

China Business Weekly

2 June 2026



FCCC/EUCBA ACTIVITIES

Webinar: European Business in China: Business Confidence Survey 2026
18 June 2026, 10:00 AM



The EU-China Business Association and the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce are organizing an exclusive webinar on the **key findings of the European Business in China – Business Confidence Survey 2026**. The webinar will take place on **18 June at 10 AM**.

During this webinar, participants will gain valuable insights into how **European businesses** are adapting to **China's rapidly changing business environment**.

The programme is as follows:

10h00 – 10h05 Introduction by **Gwenn Sonck, Executive Director, EU-China Business Association**

10h05 – 10h35 Key Insights from the Business Confidence Survey 2026 by **Adam Dunnet, Secretary General, European Union Chamber of Commerce in China**

10h35 – 10h55 Q&A Session

10h55 – 11h00 Closing by **Jochum Haakma, Chairman, EU-China Business Association**

Practical Information:

Date: 18 June 2026

Time: 10 AM CEST

Location: Online

Participation fee: Members: Free; Non-Members: Free

The EU-China Business Association is the EU-wide federation of business organisations in the EU promoting business relations with China. The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) is in charge of the management and vice-presidency of the EUCBA.

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Invitation: The 12th Europe Forum 2026: Competition or Complementarity? Strategic Opportunities in EU-China AI Development – June 24, 2026 – Brussels & Shanghai



The EU-China Business Association is pleased to announce that “The 12th Europe Forum 2026 · Brussels” will take place on **Wednesday, 24 June 2026**, with offline sessions in **Brussels** and a simultaneous branch venue in **Shanghai**.

The Forum is co-organised by the **China Europe International Business School (CEIBS)**, the **EU-China Business Association**, the **China Chamber of Commerce to the EU**, the **CEIBS AI and Management Innovation Research Center**, the **Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute**, and **ChinaEU**.

Under the theme “**Competition or Complementarity? Strategic Opportunities in EU-China AI Development**”, the Forum will explore how Europe and China can work together in the rapidly evolving field of artificial intelligence.

As AI continues to reshape industries, economies and global governance, Europe and China each bring distinct strengths. China offers large-scale application scenarios, engineering capabilities and industrial scale, while Europe contributes strong governance frameworks, regulatory expertise and a focus on trustworthy AI.

The Forum will bring together political leaders, business representatives, technology experts, academics and thought leaders from Europe and China for a high-level dialogue on AI trends, industrial transformation and future cooperation.

The program is as follows:

Host: Prof. Frank Bournois, Co-President (European), Professor of Governance and Leadership, Michelin Chair in Governance and Leadership, CEIBS

08:30 – 09:00 Check-in & Networking

09:00 – 09:10 Welcome Addresses by **Prof. Wang Hong**, President Professor of Management, CEIBS and **Gwenn Sonck**, Executive Director, EU-China Business Association

09:10 – 09:20 Opening Address by H.E. **Cai Run**, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Head of the Chinese Mission to the EU

09:20 – 09:40 Keynote Speech 1: The Global Order in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Cooperation, Trust, and Shared Responsibility by **Prof. Charles Michel**, Former President of the European Council; Former Prime Minister of Belgium; Distinguished Professor CEIBS

09:40 – 10:00 Keynote Speech 2: Balancing Regulation and Innovation: Pathways for AI Enterprises by **Andrea Renda**, Head of the CEPS Unit on GRID; Visiting Professor of Competition Policy and the Digital Economy, College of Europe in Bruges

10:00 – 10:30 High-Level Dialogue: AI Pathways and Opportunities for China-Europe Cooperation

Moderator: Ivan Hodac, Founder and Chairman, Aspen Institute

Panelists:

Dita Charanzová, Former Vice-President, European Parliament; Senior Advisor in AI Policy & Digital Governance, DGA Group

Song Haitao, President of Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, Secretary General of Global Alliance of Industrial AI Centers of Excellence

10:30 – 11:30 Panel Discussion AI & the Reshaping of Industries

Moderator: Xu Bo, International Affairs Advisor, CEIBS

Panelists:

Prof. Fang Yue, EVE Energy Chair in Economics and Decision Sciences, CEIBS; Director, CEIBS Research Centre for AI and Management Innovation

Luigi Gambardella, President of ChinaEU, Former Chairman of the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO)

Alexander Tschentscher, Head of Supply Chain Excellence & Head of Strategy – Supply Chain & Logistics, Siemens AG

Li Binjie, SVP, Unitree Robotics

Jef Vandenbergen, SCALAR Head of Operations & Cloud Platform Engineering, ZF

11:30 – 12:00 Future Leaders Dialogue: AI Natives' Outlook on the Future

Moderator: Prof. Dominique Turpin, President Emeritus, Professor of Marketing, CEIBS

Panelists:

Prof. Eric Cornuel, President of EFMD Global; Vice-Chairman of the CEIBS Board of Directors

Fang Dongkui, Secretary General of the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU)

12:10 – 13:10 Networking Reception

* Speakers are subject to change

Practical information:

Date & Time: Wednesday, 24 June 2026, 09:00-13:10 (CEST); 15:00-18:10 (Beijing time)

Language: English and Chinese (with simultaneous interpretation)

Venue:

Shanghai: 699 Hongfeng Road, Pudong, Shanghai, P.R.C.

Brussels: Rue de la Loi 155 Résidence Palace, International Press Center, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

If you wish to attend, please confirm your participation via the registration button below.

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**Exclusive Luncheon with Mr Bernd Biervert-Luth, Chief of Cabinet of EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič. Speech topic: “EU-China Trade Relations”
7 July 2026, 12h00-14h00 – De Warande, Brussels**



The **EU-China Business Association (EUCBA)** is organizing an exclusive luncheon with **Mr Bernd Biervert-Luth, Chief of Cabinet of EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič**. The luncheon will take place on **7 July from 12h00 to 14h00 CEST** at **De Warande, Zinnerstraat 1, 1000 Brussels**. Mr Biervert-Luth will deliver a speech on EU-China trade relations.

At a time when global trade dynamics are evolving rapidly, this exclusive luncheon will provide a timely opportunity to gain insights into the **EU's trade agenda with China** and to exchange views on key topics related to **trade and investment between the EU and China**.

