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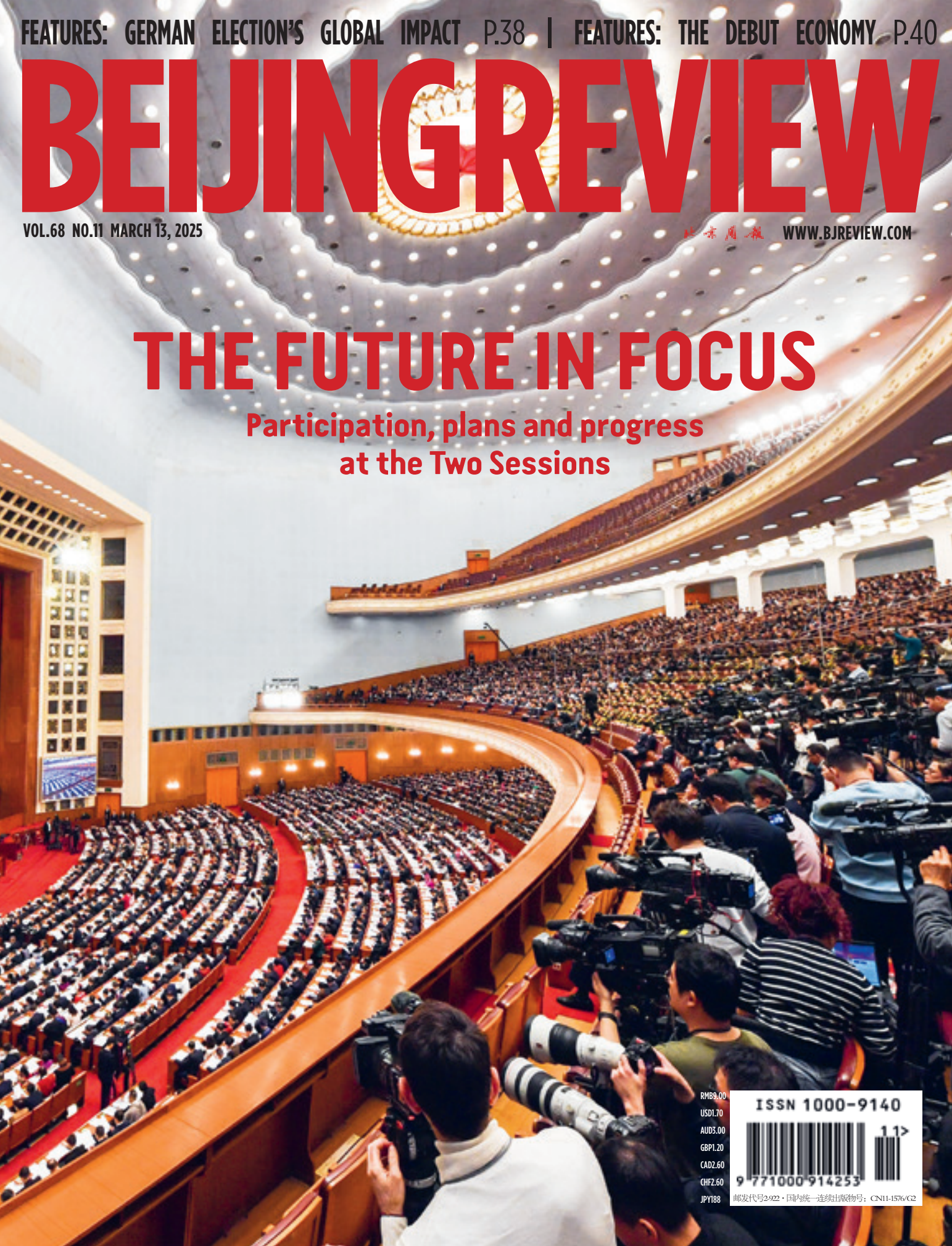
# BEIJING REVIEW

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## THE FUTURE IN FOCUS

Participation, plans and progress  
at the Two Sessions



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Cover Photo: The 14th National People's Congress opens its third session at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 5 (WEI YAO)

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## Measuring Progress and Making Plans

As 2025 is the final year of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period and a crucial year to lay foundations for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), this year's full sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, known as the Two Sessions, are particularly significant. The major task set out for this year's Two Sessions was to make sure the remaining tasks of the current Five-Year Plan are completed to a high standard, laying good foundations for the next one and ensuring a smooth transition between the two.

