

WINDOW OF CHINA

Mobile phones make politics more accessible for ordinary Chinese

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Special Report: NPC, CPPCC Annual Sessions 2008

BEIJING, March 13 (Xinhua) -- When the New York Times applauded in 2005 the "Super Girl" TV show hosted by China Hunan Satellite TV, which drew 40 million Chinese to vote for their favorite singers through mobile phone text messages, as a prelude to "voting democracy," some believed the American newspaper might have misinterpreted an entertainment event as a political matter.

However, during this year's annual full sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's top legislature and advisory body respectively, people find with surprise that mobile phones have really got a role to play in promoting "democracy with Chinese characteristics."

"For several consecutive days, we were seeing a dozen mobile phone messages coming in every second through our platform," said Ms. Xu, a staff with China Mobile who asked to be identified only by her surname. "Surprisingly, all the questions were addressed to Premier Wen Jiabao."

By Tuesday, a campaign called "Ask the Premier," jointly launched by Xinhuanet.com and China Mobile for their 100 million plus mobile phone users, had collected over 250,000 short messages, a substantial portion of which were from blue-collars, farmers, and students.

The Chinese government encourages grass-root citizens to "orderly participate in politics" to expand democracy, according to Beijing-based political observers. While delivering a keynote report to the 17th National Congress of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) last October, Chinese President Hu Jintao, also general-secretary of the CPC Central Committee, stressed the necessity to "expand orderly participation in politics through every level and in every field." For the first time in history, safeguarding the people's "right to expression" was included in the report to the Party Congress.

"Political democracy would not be possible without the active participation of citizens in politics," said Beijing-based political expert Yu Keping. As information and network technologies take great leaps forward these days, mobile phone messages are becoming a new way for the Chinese to participate in politics, in addition to the traditional way of direct voting at grass-root level.

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[Top political advisor visits journalists who cover "two sessions"](#)



Accompanied by Wang Gang (3rd from left), Jia Qinglin(L), member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Political Bureau and presider of the meetings of the CPPCC session's presidium, visits NPC and CPPCC Annual Sessions news reporting center of Xinhua News Agency on March 9. (Xinhua Photo)

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BEIJING, March 9 (Xinhua) -- China's top political advisor Jia Qinglin on Sunday urged the country's media to "vividly showcase the vigor of socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics" in their reports when visiting journalists who are covering the on-going "two sessions".

At around 11 a.m., Jia, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), visited Xinhua's news room for the annual sessions of the CPPCC National Committee and the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing, where the sessions are convened. [Full story](#)

[Netizens say gov't report faces problems squarely](#)

BEIJING, March 6 (Xinhua) -- "It is a report facing problems squarely," a netizen wrote on the China Central Television (CCTV) website on Thursday.

Premier Wen Jiabao's government work report was delivered at the First Session of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC). Now it is receiving comments from more than 200 million Chinese netizens. [Full story](#)

[Chinese foreign minister meets journalists](#)



Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi (C) answers questions during a press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 12, 2008. (Xinhua Photo)

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Journalists prepare prior to Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's meeting with the press at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 11, 2008. (Xinhua Photo)

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Editor: Bi Mingxin

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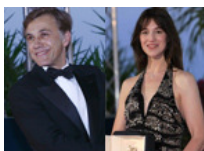
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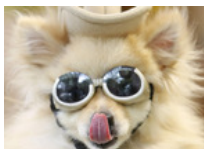
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