The programme is as follows:

12h00 – 12h30 Registration and networking cocktail

12h30 – 12h35 Introduction by **Mr Jochum Haakma, Chairman, EU-China Business Association**

12h35 – 12h50 Speech by **Mr Bernd Biervert-Luth, Chief of Cabinet of EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič**

12h50 – 13h10 Q&A Session

13h10 – 13h45 Networking luncheon and exchange with participants

14h00 End of luncheon

The luncheon is certain to be well attended, so we strongly recommend you **book now via the button below** to guarantee your place.

Practical information:

Date: 7 July, 2026

Time: 12h00 - 14h00 CEST

Location: De Warande, Zinnerstraat 1, 1000 Brussels

Price: €185 excl. 21% VAT

Deadline for subscription: 23 June, 2026

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PAST EVENTS

Webinar: AI & IP: Protecting Innovation for European SMEs in China – 27 May 2026

Webinar: AI & IP - Protecting Innovation for European SMEs in China

EU-China Business Association
连接欧洲和中国企业

CHINA IPR SME HELPDESK

European Commission

法蘭德斯中國商會 FCCC VCKK
FLANDERS-CHINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VLAAMS-CHINESE KAMER VAN KOOPHANDEL

The Multi-Layered Regulatory Architecture

China's AI regulatory framework is not a single comprehensive act, but a complex stack of baseline data laws, algorithm-specific regulations, and evolving from current IP standards as follows:

- STANDARDS & ETHICS**: Existing Operational Guidelines & Reviews
TC260 Security Standards, Science & Technology Ethics Review, AI Labelling Rules
- IP & PATENT RULES**: New Asset Protection & Ownership
2026 Patent Examination Guidelines, Copyright Precedents, Trade Secret Protection
- AI-SPECIFIC RULES**: Targeted Algorithmic Governance
Algorithm Recommendation Provisions, Deep Synthesis Rules, Generative AI Measures
- BASELINE LAWS**: The Foundation of Legal Principles
Cybersecurity Law, Data Security Law, Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL)

China's AI environment is defined by unprecedented industrial scale and aggressive intellectual property accumulation, requiring foreign entrants adopt highly pro-active and professional IP strategies.

60% GLOBAL AI PATENTS China's share of worldwide artificial intelligence patent filings.	5.32M VALID INVENTION PATENTS Total domestic volume, creating a dense prior-art landscape.	6,000+ AI ENTERPRISES Active companies driving intense domestic competition.
1.2T CORE INDUSTRY VALUE (RMB) Demonstrating massive state and private capital deployment.	602M GENERATIVE AI USERS Representing a 42.8% penetration rate among netizens.	40.3% GLOBAL 6G PATENTS Indicating early dominance in next-generation infrastructure.

The Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce organized a webinar on **AI & IP: Protecting Innovation for European SMEs in China** on **27 May 2026**. **Ms. Gwenn Sonck, Managing Director of the Flanders-China Chamber of Commerce (FCCC)** welcomed the participants on behalf of the Chamber and the China IPR SME Helpdesk. **The speaker was Mr. Jari Vepsäläinen, Chairman of the Fintrade Mercer Group.** He is a China-trained attorney and has been actively involved as a strategic investment advisor and corporate lawyer in the People's Republic of China for more than 36 years and is living in Hong Kong. Partner in organizing this webinar is the **China IPR SME Helpdesk**, an EU-funded initiative that helps European SMEs protect their IP rights in China, offering free practical advice on patents, trademarks, and copyrights, along with training webinars and one-to-one consultations with IPR help experts. China has emerged as a global leader in AI, both in deployment and in innovation. Recent analyses estimate that China accounts for around 60% to 70% of all AI-related patent applications worldwide, far ahead of any other country. In 2024 alone, Chinese investors filed roughly 300,000 AI patent applications, compared to about 76,000 in the United States, which ranks second. China is now actively implementing a practical and comprehensive regulatory framework for AI that directly affects business operations.

Mr. Vepsäläinen first briefly introduced the China IP SME Helpdesk. Its key office is in Beijing, but it covers the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. The team in Beijing can assist with IPR-related issues, all free of charge. Mr. Vepsäläinen was among the first foreign lawyers allowed to work in China in 1985.

China still doesn't have a united law governing AI issues, so it's really problematic at the moment to come to the China market with AI-related things. There are more than 6,000 active AI enterprises in China with a combined value of CNY1.2 trillion and 602 million generative AI users.

There are six critical operational risks for European SMEs:

1. Confidentiality leakage risks: keep as much as possible to yourself.
2. Patent hallucinations and rejections: filing AI-drafted patent documents.
3. Copyright assumptions are wrong: AI-generated assets or code are not automatically copyrightable. China applies the first-file principle.
4. Uncleared training data.
5. Missing labels and brands or trademarks.
6. Collaboration traps and secrecy agreements.

China's AI regulatory framework is multi-layered. Filing your IP, you have to follow all technical and security standards, ethics and labeling rules. New patent protection guidelines have been just published. There is a huge law base of different algorithms related to AI. Finally, there are a lot of other laws which you have to follow, such as the cybersecurity law, data security law, personal information law and others. You have to take all these into account once you come to the China market.

At the court, you have to prove human inputs, you cannot just use AI and try to file IP protection. You have to show that it

is made by humans, which parameters you have been using, and how AI has been assisting you. You have to document all the generational logs and prove that a creative journey occurred. The final output must reflect the author's personalized choices.

There are many legal cases in China, and Mr. Vepsäläinen presented three of them to show the basic standards. In the “Butterfly Chair” case the court ruled that there was **no human touch**. Once you try to register IPRs for your products or copyright, you have to show that there has been a human touch. In the “Cat pendant” decision, the court reasoned that there was no creative process. The “Shanghai prompts” case was dismissed because there was **no originality**. You need to prove the identity of the creator, record what tools you have been using, and keep all the input parameters, generation logs, publication details and dates, and all the documentation.

AI IPR rules and strategies include that AI cannot be the inventor, **you have to show that a natural person is the father or mother of the product**. Applying known AI is not inventive, you have to also explain which kind of AI you used and how it did help you to come up with the design. Disclosure must be complete as **black box claims are strictly rejected**. Ethics and legality criteria must be observed, and finally, AI-drafted documents are a risk. You cannot let AI make your application.

