TOP NEWS

President signs order awarding state honors

Medals, titles go to 15 prominent figures ahead of country's 75th anniversary

By CAO YIN
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President Xi Jinping signed a presidential order on Friday awarding 15 individuals national medals and honorary titles for their outstanding contributions to the country's development as the People's Republic of China prepares to celebrate its 75th anniversary.

The order came after the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, adopted a decision on conferring the honors at its latest session, which concluded on Friday.

Four people were awarded the Medal of the Republic, which is conferred on prominent figures who have made great contributions and achievements to the building of socialism with Chinese characteristics and in defending the State.

Wang Yongzhi, a missile and rock expert and a pioneer of China's manned space program, was honored posthumously, while the three others are Wang Zhenyi, a medical scientist known for breakthroughs in leukemia treatment, wheat breeding and agricultural strategy expert Li Zhensheng, and war veteran Huang Zongde.

Dilma Rousseff, president of the New Development Bank and former Brazilian president, was awarded a Friendship Medal.

Ten figures were awarded national honorary titles, which are conferred on those who have greatly contributed to — and achieved success in — various areas, including science and technology, education, health and economic research.

They include the late renowned radar expert Wang Xiaomo, prominent jurist Zhang Jinfan and the late distinguished geophysicist Huang Danian.

The NPC Standing Committee called on everyone to learn from these honored individuals, and work together to forge ahead, so as to make more contributions to comprehensively promoting Chinese modernization and national rejuvenation.

The selection of award winners began earlier this year, and the nominations were open to seek public opinions from Aug 12 to 16.

In 2019, on the occasion of celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, 42 individuals were awarded the Medal of the Republic, the Friendship Medal and national honorary titles. It was the first time that these honors were awarded.

Later, a few prominent figures with contributions to disease control were awarded national medals and national honorary titles, and some foreign dignitaries were also awarded the Friendship Medal.

These awards serve as good examples for the whole of society, arousing the public's patriotic enthusiasm, and expanding China's open and inclusive image around the world, according to a recent official release.

List of individuals awarded national medals, honorary titles

Medal of the Republic:

Wang Yongzhi (1932-2024) From Changtu, Liaoning province, he was an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and chief engineer of "Project 921" — China's manned space flight project. He was one of the co-founders of China's manned space flight sector, leading the research and development of various missiles and rockets, also participating in the blueprint of China's manned space missions.

Wang Zhenyi Born in 1924 in Xinghua, Jiangsu province, he is an academician at the CAE and former head of the Shanghai Institute of Hematology. A medical scientist and educator in blood-related diseases, he developed an effective treatment against acute promyelocytic leukemia and significantly increased the survival rate of patients worldwide of this aggressive disease by not applying for a patent for the cure.

Li Zhensheng Born in 1931 in Zibo, Shandong province, he is an academician and former vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and an agronomist. He systematically studied distant hybridization — crossing genetically dissimilar species — between wheat and quackgrass, and developed new wheat varieties that can efficiently carry specific nutrients. His work played a significant role in guaranteeing the production growth and food security of China's grains.

Huang Zongde Born in 1931, he is from Rongcheng, Shandong. He is a veteran and former consultant at Corps 52824 of the People's Liberation Army. He joined the army when he was 17 and bravely fought in multiple battles including the Yangtze River Crossing Campaign (1949) and the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53), winning various military honors.

Friendship Medal:

Dilma Rousseff Born in 1947, she was president of Brazil from January 2011 to August 2016. As the first female Brazilian president, she was elected for two consecutive terms. Rousseff has made significant contributions to promoting friendly cooperation between China and Brazil. The economist is now president of the Shanghai-based New Development Bank.

National honorary titles:

PEOPLE'S SCIENTIST

Wang Xiaomo (1938-2023) From Shanghai, he was a CAE academician, renowned radar expert and pioneer of China's early warning aircraft development. He led the research of China's first three-dimensional radar and early-warning aircraft system.

Zhao Zhongxian Born in 1941 in Xinmin, Liaoning province, he is a CAS academician and the main advocate and practitioner of China's high-temperature superconductivity research, helping establish China as one of the front-runners in the sector.

PEOPLE'S GUARD

Bayika Kalidibek Born in 1952 in Tashikurgan Tajik autonomous county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. A member of the Tajik ethnic group, he is a former border patroller in Tashikurgan. For some 70 years, three generations of his family helped guide border soldiers patrolling the Pamirs and save them from hazards and from getting lost. Laqini, his son, died when trying to save a child who accidentally broke through the ice of a frozen lake.

PEOPLE'S ARTIST

Tian Hua Born in 1928 in Tangxian, Hebei province, Tian is a former first-class actress of the August First Film Studio. She portrayed various classic roles on the screen and participated in numerous charity events after she retired. Her portrayal of iconic female characters in early Chinese cinema has left a lasting impact on the industry.

