

China Business Weekly

4 March 2025



FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

Webinar: “Doing Business in the Yangtze River Delta”

11 March 2025 – 10:00-11:00 CET



The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) and Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT) are organizing an exclusive webinar: **"Doing Business in the Yangtze River Delta."** Flemish Economic Representatives Mr. Koen De Ridder (Beijing) and Mr. Frank Van Eynde (Shanghai) will share their expertise, insider tips, and business opportunities in this dynamic region.

The Yangtze River Delta: The Economic Heart of China

The Yangtze River Delta (YRD) is one of the most dynamic economic regions in the world. This area, approximately 26 times the size of Flanders and with more than 34 times its population, serves as the engine of the Chinese economy. With 227 million inhabitants and contributing 25% of China's GDP, the YRD surpasses the economies of some G7 countries. In addition to its economic strength, the YRD is also a center of innovation, accounting for one-third of China's total R&D investments. Don't miss this opportunity to gain insights into one of the world's most important economic hubs!

Program

10:00-10:05: Introduction – **Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director, Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce**

10:05-10:20: Do's and Don'ts of Doing Business with China – **Koen De Ridder, Flemish Economic Representative in Beijing**

10:20-10:45: Trade Opportunities and the Economic Landscape of the Yangtze Delta, with a Focus on Hangzhou and Shanghai – **Frank Van Eynde, Flemish Economic Representative in Shanghai**

10:45: Q&A Session

Practical information

Date: 11 March 2025

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 CET

Location: Online

Price members: Free **Price non members:** Free

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Exclusive Innovation Trip China 2025 led by Carl Decaluwé, Governor of the Province of West Flanders – 25-31 May 2025 – NEW PROGRAM



Discover innovation in China. Exclusive inspiration trip to Zhejiang province led by Provincial Governor Carl Decaluwé.

- Do you want to innovate and discover groundbreaking ideas?
- Do you want to discover China's technological leading edge and visit advanced technological companies?
- Do you want to network with Chinese managers and Belgian expats?
- Do you want to take advantage of the bilateral cooperation between the provinces of West Flanders and Zhejiang?

Take this unique opportunity and travel to Zhejiang, China's innovative hotspot and sister province of West Flanders, from 25 to 31 May, 2025.

What to expect?

- Visits to advanced technological companies
- Inspiring meetings with pioneers in industry
- Unique networking moments with Chinese and Belgian top managers

25 years ago West Flanders and Zhejiang signed a friendship agreement that would lead to a valuable partnership in academic exchanges, medical services and the circular economy.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of this successful cooperation, the Province of West Flanders and the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) are organizing an exclusive innovation trip to Zhejiang. This trip, led by Provincial Governor Carl Decaluwé, is also a unique opportunity to discover what innovation could offer in the future. Professor Dr. Rudy Aernoudt, Economics Professor at UGhent, is providing contextual advice for the trip.

Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province and home base of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, has been nominated the best city for innovation. The city, where the gaming company Netease and Geely Auto are also located, has invested extensively in science and technology.

Following are four reasons to participate in the innovation trip with exclusive visits to some of the “six tigers” of Hangzhou (Brainco, Unitree, DeepSeek, Gamescience, etc.) and of course Alibaba!

Do you want to innovate and are looking for ideas? Zhejiang is one of the most dynamic provinces of China and a pioneer in the fields of technology, e-commerce, sustainability and innovative industries. China, the second largest economy in the world, has an enormous market potential and the innovative capacity of the country is constantly growing. Cities like Hangzhou and Shanghai have become breeding grounds of advanced technology.

Do you want to be introduced to China's innovation and visit advanced technology companies? The innovation trip will take you to Hangzhou, home of the “six tigers”, including Brainco (brain computer interface), Unitree (robots), DeepSeek (AI start-up) en Gamescience (Wukong game). These high-tech companies are considered the beginning of a transformative period for the city. We will visit a few of them, such as Leapmotor (electric vehicles), Alibaba (e-commerce) and Ant Group (fintech). A visit to Shanghai will follow, the financial heart of China, an international maritime center and world leader in container handling. CEOs and experts from China's technology sector will accompany you on the company visits.

Do you want to meet Chinese company leaders and Belgian expats? In addition to official activities and company visits, the program also includes info-sessions and networking events, where you will have the opportunity to make business contacts. Following registration, you will receive a template to indicate your details and targets so we can facilitate relevant business contacts in cooperation with the Flemish Economic Representative of Flanders Investment & Trade.

