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All-out efforts to lift domestic consumption



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Cover Design: Cui Xiaodong

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Calling on Consumers

The Chinese Government has recently introduced a package of measures and special plans to boost consumption. On April 25, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, a 24-member body comprising the Party's highest-ranking officials, held a meeting to analyze the current economic situation and discuss economic policies. The meeting decided to boost service consumption, strengthen the role of consumption in driving economic growth and remove restrictive measures in the consumption sector.

Promoting consumption is currently one of the most important measures for China to boost growth, especially against the backdrop of the "reciprocal tariffs" imposed by the U.S. Government on China and other global trading partners, which have severely affected international trade.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said relying on the domestic market and fully tapping into the potential of domestic demand are conducive to resolving the impact of external shocks and declining international demand.

The Chinese consumer market is trending toward diversification and higher-quality development, though challenges remain, including untapped consumption potential and an imperfect consumption environment. To expand

domestic demand and sustain stable economic growth, the government has implemented policies to boost consumption, including launching promotional campaigns such as trade-ins to stimulate spending. Additionally, it is committed to enhancing market supervision, cracking down on counterfeit goods and safeguarding consumer rights. By improving consumption capacity, optimizing supply and refining the consumption environment, the government aims to unlock consumption potential and drive high-quality economic growth.

China, the world's second largest consumer market, boasts the biggest middle-income group globally, offering vast investment and consumption potential. In Xi's words, "The Chinese economy is a sea, not a pond." This is a vivid interpretation of the country's huge market potential.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics indicate that the dynamism of its supersized market is being increasingly unleashed. In the first quarter (Q1), total retail sales of consumer goods reached 12.47 trillion yuan (\$1.7 trillion), a year-on-year rise of 4.6 percent. In Q1, consumer spending contributed 2.8 percentage points to overall GDP growth, further consolidating its fundamental role in economic growth. **BR**



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A SMART 'WHALE'

The *Blue Whale*, a cutting-edge high-speed submersible unmanned surface vessel, is launched in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, on April 28.

Its launch is a major step forward in the development of intelligent ocean equipment. Developed to operate both above and below the water's surface, the vessel can reach surface speeds of 36 knots (66.7 km/h), dive to avoid extreme weather such as typhoons and remain submerged in static suspension for over a month. It will be used for rapid emergency response and in meteorology, underwater mapping, photography, water sampling and infrastructure inspections.

Under construction since June 2024, the vessel is now undergoing internal debugging, mooring trials and further sea tests, with its operational debut anticipated to come in 2026.



Giddy Up!

An invitational horse racing event in Damxung County, Xizang Autonomous Region, on April 26. The event took place on April 23-28, with 403 horses taking part in 12 competitions, including endurance and speed races.

Centenary Gathering

A grand gathering was held in Beijing on April 28 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and honor model workers and exemplary individuals.

Chinese President Xi Jinping made remarks at the gathering, calling for pooling the strength of the country's working class and the broad masses of working people, and translating the grand blueprint of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through hard, down-to-earth work.

A total of 1,670 people were honored as national role model workers, and 756 were recognized as exemplary individuals.

On behalf of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, Xi congratulated the honorees and extended his greetings to workers, farmers, intellectuals and other working people from all backgrounds and ethnic groups, as well as to trade unions and their staff at all levels, ahead of the International Workers' Day, which falls on May 1.

Xi noted that the All-China Federation of Trade Unions has written a magnificent chapter in the workers' movement over the past 100 years since its founding.

Mental Health Screening

China's National Health Commission has mandated the integration of mental health screening into routine

diagnostic and treatment procedures across all clinical departments in the country's medical institutions. This requirement was outlined in a circular released on April 25.

The circular details a three-year campaign, extending until 2027, aimed at improving China's pediatric care, mental health and psychiatric services.

The directive stipulates that patients identified through screening as potentially having psychological issues should receive prompt mental health evaluations. Those confirmed to have psychological issues or suspected of having mental illnesses following evaluations should receive timely intervention.

The circular also directs local authorities to expand the pool of specialized personnel involved in mental health and

psychiatric services, including physicians, pharmacists, nurses and psychotherapists.

A key component of the campaign requires local authorities to bolster staffing for the management and care of patients with severe mental disorders at township and community health centers, ensuring each facility has dedicated personnel for this purpose.