A new law coming out in the next few days is giving more protection for different trade secrets, but you have to explain to the authorities what you have done and what you need to protect. Training datasets are very important. You show what it is, what happened, and what training and education has been given. You have to make proper secrecy contracts, not NDAs. The major trademark risk is that you did not register. In R&D cooperation with Chinese you have to protect yourself and register all that you have done. Before you come to the China market, you should define what you are going to show, how you are going to do that, and what your target is. Regarding trade secrets, you never need to show everything to partners or to the authorities.

Once you have your patents, you need to be ready for enforcement. If anything happens, you have to go after the persons or companies who have been misusing your IP rights. You have to monitor different platforms and if anything happens, report that to authorities in China. The intellectual property system consists of patents and utility models; copyright and software copyright; trademarks; and trade secrets. Our advice to SMEs is that instead of going for innovation patents, which take time and are rather expensive, you should go for utility models, which are very fast to register and have almost the same protection in China as patents have. Once you file the application for utility models, you get it approved unless it is exactly the same as somebody else has already filed. Moreover, it is cheaper than filing for a patent. For copyrights, there is a China Copyright Center in Beijing for registration. One important thing is software copyrights, which we don't have at all in Europe. If you haven't filed it, you don't have a legal right to take anybody who is infringing it to the court. It is also important to have trademarks registered, as there are already millions registered in China. Remember to also register your Chinese trademarks, because the Chinese might not know your company's English name. Trademark squatting is normal in China and authorities are very strict. Trade secrets need to be documented.

Once you come to China, the common mistake is to assume there is automatic copyright. It doesn't exist in China, where there is the first to file principle and traditional patenting might be too complicated and expensive. Evidence is important. You have to show all the time that you are the owner. China now has the multilayered regulatory framework, which is changing for the better, but nobody knows how long it will take.

A Q&A session concluded the webinar.

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY FCCC

6th Innovation Fair Sino-Euro Business Development Conference – October 26-30 – Jiangsu province



Welcome to Innovation Fair – Supporting Innovators in China since 2018

Building on the success of previous editions, the 6th Innovation Fair is scheduled to take place from 26–30 October 2026. The fair promotes international business development, uncovers sourcing opportunities, and provides direct access to the Chinese market, while also offering opportunities to represent and distribute products and services of Chinese businesses in Europe. Showcase your products, pitch your ideas, and connect with the right partners through curated, industry-focused matchmaking. Join us to connect, collaborate, and create new possibilities for your business.

Target participants/industry: Advanced manufacturing; artificial intelligence; environment & new energy; life science & medtech; digital service & software; education & training; mobility; and import & export.

Benefits & cost of participation:

Benefits

- Travel 1x Eco Class Ticket (roundtrip)
- Airport Pickup and Drop-off
- Transportation, Hotel, and Meals Throughout the Event
- Exhibitor Booth 9 m2 (incl. backdrop & basic facilities)
- Networking Opportunity
- Local Company Discovery Tour

Registration Fees

- Standard Rate: €1,480 (valid by 30 June)
- Late Registration: €1,680 (valid by 31 August)
- Group Rate: €3,600 (for 3 people)

Optional Add-Ons

- Pre-event Matchmaking Services: starting from €1,000
- Post-event Follow-Up Support: starting from €1,000
- Larger / Joint Booths: upon request
- Tailored Proposals: upon request

How to participate:

1. Registering following the QR code.
2. Complete your company descriptions and your target Chinese counterparts.
3. Payment instructions will be sent via email after we confirm your registration.

Website: <http://innovationfair.mikecrm.com/aMNrQ1J>



TRAVEL ADVISORY

U.S. Pay Pal users can now scan WeChat QR codes to pay for purchases in China



U.S. users of PayPal will be able to pay their bills at tens of millions of Weixin Pay points of sale across China by scanning QR codes, marking one of the most extensive integrations yet between China's mobile payment ecosystem and foreign digital wallets. The integration between Tencent's cross-border platform TenPay and U.S. fintech firm PayPal marks one of the first large-scale international applications of China's unified cross-border QR code gateway system. Under the partnership, PayPal users visiting China will be able to pay directly at Weixin Pay merchants nationwide using familiar PayPal wallet accounts, without opening Chinese bank accounts. The service will initially launch for U.S. PayPal users before **expanding to other markets in phases**, Tencent said. The partnership will run through China's unified cross-border QR code gateway.

Otto Williams, Senior Vice President of PayPal and regional head for PayPal World's Middle East and Africa, said: "China is home to one of the world's most sophisticated digital payment ecosystems, and for international travelers, the ability to pay seamlessly is integral to the experience of being here. Through PayPal World's partnership with TenPay Global, we are committed to **ensuring international visitors can enjoy seamless payments using a wallet they already know and trust.**" Tencent said the launch is part of a broader inbound payment service enhancement initiative built around product upgrades, overseas wallet integration and multilingual services ahead of the upcoming APEC meeting. Daniel Hong, Vice President of Tencent's fintech group, announced a series of measures including a 90-day waiver of the 3% international card transaction fee for first-time users linking overseas bank cards, covering daily spending of up to CNY1,000.

Tencent also said Weixin Pay's in-app payment guidance has been expanded into 16 languages including English and Spanish, while multilingual off-line service desks have been established at airports, border checkpoints, hotels and major commercial districts. Tencent said overseas transactions through Weixin Pay rose nearly 80% year-on-year between January and April.

Dong Ximiao, Chief Economist at Merchants Union Consumer Finance, said: "The launch of Weixin Pay support for PayPal users in China, beginning with U.S. users, is a symbolic event in the interconnection of China's cross-border payment systems. The PayPal integration marks a substantive shift from simple interconnection toward actual interoperability in China's cross-border payment infrastructure," the China Daily reports.

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CONSTRUCTION

Robots expand the limits of mega projects, such as Shanghai Pudong Airport



At the vast construction site of Shanghai Pudong International Airport's Terminal 3, a group of construction robots is racing against the clock alongside human workers, the ideal choice for carrying out repetitive, efficiency-intensive, and hazardous tasks. **As the first large-scale application of robots in civil aviation infrastructure construction,** their deployment highlights the significance of intelligent manufacturing and smart construction in building mega projects, experts said.

Consisting of 37 types of robots with different functions, they are under the command of a unified "brain" known as a construction robot cluster management system. It is the first application of such a system in a large aviation project. Tang Shengling, Senior Consulting Adviser at the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Research Institute's Digital Economy Research Center, said the use of robots in the airport construction project is a significant step.