Do you want to surf on the unique opportunities that the bilateral cooperation between West Flanders and Zhejiang is offering? This innovation trip offers an exclusive insight into the cooperation with Zhejiang and the future of innovation in China. Do not miss this opportunity to participate in an inspiring trip to one of the most innovative regions in the world.

PARTICIPANTS

The program is multi-sectoral.

The number of participants is limited to 25, early registration is advised.

PROGRAM

25/05: Departure to Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province

26/05: Hangzhou: company visits

27/05: Hangzhou: Innovation seminar, company visits and gala “Celebration of 25 years of bilateral cooperation”

28/05: Hangzhou: company visits

29/05: Hangzhou and Shanghai: Transfer to Shanghai and company visits

30/05: Shanghai: closing seminar, company visits and networking event at the Belgian Consulate-General

31/05: Departure to Brussels or participation in the optional program “World Expo Japan”

PRICE

Travel and accommodation

- Basic price: €4,889
- Single supplement: €449
- Business supplement: €3,325

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Costs of travel and accommodation are to be paid by the company. Under certain circumstances, FIT may provide financial support. For more information: <https://export.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/nl/subsidie>

Do you want more information or are you persuaded to join? Read more via the following [this link](#)

MORE QUESTIONS?

ALK BUSINESS TRAVEL

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ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY FCCC

China International Logistics and Supply Chain Fair (CILF) – 24-26 September 2025 – Shenzhen



With its gigantic export and import flows, China remains an important market for our logistics sector. Therefore, **Flanders Investment & Trade will again be at the China International Logistics and Supply Chain Fair (CILF) in Shenzhen with a booth.** It is the top fair of the logistics industry at which all major companies are present at senior level.

Visitors are primarily interested in international e-commerce logistics, overseas warehousing, ports and forwarding, international express deliveries and air freight, rail and road transport, logistics and supply chain solutions.

Why participate?

- China accounts for 20% of world trade. The country is the third customer and the first supplier of the EU.
- China is known as the prime logistics hub of Asia.
- 2,000 exhibitors from more than 50 countries.
- More than 300,000 visitors from more than 80 countries/regions.
- More than 70 seminars on logistics.
- The fair presents a unique opportunity to present your innovative services and products to a worldwide audience, to discover the latest trends and to find Chinese customers.

Our offer

- FIT will be present with a product sample booth (PSB).
- A PSB is a low-entry alternative to a 'classic' fair participation. It is an open space, shared with other companies. You can present your leaflets, products and samples at a favorable cost.
- You delegate a (local) representative.
- We provide reception services and arrange the booth.

What? Fair participation CILF – China International Logistics and Supply Chain Fair

Where? Shenzhen, China

When? 24 to 26 September 2025

Ultimate subscription date? 15 April 2025

Price

Product Sample Booth (PSB)

Kmo: €2,000

Large enterprise: €4,000

Organization Flanders Investment & Trade in cooperation with Port of Antwerp-Bruges

[I WANT TO PARTICIPATE](#)

Do you still have questions? Discover more information on our website or contact us. We are happy to help you.

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PODCAST

China's technological advance: menace or opportunity?



China Past the Wall, season 2 episode 6: From DeepSeek and TikTok to flying cars, AI-diagnoses and 'dark factories' – China has swapped its role as 'factory of the world' for technological superpower. While Europe is grappling with regulations and protectionism, China is taking the lead in AI, robotics and biotechnology.

How to handle this? Competing, blocking or cooperating? In the latest episode of China Past the Wall, VRT Expert Tom Van de Weghe together with colleague Veerle de Vos and Jun Jiang, Pascal Coppens, Leen Vervaeke, Bart Horsten and Sven Agten delves into the wondrous world of Chinese technology and the strategic choices facing Europe.

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NPC & CPPCC SESSIONS

Stabilizing growth to be priority at parliament sessions



China's policymakers will enhance countercyclical adjustments and take more steps to boost consumption, as the broader economy still faces pressing challenges from lackluster domestic demand and uncertainties from the external environment, economists said. Their comments came at a time when the market is eagerly awaiting proactive moves to revive the economy at the annual meetings of China's top legislative and political advisory bodies, also called "the two sessions". The National Committee of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference (CPPCC) will convene on March 4 and the National People's Congress (NPC) will start its annual session on March 5.