Contract Manufacturers

Chinese brand-authorized contract manufacturing enterprises (CMEs) consistently prioritize intellectual property (IP) protection, a Ministry of Commerce official stated on April 25. The official emphasized that these enterprises strictly adhere to contractual requirements for production and delivery to uphold international brand images.

The official, who oversees e-commerce, made the remarks in response to some claims on U.S. social media platforms that local consumers can buy international brands cheaply from Chinese CMEs.

China will promptly refer any evidence of illegal activities, such as false marketing or IP infringement under the guise of "contract factories," to the law enforcement authorities for investigation, the official said.

The Chinese Government places great importance on IP protection, and its progress has been recognized by all parties, the official added.

Pro-Employment Measures

China announced a series of measures to bolster employment support for 2025 college

graduates and young people, as detailed in a circular released on April 25.

The circular was jointly issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

Recognizing college graduates and other youth as valuable human resources, the circular emphasized that every effort must be made to provide them with employment support.

Key initiatives include expanding employment opportunities through channels such as promoting market-driven job creation and maintaining stable public-sector employment.

Organizations employing 2025 graduates, graduates unemployed within two years of graduation, or registered unemployed youth aged 16-24 are eligible for a one-off job expansion subsidy. This policy is effective through December 31, 2025.

The circular extended the one-off subsidy policy for state-owned enterprises hiring graduates through December 31, 2026.

Furthermore, the circular encourages youth to pursue opportunities in grassroots sectors and supports youth entrepreneurship.

The country also aims to train 1 million graduates and young people in 2025 to enhance their employability, according to the circular.

IP Protection

China will expedite its efforts to strengthen IP protection in the field of AI to support the rapid development of this technology, the country's top IP official said on April 24.

More efforts will be devoted to establishing IP protection regulations for AI and other emerging technologies, said Shen Changyu, head of the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA). This initiative aims to provide guidance and services for AI enterprises while actively engaging in global AI governance to improve international rules and standards.

Noting the recent advancements in AI innovation, Shen said CNIPA has implemented measures to keep pace with



Space Sprouts

Visitors look at space-bred vegetables at a science exhibition held in honor of the 10th Space Day of China in Hefei, Anhui Province, on April 24. This date has been Space Day of China since 2016. The date saw the launch of China's first satellite, *Dongfanghong-1*, into space in 1970.

the rapid progress in this field. He cited the issuance of guidelines aimed at addressing AI-related invention patent applications, establishing quick patent review channels, and efforts to combat the malicious squatting of trademarks related to DeepSeek, an AI chatbot

developed in China.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, China has emerged as the leading country in terms of AI-related patent holdings globally, accounting for 60 percent of the world total.



Art in the Fields

A giant metallic ant stands in the fields of Donglin Town, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province, on April 25. A land art event kicked off in the wheat fields on the same day. Teachers and students from Chinese fine arts academies formed the core creative team, producing 42 land art pieces. The artists skillfully integrated various artforms, including art installation and landscape art, into the fields and villages.

Industrial Profits

The combined profit of China's major industrial enterprises went up 0.8 percent year on year in the first quarter (Q1) of 2025, a reversal of the 3.3-percent decline in 2024, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on April 27.

The growth ended the profit downturn that had persisted since the third quarter of last year.

Industrial firms with an annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million) saw their combined profits reach 1.51 trillion yuan (\$207 billion) in Q1.

Profits increased in nearly 60 percent of China's major industrial sectors during the period, with 24 out of 41 major industrial categories registering year-on-year profit growth.

The manufacturing sector showed remarkable improvement, with its profit climbing by 7.6 percent year on year in the January-March period, an increase of 2.8 percentage

points compared to the first two months.

In Q1, the combined business revenue of China's major industrial enterprises grew by 3.4 percent year on year, 0.6 percentage points higher than in the first two months.

Wind and Solar Energy

China's installed capacity of wind and photovoltaic power reached 1.482 billion kilowatts (kw) by the end of March, exceeding that of thermal power for the first time in history, official data showed on April 25.

As new installations continue to grow rapidly, wind and solar capacity will maintain the lead over thermal power, the National Energy Administration said.

In Q1 of 2025, electricity generated from wind and photovoltaics reached 536.4 billion kw-hours, accounting for 22.5 percent of China's total power use, up 4.3 percentage points from the same period last year.