PEOPLE'S CRAFTSMAN

Xu Zhenchao Born in 1950 in Rongcheng, Shandong, he is a senior manager and senior technician at Qingdao Qianwan Container Terminal. He broke the world record in container loading and unloading nine times and helped with the fuel-to-electricity upgrade of rubber-tired gantry (cranes at ports) that led to significant cost reductions.

PEOPLE'S EDUCATOR

Zhang Jinfan Born in 1930 in Shenyang, Liaoning, he is a renowned jurist and former vice-president of China University of Political Science and Law. His research is fundamental in the theoretical basis and structural paradigm in the discipline of legal history in China.

Huang Danian (1958-2017) From Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, he was a renowned geophysicist and an exceptional representative of researchers who returned to China from overseas. He also loved being an educator and made great contributions to China's talent cultivation cause.

PEOPLE'S HEALTH WORKER

Lu Shengmei Born in 1944 in Beijing, she is a former vice-president of Jiaxian People's Hospital in Shaanxi province. She came to a grassroots hospital in an underdeveloped area in northwestern China and served some 150,000 patients over the years. Her methods of childbirth and immunity helped significantly reduce infant mortality.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTOR TO ECONOMIC RESEARCH

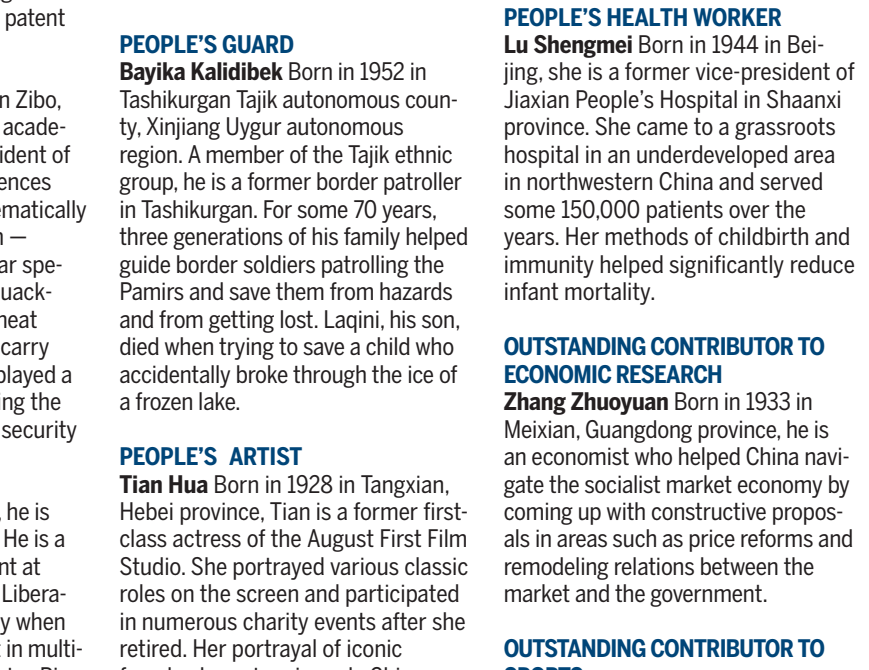
Zhang Zhuoyuan Born in 1933 in Meixian, Guangdong province, he is an economist who helped China navigate the socialist market economy by coming up with constructive proposals in areas such as price reforms and remodeling relations between the market and the government.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTOR TO SPORTS

Zhang Xielin Born in 1940 in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, he is a renowned table tennis player and coach. He won China's first world championship titles in men's doubles and mixed doubles, and the Chinese women's team won 10 team championships under his coaching.

CHINA DAILY

Cave art



An inscription from Mogao Grottoes Cave 61, from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), is unveiled with the help of staff members at the China Art Museum in Shanghai on Thursday. The exhibition "Great Art of Dunhuang" is set to open on Sept 20 and features a combination of cultural relics, replicated classic caves as well as mural sculptures.

ZHU WEIHUI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Premier Li Qiang addresses the UAE-China Business Forum in Dubai on Thursday. Li was on an official three-day visit to the United Arab Emirates starting from Wednesday. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the UAE. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Li calls for high-quality BRI bond with UAE

By ZHOU JIN
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Premier Li Qiang has wrapped up his official visit to the United Arab Emirates, where he highlighted the Gulf state's role in China's Middle East diplomacy and called for opening up new opportunities for bilateral cooperation.

Li returned to Beijing on Friday after the four-day regional tour, which also brought him to Saudi Arabia.

When addressing the UAE-China Business Forum in Dubai on Thursday, Li said that relations between the two countries stand at a historic juncture, while economic and trade cooperation is facing crucial opportunities for upgrading.

More than 200 representatives from the governments, chambers of commerce and businesses from both countries attended the forum.

The premier called on enterprises from the two countries to seize new opportunities for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and enhance cooperation in areas such as connectivity, infrastructure and financing to promote their deeper integration into global industrial and supply chains.

Li also urged the enterprises to identify more areas of shared interest and opportunity for cooperation from the intersection of their strategic priorities, and deepen cooperation in trade, new energy, tourism and other sectors.

Cooperation in cutting-edge fields such as advanced manufacturing, the digital economy and artificial intelligence should also be emphasized to jointly seize future development opportunities, he added.