Wang Tao, Chief China Economist at UBS Investment Bank, said her team expects the two sessions to follow the policies of the Central Economic Work Conference (CEWC) held in December and again set a GDP growth target of "around 5%" to anchor expectations. **Wang said policymakers are likely to prioritize "stabilizing growth" as the central task and emphasize boosting domestic demand** through more supportive macro policies, with "reviving household consumption" being listed as a top task. Wang said her team expects the government to announce a higher budget deficit of around 4% of GDP and larger ultra-long-term special central government bond issuance of CNY2 trillion to support the trade-in program of consumer goods, corporate equipment upgrades and long-term projects. The team also expects another CNY500 billion to CNY1 trillion of special central government bonds for capital injections to banks, and more special local government bonds of CNY4.5 trillion or more to support local government financing vehicles' debt swap and for home inventory destocking.

On the monetary front, she said policymakers will follow the "moderately loose" monetary policy tone set in the Central

Economic Work Conference, with explicit calls to lower the funding costs of corporate finance and household credit, cutting the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) and policy rates, enhancing countercyclical adjustments, and pushing forward a "reasonable rebound" of inflation. "We expect the People's Bank of China (PBOC) to cut policy rates by 30 to 40 basis points in 2025, likely in later months after the two sessions, and commercial banks to lower deposit rates further," she said. "The PBOC may also use various facilities to maintain ample liquidity, including more outright repos, partly to cope with a much larger government bond issuance in 2025." **Wang said the government is likely to prioritize "boosting consumption" as the top policy task in the two sessions.** "We expect the government to ramp up fiscal spending to support consumption and the household sector, including more than doubling the size of trade-in programs, creating a subsidy scheme for families with young children, and increasing the payout of residents' basic pension and government contribution to basic social insurance."

During a news conference at the beginning of 2025, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said **the annual quota for the consumer goods trade-in program for this year, which will be significantly larger than in 2024**, will be announced during the two sessions. China's accelerated push for promoting trade-in deals for consumer goods is paying off, with significant growth in consumer spending on key items such as automobiles and home appliances, providing a solid base for steady economic recovery. Retail sales of passenger cars grew 5.5% year-on-year to 22.894 million units in 2024, while retail sales of home appliances and audiovisual equipment under the trade-in program reached CNY1.03 trillion, up 12.3% year-on-year. More than 60% of automobile trade-ins were new energy vehicles (NEVs), with over 6.6 million old vehicles replaced by new energy or energy-efficient cars. For home appliance trade-ins, sales of products with high energy efficiency accounted for over 90%, driving retail sales of highly energy efficient and smart home appliances to double-digit growth for four consecutive months. "High-tech products with high energy efficiency are favored, which also helps drive the high-end, intelligent and green transformation of related industries," said Li Gang, Director General of the Department of Market Operation and Consumption Promotion of the Ministry of Commerce.

Looking forward, Lu Ting, Chief China Economist at Nomura, said the trade-in program will boost digital goods sales in the first quarter. Lu said policymakers pledged more specific measures to support consumption, including increasing basic pension payments and raising fiscal subsidies for basic medical insurance, the China Daily reports.

REAL ESTATE

China urged to solve its real estate problems



There have been lots of discussions lately about some major adjustments in China's macro-economy and the need to solve deep-rooted problems in the country's real estate sector. Speaking of the root causes of China's economic problems, in general, there are five groups with different views. The first group believes that due to the ongoing Sino-U.S. tensions, **a deterioration in the external environment** has led to China's macro-economic difficulties. The second group deems **weak consumption** as the reason, as changes in overall income, confidence and other factors have led to a contraction in consumption. The third group thinks that **domestic supply** is piling up, and corporate profits are compromised, which has further led to a decline in income and insufficient consumption. The fourth group blames deep adjustments in **the real estate market** for the decline in demand, high debt and oversupply. There is also a group holding the view that China is undergoing a **balance sheet recession**, believing that there is a significant change in the asset-liability structure that has led to comprehensive liability management nationwide and contraction in the number of market players.

In light of this, figuring out whether these reasons are the root causes or not for the current macro-economic downturn is significant. External demand, which has always been an important cornerstone of China's macro-economic stability, performed beyond expectations last year despite headwinds from an unstable external environment. Therefore, a variation in the external environment can be preliminarily ruled out. Second, there is also the issue of insufficient consumption, which is reflected in a decline in the growth rate of total retail sales of consumer goods. However, analyzing the changes in domestic demand and supply and demand structure shows that the most dramatic changes did not occur in consumer goods, but in investment goods, because the decline in consumer goods

prices has been significantly lower than those of investment goods. Therefore, the decline in consumption is only a superficial reason for the economic problems. As for oversupply in some sectors due to overcapacity, it is only cyclical, a natural market phenomenon that normally appears every seven to eight years. In summary, we can see that changes in supply, demand and the balance sheet are all related to changes in China's development paradigm, which point to **drastic adjustments in its real estate sector, a major issue that the nation should pay heed to** at present. As to the balance sheet, changes in the assets and liabilities of any market entity are inevitably the result of changes in a variety of basic parameters, and will also form an important influencing factor in the next-step economic cycle and the decision-making of market entities. That is, changes in the balance sheet, which for China is a so-called recession in this case, are both a result and a derived cause, negating its role as the ultimate cause.

