims to provide more protection for core technologies

By CAO YIN  
caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

The national-level intellectual property court will play a greater role in handling disputes related to advanced technologies and tackling monopolistic and anti-competitive behavior in order to continue its legal protection for innovation and maintain market order, a senior official said.

Providing stronger protection for intellectual property rights involving core technologies and in new or key fields will be the Intellectual Property Court's next major job, said Zhou Qiang, president of the Supreme People's Court, China's top court.

He unveiled the plan on Saturday while delivering a report on litigation procedures in IPR cases. The report was submitted for review to the Standing Committee of the

National People's Congress, the country's top legislative body.

He said that the IP Court, which was set up in Beijing in January 2019 as a division of the Supreme People's Court, would strengthen its work on case hearings related to monopolistic and anti-competitive behavior in order to maintain market order.

"Additionally, we will conduct more research on the extraterritorial application of antimonopoly laws and provisions, with more participation in IPR international cooperation and competition to better safeguard national sovereignty, as well as security and development interests," he added.

The national-level IP Court was set up to deal with appeals related to patents, technologies and monopolies.

It can streamline the appeals process by allowing litigants to bypass

provincial-level courts, which means that litigants dissatisfied with the rulings of intermediate people's courts at the city or prefecture level, or by other specialized IP courts, can appeal directly to the nation's top court, instead of first appealing to provincial-level high courts.

Liu Bin, an IPR lawyer at Beijing Zhongwen Law Firm, said the establishment of the IP Court was a vital step for the nation in reforming IPR case hearing procedures, "and it has also helped prevent inconsistency in terms of the application of laws and improved the quality and efficiency of related trials in the past three years."

"A big challenge in hearing IPR cases involving technologies and patents is to identify whether these are innovative," he said. "Before the IP Court was established, some provincial courts found this difficult, which led to inconsistencies."

Liu highlighted the significance of the IP Court's professionalism in handling such cases, "as enterprises may otherwise lose their competi-

tive edge if their technologies cannot be identified."

Previously, enterprises had to apply for a retrial to the nation's top court if they were not satisfied with rulings made by courts at the grassroots and provincial levels, which Liu said was "a waste of legal resources". That problem was overcome after the IP Court streamlined related procedures.

The report delivered on Saturday said the IP Court has worked effectively over the past three years, filing 9,458 appeals involving technologies and monopolies, with an average annual increase of 49.3 percent.

There was also a rapid growth in appeals related to invention patents, indicating that IPR protection is a major issue in technological development, it said.

More than one-fifth of the IPR cases involved new fields, such as new energy, biological medicine and new materials, it said, adding that there was also an increase in foreign-related disputes.

# Common prosperity to rely on creating 'bigger cake'

By LUO WANGSHU  
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's paramount vision of achieving common prosperity is not about robbing the rich and helping the poor, but rather about establishing a more scientific system to properly arrange the redistribution of "a bigger cake", experts said.

Common prosperity, a concept emphasizing greater equality, has become a buzzword in China's government agenda this year after the country announced the eradication of absolute poverty last year.

At the annual Central Economic Work Conference in December, which mapped out the priorities for China's economic policies this year, common prosperity was once again highlighted.

Policymakers emphasized that to realize common prosperity, the nation should first "make a bigger and better cake" through the joint efforts of its people, and then divide and distribute the cake properly

through rational institutional arrangements.

"It is practical to attain common prosperity, but for a mega society like China, it takes longer," Zheng Yongnian, a professor of political science at Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), said in a recent speech in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

He said he believed China will be able to attain common prosperity because of the strength of its political system and accumulated wealth and experience.

The United States and Europe cannot contain the development of China because capital cannot ignore China as a huge market, he added.

Maintaining common prosperity is a dynamic process, Zheng said, adding that no single society can maintain eternal prosperity.

Zheng said the key to China attaining common prosperity is to properly handle the relationship between enterprises, government and wider society.

Professor Yao Yang, head of the

National School of Development at Peking University, said the core of common prosperity is education.

He said education is the most important factor affecting income, and improving education is fundamental to attaining common prosperity.

Some redistribution in personal education would be needed, but not to rob the rich and give it to the poor, which would be unsustainable.

"It is to improve the education level among poor people, resulting in the raising of incomes, and therefore attaining common prosperity," he said.

Yao suggested expanding mandatory education from nine to 12 years and changing the tuition system in universities.

Many provinces in China have implemented 12-year free education, such as Zhejiang, he added.

Yao said elite universities such as Peking and Tsinghua usually charge lower tuition fees than others.

"Tuition fees at Peking University have not increased a penny since

1997, remaining at 5,000 yuan (\$793) a year. But at some less-advantaged universities, tuition fees have increased significantly," he said.

Students at such universities were mostly from low-income families in rural areas, he said, but that was not usually the case at Peking University.

He suggested elite schools should raise tuition fees, and then use some of the proceeds to offer scholarships to poor students.

More government funding should also be given to less-advantaged universities to reduce the urban-rural gap in education.

"The next step is to make a bigger cake and distribute the cake properly, including promoting high-quality development, raising incomes and increasingly reducing the gap in distribution and firmly avoiding polarization," said Han Wenxiu, an official at the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs.

He said common prosperity should be achieved both materially and spiritually.

## Number of tutoring institutions plummets

By ZOU SHUO  
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

92 percent

Decrease in offline tutoring institutions for primary and middle school students following the "double reduction" policy

All 25 Chinese tutoring companies listed on stock markets at home or overseas no longer offer academic tutoring services to primary and middle school students following government efforts to alleviate students' academic workloads, according to the Ministry of Education.