This year's Two Sessions continued to focus on promoting high-quality development. A series of important issues discussed during the Two Sessions, including the development of new quality productive forces, artificial intelligence and humanoid robots, have already become major topics of public interest. These sectors are considered to be among the main driving forces in China's continued economic transformation, as it works toward its mid-century goals for development and modernization.

This year's Two Sessions are the

first to be held since the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was held last year. For this reason, implementing the Third Plenary Session's core directive to further deepen reform and opening up comprehensively is also among key tasks on this year's agenda. The Two Sessions discussed reforms in key areas, such as accelerating the building of a unified national market, boosting the development of private economy and deepening the reform of the fiscal and tax systems. These reform measures will add new vitality to economic and social development and facilitate sustainable and sound economic growth.

The Two Sessions also perform major functions in China's whole-process people's democracy, being key platforms for delivering ideas and suggestions from communities to government organizations, and for monitoring government progress on implementing these proposals. By following the progress and outcomes of these meetings, international observers can gain a deeper understanding of China's governance, its goals and its place in the global community. **BR**



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# TRADITION MEETS TALENT

A rider performs horseback archery in Lhasa, capital of Xizang Autonomous Region, on March 2 to celebrate the Tibetan New Year, which fell on February 28. This year, the region enjoyed a six-day holiday in celebration of the festival, which began on February 27.



## City of the Future

The construction site of the Sinochem Holdings building in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province, on February 27. Since China announced plans to establish the new area in April 2017, it has evolved from a blueprint into a dynamic city.

## Public Data Platform

China's national platform for public data resource registration was put into service on March 1, according to the National Data Administration (NDA).

The platform, accessible at [Sdj.nda.gov.cn](http://Sdj.nda.gov.cn), has officially opened for registration. This is a big step forward in the market-oriented reform of data resource allocation.

Chen Ronghui, deputy head of the NDA, said at a press conference on February 18 that the platform will allow data providers to publish information about data resources and

products while enabling users to search for data.

On the first day of registration, the national platform introduced a range of national public data categories, including medical insurance, meteorology and natural resources. Several provincial-level platforms for public data resource registration were also launched on the same day and successfully integrated with the national platform.

A key focus for this year's data-related initiatives is to enhance the role of data in reducing corporate costs, fostering new quality productive forces and driving high-quality development. New

quality productive forces refer to the country's shift toward innovation-driven growth, technological advancement and high-quality development in various sectors of the economy.

The transaction volume of China's data market was estimated to have topped 160 billion yuan (\$22 billion) in 2024, a year-on-year increase of more than 30 percent, official data showed.

## AI Terminal Industry

Shenzhen, a tech hub in the southern province of Guangdong, on March 3 published an action plan to expand

the its artificial intelligence (AI) terminal industry to a scale of 1 trillion yuan (\$140 billion) by 2026.

According to the plan, the output of AI terminal products in Shenzhen should exceed 150 million units by 2026. More than 50 popular AI terminal products will be launched in fields such as mobile phones, computers, large-model all-in-one machines and wearable devices.

Key fields of the AI terminal industry involved in the plan also include AI tablets, AI imaging devices, whole-home intelligent products and industrial-grade AI terminals.

The municipality will create more than 60 typical AI terminal application scenarios in the areas of intelligent manufacturing, smart finance, smart cities, smart elderly care and smart government affairs, per the action plan.

## Protecting Gobi Desert

Authorities in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have introduced a new legal framework to safeguard the Gobi Desert, a vital part of the region's desert ecosystem.

