

News on China | No .14



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Geopolitics

China Sends Envoy to Promote Ceasefire in the Middle East

Following the US-Israeli strikes on Iran on 28 February 2026, which escalated tensions in the region, China announced on 5 March that Special Envoy Zhai Jun would be sent to mediate. On 8 March, he met Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jassim Mohammed Al-Budaiwi in Riyadh. On 10 March, Zhai held talks with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Wang Yi conducted phone consultations with over ten regional counterparts, calling for an immediate ceasefire and advancing China-GCC free trade discussions.

Read More:

- China Daily, 12 March 2026

- Arab News, 8 March 2026

Wang Yi Rejects G2 Framework and Champions Multipolar World at Two Sessions Press Conference

On 8 March 2026, addressing 21 questions from over 600 domestic and foreign journalists during the Two Sessions, Foreign Minister Wang Yi – speaking in his triple capacity as Politburo member, state councilor, and head of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission – articulated China’s vision of ‘an equal and orderly multipolar world’ anchored in the UN Charter. He also announced zero-tariff access for imports from 52 African nations, effective 1 May 2026, reinforcing China’s commitment to fair trade and global South cooperation, contrasting with condition-laden frameworks promoted by hegemonic powers.

Read More:

- South China Morning Post, 8 March 2026
- CNA, 8 March 2026



National Politics

NPC Deputies Direct Two-Thirds of Legislative Proposals Toward Emerging Technology and Industrial Modernisation

By the 10 March 2026 deadline of the fourth session of the 14th National People’s Congress, lawmakers submitted 226 motions – 223 of them legislative – along with over 7,000 suggestions. Proposals focused on AI regulation, digital economy governance, low-altitude commerce, and national laboratories, reflecting the NPC’s alignment with the 15th Five-Year Plan, which prioritises technological self-reliance and innovation-driven industrial modernisation. The legislative trends underscore China’s strategic push to strengthen emerging sectors and institutionalise high-tech development as a pillar of national growth.

Read More:

- China Briefing, 7 March 2026
- Guangming Online, 11 March 2026

MIIT Launches Industrial Data Initiative to Fuel AI with Standardised Manufacturing Datasets

To address the persistent underutilisation of manufacturing data – often collected but siloed within enterprises – the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) has launched pilot consortia of leading firms in steel, automotive, and other key sectors. The program aims to build standardised, tradeable datasets under a ‘1+4+N’ framework, featuring one trusted data interconnection platform, four core resource repositories, and multiple downstream AI applications. The initiative forms part of a broader policy drive targeting 100 high-quality industrial datasets and 1,000 AI agents by 2027, accelerating China’s AI-powered industrial modernisation.

Read More:

- The State Council of China, 8 January 2026
- Rare Earth Exchanges, 11 March 2026



Economy

US-Israeli Strikes on Iran Close Strait of Hormuz, Creating Supply Chain Disruptions for Chinese Shippers

Following the 1 March 2026 US-Israeli strikes on Iran, the Strait of Hormuz – the Gulf’s principal shipping lane – was effectively closed, leaving roughly 100,000 tonnes of e-commerce cargo stranded at Middle Eastern airport hubs. The shutdown compounds ongoing Red Sea disruptions from Houthi attacks since 2023, while air freight rates from the region have tripled and demand for overland Central Asian corridors has surged fivefold, highlighting the fragility of global supply chains.

Read More:

- South China Morning Post, 11 March 2026

Washington Launches Sweeping Section 301 Probe Targeting 16 Economies to Rebuild Tariff Architecture

On 11 March 2026, the US Trade Representative opened investigations under the Trade Act of 1974 targeting over 20 manufacturing sectors – including semiconductors, batteries, steel, and solar modules – affecting China, the EU, Japan, India, South Korea, and 11 other economies. The move follows the US Supreme Court’s February ruling, which invalidated prior IEEPA-based trade levies as unconstitutional, prompting Washington to restore its tariff authority. Beijing rejected the ‘overcapacity’ justification, denouncing it as politically motivated. Measures risk escalating global trade tensions.