Changes in the real estate sector have affected some key parameters, such as real estate consumption, investment spending, credit, the collateral of enterprises and individuals, and government revenue. Therefore, there is a need for precise policy-making and implementation in the real estate sector.

First, the proactive fiscal policy, which attracts most of the market's attention, is an important pillar of in-depth governance in the real estate sector. A more proactive fiscal policy should not focus too much on the deficit ratio, but rather on the growth rate of broad fiscal spending, which is central to a more pro-active fiscal policy in 2025 and 2026, and it should match the target GDP growth rate of 5%.

The implementation of a proactive fiscal policy must be complemented by a more active monetary policy, and the easing of the monetary policy is of equal importance to prevent economic "hypothermia" and avoid deflation. It is necessary for proactive macro-economic policies to be made with a cross-year perspective, preferably with a two-year time span, to systematically arrange indicators, as these can help dispel market concerns over policy stability. **Stabilizing the real estate market is the key to stabilizing China's confidence, expectations and avoiding vicious circles.** China should seize the opportunity of the sharp decline in real estate prices, carry out large-scale real estate acquisitions, and make every effort to promote new urbanization. This will not only help resolve the dilemma of deep adjustment in the real estate market, but also effectively solve the housing problem of migrant workers and comprehensively promote the development of new urbanization, Liu Yuanchun, President of the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, writes in the China Daily.

FOREIGN TRADE

China firmly opposes doubling of import tariffs from 10% to 20% imposed by U.S. on March 4



The Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) expressed strong opposition to the U.S. imposing an extra 10% tariff on imports from China starting on March 4 and vowed to take necessary countermeasures to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies. U.S. President Donald Trump announced that 25% tariffs on Canadian and Mexican goods will also take effect on March 4, while raising the additional tariff on imports from China from 10% to 20%, citing the so-called fentanyl issue as a pretext. MOFCOM said that unilateral tariffs violate World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and undermine the multilateral trading system.

A Ministry Spokesperson said that China is one of the countries that has the strictest drug control policies and highest levels of enforcement globally, and China has actively launched international drug control cooperation, including with the U.S. The Trump Administration holds China responsible for the influx to the U.S. of precursor chemicals to produce fentanyl. The U.S. has repeatedly ignored objective facts, previously imposed an additional 10% tariff on China using a similar pretext and is now threatening to impose more tariffs, the Spokesperson said.

Washington levied an additional 10% tariff on all Chinese imports in February. In response, China raised tariffs on U.S. coal and liquefied natural gas, agricultural machinery such as farm equipment, large-displacement cars and pickup trucks. The Ministry of Commerce said that shifting blame onto other countries will not address U.S.' domestic issues. Instead, it will place a greater burden on U.S. businesses and consumers while disrupting the stability of global industrial supply chains. "We urge the U.S. to avoid repeating the same mistake and return to the right path of resolving differences through equal dialogue. If the U.S. persists in implementing the

tariffs, China will take all necessary countermeasures to protect its interests," the Spokesperson added.

Sun Xuegong, Director of the Department of Policy Study and Consultation at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, part of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), said this U.S. tariff policy is a lose-lose scenario. "China suffers from that, and the U.S. suffers from that, and the whole world also suffers from that," said Sun, adding that economic policy should be based on facts, not emotions. Tiffany Smith, Vice President for Global Trade Policy at the National Foreign Trade Council in Washington, told China Daily that "adding new and expanded tariffs will harm working families."

Sharing similar views, Mary Lovely, Professor Emeritus of Economics at Syracuse University and Senior Fellow of the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, said that tariffs will "take a larger share of income" from low-earning households in the U.S. Lovely said that politicians often tout tariffs as positive as they "cling to the belief that it creates jobs in the U.S.". Xu Hongcai, Deputy Director of the Economic Policy Commission under the Beijing-based China Association of Policy Science, said China needs to engage in dialogue with the U.S. to resolve trade issues, and diversify and expand into international markets, focusing on cooperation with partners also hit by tariffs like the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Canada and Mexico. "It is also practical for China to further strengthen business ties with economies participating in the Belt and Road Initiative," said Xu, as reported by the China Daily.