On March 1, the city of Hami enacted Xinjiang's first local regulation aimed at protecting the Gobi Desert, marking a major step in the region's broader efforts to combat desertification through legal measures.

The new regulation requires that city and county governments in Hami develop a comprehensive ecological protection plan with clear conservation and restoration targets. It also mandates that construction, tourism and commercial activities within the Gobi align with these guidelines

to prevent environmental degradation, said Li Qiang, deputy head of the standing committee of the Hami people's congress.

Experts noted that the Gobi's gravel layer serves as a natural barrier against desertification. If disturbed, dormant dust sources could become active, intensifying sandstorms across the region.

The Gobi Desert in Hami covers 94,600 square km, accounting for about 66 percent of the city's total area, according to Hami's Ecology and Environment Bureau.

## Drug Control

From January 2024 to this January, Chinese police nationwide cracked approximately 38,000 cases involving drug-related crimes, seizing over 28 tons of drugs of different kinds, according to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) on February 28.

As part of a national anti-drug campaign, public security authorities during the period apprehended seven criminal fugitives on their wanted list who were involved in serious drug-related offenses, said the MPS.

To rein in the production of drugs, Chinese police in 2024

handled 151 cases involving drug making, with over 1,400 tons of material seized.

In addition, public security authorities have reinforced control over both the usage and export of narcotic chemicals, adding a series of new items to the strict control list over the past year, the MPS said.

To tackle global and regional drug issues, China has strengthened international cooperation with key countries and regions, further consolidated the mechanism for bilateral dialogues, and conducted joint anti-drug operations to crack down on relevant crimes and bring fugitives to justice, the MPS said.

## Wild Species

China has seen an increase in the populations of its flagship species over the past few decades, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said on March 3, the United Nations World Wildlife Day.

The number of wild giant pandas has risen from around 1,100 in the 1980s to nearly 1,900 today, and the number of Tibetan antelopes has increased from around 60,000-



## Textile Trends

An overseas buyer learns about textile products at a booth during the 33rd East China Fair in Shanghai on March 1. The fair, running from March 1 to 4, featured more than 5,100 booths in six themed sections for garments, textiles, household products, gifts, cross-border e-commerce and overseas business.

70,000 in the late 1990s to over 300,000 today.

In the realm of wild plants, more than 200 endangered species have been successfully reintroduced, and many species have experienced significant recovery and protection.

The steady increase in

wild populations is mainly due to China's comprehensive conservation efforts in recent years. According to the administration, these efforts include continuously refining policies and legal frameworks, and increasing financial investment.



## Reconstructing Homes

The launch ceremony of the reconstruction work for eight quake-hit villages takes place in Gurum Village, Chamco Township in Dingri County, Xizang Autonomous Region, on March 3. The reconstruction work will cover the entirety of the eight villages in Dingri and its neighboring counties, which were jolted by a 6.8-magnitude earthquake that killed 126 people and leveled thousands of houses on January 7.

## Further Opening up

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) has issued approvals to the first batch of 13 foreign-invested enterprises in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, as well as in the southernmost province of Hainan, for pilot operations in value-added telecommunications services. This is yet another major step in the opening up of China's information and communication sector.

The ministry said on February 28 that the companies are permitted to engage in value-added telecom activities such as Internet access and information services in accordance with the approval.

The related businesses by these firms, which have been approved for pilot operations and are predominantly affiliates of well-known multinationals, are expected to provide Chinese consumers with a more diverse range of telecom services and products. This development is anticipated to further stimulate market vitality,

enhance service quality and standards, and better meet the growing digital lifestyle needs of the public.

As of late February, the number of foreign-invested telecom enterprises in China had increased 30 percent year on year to exceed 2,400.

Last October, the MIIT launched a pilot program to expand opening up in value-added telecom services in four designated areas in Beijing, Shanghai, Hainan and Shenzhen.

It allows foreign investors to operate wholly owned businesses, such as Internet data centers, and engage in online data processing and transaction processing within designated areas. They can also gain greater access to China's cloud computing service and computing power service markets.

