

News on China | No. 13



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Geopolitics

China Condemns US-Israeli Strikes on Iran and Defends Right to Self-Defense, While Pushing for Ceasefire at the UN

On 28 February 2026, China condemned the US-Israeli military strikes on Iran, reaffirming Iran’s right to self-defense. Along with Russia, it called for an emergency UN Security Council session on the same day to denounce violations of international law by the aggressor coalition. On 3 March 2026, the Chinese government engaged diplomatically with foreign ministers from Iran, France, Oman, and Israel, urging an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations to prevent further escalation and ensure regional peace.

Read More:

- China Daily, 4 March 2026
- Brasil de Fato, 2 March 2026
- teleSUR, 2 March 2026

Beijing Calls for Pakistan-Afghanistan Ceasefire and Offers Mediation amid Worst Fighting since Taliban's Return to Power

Following Pakistan's declaration of 'open war' and air strikes along the Durand Line on 27 February 2026 – the most severe escalation since the Taliban's return – Beijing stated that it is actively mediating through its own channels, urging restraint and dialogue. With traditional brokers Qatar and Turkey preoccupied by Middle East tensions, China's intervention aims to reduce conflict risks that threaten billions in Belt and Road investments along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and to facilitate a ceasefire and diplomatic resolution.

Read More:

- HKFP/AFP, 27 February 2026
- SCMP, 28 February 2026



National Politics

Two Sessions Unveil 15th Five-Year Plan Prioritising Technological Self-Reliance with Continued Strong Growth

On 5 March 2026, at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, approximately 3,000 delegates received the 2026–2030 15th Five-Year Plan, highlighting advanced semiconductors, AI, and quantum computing as breakthrough priorities, with R&D spending doubled since 2015 to US \$780 billion (PPP). While setting a 4.5–5% annual growth target, China continues to outpace most major economies, with urban unemployment around 5.5%, creation of over 12 million jobs, and a 3.8% reduction in CO₂ per GDP unit. Record exports and a US \$1.2 trillion trade surplus underscore the country's strong industrial base and innovation-led, high-quality development.

Read More:

- The State Council of China, 5 March 2026
- The State Council of China, 5 March 2026

Iran's Closure of Hormuz Strait exposes Taiwan Province of China's Energy Vulnerability

Following drone attacks on Qatar's Ras Laffan and Mesaieed energy complexes on 2 March 2026, launched by Tehran in retaliation for the US-Israeli military operation, QatarEnergy declared force majeure, threatening roughly a quarter of Taiwan natural gas supply. The economic affairs minister ruled out power rationing, citing alternative cargoes from Australia and the US, even as European wholesale gas prices surged nearly 50% and Asian LNG spot prices jumped around 39%.

Read More:

- Euronews, 4 March 2026
- Taipei Times, 4 March 2026



Economy

Overseas Shipments Surpass Domestic Sales for First Time as BYD Unveils Five-Minute Flash Charging and Next-Generation Battery

On 5 March 2026 in Shenzhen, BYD unveiled a 1,500-kW flash-charging system restoring 400 km of range in five minutes and a second-generation Blade Battery delivering over 1,000 km per charge. The event capped a month in which overseas shipments of 100,600 new energy vehicles surpassed domestic sales for the first time, highlighting BYD's technological lead over Western automakers, which have collectively taken billions in EV-related write-downs.

Read More:

- electrive, 2 March 2026
- CleanTechnica, 4 March 2026

China Grants Full Zero-Tariff Access to 53 African Nations, Largest Unilateral Trade Concession by a Major Economy

On 14 February 2026, during the 39th African Union Summit, China announced duty-free access for 53 African countries, covering all tariff lines and forgoing an estimated US \$1.4 billion in annual revenue. The concession expands previous preferential treatment limited to 33 least-developed nations and is non-reciprocal, requiring no barrier reductions from African partners. Analysts note it contrasts with the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), now undermined by rising American tariffs on the same countries, highlighting China's growing economic influence on the continent.

Read More:

- Brookings, 27 January 2026
- HORN Institute, 23 February 2026



Agriculture and Environment

Henan Farmers Slash Labour Costs by 18,000 Yuan per Season with Smart Irrigation Technology

Amid a nationwide push that raised grain output to a record 714.9 million tonnes in 2025, wheat farmers in Henan Province are using smartphone-controlled drip irrigation and real-time soil monitoring powered by IoT, cutting seasonal labour costs by 18,000 yuan (US \$2,571) per 300-mu / 20-hectare plot. Over 300,000

agricultural drones now service 30.7 million hectares annually, showing how IoT-driven digital farming is transforming agriculture and boosting efficiency across China.

Read More:

- **People's Daily, 27 February 2026**
- **AgTech Navigator, 26 January 2026**

Over 80% of Key Protected Wildlife and Plant Species Now under Effective Conservation as China Marks World Wildlife Day

On 3 March 2026, China's National Forestry and Grassland Administration reported that over 28,000 wild plant species have been collected and preserved, with more than 300 reintroduced to natural habitats. These achievements are supported by a network of national parks, hundreds of designated habitats, and 500+ in-situ sites for rare flora. This year's World Wildlife Day theme, 'Medicinal and Aromatic Plants', highlights that over 20% of medicinal plant species remain at risk of extinction.

Read More:

- **UN News, 3 March 2026**
- **China Daily, 3 March 2026**



Science and Technology

First National Humanoid Robot Standards Accelerate Industry's Transition from Pilot Projects to Mass Production

More than 120 research institutes and enterprises contributed to the framework, released on 28 February in Beijing. It covers six domains, from brain-inspired computing to safety and ethics, for a sector that includes over 140 domestic firms and 330 product models. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology aims to finalise binding specifications within six months to unify component design and speed up mass production.

Read More:

- **Humanoids Daily, 1 March 2026**
- **Xinhua, 3 March 2026**

Origin Quantum Releases World's First Publicly Downloadable Quantum Computer Operating System, Supporting Three Processor Types

Released by Hefei-based Origin Quantum, the system supports superconducting, ion-trap, and neutral-atom processors, managing task scheduling, hardware coordination and automatic qubit calibration. First unveiled in 2021 and now available for local deployment, it differs from IBM's Qiskit and Google's Cirq, which

provide cloud-based programming frameworks rather than downloadable operating systems. The release strengthens ecosystem building as quantum technology is designated a priority industry under China's 15th Five-Year Plan.

Read More:

- [The Quantum Insider, 27 February 2026](#)
- [Digital Watch Observatory, 27 February 2026](#)



People's Life and Culture

Lantern Festival Lights Up Cities Nationwide as Rare Total Lunar Eclipse Adds a 'Blood Moon' to the Celebrations

Marking the final night of Spring Festival with traditions over 2,000 years old, the Lantern Festival (Yuan Xiao Festival) on 3 March 2026 drew millions to lantern fairs across China. Families solved riddles pinned to lanterns and shared tangyuan, glutinous rice balls symbolising reunion, while dragon dances filled the streets. In dozens of cities, celebrations blended AI displays and drone formations with ancient customs. A rare total lunar eclipse, visible to 3.3 billion people, created a celestial backdrop not expected to recur until 2072.

Read More:

- [China Daily, 3 March 2026](#)
- [Live Science, 3 March 2026](#)