"The landmark application of clustered and systematic construction robots will provide a replicable Chinese model for the development of intelligent robotics and the smart upgrading of the construction industry," Tang said. The terminal under construction covers nearly 1.5 million square meters, with a total floor area of about 1.96 million sq m, according to Zhang Yi, Deputy Director of the Terminal Engineering Department of Shanghai Airport Group's Construction Division. "One of its most distinctive architectural features is the international terminal's bird-shaped roof. Together with 17 gigantic bird-shaped columns, it creates the impression of a bird soaring through the sky," Zhang said. "The project is expected to be ready in 2028, further supporting Shanghai's development into an international aviation hub," added Zhang. Qin Yi, Deputy General Manager of Shanghai Construction Group's General Contracting Department, said **the number of robots and the scale of their application in the project are unparalleled.** Qin said the robots would reduce construction time by 20%, and trim the on-site workforce by about 35%.

For instance, a crew of three robots is doing the concrete flooring works continuously and efficiently, carrying out tasks of leveling, surface finishing and polishing. The crew is expected to complete about 700,000 sq m of structural and architectural flooring work for the project. The team consists of a four-wheel laser leveling robot, a crawler smoothing robot and a floor polishing robot, Qin said. The crew can process more than 1,000 sq m of flooring per day,

and keep deviations in flatness to within a millimeter. The use of robots has not only saved construction time but also significantly reduced reliance on specialized labor, further ensuring the stability and quality of the construction process. "The introduction of robots for the project has made the construction process more advanced and intelligent, therefore improving the overall project's quality and standard," Qin said.

When comparing manpower and robot performance, robots can significantly improve first-pass welding and overall welding quality. The rework rate in traditional manual welding is typically close to 10%, but welding robots have virtually eliminated reworking.

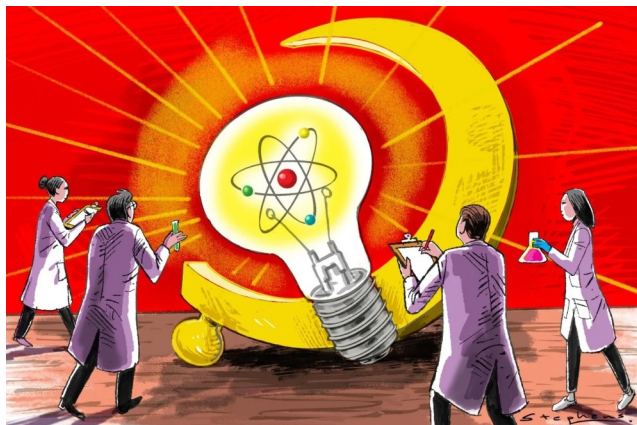
Cao Qixin, Professor specializing in robot research at Shanghai JiaoTong University, said: "The construction industry involves highly complex workflows, and integrating multiple types of robots through an intelligent platform has significant importance." **Twenty-four robot models are currently being used in the terminal construction project.** Based on their functions and applications, they are classified into three categories: on-site construction robots, construction management robots, and processing robots. Working in risky scenarios, they can perform highly difficult operations, eliminating the need for human workers to be directly exposed to hazardous environments such as high temperatures, toxic gases and flying sparks. Civil aviation engineering has the highest requirements for safety and precision, so robots must undergo reliability verification in real-world scenarios. The Shanghai project can serve as a model for the intelligent upgrading of infrastructure projects nationwide.

In highly repetitive tasks, robots are all-rounders capable of handling everything, including trivial chores. A security inspection robot, for example, is capable of agile movement and can take panoramic images on a construction site, allowing management to view any alarming scenarios and on-site conditions in real time. Another example is the cleaning robot, which can remove small stones and dust from construction floors via a fully automated operating system. The machine is capable of cleaning up to 500 sq m of floor area per hour. As for underground work, welding robots can reduce the workforce by 50% and improve efficiency by 30%. A large proportion of the robots being used on the project are made in China or have Chinese origins.

The new terminal will add 50 million additional annual passenger trips to the airport's capacity. Shanghai Pudong International Airport received nearly 85 million passenger trips by the end of 2025, exceeding its design capacity of 80 million. **China has a robot density of 166 per 10,000 workers, ranking sixth in Asia and 22nd globally,** according to a report from the International Federation of Robotics. South Korea tops the rankings at 1,220, followed by Singapore at 818. Shanghai's current density level of robots is 500. If it reaches the target of 600 by 2028, it would rank third behind South Korea and Singapore, the China Daily reports.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

China to focus on basic research to transition from industrial to scientific civilization



On April 30, President Xi Jinping convened China's top scientific leadership in Shanghai for a symposium on strengthening basic research. On the surface, it seemed another high-level science policy meeting. In reality, it was a strategic declaration that **China intends to compete not merely in manufacturing, commercialization or industrial deployment, but in foundational scientific discovery** itself. The meeting's significance may ultimately rival the "Made in China 2025" plan, write **Tan Kong Yam, Professor of Economics at Nanyang Technological University** and **Clement Chan, Managing Director of a Hong Kong-based boutique fund**, in the South China Morning Post.

Soon after the meeting, the Liberation Daily reported extensive responses from leading private-sector technologists and academics. It cited Peng Zhihui, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer (CFO) of AgiBot; Xia Lixue, Co-founder and CEO of Infinigence AI; Li Lin, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS); and Xu Tianheng, Researcher at the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute. Their remarks underscored Beijing's growing emphasis on basic research, scientific self-reliance and original innovation as foundational pillars of national power, technological competitiveness and China's long-term economic and strategic security.

For decades, China's rise has been driven by its exceptional ability to absorb, refine and scale up existing technologies, making it arguably the world's greatest "one to 100" civilization, to borrow from Peter Thiel's framework. It excelled in commercializing and deploying technologies such as high-speed rail, electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels, drones and telecommunications through powerful manufacturing ecosystems and state coordination. But **many foundational breakthroughs of the modern technological era** – including semiconductors, the internet, quantum mechanics, the CRISPR gene-editing toolkit and machine deep learning – **originated largely in Western, especially American, research systems**. Beijing increasingly recognizes that **true "zero to one" innovation requires breakthrough scientific discovery**, intellectual freedom, experimentation, tolerance for failure and a long-term research culture.