"Barring a last-minute reversal – always possible with Trump – the gloves are now off and the most significant global trade war in almost 100 years could be under way," former U.S. Trade Negotiator Stephen Olson said in an emailed commentary to the South China Morning Post. "The initial 10% tariff on China was, for the most part, manageable. But the additional 10% will be far more problematic." Economists around Asia projected the combined tariffs will shave 0.4 to 0.8 percentages points off China's gross domestic product (GDP) for 2025, while squeezing the profits of its exporters in the American market, as goods from other sources will be priced more competitively with lower tariff burdens. The March launch date for the tariffs "surprised" Zhang Zhiwei, President and Chief Economist at Pinpoint Asset Management in Hong Kong, as he had expected them to be imposed in April. He called the hike "certainly negative for China's exports".

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

Jin Zhuanglong replaced as MIIT Party Secretary

Jin Zhuanglong has been replaced by Li Lecheng as Communist Party Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT). The notice did not say whether he was under investigation for corruption, but he was last seen in public two months ago. He nominally remains MIIT Minister, but it is likely that the National People's Congress (NPC), which meets for its annual session on March 5, will also remove him from this position. Jin, 60, last appeared at a Ministry work conference in Beijing in late December, where he reviewed the past year's work and set out priorities for this year. His successor as Party Secretary, Li Lecheng, 59, has been Governor of Liaoning province.

The MIIT oversees China's vast internet infrastructure, including the licensing of new technologies, electric cars and the development of 5G and 6G communication networks, and is responsible to make China less reliant on foreign technology. Jin is an aerospace expert who specialized in winged missile design, graduating from Beihang University in 1986. Three years later he received a master's degree in engineering from the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology. Previously, he worked at the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation and the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China. He also served as the Executive Deputy Director of the Office of the Central Military-Civil Fusion Development Committee.

In 2022, Jin replaced Xiao Yaqing as Party Secretary and Minister at MIIT. Later that year Xiao was expelled from the Party and demoted after anti-corruption investigators concluded he had taken bribes. Jin's removal comes after a number of aerospace executives from state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were caught up in the anti-corruption drive.

Last week, Tan Ruisong, former Chairman and Party Secretary at the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), the country's leading military aircraft maker, was expelled from the Party after being accused of taking a "huge amount" of bribes. In 2023, three senior aerospace executives were removed from the country's top political advisory body, the CPPCC.

Tiantuo satellite enables global cargo surveillance

Satellite technology that can track hundreds of millions of shipping containers around the world has been successfully tested by Chinese military scientists, in a huge leap forward in monitoring global supply chains. Developed by researchers at the National University of Defense Technology (NUDT) in Changsha, the technology centers on the Tiantuo-5 satellite – a compact, 80 kg orbiter launched in 2020. Recent trials have proved that China can gather real-time data from Internet of Things (IoT) sensors on cargo containers, including their location, internal conditions and even tamper alerts. The breakthrough will help Beijing enforce export controls just as China tightens restrictions on exports of advanced technologies, such as aerospace engine and military drone components to the United States and its allies.

The researchers said the satellite network could become a cornerstone of Beijing's strategy to curb smuggling – for example shipments of restricted goods through third countries – while collecting unprecedented data on global trade flows. "This isn't just about catching smugglers," said a Beijing-based logistics expert who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue. "It's about building a system to enforce our own rules – and break the chains that have been imposed on developing countries for over a century – with a technology revolution in space," he said. He noted that Tiantuo means "breaking new ground with the power of heaven", the South China Morning Post reports.

China Chamber warns of discrimination in the EU's Clean Industrial Deal

The recent proposal of the European Commission (EC) to allocate €100 billion to support EU-made clean manufacturing within the bloc has raised concerns from the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU) about the EU policy's potential discrimination against foreign businesses, including those from China. According to the EC, the Clean Industrial Deal is "a bold business plan to support the competitiveness and resilience of our industry." EC President Ursula von der Leyen pledged to deliver the deal within the EC's first 100 days of the Commission's mandate, prioritizing EU competitiveness and prosperity. Specifically, the plan aims to increase demand for EU-made clean products by

introducing sustainability, resilience and made-in-Europe criteria in public and private procurements, among other actions.

