

News on China | No. 17



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Geopolitics

New Global Data Organization Launched in Beijing to Confront Digital Divide in the Global South

The World Data Organisation (WDO), the first international body dedicated to data governance, was officially launched on 30 March in Beijing. Bringing together over 200 members from more than 40 countries across 14 sectors, the WDO aims to confront stark global digital inequalities. While digitally deliverable services account for over 60% of exports in advanced economies, they represent only 15% in least developed countries. Through voluntary standards, capacity building, and cross-border cooperation, the organization seeks to expand access to data infrastructure and governance, strengthening the Global South's digital sovereignty.

Read More:

- Digital Watch Observatory, 1 April 2026
- Brasil de Fato, 2 April 2026

China Warns Lebanon Must Be Protected from Israeli Invasion to ‘Not Become Another Gaza’

The killing of three Indonesian UN peacekeepers in separate incidents on 29–30 March prompted an emergency UN Security Council session on 31 March. China’s deputy permanent representative demanded Israel’s immediate withdrawal and condemned the attacks as violations of international humanitarian law. Beijing warned that Lebanon risks becoming ‘another Gaza’ amid escalating military aggression that has already claimed over 1,200 lives since 2 March, leaving thousands injured and displaced. The session highlighted the urgent need for international protection of civilians and peacekeepers and reinforced calls for diplomatic solutions.

Read More:

- China Daily, 2 April 2026
- UN News, 30 March 2026



National Politics

New Judicial Directive Unifies Legal Aid for Women, Migrant Workers, and Other Vulnerable Groups

Issued on 28 March by the Supreme People’s Court and Supreme People’s Procuratorate, the 16-article directive formalises the ‘civil support prosecution’ mechanism – under which prosecutors may assist individuals unable to pursue litigation independently, covering unpaid wage claims, protection orders, and disability rights cases – replacing a previously fragmented landscape where labour unions and women’s federations handled cases in isolation.

Read More:

- Sixth Tone, 28 March 2026
- China Daily, 24 March 2026



Economy

Hainan Free Trade Port Posts 32.9% Trade Growth in First 100 Days of Customs Operations

Since 18 December 2025, Hainan Free Trade Port has recorded strong momentum. Total import and export value exceeded 80 billion yuan (US \$11.6 billion), while offshore duty-free sales reached 15.62 billion yuan

(US \$2.3 billion). Registration of 7,503 new foreign trade enterprises – a 65.7% year-on-year surge – and 85,000 new market entities highlights investor confidence. Air connectivity expanded to 92 overseas passenger routes serving 45 cities in 23 countries. These results underscore Hainan’s growing role as the world’s largest free trade port, boosting trade, tourism, and global integration.

Read More:

- People’s Daily, 1 April 2026
- Global Times, 30 March 2026

China Launches Smart Shipping Plan for 100 Autonomous Vessels and AI Ports by 2027

China has unveiled a joint Smart Shipping Plan led by four ministries, aiming for 100 autonomous vessels and AI-integrated ports by 2027. Building on the Zhifei container ship’s world-first fully autonomous operation at Qingdao and 60 automated terminals nationwide, the plan sets 11 key tasks covering technology breakthroughs, pilot applications, infrastructure upgrades, and regulatory governance. Near-term goals include three pilot zones and five demonstration routes, while by 2030 China aims to master core maritime technologies at internationally advanced levels.

Read More:

- South China Morning Post, 30 March 2026
- Xinhua, 30 March 2026



Agriculture and Environment

Carbon Market and Green Finance Reforms Pledge Support for Private Sector’s Low-Carbon Transition

On 21 March, China’s Ministry of Ecology and Environment convened financial regulators, major banks, and private enterprise representatives to announce eight coordinated measures promoting the private sector’s low-carbon transition. Addressing an imbalance where state-owned enterprises account for 84.53% of green bond issuance, the reforms introduce carbon allowance monetisation, environment-oriented development models, and interagency data-sharing. The goal is to channel green credit toward private firms within a 43.51 trillion yuan (US \$6.2 trillion) green lending market.

Read More:

- Green Finance & Development Center, 24 February 2026
- Xinhua, 26 March 2026



Science and Technology

Zhongguancun Forum Showcases Chip Breakthrough, 6G Roadmap, and Open Science Cooperation

China's annual Zhongguancun Forum, held in late March, highlighted the 15th Five-Year Plan's technology self-reliance agenda. The conference focused on the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Xiangshan open-source RISC-V processor, achieving 16.5 points per gigahertz on international benchmarks. Eleven of 23 premier RISC-V International members are now Chinese entities, demonstrating a coordinated effort to develop alternatives to proprietary chip architectures. Participants also outlined national 6G roadmaps and initiatives for expanded open science cooperation.

Read More:

- South China Morning Post, 27 March 2026
- Xinhua, 27 March 2026

China Launches World-First Automated Humanoid Robot Production Line, Supported by Giant Training Hub

China has launched the world's first fully automated humanoid robot production line in Foshan, part of the third phase of its national robotics program. The line can produce 10,000 units annually, generating one robot every 30 minutes with 50% higher efficiency than traditional methods. Supporting this phase, Beijing's giant 10,000 m² training hub provides 16 scenario-based environments that generate six million data entries annually, addressing AI and data bottlenecks. Together, these initiatives mark the shift from experimentation to industrial-scale deployment under the 15th Five-Year Plan.

Read More:

- Brasil de Fato, 31 March 2026
- CGTN, 30 March 2026



People's Life and Culture

Qingming Festival: A 2,500-Year Tradition of Honouring Ancestors and Welcoming Spring

Qingming traces its origins to Jie Zitui, a loyal minister who perished in a mountain fire after refusing rewards for his service, inspiring the Cold Food Festival. Over centuries, it merged with agricultural rites and became an imperial holiday under the Tang dynasty. Falling fifteen days after the Spring Equinox, families visit ancestral graves to sweep tombs, burn incense, and offer food and paper. At the same time, the festival celebrates spring through outings, kite-flying, planting willow branches, and eating qingtuan (green mugwort rice balls) – blending solemn remembrance with joyful renewal and reflecting a distinctive Chinese view of life, death, and the seasons.

Read More:

- Britannica
- China Daily, 1 April 2026

12,900 Intangible Heritage Workshops Empower 1.2 Million Through Village Home-Based Production

China's intangible cultural heritage programme now spans 2,138 county-level areas, including 693 formerly impoverished counties, with over 4,300 workshops operating directly in villages. Using flexible home-based production models, elderly residents, women, and people with disabilities can earn income from traditional crafts without leaving their communities. Elevated to a core component of national rural revitalisation strategy by the 2026 No. 1 Central Document, the initiative supports skill development, preserves cultural traditions, and strengthens local economies, demonstrating a scalable model for inclusive rural development.

Read More:

- People's Daily, 27 March 2026
- Xinhua, 16 June 2025