Official data showed that China's total installed renewable power capacity reached about 1.41 billion kw by the end of 2024, accounting for over 40 percent of its total electricity capacity and surpassing coal-fired power installations.

Since 2013, China's wind power installed capacity has grown sixfold, while solar power installed capacity has surged more than 180 times. Its annual newly installed renewable energy capacity accounted for more than 40 percent of the global total last year, pointedly contributing to the world's green development.

Electric Vehicle Sales

China will step up efforts to align the development of transport infrastructure with renewable energy systems, aiming to make pure electric vehicles the "mainstream of new car sales" by 2035, according to a circular released on April 25.

The country also plans to realize the large-scale application of new-energy heavy-duty trucks and establish a green fuel supply system for the transport sector by 2035, according to the circular jointly issued by the Ministry of Transport and nine other departments.

The circular underscored efforts to advance the development and utilization of clean energy along and around transport infrastructure, including railways, roads and ports.

To advance the green transition of the transport sector, the country will further promote the use of new-energy vehicles, green and low-carbon vessels, new-energy aircraft, as well as the green and low-carbon development of postal and express delivery services.

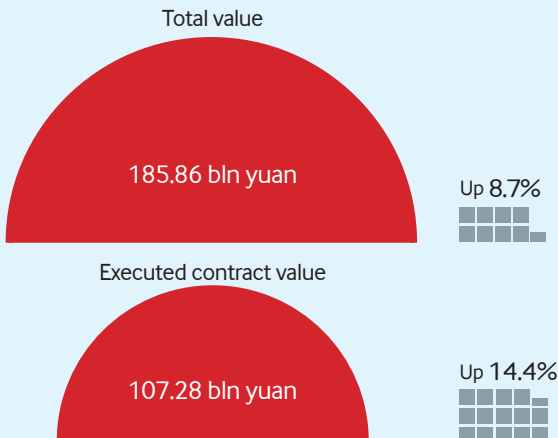
The circular pledged to beef up financial support by leveraging funds including special local government bonds, green loans, green bonds and relending funds for technology innovation and upgrading.

NUMBERS

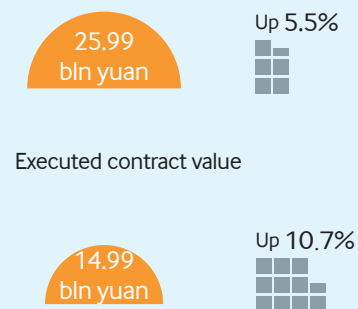
China's Service Outsourcing Industry in January-February

(All growth rates are y.o.y.; \$1=7.2 yuan as of April 29)

Service outsourcing contracts inked by firms in China



Offshore service outsourcing contract value



Tourism Spending

Spending on domestic travel by Chinese residents surged by 18.6 percent in Q1 of 2025 compared to the same period last year, highlighting robust growth in cultural and tourism consumption in the country.

According to data released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, total domestic tourism expenditure reached 1.8 trillion yuan (\$247 billion) in the January-March period.

The report also showed that 1.79 billion domestic trips were made during the period, a 26.4-percent rise compared to Q1 of 2024.

In Q1, urban residents' spending on domestic travel jumped up 14.8 percent to 1.48 trillion yuan (\$203 billion), while rural residents' spending soared nearly 40 percent to 320 billion yuan (\$44 billion).

Urban travelers made 1.318 billion trips, rising 22.4 percent from a year ago. Rural travelers made 476 million trips, spiking

up 39.2 percent from the same period last year, according to the report.

Outbound Direct Investment

China's total outbound direct investment (ODI) rose 6.2 percent year on year to \$40.9 billion in Q1 of 2025, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) on April 24.

In Q1, non-financial ODI went up 4.4 percent to \$35.68 billion, He Yadong, a MOFCOM spokesperson, said at a press briefing.

Non-financial ODI in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative reached \$8.87 billion in Q1—increasing by 15.6 percent year on year.

During this period, turnover of overseas-contracted projects amounted to \$34.18 billion, up 5.5 percent year on year. The value of new contracts for such projects, meanwhile, surged by 26 percent to \$58.67 billion in Q1.

Shortened Negative List

China has further shortened its market access negative list, which specifies fields that are off-limits to both domestic and overseas market entities, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country's top economic planner, announced on April 24.