In a statement sent to the Global Times, the CCCEU said that the EC's corresponding procurement standards should align with international rules. "The proposed 'Europe First' standard in public procurement for strategic industries may violate the principles of most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment or national treatment obligations, potentially discriminating against foreign competitors, including Chinese enterprises," the CCCEU said. The Chamber noted that Chinese enterprises in the EU have played a significant role in many strategic industries. **"If the EU adopts protectionist measures, it could place Chinese companies at a competitive disadvantage or risk violating relevant WTO principles,"** it said.

In a separate response to the EC's claim of "overcapacity" mentioned several times in the new deal, the CCCEU said that the EU should not simply label global industrial divisions and exports as "overcapacity." In key sectors such as green energy and digital industries, the world faces a shortage of capacity rather than an excess, the CCCEU said, adding that these industries urgently require international cooperation to achieve climate change and economic development goals. "We hope the EU will take a rational view of the global industrial division and adopt a constructive approach to promoting dialogue and cooperation," the Chamber said. "International trade is market-driven, encouraging companies to enhance their competitiveness through quality improvements and supply innovations," Zhou Mi, Senior Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told the Global Times, adding that so-called overcapacity concerns should not be exaggerated to justify protectionist actions.

China's first wholly foreign-owned tertiary general hospital starts operations in Tianjin

The Perennial General Hospital Tianjin, China's first wholly foreign-owned, third-grade general hospital, commenced operations in Tianjin, as the country pushes forward its plan to open up its medical sector to foreign investors. The hospital, a tertiary general hospital with 500 beds, was built with investment by Singapore Perennial Holdings and is located in Tianjin's Xiqing district. The hospital aims to take advantage of the convenient location of the Tianjin South Railway Station, a key stop of the 1,318-kilometer-long Beijing-Shanghai High Speed Railway, to extend its service scope to include patients from the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, according to the company. "The launch of the hospital as China's first wholly foreign-owned hospital is of great significance, showcasing the Chinese government's commitment to opening up its medical sector to global investors, dispelling doubts and concerns," Pua Seck Guan, Executive Chairman and CEO of Perennial Holdings, told the Global Times at the opening ceremony. "We plan to copy/paste the model from Tianjin to a number of Chinese cities including Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, and Xian, capital of Shaanxi province."

"The hospital will serve the 100 million people living in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei area, and we plan to bring some foreign patients to our hospital to tap China's unique medical strengths such as traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Pua said. "Judging from the experiences of developed countries, the potential of China's medical and healthcare market is great. We believe this is just the beginning."

Perennial Holdings said the multi-disciplinary hospital was developed and equipped at a total cost of CNY1 billion. The new hospital features specialized departments such as orthopedics, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology and nephrology, in addition to an international division. **In China's three-tier hospital grading system, the third-grade hospitals represent the highest level.** The official launch of the Singapore-invested hospital follows moves by other localities to introduce foreign hospitals amid policy support from the Chinese central government.

The city of Shenzhen in Guangdong province will introduce two wholly foreign-owned top-tier hospitals in its drive to prioritize healthcare development and deepen high-quality medical cooperation. In December, the Shenzhen municipal government announced a deal with Singapore's Luye Medical Group on the setting up of a wholly foreign-owned specialty hospital in the city, also a first in China. Li Yong, Senior Research Fellow at the China Association of International Trade, told the Global Times that the trend indicated foreign investors' confidence in China as projects such as hospitals are long-term investments that offer no quick gains.

In November, China's National Health Commission and three other government departments issued a pilot work plan to grant approval for wholly foreign-owned hospitals in the cities of Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Suzhou, Fuzhou, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, as well as the island province of Hainan. China has allowed the establishment of joint-venture medical institutions with foreign investors since 2000 and currently has more than 60 foreign-invested joint-venture medical institutions, the Global Times reports.

Application of AI is transforming traditional steel industry

The application of large artificial intelligence models is transforming sectors across China, including Hebei province's traditional steel industry, driving significant efficiency gains and cost reductions. Xinxing Ductile Iron Pipes Co, a major iron and steel producer in Wu'an, Handan city, has implemented 38 AI-driven application scenarios since 2023. Among them is a coal blending model that has reduced the cost of each metric ton of coke by CNY9.4, according to Wen Zhihui, head of the company's Digitalization Department. "The ratio of using different types of coal from various manufacturers directly affects the quality and cost of coke," Wen said. Previously, coal blending schemes required experienced supervisors to formulate plans based on the composition and price of each coal type, relying heavily on trial and error and subjective judgment. "This process involved numerous trials, and slight negligence could lead to fluctuations in coke quality or increased costs," Wen said. In 2023, Wen's

department developed two AI-driven calculation models using big data to determine optimal coal blending ratios in a more precise and scientific process. “We input quality parameters into the models, which conduct billions of calculations before selecting 10 blending schemes that meet quality standards at the lowest cost,” he said.