China sees the shift from "one to 100" scaling to "zero to one" breakthrough innovation as essential for long-term national power, a view driven largely by U.S. technological containment and export controls. Beijing increasingly views basic research as a quest for "knowledge sovereignty" amid a deeper struggle over scientific and technological dominance. At the symposium, President Xi called for improvements in evaluating basic research and creating a more open, inclusive and failure-tolerant innovation environment, an implicit criticism of the key performance indicator-driven, bureaucratic research culture.

Modern Chinese governance excels at coordination, mobilization, disciplined execution and large-scale industrial deployment. Breakthrough science often depends on ambiguity, intellectual freedom, experimentation, dissent and tolerance for failure, qualities that can conflict with centralized, performance-driven governance. This tension may determine whether China can evolve from a manufacturing superpower into a true frontier innovation civilisation.

China's challenge is increasingly cultural and cognitive rather than material. It already possesses vast scientific infrastructure, laboratories, universities, funding and engineering talent, with research and development (R&D) spending reaching CNY3.6 trillion in 2024. China also rivals or surpasses the U.S. in several scientific publication metrics.

But frontier innovation requires more than scale. China's education and talent systems have historically emphasized discipline, standardization, examination performance and technical execution, while breakthrough discovery depends more heavily on curiosity, interdisciplinary thinking, risk-taking and tolerance for uncertainty. China needs not simply more scientists, but different kinds of scientists.

Over the past decade, the number of leading academicians in the Communist Party's Central Committee has doubled. Instead of being purely advisers, scientists are increasingly being integrated directly into policymaking and industrial strategy, especially in sectors such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, aerospace, robotics and advanced manufacturing. This reflects Xi's broader emphasis on "new quality productive forces" as the foundation of China's economic and geopolitical power.

The broader U.S.-China technological rivalry increasingly reflects a systemic competition between execution and invention, coordination and creativity, scale and originality. China excels at transforming technologies into civilizational-scale industrial systems, while the U.S. remains stronger at generating new technological paradigms. The central question is whether China can narrow the gap in original discovery without weakening the political structures that enabled its industrial rise. Xi's symposium was more than a routine policy meeting. It signals a transition from an industrial civilization centered on manufacturing towards a scientific civilization seeking leadership in knowledge creation, technological standards and epistemic power, Tan and Chan conclude.

SEMICONDUCTORS

Huawei's new chip architecture to achieve 1.4 nanometer performance



Huawei Technologies expects its premium chips to achieve transistor density equivalent to 1.4-nanometer processes by 2031 under a new semiconductor development framework, the company announced at a conference in Shanghai. He Tingbo, Huawei Board Member and President of its Semiconductor Business, formally introduced the “**Tau Scaling Law**” in a keynote speech titled “New Semiconductor Path in Practice”. Unlike traditional approaches that rely on miniaturizing transistors, **the new methodology prioritizes reducing signal propagation time across devices, circuits, chips and systems**, He said, adding that Huawei has already designed and mass-produced 381 chips based on the Tau Scaling Law over the past six years.

This autumn, the company will launch a new Kirin smartphone chip that adopts **a multilayer circuit architecture which shortens critical path wiring and improves transistor density and energy efficiency**. The announcement underscores China's push to circumvent U.S. export restrictions that have limited domestic access to advanced lithography tools and cutting-edge semiconductor manufacturing.

China is widely seen as unlikely to reach 1.4 nm capabilities through conventional fabrication alone, but a successful application of the Tau Scaling Law could offer a way to improve performance and chip density despite equipment constraints, experts said. Huawei's projection places it on a competitive timeline with TSMC, the world's largest advanced chip foundry. TSMC currently produces chips on 2 nm technology and plans to begin mass production of its A14 (1.4 nm) process in 2028.

Beyond Huawei's internal roadmap, Chinese AI developers are increasingly turning to domestic chips. In its DeepSeek-V4 technical report, DeepSeek listed Huawei's Ascend NPU alongside Nvidia GPUs within the same hardware validation framework, the first time the company has positioned a Chinese AI chip on equal footing with Nvidia in an official document. The model has already completed inference adaptation on Huawei's Ascend platform. As overseas advanced computing procurement tightens, the shift toward domestic AI chips is accelerating. He from Huawei said the semiconductor industry's future depends on open collaboration, adding that no single company can independently find all the answers.

Huawei's progress comes as a string of Chinese

semiconductor companies are making inroads into chip supply chains, including chip materials, packaging, manufacturing processes and chipmaking equipment. Xing Ziqiang, Chief China Economist at Morgan Stanley, said that China is making breakthroughs in technological innovation, driven by three core advantages – industrial clusters, a demographic dividend of science and engineering talent, and an ultra-large market – that are difficult for other economies to replicate. “My colleagues estimate that by 2027 or 2028, China is expected to achieve a 50% localization rate in GPUs, marking a significant leap forward,” Xing said, as reported by the China Daily.

Huawei Technologies has engineered a workaround to one of China's most crippling chipmaking bottlenecks, but analysts warn that the nation's path to semiconductor independence is still constrained by manufacturing challenges. Huawei has been cut off from procuring leading lithography machines from Dutch supplier ASML, and cutting-edge electronic design automation (EDA) tools since 2019. The company's new Tau (τ) Scaling Law proposes a major shift in how chips are built. For decades, the industry advanced by physically shrinking transistors to pack more onto a silicon wafer. Huawei is betting instead on a concept called “time scaling”. Rather than trying to make the hardware components smaller, the firm aims to boost performance by compressing the effective time constant (τ) – essentially speeding up how fast signals travel across devices, circuits and systems. Under this new path, improvements in lithography tooling are “not necessary.”

However, Arisa Liu, Chief Director and Research Fellow at Taiwan Industry Economics Services, cautioned that **Huawei's new law** provided “architectural optimization gains” within physical limits, but **was not a total replacement for hardware**. The question remains: can Huawei find a domestic foundry capable of manufacturing its sophisticated designs amid strict U.S. export controls? While Huawei's 2031 timeline indicates it still lags behind global rivals by a few years, Liu noted that achieving this level of innovation while “totally isolated and unable to access top-tier Western equipment” demonstrated “exceptional resilience” and gave Huawei significant bargaining power in the smartphone and AI sectors. Beyond lithography, industry observers expect advanced chip packaging to become more important in the supply chain. Huawei's LogicFolding architecture boosts performance by reducing the electrical resistance that slows down signals, allowing different parts of a chip to connect and communicate much more quickly.