## Forex Transactions

The Chinese foreign exchange (forex) market recorded transactions worth 22.34 trillion yuan (\$3 trillion) in January, according to data released by the State

Administration of Foreign Exchange on February 28.

The data showed that the transaction volume of the client market reached 4.03 trillion yuan (\$554 billion) and that of the interbank market was 18.31 trillion yuan (\$2.5 trillion).

In terms of products, the spot market's cumulative transaction volume was 7.94 trillion yuan (\$1 trillion), and that of the derivatives market hit 14.4 trillion yuan (\$2 trillion), according to the data.

## Power Generation

China aims to bring its total installed power generation capacity to over 3.6 billion kilowatts (kw) in 2025, the National Energy Administration said.

China will work to increase energy production this year. The country plans to maintain crude oil output at over 200 million tons and add over 200 million kw of new energy power generation capacity.

According to the administration, China's total electricity generation is expected to reach

10.6 trillion kilowatt-hours in 2025.

In terms of green and low-carbon transformation, the proportion of non-fossil energy power generation capacity is expected to increase to around 60 percent, while the share of non-fossil energy in total energy consumption is expected to reach around 20 percent.

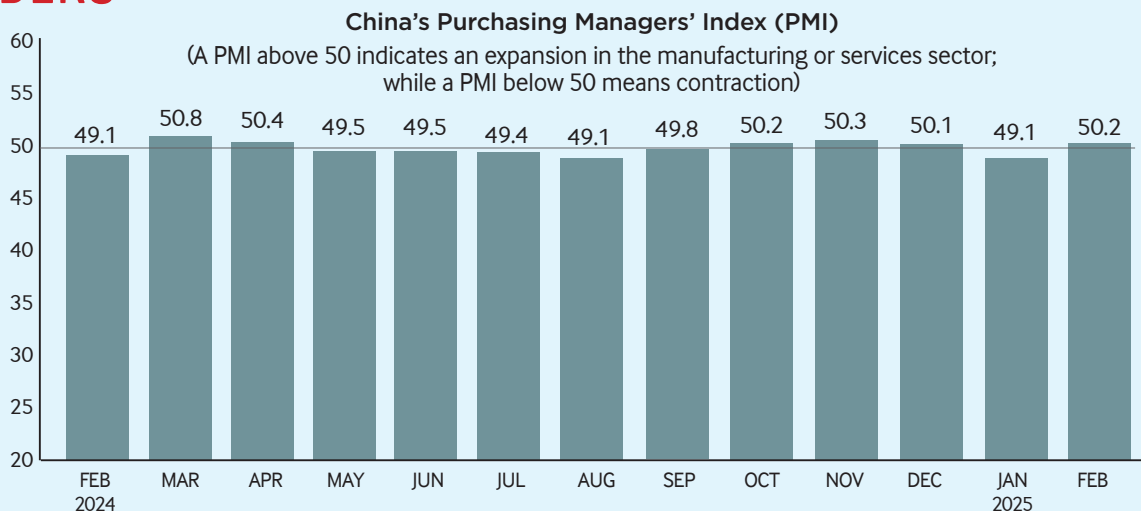
Zhang Xing, the administration's spokesperson, said the research and development of key energy technology equipment still needs to be strengthened, and the reform of the energy system and mechanisms needs to be further advanced.

China will promote high-quality development and high-level security of energy to support the sustained recovery of its economy and to meet people's growing energy needs for better quality of life, Zhang added.

## PV Industry Development

The China Photovoltaic (PV) Industry Association on

## NUMBERS





February 27 released this year's edition of the China PV Industry Development Roadmap (2024-25).

The roadmap covered different aspects of the PV industry chain, including 76 key indicators such as polysilicon, PV cells and new energy storage, according to the association.

The roadmap summarized the industry's development for 2024 while also predicting development trends for the coming five years.