China welcomes more enterprises from the UAE to invest in the country, Li said, adding that he believes that with the joint efforts of entrepreneurs from both sides, bilateral trade cooperation will continue to thrive.

UAE investment in China grew 120 percent in 2023, representing 90 percent of all Arab investment in China, said Chinese Ambassador to the UAE Zhang Yiming.

China's investment in the country has been growing by more than 16 percent annually, reaching $1.3 billion in 2023 and accounting for 60 percent of China's total investment in Arab countries.

In the Middle East, the UAE is China's second-largest trading partner, largest export market and the third-largest market for Chinese engineering projects.

On Thursday, Li also held talks with UAE Vice-President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the UAE.

The two countries signed more than 130 bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding over the past four decades. And in 2018, the two countries upgraded their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

China has long placed the UAE as a priority in its Middle East diplomacy, and stands ready to work with the country to firmly support each other and consolidate the political foundation of bilateral ties, Li said.

He stressed that China and the UAE are good partners on the path of common development, and it is in the fundamental interests of both sides to strengthen cooperation and help each other succeed.

A mutual visa exemption arrangement between the two countries came into effect on Jan 16, 2018, making the UAE the first country in the Middle East to achieve full visa exemption status with China.

Ties: Speakers share views on improving relationship

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"Just as President Xi Jinping pointed out 'the hope of the China-US relationship lies in the people, its foundation is in grassroots connections, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from subnational exchanges' — those are the key aspects we should constantly work to strengthen," Qu said.

The veteran journalist said he is a firm believer that "mutual understanding is the foundation of friendly cooperation" and that "a modernized China represents an opportunity, rather than a challenge, to the US".

Given that China and the US have accumulated remarkable "cognitive deficits" amid profound changes taking place in the world, it is crucial that the two peoples reacquaint themselves with a real, multidimensional and comprehensive view of each other's country, he said.

In his keynote speech, Xie, the ambassador, said: "The history of the China-US relationship in the past 45 years, especially the ups and downs in recent years, tells us that pressure, sanctions, isolation, containment and blockade don't serve the purpose. Rather, they bring self-inflicted trouble and require extra work to offset the unwanted results.

"The idea of 'decoupling' is illusive. Viewing each other as new Cold War adversaries will prove to be the biggest strategic misjudgment in the 21st century," he said.

The envoy underscored that among the four red lines that China has drawn — Taiwan, democracy and human rights, path and system, and development rights — the Taiwan question is paramount in China-US relations and is a red line that must not be crossed.

"For China-US relations to have a 'stable floor', it is critical to avoid touching these 'high-voltage wires'," Xie said.

The Vision China morning session featured presentations from six Americans. They came to tell stories of friendship with China in a time wrought with uncertainty. They are people who have remained steadfast in their support of China while trade and political tensions persist, particularly in a US presidential election year.

US' wrong assumptions

US policy on China has veered off course because the assumptions have changed, in many ways radically, David Firestein, CEO and president of the George H.W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations, said during his speech at the event.

"They have changed in a way that they have become less accurate than they were before," he said.

He outlined six wrong assumptions: China is no longer a partner but an enemy; building a constructive relationship with China does not serve the long-term interests of the US; China no longer accepts the existing world order and seeks to reshape it; China is trying to replace the US as the sole superpower; excessive engagement with China harms the US and makes it vulnerable; China-US relations are a "zero-sum game".

"They're all wrong, every one of them," Firestein said of the assumptions.

In 1979, teenagers Kelly Van Dries and her elder sister Kitty were working at a rodeo in Simonton, Texas, which was owned by their parents. Kelly had the honor of presenting a cowboy hat to Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping.

Sarah Lande of Iowa recalled the friendly exchanges of the city of Muscatine with Hebei province.

Their presentations were followed by a Gen Z debate and exchange in the afternoon, at which US and Chinese youths debated "The impact of artificial intelligence on human life" and discussed how to avoid the Thucydides Trap, while overcoming "information bubbles" for better China-US communication.

Ge Haijiao, chairman of Bank of China, said it is the longest continuously operating and most globalized bank in China. The bank has been a witness, participant and contributor to the ever-deepening and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and the US.

"Bank of China is firmly committed to promoting trade and commerce between China and the United States, to the benefit of both societies," Ge said in a message read in New York by Hu Wei, president and CEO of Bank of China USA and chairman of the China General Chamber of Commerce-USA.

Steve Blake, chief representative for the environmental group Wild-Aid in Beijing, said his experience in China "has really shaped my entire life for the most part".

"Study Chinese, go check out China. ... On the ground, it's still an amazing place," he said.

Angela Chen, co-chair of the New York Philharmonic's International Advisory Board, said: "I'm really touched by these stories. You should share them with US audiences."

"I encourage your team to make a documentary featuring all the stories shared today — US audiences should know that there are still many people building connections between the US and China," she added.

Belinda Robinson, Minlu Zhang and Heng Weili in New York contributed to this story.