The South China Morning Post adds that researchers at Peking University have claimed a breakthrough in microchip design software, offering critical support to Huawei Technologies. The innovation comes in the form of a prototype tool for electronic design automation (EDA), a market dominated by Western players such as Synopsys and Cadence Design Systems.

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CHINA NEWS ROUND-UP

The EU agrees on tougher China trade policy; measures expected in October

The European Commission agreed on a tough new approach to trade relations with China at a rare China-focused debate. In a presentation, Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic laid out why the EU needed to take stronger steps to defend itself from what is described as a new “China shock” to its industries. This may require developing a new instrument to compel companies in critical sectors to expand both the number and the locations of the suppliers they use. Sefcovic is also expected to ramp up the use of safeguard measures in sectors that are under severe pressure from Chinese overcapacity. Safeguards are faster and broader than anti-dumping or anti-subsidy probes and are difficult for dissenting member states to block, since a qualified majority is required to obstruct them. They are expected to be used in some chemicals and machinery industries.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is supportive of a more robust approach, with Commissioners expected to fall into line behind her. The goal was to ensure none of the other 26 Commissioners were in doubt as to the severity of the problems the EU faces. Sefcovic described a bloodbath of trade data, job losses and industrial decline to his colleagues, who also heard from Macro-economist Alfred Schipke, formerly the Head of Mission for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in China. The EU Commission sees links between Chinese economic policies and deindustrialisation.

Measures will not follow immediately: **von der Leyen will now take the recommendations to the European Council meeting of the 27 national leaders on June 18 and 19**, which has China on the agenda. The Council summit will be instrumental in determining whether the bloc meaningfully changes course on China policy. Member states are notoriously divided on the matter, and senior officials said that nothing can move forward until they are more aligned.

While France, Italy, and the Netherlands have been among the major economies calling for a more assertive approach to China, it is not known exactly where the largest EU member, Germany, will land on the issue. The Commission’s “overarching approach remains de-risking, not decoupling”, the account of the meeting said, describing China as a “critical partner, and engagement and dialogue will continue”.

Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao is expected to meet Sefcovic in Brussels on June 29, while Vice Minister

Ling Ji will visit Brussels for talks three weeks earlier. More technical contacts are ongoing, with the incoming Director General of Trade Ditte Juul Jorgensen expected to engage with Chinese counterparts once she takes up her role this week. **Measures are expected in October. China has already announced it will retaliate if its interests are harmed**, the South China Morning Post reports.

Alibaba AI voice model outperforms western rivals

A new artificial intelligence voice model from Alibaba Group Holding has beaten Western rivals OpenAI and xAI on a major global benchmark, underscoring its technical edge in capturing complex Chinese dialects and accents. Fun-Realtime-TTS-Preview, developed by Alibaba’s Tongyi Lab, has secured the fifth spot on the Artificial Analysis Speech Arena leaderboard with a score of 1,190. It was the only Chinese-engineered voice system in the global top five. The Speech Arena benchmark is operated by Artificial Analysis, a San Francisco-based AI evaluation organization backed by investors including former GitHub Chief Executive Nat Friedman and Google Brain Founder Andrew Ng. The platform ranks models through blind user evaluations of generated speech clips using an Elo-based system. Speech Arena users test how well models can perform across three core capabilities – converting speech into text, enabling end-to-end voice understanding and conversational interaction, and transforming text into natural-sounding speech.

In a separate Artificial-Analysis Word Error Rate index, Alibaba’s Fun-Realtime-ASR model ranked first with a word error rate of 1.8%, meaning fewer than two words out of every 100 were transcribed incorrectly. The breakthrough addresses a long-standing bottleneck for voice tech in Asia. According to a May report by the Baidu Developer Center, traditional speech systems trained on standard Mandarin see their accuracy fall below 60% for speakers with an accent, and drop to under 30% for regional Chinese dialects. Alibaba has been trying to bridge this gap. According to the firm’s cloud unit, **the new model supports more than 30 languages, seven major Chinese dialects and over 20 regional accents**.

Chinese AI developers are increasingly pivoting from general-purpose chatbots towards embedding voice AI assistants into daily applications. The growing industry focus on speech models reflects expectations that voice interfaces could become a key gateway for deploying AI across industries. As one of the most intuitive forms of

human-computer interaction, voice requires little user training. Voice-based AI systems are generally seen as easier for mainstream users to adopt than text-based interfaces because they require less user training and can operate more naturally across devices such as smartphones, smart speakers and in-car assistants, the South China Morning Post reports.

AI platform for drug discovery cuts screening time from years to seconds

China has unveiled an artificial intelligence platform for drug discovery that can screen a vast library of chemical compounds, cutting the initial drug screening phase from months or years down to tens of seconds. Developers said they expected the system to provide a novel method for identifying lead molecules to treat tumors, neurodegenerative conditions, rare diseases and emerging infectious diseases, as well as possibly speeding up drug research during public health crises. Called **GalaxyVS**, the platform is powered by China's new generation of Tianhe supercomputers. Its daily throughput in predicting how two or more molecules interact is six orders of magnitude higher – or a million times faster – than the existing world record for supercomputing molecular docking. The breakthrough was announced by the National Supercomputing Center in Tianjin, which developed the platform in collaboration with a team from Tsinghua University's Institute for AI Industry Research.

The Tsinghua team brought in DrugCLIP, their ultra-fast virtual screening method that was documented in the leading peer-reviewed publication *Science* in January. In the latest development, the supercomputing team optimized the DrugCLIP model by leveraging the massive parallel processing capability of the new-generation Tianhe supercomputer to achieve super-fast results. According to Li Peishun, Researcher at the National Supercomputer Center, "GalaxyVS is not simply an amplification of existing models". Instead, it is "a complete platform that reconstructs a chemical space of nearly 100 billion elements, integrating AI models, supercomputing, high-performance retrieval and medicinal chemistry", Li explained. "This platform effectively addresses challenges in traditional drug discovery, including a scarcity of active molecules, an insufficient screening space and the homogenization of candidate molecules."