In 2024, newly added solar PV installations in China surged 28.3 percent year on year to hit 277.57 gigawatts (gw)—ranking first worldwide, the roadmap revealed.

In the case of polysilicon, the country's production rose 23.6 percent year on year to 1.82 million tons in 2024, it said.

Polysilicon is a mosaic of tiny silicon fragments meshed together. This unique multi-crystalline configuration gives it enhanced electrical properties that make it immensely useful in

electronics and solar cells.

Driven by favorable factors such as the continued decline in PV power generation costs and growing demand in emerging markets, global installations of new PV capacity are expected to continue rising, the roadmap predicted.

Global solar PV capacity may hit at least 5,400 gw by 2030, the roadmap said in quoting International Renewable Energy Agency data.

## Unicorn Firms

China's 178 national hi-tech industrial development zones were home to approximately 67 percent of the country's unicorn firms, or startups valued at over \$1 billion, by the end of 2024, MIIT data showed.

These zones housed about one third of the country's hi-tech enterprises and 46 percent of its "little giant" firms, which refer to the novel elites among small and medium-sized enterprises that are engaged in manufacturing, specialize in a

niche market, and boast cutting-edge technologies.

These zones host approximately 60 percent of the country's publicly listed artificial intelligence (AI) companies and about half of its AI unicorns, the ministry said.

The zones registered steady economic growth last year, with their total GDP up 7.6 percent year on year in nominal terms.

The hi-tech areas also achieved fruitful results in opening up and international cooperation, with total import and export volumes of goods and services hitting 9.5 trillion yuan (\$1.3 trillion), a 2.5-percent year-on-year growth.

## Vehicle Drone System

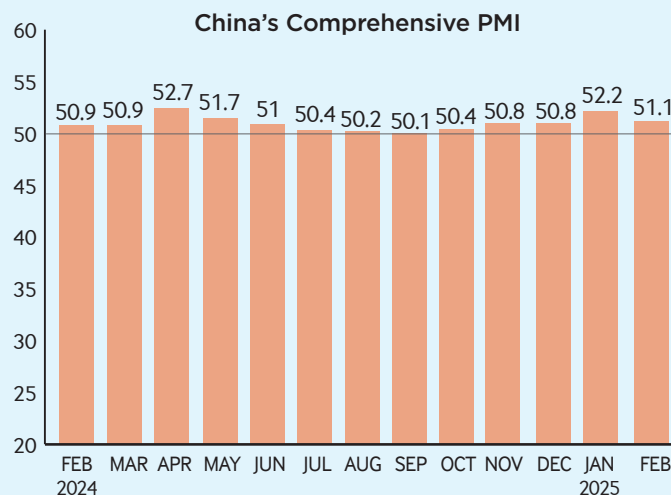
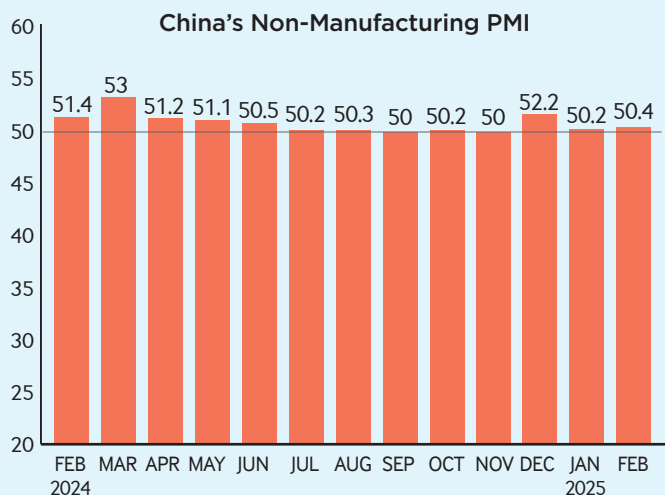
Chinese automaker BYD and drone giant DJI have launched an intelligent vehicle-mounted drone system, aiming to transform cars into mobile entertainment and exploration platforms.

