

WHAT'S THIS YEAR'S FOCUS?



High-level Reform and Opening Up of the Pudong New Area

The Pudong New Area will be the pioneer in fields like innovation, exploration of governance mode, green and low carbon development and will be a great power to serve the nation. While continuing to enhance its hard power, Pudong will also comprehensively improve its soft power and better display the Chinese ideas, spirit and ways to the world.

Improvement of New 'Kinetic Energy'

Shanghai will enhance its forward judgements on new technology, industry and mode. It will actively push the digital economy and comprehensively facilitate the city's digitization. It will guide firms to speed up their research on important platforms where the virtual world and real society can interact with each other in the future.



Digital Economy

Shanghai will keep enhancing its advantages on the digital economy, raising its size and quality. It will focus on some major fields and vigorously promote breakthroughs in key technologies, attracting a group of high-quality companies with great potential for development to create new highlights on digital economy. Through innovations on policies and systems, it will form a nice environment for developing the digital economy.



Urban Digitalization

Shanghai will improve its government management with intelligentization and digitalization. The city will further improve its one-stop online platform offering government services.



Public-Welfare Projects and Civil Affairs

The city government will introduce market and social forces to participate in public-welfare projects. For example, along with the construction of "new cities," Shanghai will use innovative ways to re-vamp old areas. The comprehensive management on parking problems will be pushed forward by improving the transport system, promoting green travel and matching resources.



Compiled by Ke Jiayun and Chen Huizhi
Graphics by Shen Xinyi/Shanghai Daily

From 'hand raisers' to giving voice to people

Chen Huizhi

"NANCHANG Road has been turned into a cafe street, but all roadside parking slots on the street were removed last year, hurting the caterers a lot," Shi Zheng, a deputy to the Shanghai People's Congress, the city's legislature, wrote in a suggestion to the government ahead of the annual session of the congress, which starts tomorrow.

This, she wrote, is an example of how rigid street parking rules are turning away the customers of many small street shops, which are already struggling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

She suggested that the government introduce 15-minute free parking for all street parking slots available, and use digital platforms to facilitate the service.

Shi, president of the workers' union of Shanghai Jingao Public Transportation Co, became a deputy to the Shanghai People's Congress in 2017. Street parking problems, which are a major concern for many residents, have been on her mind for years.

Last year, she filed a suggestion in which she called for the introduction of more temporary parking slots on minor streets. The deputy work commission of the congress forwarded her suggestion to the Shanghai traffic police.

She told Shanghai Daily that her new suggestion was the result of the event's brainstorming with police officials.

"Although I work for a bus company, it doesn't mean that I have to promote public transportation all the time," she said.

"It's the expectation of residents that all kinds of mobility needs are addressed."

As a member of the urban construction and environmental protection committee of the congress, Shi also conducted pre-legislation research on the taxi business last year.

The job of a legislator is so much learning by doing. Shi and her fellow deputies come from different walks of life, but they listen to various needs of the people and address them through direct access to the government or legislation. This works in a very similar way to legislatures in many other countries.

In China, becoming a deputy of the people's congress is largely seen as an honor. The deputies are revered by people, but with their position comes more responsibility than a heightened status, which they're well aware of.

In recent years, as an increasing number of channels to take part in the legislation



Chen Huizhi

VOICES FROM THE REPORTERS

Shanghai Daily reporters who are covering the Two Sessions will provide their insights on what they see, hear, experience and discuss with various deputies during the conference in this column.

process and seek engagement with the deputies on various issues are open to the public, the deputies have become more visible, dispelling the impression that they're merely "hand raisers."

People can now directly offer their suggestions on legislative matters to the legislatures through "liaison points on legislative matters" in all 16 Shanghai districts.

Last year alone, 3,103 suggestions on over 30 local laws were collected from 25 liaison points, and 354 of them were eventually written into law, according to the Shanghai People's Congress.

Deputies regularly meet people in about 5,600 community deputy offices around the city where they take suggestions or complaints from the people and strive to address their problems.

Residents are invited to attend hearings launched at the Shanghai People's Congress where members of the standing committee of the congress ask government representatives questions on various issues. The congress also holds open-door events in which people take the seats of the standing committee members and discuss legislative issues like lawmakers do.

In the opinion of Xu Liping, general engineer at SGIDI Engineering Consulting Group Co and a member of the committee for urban construction and environmental protection of the Shanghai People's Congress, democracy is not a job confined to those who sit in the legislature, but rather it should be very inclusive.

"A people's democracy works only when people have the passion, the capability, and the access to take part in the governance of our society, which can't happen overnight," she told Shanghai Daily. In her view, the key is to ensure full knowledge of policy and legislative issues as well as full participation of the people.