

News on China | No. 16



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Geopolitics

Middle East Nations Call for Ceasefire, Respect for Sovereignty and Dialogue with Iran, Says Chinese Envoy

After wartime shuttle diplomacy across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Egypt, where closed airports and missile interceptions forced overland travel, China's special envoy Zhai Jun reported that regional countries support a ceasefire and dialogue with Iran. At a March 23 press briefing in Beijing, Zhai presented China's six-point plan, condemned unauthorized U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran, and highlighted that the conflict has already caused over 21,000 casualties, threatening the Strait of Hormuz and global energy security. Negotiation remains the only viable path.

Read More:

- **Brasil de Fato, 24 March 2026**
- **Xinhua, 23 March 2026**

China Drives Asia’s Leadership in Innovation, Sustainability, and Global Cooperation at Boao Forum amid Middle East Crisis

The 25th Boao Forum for Asia, held from 24–27 March 2026 in Boao, Hainan, China, gathered over 2,000 delegates from 60 countries, reaffirming its role as a strategic global platform amid geopolitical tensions, including the Middle East crisis. Zhang Jun, the forum’s secretary-general, stressed the event’s significance in promoting dialogue and cooperation. Key participants included Zhao Leji, chairman of China’s NPC Standing Committee, and Singapore’s Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. Reports show Asia accounts for 48% of global GDP in purchasing power terms and leads 70% of annual new clean energy installations, cementing its role as a driver of growth, innovation, and multilateral cooperation.

Read More:

- **Brasil de Fato, 26 March 2026**
- **RTHK, 24 March 2026**



National Politics

Xi Jinping Charts Xiongan’s Pivot from Construction to Innovation During Fourth Inspection of New Area

Accompanied by three Politburo Standing Committee members – signalling the highest-level political commitment – the presidential visit to the purpose-built city, comparable in size to Greater London, marked a strategic shift from basic infrastructure construction toward cultivating emerging industries and ‘new quality productive forces’, nearly nine years after ground was broken on a project designated alongside Shenzhen and Pudong as a zone of national significance.

Read More:

- **South China Morning Post, 24 March 2026**
- **Sinocism, 23 March 2026**

Long-Term Care Insurance Becomes China’s Sixth Social Security Pillar After Decade-Long Pilot Covering 310 Million

The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and State Council jointly issued guidelines establishing a unified national care insurance system – covering 36 standardised service items for those unable to care for themselves – after pilot programmes across 49 cities enrolled nearly 310 million people, provided benefits to over 3.3 million recipients, and reduced caregiving costs by more than 100 billion yuan (US \$14.5 billion), with full urban-rural implementation targeted by end of 2028.

Read More:

- Xinhua, 26 March 2026
- China Daily, 26 March 2026



Economy

China Launches Ninth Batch of Foreign-Invested Projects Worth US \$13.4 Billion, Totaling US \$108 Billion

China's National Development and Reform Commission announced its ninth batch of 13 major foreign-invested projects, valued at US \$13.4 billion, raising the cumulative total to US \$108 billion. Backed by firms from the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, and Turkey, the projects span electronics, chemicals, automobiles, and logistics, demonstrating sustained appeal of China's advanced manufacturing sector. Despite three years of declining FDI, a 19.1% rise in new foreign-invested enterprises in 2025 (70,392) shows investors are prioritizing market presence and long-term growth in the Chinese economy.

Read More:

- China Briefing, 27 January 2026
- Yicai Global, 19 March 2026



Agriculture and Environment

China Extends Rural Land Contracts in 29 Provinces for 30 Years Amid Expiring Agreements

On 18 March, China's Communist Party (CPC) Central Committee and State Council General Offices issued a 15-measure guideline standardizing procedures for extending household land contracts – first allocated in the 1990s – by another 30 years. Province-wide trials begin this year, explicitly protecting women affected by marriage or divorce, safeguarding urbanized farmers' contractual rights, and addressing landless households through collective revenue distribution, ensuring continuity and legal clarity for rural families.

Read More:

- Xinhua, 18 March 2026
- China Daily, 22 January 2026

China Invests US \$800 Billion in Water Infrastructure Over Five Years, Covering More Than 80% of Territory

China's five-year investment of over US \$800 billion has built the world's largest water infrastructure network, covering 80.3% of the country. The system includes roughly 95,000 reservoirs with over 1 trillion cubic metres of storage, the South-to-North Water Diversion Project – which transferred 87 billion cubic metres to benefit 195 million people – and 82,900 rural supply projects completed during the 14th Five-Year

Plan (2021–2025), raising tap water coverage to 96% for 495 million rural residents.

Read More:

- Anadolu Agency, 23 March 2026
- Global Times, 23 March 2026



Science and Technology

Eight-Year Study Identifies ‘Longevity Gene’ in Wild Rice, Enabling Perennial Growth and Repeated Harvests from Single Planting

Published on the cover of *Science* on 20 March, research by the Chinese Academy of Sciences reveals that two microRNA genes – designated Endless Branches and Tillers 1 (EBT1) – act as an ‘aging switch’ in wild rice, reverting plants from reproductive to vegetative growth every three to four months; field trials confirmed a modified variety survived more than two years in Hainan, with researchers targeting 4,500–6,000 kg per hectare to reduce seed costs across the Global South.

Read More:

- Yicai Global, 20 March 2026
- UkrAgroConsult, 20 March 2026

Dongbi Index Classifies 7,091 Medical and Life Sciences Journals in Push to Rebalance Global Academic Evaluation

Compiled by a consortium of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and a Shenzhen-based data analytics firm, the four-tier list released on 21–22 March in Shanghai covers 4,027 medical and 3,064 life sciences publications, advancing an effort to establish an independent research evaluation voice at a time when Chinese researchers contribute a growing share of global scientific output yet remain underrepresented in editorial positions and the evaluation infrastructure controlled by Western commercial publishers.

Read More:

- People’s Daily, 22 March 2026



People’s Life and Culture

Guangzhou Police Arrest ‘Aunt Mei’, Key Suspect in Two-Decade Child Trafficking Case Involving Nine Abducted Boys

The arrest of the long-fugitive suspect known as ‘Aunt Mei’ (梅姨) has brought closure to one of China’s most high-profile child trafficking cases – nine boys abducted from Guangzhou and Huizhou between 2003

and 2005 were all recovered and reunited with their biological families between 2019 and 2024, thanks to over two decades of persistent efforts by law enforcement and civil society, a testament to China's unwavering resolve in combating child trafficking.

Read More:

- **South China Morning Post, 21 March 2026**
- **China Daily, 23 March 2026**

Death of Education Influencer Zhang Xuefeng at 41 Reignites National Debate on Overwork and Sleep Deprivation Crisis

Zhang Xuefeng, one of China's most prominent education influencers known for his career guidance, died of sudden cardiac arrest on 24 March at the age of 41, reigniting public discussion around overwork culture among young professionals – meanwhile, a '2026 China Sleep Health White Paper' released on World Sleep Day found that over 300 million Chinese suffer from sleep disorders with average nightly rest at just 6.97 hours, underscoring the urgent need for younger generations to prioritise their health and well-being.

Read More:

- **Global Times, 25 March 2026**
- **China Daily, 21 March 2026**