The system, called *Lingyuan*, integrates a drone with the vehicle, offering a vertical field of view to capture travel moments in real time. It will be available across all BYD models, the company announced at a launch event in Shenzhen, a major tech hub in Guangdong Province, on March 2.

*Lingyuan* features a retractable car-mounted landing pad, enabling automated takeoff and landing, synchronized follow-shooting, and rapid storage and charging of the drone, according to Yang Dongsheng, BYD's Senior Vice President.

Wang Chuanfu, Chairman and President of BYD, said at the launch event that the collaboration started from the ground up, integrating vehicle and drone technologies in a way that enhances both.

Luo Zhenhua, President of DJI, called the partnership a breakthrough in product innovation and a reimagining of the mobility ecosystem.



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

# THIS WEEK **WORLD**



## AUSTRIA

President Alexander Van der Bellen (center) and leader of the People's Party Christian Stocker (left) at Stocker's swearing-in ceremony as chancellor, in Vienna on March 3, ending five months of political deadlock over forming a coalition.



## JAPAN

Runners fill the street at the start of the Tokyo Marathon 2025 in Tokyo on March 5



## BRAZIL

Revelers attend a parade of the Rio Carnival 2025 on the Marques De Sapucaí Avenue in Rio de Janeiro on February 28



## JORDAN

A woman and a child from Gaza arrive at the King Hussein Bridge border crossing on March 4. A total of 29 children from Gaza, along with their families, were evacuated that day to the country to receive medical treatment



## SPAIN

A demonstration of a humanoid robot at the 2025 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona on March 4. The event brought together industry leaders, policymakers and technology innovators to explore 5G advancements, AI and advanced connectivity



## PAKISTAN

Locals gather at a damaged mosque after a terrorist attack in the Bannu District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, on March 5. Six terrorists died in the attack, which claimed the lives of 12 and injured 32 others

# THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

## ↓ ANT GROUP'S NEW CEO

On March 1, **Cyril Xinyi Han** became chief executive officer (CEO) of Ant Group, China's fintech powerhouse and operator of online payment service platform Alipay, as the company drives the next phase of growth after more than 20 years in business.

Han is responsible for all business segments and daily management of the group.

He joined the group in May 2014 and has held positions including senior director, vice president and chief financial officer. In March 2024, he was appointed the group's president.

Under his leadership as president, the Alipay team pushed forward a series of key innovation and transformation projects, Eric Jing, Chairman and then CEO of Ant Group said in an e-mail to employees in December 2024.

In 2011, Ant Group was spun off from e-commerce giant Alibaba Group and became an independent company. Prior to joining Ant Group, Han was a senior director in the Corporate Finance Department of Alibaba.



## The Unretirement Surge

**Rednet.cn**  
**February 26**

Recently, the news that a company in Beijing was looking for senior employees not only drew more than 500 applications but also triggered a widespread discussion on how seniors can reinvigorate the workforce.

As China's population rapidly ages, seniors are rejoining the workforce in droves. While many worry that this re-entry means fewer opportunities for younger job candidates, the "unretiring" trend may actually help solve some of the issues that already existed in the labor market.

On one hand, hiring retirees can be an enticing option for companies looking both to fill empty roles and to tap into a wealth of

experience and knowledge. On the other hand, re-entering the workforce allows older people to not only ease the financial burden on their families but also rediscover their place in society.

However, some older job applicants have faced age discrimination in recruitment, and are paid less than their younger counterparts for the same position. Furthermore, their high likelihood of health conditions makes them unsuitable candidates for physically demanding jobs.

To address these challenges, the government, businesses and the public should work in tandem to introduce more incentives to provide seniors with more job opportunities, and strengthen vocational training for retirees to help them transition back to a more flexible mode of work.



## New Love for Live Music

**Lifeweek**  
**March 3**

Since China emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023, its live performance industry has entered a prolonged boom. In 2024, total ticket sales for concerts across the country soared to a colossal 17.9 billion yuan (\$2.5 billion). Optimism remains high for continuous growth, as this year's lineup includes some of C-pop's biggest stars, such as Nicholas Tse and Sandy Lam.