The new version reduced the number of items from 117 to 106, according to the NDRC.

Replacing the version issued on March 12, 2022, it was jointly published by the NDRC, MOFCOM and the State Administration for Market Regulation, after approval by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, the country's highest state administrative organ.

The new list has lowered the entry thresholds by directly removing several national measures. For example, the seal engraving industry has shifted from a licensing to a filing system.

Some national measures

have been partially relaxed. While maintaining necessary market access regulations in sectors like TV drama production and new telecom services, the entry process has been streamlined.

Several regional measures have been removed, including regulations on ship design and construction, as well as alcohol production and operation management. These areas are now subject to a unified national access system.

The new list also standardizes market access in key sectors and refines requirements for specific fields. This includes incorporating management measures for new business formats and emerging fields into the list, such as the issuance of operating licenses for civilian unmanned aerial vehicles.

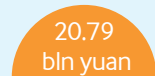
Initially issued in 2018 by the NDRC and MOFCOM, the market access negative list underwent four revisions in 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2025. The number of listed items has decreased from 151 in 2018 to the current 106, a reduction of approximately 30 percent.

Offshore service outsourcing executed contract value

With the United States



With Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



With Singapore



Offshore service outsourcing executed contract value

Of foreign-funded enterprises



Up 9.7%



By the end of February 2025,



new employees had joined China's service outsourcing industry

(Source: Ministry of Commerce)



ITALY

A ceremony in honor of the 80th anniversary of Liberation Day is held at the Vittoriano Monument in Rome on April 25



IRAN

Emergency personnel work to contain a fire at the site of an explosion in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, on April 26. At least 46 people had been killed and 1,200 others injured as of April 29, after the massive explosion rocked the Shahid Rajaei Port



KAZAKHSTAN

The eighth Eurasian Book Fair in Astana on April 23. The fair was held from April 23 to 27



RUSSIA

President Vladimir Putin listens to a briefing by Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov in Moscow on April 26, regarding the military's completion of an operation to regain control of the border region of Kursk



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Lee Jae-myung, former leader of the Democratic Party, speaks after being elected as the party's presidential candidate during its national convention in Goyang City on April 27



CANADA

Mourners lay flowers near the site of an attack in Vancouver, British Columbia, on April 27. Eleven people have been confirmed dead after a driver drove into a crowd at a street festival a day earlier



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ BIGGEST WINNER AT BEIJING INT'L FILM FESTIVAL

Norwegian filmmaker **Lilja Ingolfsdottir** emerged as the standout director at the 15th Beijing International Film Festival, which concluded on April 26. Her debut feature—marital drama *Loveable*—not only captivated audiences but also secured four prestigious Tiantan awards, including best feature film and best director.

Ingolfsdottir, a graduate of the London Film School and the Film and Television School of Performing Arts in Prague, the Czech Republic, has created around 20 short and mid-length films as screenwriter and director. *Loveable*, which tells the poignant story of a 40-year-old woman striving to rebuild her life amid her collapsing marriage, had its world premiere at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech Republic in 2024, where it won five awards.

The 15th Beijing International Film Festival ran from April 18 to 26. This year, 1,794 feature movies from 103 countries and regions competed for a Tiantan Award, with nearly 90 percent of all entries coming from abroad.



Defending the Weekend

Southcn.com
April 27

On April 24, Xiaohongshu (RedNote), a leading lifestyle platform in China, took Chinese social media by storm by announcing that it would discontinue its big week/small week system, where workers alternate between five- and six-day working weeks. Before RedNote, a host of Chinese tech giants, including ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, and Kuaishou, another popular Chinese video-sharing platform, had announced their plans to abandon the same practice.

This schedule, once widely adopted by Chinese companies, means employees worked two additional Saturdays each month, earning double pay for those days, which

amounts to the equivalent of four extra days' salary.

Given the extra pay, opinions on whether to cancel this work schedule have long been divided. Supporters of the move argue that weekends should be reserved for family and rest. However, many worry that canceling six-day working weeks will result in a major pay cut. Others are concerned that the change would not address the underlying issues of office overwork and that they would still be expected to work long hours from home without adequate compensation.

To address the issue from the root, it is imperative to establish a more balanced performance evaluation system that respects employees' right to rest while offering the option to trade working hours for higher income.



