

News on China | No. 38



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Geopolitics

Modi, Xi and Putin Defend Multipolar Order as Russia Offers China Permanent Visa-Free Travel

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation marked its 25th anniversary at a Bishkek summit on 31 August and 1 September 2026. Narendra Modi urged the leaders to leave 'endless war' behind and move towards its end. Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, meeting on 31 August, pressed for an equal and orderly multipolar world. Putin offered to make the reciprocal 30-day China-Russia visa-free regime permanent, citing a 43% rise in bilateral tourism in the first half of 2026.

Read More:

- **Brasil de Fato**, 31 August 2026
- **teleSUR**, 2 September 2026

China Steps Up Emergency Aid to Nepal with Third Airlift and Rescue Teams

A third shipment of emergency supplies reached Kathmandu on 3 September, including tents, blankets, mortuary refrigerators, medical protective gear and satellite communication equipment. Chinese forensic experts also arrived to assist with victim identification, while Xizang sent two Bailey bridges to help restore access. The shipment followed a second airlift carrying drones, water purification gear and genetic testing equipment. Together, the first two airlifts delivered 55.8 tonnes of aid, including 13,200 relief items. China has provided US \$2 million in emergency aid, while the Red Cross Society donated US \$200,000. Nepal recorded around 1,300 dead and 4,800 missing.

Read More:

- **Kathmandu Post**, 30 August 2026
- **Brasil de Fato**, 3 September 2026

China Quits Gwangju Biennale over ‘Taiwan Pavilion’ Name but Credits Seoul’s One-China Stance

Since June, organisers had listed the exhibition under an institutional acronym, drawing ‘political censorship’ accusations from the participating artists in Taiwan, China. The biennale’s foundation restored ‘Taiwan Pavilion’ in late August, and China’s embassy called that a violation of the one-China principle. It credited Seoul’s one-China position, faulting ‘a very small number of South Korean politicians and social groups’. Seoul called the naming a cultural-sphere decision unrelated to policy, while Beijing said ties are on the ‘right track’.

Read More:

- **The Straits Times**, 3 September 2026
- **Global Times**, 3 September 2026



National Politics

Regular Aid and Monitoring Enter Rural Revitalisation to Prevent Large-Scale Poverty Relapse

A joint inquiry on 26 August put lawmakers’ questions to Vice Premier Liu Guozhong and senior ministry officials. Liu said regular support should be incorporated into the rural revitalisation strategy, with targeted monitoring to prevent a large-scale return to poverty. Per capita income in counties lifted out of poverty reached 18,627 yuan (US \$2,772) in 2025, growing 8.2 percent a year since 2020. Employment among people lifted out of poverty has stayed above 30 million for five consecutive years.

Read More:

- Xinhua, 27 August 2026
- China Daily, 27 August 2026

Coast Guard Enhances Huangyan Dao Patrols to Strengthen Management and Safeguard Sovereignty

Rules published in August prohibit unauthorised fishing, mining and the collection of corals and giant clams inside a national nature reserve. Coast guard drills covered search and seizure, interdiction of forced entry and forced towing. Patrols in Huangyan Dao's territorial sea have since been enhanced, with offending ships regulated under the law. The coast guard says the patrols further strengthen orderly management of the waters and safeguard China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

Read More:

- CGTN, 30 August 2026
- Free Malaysia Today, 1 August 2026



Economy

Foreign Investors Hold Under 2% of Onshore Bonds as Hidden Local Debt Halves in Two Years

A State Council report published on 31 August put total government borrowing at 102.5 trillion yuan (US \$15.27 trillion) at end-2025. Within that, off-balance-sheet local liabilities fell to 6.5 trillion yuan (US \$968 billion) from 14.3 trillion yuan (US \$2 trillion) at end-2023. A 10 trillion yuan (US \$1.49 trillion) swap package launched in late 2024 drove the fall. Most of the debt is owed to domestic, state-backed lenders, so a sudden crisis remains unlikely.