"Taking restrictive measures against [Chinese chatbot] DeepSeek under the pretext of 'security risks' is an attempt to overstretch the concept of national security and politicize trade and tech issues."

**Xiao Qian**, Chinese Ambassador to Australia, in a signed article published in *The Australian* newspaper on March 3, calling on Australia to strengthen artificial intelligence (AI) cooperation with China

"If the U.S. has other agendas in mind and insists on waging a tariff war, trade war or whatever war, China will not flinch and is ready to make due response."

**Lin Jian**, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, commenting on the U.S. imposition of additional tariffs on Chinese imports under the pretext of its ongoing fentanyl crisis, at a press conference on March 4

Comparing China's concert market in 2024 with that of 2019 reveals a fundamental shift: In the past, dedicated fans made up the majority of a concert audience, whereas live music events today have extended beyond fandoms to include participation of the wider public. People no longer attend concerts solely because they love a particular singer; they also go for the experience of being part of a packed, ecstatic crowd and getting lost in the rush of energy and joy.

Another notable phenomenon in China's concert scene is that more and more older adults are discovering their passion for live music events. Their increased participation has made the comeback concert of Dao Lang, a 53-year-old singer who was primarily active in the 2000s and whose fans are mostly born in the 1960s and 70s, one of China's best-selling live performances of the year.

While the concert craze in China signals a remarkable resurgence for the live performance sector, industry insiders remain cautiously optimistic about sustaining this momentum. They ponder how the live performance sector can continue to thrive and what long-term effects this concert boom may have on the broader music industry.

## The Seven Giants

**Securities Daily**  
**February 26**

A recent surge in Chinese stocks across sectors such as humanoid robots, semiconductors and quantum computing has highlighted a public interest in the rise of home-grown firms in China's technology sector.

This phenomenon has led a slew of Chinese stock brokers to propose a new concept called the "Seven Giants." The term presents a Chinese alternative to the Magnificent Seven, a group of high-performing companies in the U.S. stock market that include Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta Platforms, Microsoft, NVIDIA and Tesla.

There is no one accepted view in the tech world with regard to who constitutes the Seven Giants. Nevertheless, the creation of this concept signifies a consensus in the market that Chinese tech companies are assuming a larger role in driving technological innovation and industrial upgrade worldwide.

More than 570 Chinese industrial enterprises have made it onto the list of the world's top 2,500 spenders on research and development, accounting for nearly one fourth of the total.

In the future, more Chinese tech giants are expected to emerge, becoming an important force driving global technological progress and innovation.

## SCIENTIST HONORED FOR WATER SAFETY COOPERATION

**Wei Yuansong**, a leading Chinese scientist in water pollution control, was recently honored with a set of commemorative stamps featuring his portrait issued by Sri Lanka for his decade-long commitment to improving safe drinking water access there and fostering scientific collaboration.

His partnership with Sri Lanka began in 2013, addressing chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology linked to contaminated groundwater. In August 2014, Wei's first research trip involved extensive fieldwork to gain community trust and overcome initial skepticism.

These efforts led to a 2015 agreement between China and Sri Lanka to enhance water safety.

Now 55, Wei leads the Laboratory of Water Pollution Control Technology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The CAS facilitated the construction of four water treatment facilities in Sri Lanka, benefiting thousands of villagers, alongside training more than 30 water specialists and improving public health.



“China has made remarkable strides in technological innovation, green energy and digital infrastructure. These advancements not only strengthen the resilience of its economy but also offer valuable experiences for countries of the Global South.”

**Waref Kumayha**, President of the Silk Road Institute for Studies and Research in Lebanon, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“There are neither fundamental interest clashes nor geopolitical conflicts between China and Europe; they are partners that contribute to each other's success.”

**Lou Qinjian**, spokesperson for the Third Session of the 14th National People's Congress, at a news conference on March 4