Autopilot in Overdrive

China Newsweek
April 14

On March 29, a Xiaomi SU7 sedan drove into a concrete guardrail on an expressway at around 116 km per hour, causing a fire that killed all three passengers. According to an official statement by Chinese consumer electronics and smart manufacturing company Xiaomi, the car was running on the Navigate On Autopilot mode, an assisted-driving feature, when the collision happened. Seconds before the

“Individual countries will be stronger if they're willing to work together.”

Tom Fletcher, United Nations Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency, noting that countries can only achieve broad-based economic development by forging partnerships rooted in trust and dialogue

“China's cooperation with Central Asia doesn't represent geopolitical games, but rather a joint exploration of development strategies.”

Li Yongquan, Director of the Eurasian Social Development Research at the Development Research Center of the State Council, as China put forward a five-point proposal for deepening China-Central Asia cooperation during the Sixth China-Central Asia Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on April 26

crash, the car warned that there were obstacles ahead and started to slow down, but it was too late.

The crash has cast a spotlight on the many challenges in which the self-driving rush is now enmeshed.

First brought into question was whether these systems can handle complex situations and irregular objects beyond their programmed capacities.

On the marketing front, the fatal crash also revealed a troubling trend among car salespeople, whose use of exaggerated claims like “fully autonomous” and “hands-free driving” has fueled overly high expectations about the vehicles’ capabilities.

Last but not least, experts have pointed out how the legal and regulatory frameworks governing the industry have failed to keep pace with technological advancements, leading to major ambiguities concerning rights and liabilities.

Therefore, it is essential for drivers to fully understand the limitations of smart driving technologies, and for professionals in the industry to remember that any attempt to downplay safety concerns risks jeopardizing the industry’s own future.

Delivery Showdown

Guangzhou Daily
April 24

After JD.com, a Chinese e-commerce giant, launched its own food delivery service in February, a bitter battle for dominance has since broken out between the company and Meituan, which is the country’s biggest food delivery platform.

There is hope that healthy competition between the two will drive positive changes in the food delivery industry. For a long time, the industry has struggled with ghost kitchens, delivery-only restaurants, often found not meeting food safety standards, as well as the exploitation of delivery riders by unfair platform algorithms. Like a catfish joining

a school of sardines, JD.com’s entry promises to shake up the food delivery landscape by pushing its competitors to address long-standing issues.

One of the key battlegrounds of the war between the two tech giants is price: JD.com has introduced refunds on delayed deliveries, while Meituan has launched a series of discounts and subsidies. JD.com has recently pledged to cover social insurance for full-time riders, with Meituan and Ele.me, another Chinese delivery giant, following suit.

While the outcome of this showdown remains uncertain, it will surely bring about an upgraded ecosystem that better balances the interests of workers, consumers and restaurants.

NEW HEAD OF TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Wang Liqin, former Olympic and world champion, was elected president of the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) at the second meeting of the 10th CTTA Member Congress in Beijing on April 23, succeeding Liu Guoliang.

Wang, 46, is a two-time Olympic champion and three-time World Championships singles winner. He retired from the national team in 2013 and has served as CTTA vice president since 2018.



After his election, Wang pledged to uphold Team China’s mission and strengthen preparations for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. “I will continue the spirit of fighting for the nation and work toward new achievements in Chinese table tennis,” he said.

Liu resigned from the CTTA presidency at the meeting. During his tenure since 2018, China claimed nine of 10 Olympic gold medals in table tennis at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024.

“China is becoming a tech and innovation giant in electric vehicles (EVs), AI and many other fields. We see China as a big and impressive partner. Customers have more confidence in buying Chinese products.”

Hector Mena, President of the Mexican Dealer Association, at the 2025 BYD Americas Dealer Conference in Shengzhou, Zhejiang Province, which ran from April 24 to 28. China’s BYD is the world’s largest EV maker

“In this war, numerous Chinese people were brutally killed in bloody tragedies like the Nanjing Massacre. However, it is heartbreaking that many Europeans are unfamiliar with this history, and far-right fascists even attempt to distort or erase it.”

José Luis Centella, President of the Communist Party of Spain, in a recent interview with *Global Times* newspaper, regarding this year’s 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War



COVER STORY

HOMEGROWN SOLUTIONS

China doubles down on domestic demand to fuel economic growth

By Li Xiaoyang