Read More:

- People's Daily, 18 February 2026
- Caixin Global, 1 September 2026

South-South Trade Deepens as China and ASEAN Cross US \$1.05 Trillion for the First Time

Vice Minister of Commerce Yan Dong announced the 2025 total on 1 September. In January–July 2026 the two sides exchanged US \$744.41 billion, up 24.7 percent and equal to 21.8 percent of China's foreign trade. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has now been China's biggest trading partner for six successive years. The wider Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is the world's largest trading bloc, holding 28 percent of world GDP against the European Union's 18 percent.

Read More:

- Xinhua, 1 September 2026
- Tricontinental, 30 October 2025



Agriculture and Environment

Digital Rural Strategy Closes Second Stage as Report Sets 15th Five-Year Plan Tasks

The Cyberspace Administration of China and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs published the seven-year review on 31 August. It records 2025 as the year the 2019 Outline of the Digital Rural Development Strategy met its second-stage goals. Rural internet penetration reached 69.5 percent in 2025, narrowing the urban-rural access gap to 15.6 percentage points. The report then sets 15th Five-Year Plan tasks: digitalised rural industry, informatised rural construction and smart governance.

Read More:

- Cyberspace Administration of China, 31 August 2026
- People's Daily, 1 September 2026

Tibetan Plateau Weather Monitoring and Cryosphere Data Sharing to Expand After Mudslide

Part of a glacier broke off on the Nepalese side of the border on 26 August and reached Gyirong Port in Xizang within seven minutes. Three portable automatic weather stations now support road restoration, rescue work and barrier lake surveys. The China Meteorological Administration pledged on 28 August to improve the siting of weather stations across the Tibetan Plateau. It will also share glacier, snow and permafrost data and survey the region's glacial lakes.

Read More:

- China Daily, 30 August 2026
- CGTN, 30 August 2026



Science and Technology

Chinese Scientists Target World Protein Shortage with Food-Waste Feed Using 1% of Soybean Land

A two-stage process at the Tianjin Institute of Industrial Biotechnology ferments canteen leftovers into organic acids, then feeds them to the marine microbe *Schizochytrium*. The best engineered strain produced 46.72 kg of single-cell protein per tonne of dry waste, with land-use impacts about 1% of soybean-based production. The peer-reviewed study calls the process a low-carbon answer to global protein deficits. Fossil resource use runs 203% above soybeans, and industrial scale-up is the team's stated next step.

Read More:

- [Journal of Cleaner Production, 10 June 2026](#)
- [Global Times, 31 August 2026](#)

China's Space Computing Cloud Serves 100 Users as Musk's Orbital Data Centres Await Launch

Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications launched the Tiansuan Constellation in 2021, which now runs 16 low-Earth-orbit satellites and seven ground stations. Xinhua reported on 31 August that the platform had begun routine in-orbit services. The milestone drew little Western coverage, though Chinese state media announced each step. Elon Musk has promoted orbital AI data centres for months, telling a March event that space compute could undercut terrestrial costs in as little as two to three years.

Read More:

- [Xinhua, 31 August 2026](#)
- [SpaceNews, 22 March 2026](#)



People's Life and Culture

China's First Healthcare Security Law Covers 1.33 Billion People and Codifies Long-Term Care

Lawmakers approved the seven-chapter, 56-article text on 28 August, and it takes effect on 1 January 2027. It requires a multi-tiered system with basic medical insurance as its mainstay. Long-term care insurance, piloted since 2016, now becomes a statutory system. The scheme covered 308.55 million people at the end of 2025, when 323.38 million Chinese were aged 60 or above – 23 percent of the population.

Read More:

- [Xinhua, 28 August 2026](#)
- [ET HealthWorld, 27 March 2026](#)

Chongqing Lets Schools Keep Phones off Campus from the First Day of Autumn Term

The measure sits inside a wider juvenile-protection statute, passed by the municipal legislature in late July and effective since 1 September. Each school decides whether to exclude phones, tablets and smartwatches. UNESCO monitoring counts 114 education systems with national school phone bans, 58% of countries, up from 24% in June 2023. Australia's social media age limit for children took effect in December, and Portugal and Spain have passed comparable laws.

Read More:

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- UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, 17 March 2026
 - China Daily, 1 September 2026