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Government Work Report Highlights Sci-tech Innovation

Edited by WANG Xiaoxia

China made new breakthroughs in sci-tech innovation last year, and will continue efforts for greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology in 2024, according to the Government Work Report delivered at the second session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) on March 5.

In 2023, China made major headway in establishing a system of national laboratories and achieved fruitful results in developing core technologies in key fields, according to the report.

Substantial progress was made in the R&D of high-end equipment, such as aircraft engines, gas turbines and fourth-generation nuclear power units. A series of innovations emerged in frontier areas such as AI and quantum technology while the volume of contracted technology transactions grew by 28.6 percent. These achievements have further enhanced the capacity for innovation-driven development, the report said.

Supportive policies and measures enabled these achievements, including a significant increase in funding and

loans to support sci-tech innovation, and the implementation of major science and technology programs, said the report.

A major task of 2024 is to invigorate China through science and education and consolidate the foundations for high-quality development. According to the report, the capacity for original innovation will be enhanced with the cultivation of more first-class scientists and innovation teams. Research on disruptive and frontier technologies will be stepped up.

The report said the principal role of enterprises in sci-tech innovation will be reinforced, and R&D and application of technologies that promote people's wellbeing strengthened. Intellectual property rights protection will be bolstered and policies and measures formulated for better application of sci-tech advances.

China will also expand science and technology exchanges and cooperation with other countries, promote international personnel exchanges, and create an open and globally competitive innovation ecosystem, the report added.



The opening meeting of the second session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, March 5, 2024. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

Higher-standard Opening-up Measures for 2024

By Staff Reporters

The Government Work Report tabled at the second session of the 14th NPC sends positive signals for foreign investment and international cooperation.

Expanding market access

China will further shorten the negative list for foreign investment, and all market access restrictions on foreign investment in manufacturing will be abolished, according to the report.

To pursue higher-standard opening up and promote mutual benefits, the country will promote alignment with high-standard international economic and trade rules, expand institutional opening up, and facilitate interplay between the domestic and international markets.

Market access restrictions in some service sectors,

such as telecommunications and healthcare, will be reduced, and the Catalog of Encouraged Industries for Foreign Investment will be expanded. Foreign-invested enterprises in China will be encouraged to reinvest in China.

Ensuring national treatment

The government will ensure national treatment for foreign-invested enterprises and their participation in government procurement, bidding and standard-setting processes in accordance with the law and on an equal footing, the report said.

China will continue to develop a first-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and internationalized, which will enhance the appeal of "Invest in China." A new group of foreign-funded projects will be selected as landmark projects at an appropriate time.

To strengthen services for foreign investors and

make China a favored destination for foreign investment, things will be made easier for foreign nationals to work, study and travel in the country, the report said.

Promoting scientific cooperation

There will be holistic and coordinated efforts to strengthen education, science and technology, and the workforce; planning and policy implementation will be integrated for innovation and industrial, capital, and talent chains; comprehensive reform of education, science and technology, and human resources will be deepened to create a strong impetus for Chinese modernization drive.

The initiatives outlined in the Government Work Report signify a concerted effort to create a more favorable investment environment, promote international cooperation, and bolster domestic scientific and technological capabilities on the global stage.

Major Development Targets for 2024

GDP growth rate **around 5%**

Creating jobs in urban areas **over 12 million**

CPI increase **around 3%**

Grain output **over 650 million metric tons**

Reducing energy consumption per unit of GDP **around 2.5%**

- Accelerate development of new quality productive forces.
- Step up research on disruptive and frontier technologies.
- Launch an 'AI+' initiative.

Source: 2024 Government Work Report
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Minister of Science and Technology Yin Hejun Interviewed at the Ministers' Corridor: Building a Sci-tech Powerhouse, Supporting Young Talents

By LI Linxu & QI Liming

Sci-tech innovation has not only boosted the competitiveness of China's traditional industries, but also solidified the foundation and injected impetus for the development of new quality productive forces, said Yin Hejun, minister of science and technology, on March 5.

Speaking to journalists at the Ministers' Corridor after the opening meeting of the second session of the 14th National People's Congress, Yin elaborated on how to support high-quality development through sci-tech innovation, as well as how to support young people to play a leading role.

Gaining new momentum

Strong sci-tech support is indispensable for promoting high-quality development, said Yin, adding that last year, the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee deepened the reform of the Party and state institutions, and further strengthened the centralized, unified leadership of the Party over science and technology related work.

A new look is emerging in China's sci-tech undertakings, with enhanced macro coordination of science and technology, accelerated implementation of major sci-tech projects, and strengthened strategic sci-tech forces, added Yin, citing a series of figures.

From the perspective of input, China's R&D expenditure exceeded 3.3 trillion RMB in 2023, up 8.1 percent year-on-year, with an R&D investment intensity of 2.64 percent. The country's investment in basic research reached 221.2 billion RMB, a year-on-year increase of 9.3 percent.

From the perspective of output, 950,000 technology contracts were signed last year, with a transaction value of 6.15 trillion RMB, an increase of 28.6 percent over the previous year. The number of authorized patents reached 921,000, up 15.3 percent over the previous year.

From the perspective of progress, a batch of major original achievements were made in quantum technology, integrated circuits, artificial intelligence, biomedicine and new energy.

The world's first fourth-generation nuclear power

plant officially went into commercial operation, while the C919 large passenger aircraft successfully completed its maiden commercial flight. New energy vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic modules, the so-called new three items that everyone is talking about, registered very pleasing export growth rates last year.

Next, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) will resolutely implement the decisions and plans of the CPC Central Committee and firmly adhere to the defined responsibilities in the areas of strategies, reforms, plans and services, said Yin, adding that MOST will strengthen macro coordination, particularly in the coordination of strategic planning, policy measures, major projects, sci-tech strengths, resource platforms and regional innovation.

The ministry will prioritize its work in three areas: stepping up efforts to tackle key problems in science and technology, enhancing the cultivation of strategic forces, and deepening the reform of sci-tech systems and mechanisms, according to Yin.

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