



The seven men who rule China

China's Communist Party yesterday unveiled a new line-up for its top decision-making body, the Politburo Standing Committee. Here are the seven members, in order of party hierarchy.

PRESIDENT XI JINPING, 64

• Mr Xi became the top leader in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) hierarchy in late 2012. Beginning his second five-year term as the party chief yesterday, he has amassed enough authority to be considered the most

powerful Chinese leader since Deng Xiaoping.

• Named "core" leader of the party last October, he further cemented his grip on power after his political thoughts were written into the party charter at the recently concluded 19th party congress.

• In a break with party norms, he did not name potential successors to the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), fanning speculation that he is planning for a third term in 2022.

• He was also re-elected yesterday as the chairman of the Central Military Commission, which oversees the People's Liberation Army.

LI KEQIANG, 62

• Like Mr Xi, Mr Li was first promoted to the PSC at the 17th party congress in 2007.

• Five years later, Mr Xi succeeded President Hu Jintao and Mr Li succeeded Premier Wen Jiabao.

• As premier, his key portfolios include economic management and finance. But Mr Li, widely seen as an ally of former president Hu Jintao, has had his power reduced with the setting up of high-level steering committees headed by Mr Xi.

• Some analysts say Mr Li is being retained on the PSC for a second term for political continuity.

LI ZHANSHU, 67

• Ranked No. 3 in the Chinese leadership hierarchy, after President Xi and Premier Li, Mr Li is tipped to head the National People's Congress, China's Parliament.

• His friendship with Mr Xi goes back to the 1980s when both headed neighbouring counties in Hebei province.

• As director of the CCP Central Committee's General Office, Mr Li is Mr Xi's chief of staff and often accompanies him on foreign trips. He is set to be Mr Xi's strongest ally now that anti-graft czar Wang Qishan has stepped down.

WANG YANG, 62

• Mr Wang, like Mr Li Keqiang, hails from the Communist Youth League faction, also known as tuanpai.

• Seen as a significant figure familiar with foreign policies, he headed the Chinese delegation at the first US-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue in July.

• The Vice-Premier was formerly the party chief of Chongqing municipality and Guangdong province.

• Even though he is ranked No. 4 in the PSC, he is tipped to be chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a state position that is deemed less important than that of his other lower-ranking colleagues in the PSC.

WANG HUNING, 62

• The director of the Policy Research Office, a think-tank of the party's Central Committee, is a close aide who is often seen beside Mr Xi during important meetings and overseas trips.

• A key adviser to former presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao and now Mr Xi, the former dean of Fudan University Law School is also the brains behind Mr Xi's "Chinese Dream" campaign.

• His promotion to the PSC, and his new role as the Secretary of the party's Secretariat, will help Mr Xi further advance his ideology over the next five years.

ZHAO LEJI, 60

• In 2000, he became Qinghai governor at the age of 42, making him the youngest governor in the country at the time. His promotion to Qinghai party boss three years later made him the country's youngest provincial party secretary, at age 45.

• After spending almost three decades in one of the poorest provinces in China, he moved to Shaanxi, Mr Xi's home province, and was its party secretary from 2007 to 2012.

• Elected head of the party's top anti-graft agency, the Central Committee for Discipline Inspection, Mr Zhao will ensure that Mr Xi's anti-graft campaign is carried out more extensively, as well as help to institutionalise party supervision.

• He has a degree in philosophy from Peking University.

HAN ZHENG, 63

• Widely seen as a member of the Shanghai faction led by former president Jiang Zemin, Mr Han was Mr Xi's deputy when the latter served a brief stint as Shanghai party boss in 2007.

• The Shanghai party chief is likely to be the first executive vice-premier, who will be the point man for the Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation, the highest-level forum between China and Singapore.

• As Shanghai mayor, Mr Han led a US\$44 billion (S\$60 billion) infrastructure makeover for the 2010 Shanghai Expo.

Sources:
THE STRAITS TIMES,
BLOOMBERG, REUTERS

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