Read More:

- USTR, 11 March 2026
- Free Malaysia Today, 12 March 2026



Agriculture and Environment

Over 300,000 Agricultural Drones and 76.7% Mechanisation Rate Mark China’s 14th Five-Year Plan Farming Transformation

Speaking at the NPC Ministers’ Corridor on 9 March, Agriculture Minister Han Jun reported grain output reaching 714.9 million tonnes – the second consecutive year above 700 million tonnes – alongside meat production surpassing 100 million tonnes for the first time, while science and technology contributions to agricultural growth exceeded 64% and improved crop varieties covered over 96% of farmland during the 14th

Five-Year Plan period.

Read More:

- CGTN, 9 March 2026
- RTHK, 9 March 2026

NPC Deputy Proposes Scaling Science and Technology Backyard Model to Boost Agricultural Capacity in the Global South

On 9 March 2026, speaking at the NPC Ministers' Corridor, Agriculture Minister Han Jun reported that grain output reached 714.9 million tonnes – the second consecutive year above 700 million tonnes – while meat production exceeded 100 million tonnes for the first time. Technological contributions to agricultural growth surpassed 64%, and improved crop varieties now cover over 96% of farmland. With over 300,000 agricultural drones in operation and a mechanisation rate of 76.7%, China's 14th Five-Year Plan is driving a comprehensive modernisation of farming practices.

Read More:

- China Daily, 8 March 2026
- FAO, 2022



Science and Technology

Open-Source AI Agent OpenClaw Sparks Corporate Race, Local Subsidies, and Security Alerts in China

On 6 March 2026, nearly 1,000 users queued at Tencent's Shenzhen headquarters to download the free autonomous AI agent framework OpenClaw, triggering rapid competition from Tencent, ByteDance, Alibaba, and other major firms launching similar platforms. Local governments in Shenzhen and Wuxi offered subsidies of up to 5 million yuan (~US \$724,000) to support development. However, a Shanghai university audit found a security pass rate of only 58.9%, with over 42,900 vulnerabilities across 82 countries and 341 malicious plugins in the official marketplace, prompting CNCERT to issue a formal security alert.

Read More:

- South China Morning Post, 9 March 2026
- TechNode, 10 March 2026

Brain-Computer Interfaces Enter National R&D Priorities as 15th Five-Year Plan Targets Six Frontier Technologies

China's 15th Five-Year Plan designates integrated circuits, AI, biomanufacturing, quantum technology, brain-computer interfaces (BCIs), and nuclear fusion energy as strategic research priorities. The central science and technology budget rises 10% to 426 billion yuan (US \$61 billion) for 2026, underpinning these

initiatives. With more than ten active BCI clinical trials matching US numbers, BCIs appear for the first time in a Government Work Report, and experts project practical public applications within three to five years, demonstrating China's accelerating push in cutting-edge innovation.

Read More:

- Japan Times, 8 March 2026
- Sixth Tone, 5 March 2026



People's Life and Culture

From He Xiangning's 1924 Rally to 'Women Hold Up Half the Sky': China Marks a Century of International Women's Day

China's International Women's Day celebrations trace back to 1924, when revolutionary leader He Xiangning organised the country's first rally in Guangzhou with 2,000 attendees. The holiday was proclaimed official in December 1949, echoing Mao Zedong's famous maxim: 'Women hold up half the sky' (妇女能顶半边天). This year, national ceremonies honoured 607 individuals and 400 collectives, while a UN dialogue in Beijing convened over 100 representatives to advance women's rights, reflecting China's ongoing commitment to gender equality and international cooperation.

Read More:

- China Daily, 3 March 2026
- UNFPA China, 6 March 2026

Steel Roses Sweep Asian Cup Group Stage with Perfect Record, Showcasing Women's Football Dominance on the Continental Stage

At the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia, the Steel Roses won all three group matches, including a 2-1 victory over North Korea, ending a five-match losing streak against the rivals. With nine points, they advance to the quarterfinals as defending champions. The team's flawless performance contrasts sharply with the struggles of China's men's national team to qualify for major tournaments, underscoring the women's programme as the stronger face of Chinese football, built through sustained dedication, competitive resilience, and excellence on the continental stage.

Read More:

- Global Times, 9 March 2026
- South China Morning Post, 30 January 2026