The company's use of AI reflects a broader push across Hebei, a major steel hub, to integrate AI models into steel production. According to the Hebei Metallurgical Industry Association, key steel enterprises in the province produced approximately 200 million tons of crude steel last year, accounting for about 20% of China's total crude steel output. “Steel is a pillar industry of Hebei. We will organize universities, research institutions and enterprises to further develop large AI models for the steel industry, empowering innovation with advanced technology,” said Wang Hefu, an official with the province's Industry and Information Technology Department.

At the end of last year, HBIS Group Co, a leading steel producer headquartered in Shijiazhuang, developed the WeShyper Iron and Steel Large Model, an advanced AI system designed for the steel industry. The model integrates language understanding capabilities and efficient algorithms to streamline information processing, decision-making and operational management in steel production.

“We have identified 142 AI scenarios with implementation potential and development value to enhance 12 industrial procedures with digital intelligence,” said Xu Min, Director of the Bureau of Data Technology and Industrial Informatization in Qian'an, Tangshan city, as quoted by Hebei Daily. Since last year, **Qian'an** – a key player in Hebei's steel sector – **has been working with 39 steel enterprises and 13 top domestic AI firms to develop AI application models for steel production.** Together, they have established the Hebei Taihang Steel AI Management System to address challenges in steel production using AI. AI adoption is accelerating across industries nationwide. From healthcare to finance and ports to railways, AI is driving innovation and improving efficiency, the China Daily reports.

Shanghai becomes the world's top automobile ro-ro port in 2024

Shanghai Port completed an automobile roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) throughput of 3.63 million vehicles in 2024, an increase of 15% year-on-year. The port's auto throughput jumped to the world's No 1 spot for the first time, according to the China Media Group (CMG). Shanghai Port has 15 international automobile ro-ro routes, reaching 289 ports in 131 countries and regions. Ports across China are ramping up their ro-ro capacity to better facilitate the nation's fast-growing vehicle trade. **Last year, the country exported 5.859 million vehicles, up 19.3% year-on-year, further consolidating its position as the world's top automobile exporter,** according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM). Zheng Ping, Chief Analyst at industry portal Chineseport.cn, told the Global Times that Chinese ports' capacity to handle the automobile trade has expanded rapidly in the past few years amid the explosive growth of

Chinese auto exports, which is driven by strong growth in new-energy vehicles (NEVs).

“China faces no port infrastructure bottlenecks and the swift expansion at various ports has effectively underpinned China's auto export growth,” Zheng said, noting that the change is all market-driven as Chinese NEVs are much sought after in many parts of the world despite protectionist headwinds in some markets. Amid the strong growth trends, many Chinese ports, not just Shanghai, will enjoy more prominent spots in the ranking of ro-ro ports in the near future, Zheng predicted.

Shanghai, which is home to Tesla's Gigafactory, is not the only port in China developing its automobile handling capacity in recent years. Starting from 2020, the Nansha automobile terminal of the Port of Guangzhou, the world's fifth-largest port, has steadily expanded its capacity to include seven berths capable of accommodating ro-ro ships displacing up to 70,000 tons with a parking depot of 1.6 million square meters. In 2024, NEV exports from the ro-ro terminal soared by 23.2% year-on-year and shipping links reached 30 countries and regions. The automobile terminal in Ningbo-Zhoushan Port, Zhejiang province, handled 239,000 cars for export in 2024, a sharp annual increase of 40.7%, according to the local Commerce Bureau.

At the Port of Tianjin, auto exports reached 640,000 units in 2024, a year-on-year increase of 25%, local news portal tjbh.com reported, citing local customs. China's NEV industry has posted record growth amid industrial transformation and strong demand for green transportation. NEV production and sales both exceeded 10 million units for the first time in 2024 and accounted for over 40% of total sales, the Global Times reports.

Shenzhen allocating CNY4.5 billion to finance initiatives in AI and robotics

Shenzhen in Guangdong province plans to launch supportive policies, including CNY4.5 billion in financial incentives, to drive the city's artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics sectors, with humanoid robots emerging as one of the key sectors receiving attention. Shenzhen, home to some of the world's largest tech companies – including Huawei Technologies, Tencent Holdings and BYD Auto – is positioning itself as a national hub for these high-tech industries. Lin Yi, Director of Shenzhen's AI Industry Department, said the city plans to launch a special policy for humanoid robots designed to promote breakthroughs in key technologies, databases and large-scale manufacturing. The CNY4.5 billion will be allocated to the initiative this year, with company applications set to open in March. The policy package will offer subsidies to businesses, including up to 60% support – capped at CNY10 million – including for computing power costs.