An unnamed official with the ministry's department for supervision of after-school tutoring said the number of offline tutoring institutions for primary and middle school students has been slashed by 92 percent from 124,000 to 9,728 and online ones by 87 percent from 263 to 34.

All remaining tutoring institutions have been turned into non-profit organizations and all of their prepaid tutoring fees, totaling 13 billion yuan (\$2 billion), are under government supervision, the official said.

All provincial-level regions have released guidance rates for tutoring courses based on local conditions, and the rates have been decreased by more than 40 percent compared with those before the "double reduction" policy was introduced, he said.

According to the policy, which aims to reduce the amount of academic tutoring and lessen the homework burden faced by primary and middle school students, academic tutoring institutions are banned from going public for financing, and investment in them by listed companies and foreign capital is barred.

A recent guideline issued by the ministries of education and justice and the State Commission Office for Public Sector Reform said institutions and people caught seriously violating extracurricular tutoring regulations will face hefty fines and a lifetime ban from working in the education sector.

The official said "serious violations" are defined as national or cross-regional incidents that lead to significant impacts and grave danger, and "hefty fines" means one to five times their illegal gains.

The ministry is working on a new guideline on the specifics of administrative punishment, he added.

The double reduction policy also stipulated that academic tutoring companies for high school students should conform with the requirements for prima-

ry and middle school students.

The official said local governments are following the policy closely in regulating tutoring companies for high school students.

The Minors Protection Law stipulates that proper arrangements should be made for children's academic studies so that they have time for rest, leisure and physical exercise.

High schools should make efforts to meet the academic study demands of students and parents so children do not need to attend tutoring courses, the official said, adding that no school-organized tutoring courses are allowed during public holidays.

Zhang Ying, deputy director of Liaoning Provincial Department of Education, said the number of academic tutoring institutions for primary and middle school students in the province has fallen by 99.9 percent, and Shenyang, the provincial capital, now has no such institutions.

A grassroots supervision system for extracurricular tutoring consisting of subdistrict and community workers has been established, he said.

More than 300 community workers in a district in the city of Fuxin had used their cellphones to record violations, he added.

Lou Weimin, director of the Jin-hua education bureau in Zhejiang province, said family expenditure on extracurricular tutoring in the city has been reduced by 91.8 percent from 904 million yuan to 83 million yuan.

To spur local governments into action, the city has ranked its counties and districts on their double reduction progress every month since October, he said.

The city has more than 6,000 community workers conducting daily inspections on illegal tutoring within their jurisdictions and they have reported more than 3,100 violations, Lou said.

It has also implemented a rating system for remaining tutoring institutions. Those who obtain four out of five stars are allowed to conduct after-school services at public schools, he added.

## Power couple



A pair of oriental storks take care of their nestlings on a transmission tower in Gaoyou, Jiangsu province, on Sunday. An increasing number of the birds, which are under top-level national protection, have nested in the county in recent years thanks to an improved environment. TANG DEHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Hainan banana farmer's ambition leads to thriving plantation, better incomes

HAIKOU — At the break of dawn, Wang Hai pushed open his door and walked out into the banana fields to check the plants.

"I usually walk the fields for three to four hours a day," the 60-year-old said.

Wang is the manager of the Long-han banana plantation base in Lingao county, in South China's Hainan province. He looks after approximately 67 hectares of plantations and has reaped solid profits over the past few years through hard work.

"Life is so much better now," he said.

Wang's career is flourishing as China pushes forward with rural vitalization efforts.

China unveiled its annual No 1 Central Document on Feb 22, highlighting efforts to stabilize and increase agricultural production and steadily raise farmers' incomes.

Wang's first foray into the tropical fruit industry was as a security guard. In the past, he and his fellow villagers would make ends meet by planting rice and sugar cane.

"Life was hard back then. I used to live in a windowless house," he said.

In 2000, an ecological farming

company came to the village to set up banana plantations. Wang seized the opportunity and applied for the security guard position.

"My responsibilities included looking after the banana trees, preventing cattle from damaging the plantation and ensuring that villagers did not enter," he said.

While the job provided a steady income, it fell short of his ambition, which was to learn about banana farming.

"When I patrolled the fields, I would watch how the workers fertilized the fields," Wang said. "I learned how much fertilizer each

banana plant required and when to fertilize them."

He would take notes and learn techniques. Soon, he mastered the skills needed for banana farming.

After a few years, the company head recognized Wang's potential and appointed him manager of a small patch of the plantation. Wang was in charge of everything from farming to electricity and irrigation.

Thanks to the skills he had gained, his first batch of trees bore more than 350 kilograms per hectare, much higher than the average output in previous years.

"It was quite impressive, and my

boss transferred me to work on larger fields," he said.

With the money he earned, Wang built a new house and bought cars for his family.

But his career was not all smooth sailing. In 2010, a typhoon completely destroyed the plantation, leaving him devastated.

"I did not know what to do at the time, I was at a complete loss," Wang said, adding that it was the encouragement of his staff that gave him hope. "Life goes on no matter what happens."

The natural disaster was a blessing in disguise, as it taught him to

better prepare for future calamities by trimming the leaves of banana plants to mitigate problems.

Wang currently employs 18 workers, all of them local villagers. They can earn up to \$20,000 a year, much more than what they would earn planting rice or sugar cane.

Wang is now hatching bigger plans for his farming career. "We plan to grow more tropical fruits, like pineapples, which have high economic value."

He said that in the days to come, people in the region will continue to enjoy greater prosperity.

XINHUA