

China's 'iron lady' steps down from key political post

AFP, Beijing

China's most powerful woman, Vice Premier Wu Yi, signalled her retirement yesterday, ending a career as a tough negotiator and troubleshooter that earned plaudits at home and abroad for "the iron lady."

Wu, 69, was not named to the Communist Party's new Central Committee at the close of a five-yearly party Congress, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Her failure to win another term on the committee appeared linked to her age and means she will step down from the vice premiership when China's parliament names a new government in March next year.



Chinese President Hu Jintao (L), former president Jiang Zemin (C) and Premier Wen Jiabao (R) raise their hands to vote during the closing session of the ruling Communist's 17th five-yearly Party Congress inside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

New leaders, economic plans in China as Congress ends

AFP, Beijing

China's Communist Party yesterday endorsed Hu Jintao's new economic model for the country, while opening the way for a top leadership reshuffle that will likely see the president consolidate his power.

Following the end of its five-year Congress, Hu, 64, is almost certain to be given a second term as party chief on Monday alongside a revamped line-up of leaders in the nation's most powerful political organ.

That body, the party's Standing Committee of the Politburo, currently has nine members but will see as many as four new faces in Monday's reshuffle, following the complex political events that took place at the Congress.

He gave a glowing assessment of the week-long gathering, which brought more than 2,200 top cadres to Beijing, to outline the party's goals for the next five years, as well as finalise the leadership manoeuvres.

"It has drawn up a grand blueprint for continuing to build a

moderately prosperous society," Hu said in a closing speech at the Great Hall of the People, although there was little in the way of much-touted democratic reforms.

While much speculation has focused on the new generation of leaders, and whether any of them will emerge as the clear frontrunner to succeed Hu in 2012, the president appeared to use the Congress to cement his hold over the party.

In that regard, the Congress appointed many Hu allies to the new 204-member Central

Committee, which as its first task will on Monday formally approve the new Standing Committee.

The Congress also saw the party's constitution amended to include Hu's economic model for the country that he has termed "scientific development".

This broadly means a greater emphasis on addressing environment concerns and China's army of poor as the nation develops, rather than a sole focus on break-neck economic growth as was the case under Hu's predecessor Jiang Zemin.

It has drawn up a grand blueprint for continuing to build a

a moderately prosperous society," Hu said in a closing speech at the Great Hall of the People, although there was little in the way of much-touted democratic reforms.

While much speculation has focused on the new generation of leaders, and whether any of them will emerge as the clear frontrunner to succeed Hu in 2012, the president appeared to use the Congress to cement his hold over the party.

In that regard, the Congress appointed many Hu allies to the new 204-member Central

Committee, which as its first task will on Monday formally approve the new Standing Committee.

The Congress also saw the party's constitution amended to include Hu's economic model for the country that he has termed "scientific development".

This broadly means a greater emphasis on addressing environment concerns and China's army of poor as the nation develops, rather than a sole focus on break-neck economic growth as was the case under Hu's predecessor Jiang Zemin.

It has drawn up a grand blueprint for continuing to build a

a moderately prosperous society," Hu said in a closing speech at the Great Hall of the People, although there was little in the way of much-touted democratic reforms.

While much speculation has focused on the new generation of leaders, and whether any of them will emerge as the clear frontrunner to succeed Hu in 2012, the president appeared to use the Congress to cement his hold over the party.

In that regard, the Congress appointed many Hu allies to the new 204-member Central

Israel accuses Fatah militants of trying to ambush Olmert

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday accused militants from Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah movement of trying to ambush Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's convoy in the West Bank last summer.

Yuval Diskin, the head of Israel's domestic Shin Bet security service, gave details of the August 6 plot during a weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet, a senior government official present at the meeting told AFP.

"On August 6, while Prime Minister Olmert was travelling to Jericho to meet Abu Mazen (Abbas), Fatah terrorists tried attacking his convoy," the official

said, quoting Diskin.

"The terror plot was thwarted and the meeting was held as planned," the official added.

The news came as Olmert prepared to embark on a trip to France and Britain to discuss preparations for an Israel-Palestinian peace conference expected to be held next month.

"We feel great displeasure over this issue and we will not ignore it. But I do not have any intention to stop the negotiation efforts with the Palestinians," Olmert told reporters before his departure.

"What bothered us was the unacceptable way they dealt with the suspects. This is part of a behaviour pattern that has to change," he added.

US Rep Bobby Jindal became the nation's youngest governor and the first nonwhite to hold post in Louisiana since Reconstruction when he carried more than half the vote to defeat 11 opponents.

Jindal, the Republican 36-year-old son of Indian immigrants, had 53 percent with 625,036 votes with about 92 percent of the vote tallied. It was more than enough to win Saturday's election outright and avoid a Nov. 17 runoff.

"My mom and dad came to this country in pursuit of the American dream. And guess what happened. They found the American Dream to be alive and well right here in Louisiana," he said to cheers and

applause at his victory party.

His nearest competitor: Democrat Walter Boasso with 208,690 votes or 18 percent; Independent John Georges had 116,477 votes or 14 percent; Democrat Foster Campbell had 151,101 or 13 percent. Eight candidates divided the rest.

"I'm asking all of our supporters to get behind our new governor," Georges said in a concession speech.

The Oxford-educated Jindal had lost the governor's race four years ago to Gov Kathleen Blanco. He won a congressional seat in conservative suburban New Orleans a year later but was widely believed to have his eye on the governor's mansion.

Blanco opted not to run for re-election after she was widely blamed for the state's slow response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source of a minor fire that broke out at the bomb damaged Glorietta mall in Manila's financial district in Makati yesterday. Police investigators found traces of military type explosive at the blast site while local ABS CBN TV station received a message from supposed Muslim extremist group, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, claiming responsibility for the bombing.

Shoppers evacuate while security men and firemen in the background look for the source