Innovative drug research and development typically takes more than 10 years to yield results and could require investments in the billions of U.S. dollars. **A critical initial phase in drug development involves sorting through immense volumes of compounds to pinpoint active molecules** capable of binding to specific biological targets. But traditional experimental screening is costly and time-consuming and conventional methods of molecular docking are limited in their efficiency and have a high rate of false positives. As the library of synthesizable compounds grows to a scale of hundreds of billions or even trillions, **existing virtual screening technologies face severe constraints** in algorithms, computing power, storage and engineering capabilities. The system's real-world tests showed that a single retrieval operation across a 100-billion-molecule library could be completed in less

than a minute. Its massive efficiency is reflected in its daily throughput, which reaches 16 trillion molecular dockings, the South China Morning Post reports.

Hainan to become premier destination for health and wellness

Hainan province is positioning itself as a premier destination for the global health and wellness sector, with senior officials and business leaders pledging stronger international cooperation, during a major forum held in Haikou. The "Dialogue on Hainan Free Trade Port: A New Global Vision for Health" brought together more than 170 enterprises from 19 countries and regions, including 80 foreign life-health companies and 105 senior executives from global firms such as Siemens, Pfizer and Novo Nordisk. Feng Fei, Party Secretary of Hainan, said the island province is becoming a new frontier of China's opening-up, a hotbed for mutually beneficial cooperation and a new engine for economic globalization. "The life and health industry is a key pillar of the Hainan Free Trade Port," Feng said, highlighting Hainan's unique advantages: its excellent ecological environment, open industrial policies and vast market potential. He extended a warm welcome to foreign pharmaceutical companies, research institutions and investors to share in the FTP's opportunities and help **build a world-class life-health industry cluster**. The island-wide special customs operations kicked off in Hainan on December 18, which Feng described as a landmark move in China's commitment to building an open world economy.

Xi Guohua, Chairman of CITIC Group, called Hainan Free Trade Port the highest-level form of China's opening-up. "The full implementation of Hainan's policies presents historic opportunities for the bio-health industry to integrate into global industrial chains," Xi said. He added that CITIC will leverage its strengths as a multinational conglomerate to serve as a bridge between China and the world, deepening cooperation with Hainan in biomedicine, high-end medical care and wellness services. CITIC has provided a financing support package exceeding CNY39 billion to facilitate win-win cooperation.

Peter Burnett, Chief Executive of the China-Britain Business Council, said **"Hainan is not just a free-trade zone, it's a free trade port, the only one in China.** That means the whole island is included, with very low tax rates and zero tariff policies. Li Tao, Vice President of Siemens Healthineers Greater China, said Hainan has unique characteristics and a leading edge, not just policy priority. "We are also exploring how some of our medical equipment can be initially applied in Hainan for trial use, and then promoted to partner countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative," Li said.

Michael Heilig of the German Federal Association for SMEs, said during a trip to the province that "Hainan is not only a tourism destination, but also a very international economic and innovation hub. German SMEs are often called hidden champions. The policy of 30% value-added processing in Hainan allowing tariff-free access to China's mainland is particularly innovative and appealing. Given Hainan's strategic location, it can connect to the huge Chinese mainland market as well as the broader Asia-

Pacific and Southeast Asia. This will be very important for German SMEs as they restructure their supply chains under the current economic situation,” Heilig said, as reported by the China Daily.

Tsingtao Beer Museum attracts foreign tourists

The Tsingtao Beer Museum in the coastal Chinese city of Qingdao, Shandong province, was highlighted on May 18, marking International Museum Day. Converted from a German-built brewery dating back to 1903, this museum is attracting an increasing number of visitors from abroad as the summer tourism peak approaches. This is largely thanks to its immersive projects that combine history, culture and leisure into a refreshing travel experience. Inside the museum, technology-driven exhibits have captivated many first-time visitors. In the brewing exhibition hall, holograph projections vividly re-create a German brewer from a century ago. Turning abruptly toward visitors, he appears to splash them with a virtual mug of beer, eliciting laughter and surprise. As night falls, projection mapping and digital lighting technologies transform the century-old brewery walls into dreamlike displays of light and shadow, rolling out a feast of nighttime visual wonders.

“We have carefully designed an industrial tourism experience that integrates sightseeing, interaction, tasting, and shopping,” says Sun Ji, the museum’s Curator. The goal is to transform industrial heritage into an immersive cultural tourism landmark that combines historical exploration, brewing culture, entertainment, dining, and creative consumption, she says. Visitors can even step into the role of brewmasters, crafting personalized beer recipes in interactive theatrical gaming spaces. Afterward, they can browse the museum’s gift shop for quirky mascot dolls and other souvenirs.

Still, for many visitors, the beer itself remains the highlight. “It’s cool to see the old buildings and vintage equipment, but the most unforgettable part is tasting Tsingtao Beer,” says American tourist Andrew Werner before draining his glass in one gulp. This experience-oriented tourism model has earned the museum remarkable market appeal. In 2025, it received more than 2.5 million visits.

“As China continues to optimize its visa-free policies, the museum is gaining global appeal. **We welcomed more than 250,000 overseas visitors in 2025, up by 70% year-on-year,**” Sun says. To better serve international visitors, the museum has introduced a ticketing system that supports multiple currencies and international bank cards, and offers multilingual services in Chinese, English, Russian, French, Japanese, and Korean. The 15th Five Year Plan (2026-30), calls for the development of industrial tourism tailored to local conditions, fostering distinctive-themed travel routes, and high-quality tourism projects. The policy push is accelerating the transformation of China’s industrial tourism sector, as represented by the Tsingtao Beer Museum and others, toward technology-enhanced and culturally immersive experiences, **breathing new life into historical heritage** while strengthening preservation efforts.

“Our experience has shown that old factories and aging

equipment are still precious assets that preserve historical memory and generate new momentum for cultural and tourism consumption,” says Zeng Chao, Deputy General Manager of Tsingtao Beer Culture Communication Co and General Manager of Tsingtao Beer International Tourism Development Co, as reported by the China Daily.