The government will also offer model and database vouchers to further incentivize growth in these emerging sectors. The city also plans to integrate AI and robotics into its major science and technology projects to foster partnerships between industry, academia and research institutions, Lin said. Shenzhen's move follows similar plans nationwide, where regional governments have included embodied intelligence and humanoid robots as

key economic strategies for 2025. This year's government work reports from over a dozen provinces and cities – including Beijing, Chongqing, Shandong province and Anhui province – emphasize the role of these technologies in advancing industrial upgrades and driving economic growth. Hefei in Anhui plans to commercialize embodied intelligence products and attract over 100 companies in the AI and algorithm sectors. Shandong plans to accelerate the development of a full industry chain encompassing embodied intelligence.

Major Chinese tech companies are making their own **moves in the humanoid robot sector. At least 18 automakers have joined the race**, spurred by government incentives and technological advancements in AI. Xiaomi, Xpeng and Nio are among the latest firms to announce their entry into the humanoid robot market, while Tesla and BMW have introduced their first humanoid robot “employees” on assembly lines. Xu Xiaolan, former Vice Minister of Industry and Information Technology, said that humanoid robots are expected to become another “disruptive product” after computers, smartphones and new energy vehicles (NEVs).

China's humanoid robot market is rapidly growing and recorded USD2.9 billion in sales revenue last year, which is projected to skyrocket to around USD46.31 billion by 2031, at a staggering compound annual growth rate of 48.6%. Rick Xiong, General Manager of the Beijing Embodied Intelligence Robotics Innovation Center, said that leading Western countries have deep-pocketed industry giants dominating the robot landscape, whereas China is characterized by a proliferation of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) striving to navigate the competitive terrain of humanoid robots, the China Daily reports.

Shenzhen, often referred to as China's Silicon Valley, announced its 2025 economic growth target of 5.5%. Last year, Shenzhen set its GDP growth goal at 5.5% and later reported 5.8% growth, placing it among the top in terms of growth rates among major cities in China.

Humanoid robot rentals gaining popularity in China

The humanoid robot rental business is gaining steam in China as these complex artificial machines spark significant interest across industries and consumer markets. A quick search on major e-commerce and

second-hand platforms reveals a growing number of vendors offering humanoid robot rentals, ranging from CNY2,500 to CNY100,000 per day. Industry observers noted that the increasing number of rentals shows the growing applications and surging demand for humanoid robots across commercial and entertainment industries. This trend, they say, brings us one step closer to the vision where “every household could own a humanoid robot.” One vendor said that the Unitree G1 humanoid robot, suitable for exhibitions, corporate events and commercial activities, is available for rent at CNY5,000 per day, with an additional CNY500 deposit. The Global Times noticed that the types of humanoid robots are rich and diverse, and the prices range from a toy robot of about CNY1,000 to a professional robot of hundreds of thousands of yuan.

In the past, humanoid robots were mostly confined to laboratories or specific industrial scenes and were difficult for the public to access, Guo Tao, an angel investor and senior AI expert, told the Global Times. Humanoid robots are now being used in a wide range of industrial settings, from car manufacturing to live performances. Beyond that, there are also humanoid robots and robotic dogs capable of running, jumping, navigating rough terrain, flipping in the air, avoiding obstacles and even trekking through challenging landscapes.

As humanoid robot applications expand, manufacturers are continuously introducing innovations with increasingly advanced capabilities. Shenzhen-based EngineAI released a video showcasing a humanoid robot performing a front somersault stunt. The company said this feat marks the world's first robotic front flip. The robot, PM01, stands at 138 centimeters tall and weighs around 40 kilograms. Equipped with 24 degrees of freedom, it can move at a speed of up to 2 meters per second. Currently customers are mainly scientific research universities and institutions.

Recently, humanoid robot “Tiangong” achieved a world-first by climbing 134 outdoor stairs at the Haiziqiang Park in Beijing's Tongzhou district. This marks the first time a humanoid robot has demonstrated such advanced mobility in a complex outdoor environment. Humanoid robots are expected to see significant demand in the future, whether in industrial production, the service sector, or household use. The development and innovation in this industry are progressing at an extremely rapid pace. As mass production increases, the cost of humanoid robots is expected to drop significantly, the Global Times reports.

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