Beijing Municipality sets 4.5% to 5% GDP growth target

Beijing has set an ambitious annual GDP growth target of 4.5% to 5% during the 15th Five Year Plan period (2026-30), with aspirations for even better outcomes, Beijing Mayor Yin Yong said. To achieve this goal, the capital will continue to accelerate the development of its competitive modern industrial clusters, leveraging its technological strength and significant industrial scale advantages, he noted. The city’s initiatives include the upgrading of key industries and quality enhancement in integrated circuits, robotics and intelligent manufacturing, internet-connected vehicles, and space technology, he specified. Beijing is also anticipating breakthroughs in core technologies of future industries, and scaling their applications in quantum technology, superconductivity, brain-machine interfaces (BMI), and bio-manufacturing, Yin said. The city will beef up its efforts to promote the coordinated development of innovation and industrial and supply chains in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and enhance its role as China’s technological and science hub, he added.

The city is focusing on high-level development of its municipal administrative center in Tongzhou district, eastern Beijing, which began construction 10 years ago. Li Xiaojiang, an expert from the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Coordinated Development Expert Advisory Committee, suggested that in the next five to 10 years, the center should offer a more cost-effective living environment compared to Beijing’s central urban area. Xia Linmao, Executive Vice Mayor of Beijing, emphasized significant potential and ample space for private capital to join the building of the city, the China Daily reports.

Chinese market contributes USD362.2 billion in revenue for top 100 U.S. companies

Top 100 U.S. companies operating in the Chinese market achieved total revenue of USD362.2 billion in 2025, up 1.2% year-on-year, as China became the second-largest global revenue market for approximately half of those enterprises, according to the “Hurun Top 100 U.S. Enterprises in China 2026” survey by the Hurun Research Institute. The survey stressed that the U.S. business community is no longer content with merely gaining access to the market, but is increasingly focused on deepening commercial cooperation. “The Chinese market accounts for 12% of the revenues generated by the top 100 U.S. companies in Hurun’s list. Six of these companies derived more than 50% of their revenues from the Chinese market,” Rupert Hoogewerf, Chairperson and Chief Researcher of Hurun, said, underscoring the “ongoing strategic importance of the

Chinese market to the U.S. businesses.”

U.S. semiconductor companies accounted for the biggest number on the list, occupying six of the top 10 spots. **Qualcomm, Nvidia, Intel, and Broadcom each generated more than USD10 billion in revenue in China**, according to the survey. Apple generated revenues of USD64.4 billion in China last year, and it has 200 core suppliers, more than 70% of which have factories in the Chinese mainland. “Its supply chain is deeply integrated into China’s manufacturing ecosystem, and China serves as its most important production base and growth engine,” the survey noted. In the most recent Hurun Largest Foreign Companies in China survey, there were more companies from the U.S. than any other country, followed by Japanese and German companies. “This survey is objective, as many U.S. companies operating in China keep generating profits. This also shows the resilience and vitality of the Chinese economy as well as the attractiveness of the ultra-large Chinese market,” Huo Jianguo, Vice Chairperson of the China Society for World Trade Organization Studies in Beijing, told the Global Times.

The Chinese market remains an important component of the global strategies of many U.S. firms, Jeffrey Lehman, Chairperson of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, told the Global Times in a recent interview, calling for a stable U.S.-China relationship that benefits the whole world, the Global Times reports.

The South China Morning Post added that 26 U.S. semiconductor firms, from Qualcomm to Nvidia, saw their China revenue climb by an average of 20% last year, despite trade tensions. Out of the top 10 earners last year, chip giants secured six slots – Qualcomm, Nvidia, Intel, Broadcom, Applied Materials and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), with four of them reporting year-on-year revenue gains from China. Furthermore, Western Digital, Analog Devices (ADI) and AMD led the expansion with year-on-year growth rates of 43%, 34% and 24%, respectively. The three ranked 33rd, 30th and 10th, according to Hurun’s list. The strong momentum underscores “the robust market demand for AI computing power, high-end chips, and the semiconductor industry chain in China”, said Rupert Hoogewerf. But five of the six giants fell in their Hurun list ranking, with Qualcomm falling from second to fifth despite a 14% rally in its Chinese revenue last year. Nvidia, Intel, Broadcom and Applied Materials all dropped one notch to occupy sixth to ninth place in the 2026 edition, while AMD was in 10th place. The total revenue of the top 100

companies in the Chinese market, exceeded the USD202 billion trade deficit with China.

BYD aiming for zero accidents with autonomous driving system

EV maker BYD has set its sights on achieving zero traffic accidents through self-developed autonomous driving technology. Founder and Chairman Wang Chuanfu told a press conference in Shenzhen that BYD’s “God’s Eye” advanced driver-assistance system would be priced at just CNY12,000. The system allows drivers to go “hands off”, with BYD pledging to cover any costs from traffic accidents when the technology is activated. “There are roughly 1.19 million people who die in traffic accidents globally every year, and tens of millions more are injured. Our first goal is to achieve zero traffic accidents,” Wang said, but he declined to disclose a timetable for commercialization. The announcement underscores BYD’s push to secure a leading position in the future of mobility, with ambitions to mass-produce smarter cars at lower costs.

Wang said the company had built more than 6,100 flash-charging stations in total, the most among Chinese carmakers. “The latest technologies BYD unveiled send a message that **the company is embarking on technological advancements, instead of price cuts, to increase its market share**,” said Gao Shen, an independent analyst in Shanghai. “As a bellwether in the global EV industry, any drastic action taken by BYD could change the game since its competitors would have to either increase investment in new technologies or slash costs to keep their vehicles affordable.” Nick Lai, head of auto research for the Asia-Pacific region at JPMorgan, said manufacturers were now taking one of two paths: upgrading production techniques to lower costs and reduce prices, or offering consumers new models that outperformed existing ones at the same price.

BYD reported deliveries of 700,050 units in the first quarter of 2026, down 30% year-on-year as the domestic market weakened following a rollback of subsidies and tax incentives. Rising overseas sales helped offset the slump. BYD exported 120,083 units in March, its fifth consecutive month with shipments of more than 100,000 vehicles. Overseas deliveries in the first quarter accounted for nearly 46% of total sales, double the full-year proportion of 23% in 2025, the South China Morning Post reports.

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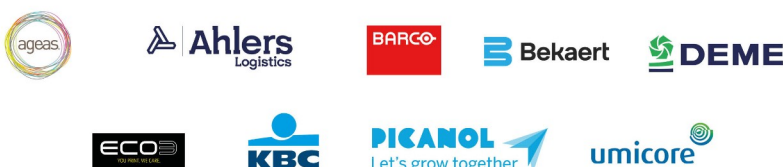
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