



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## CHINA MONITOR

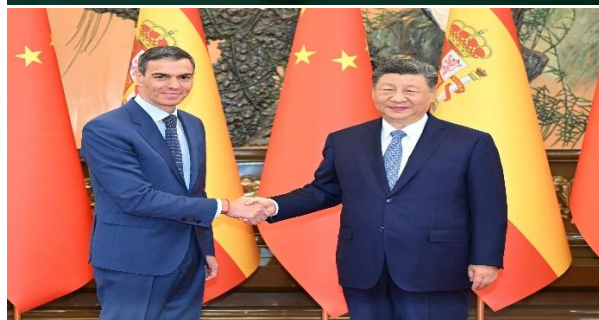
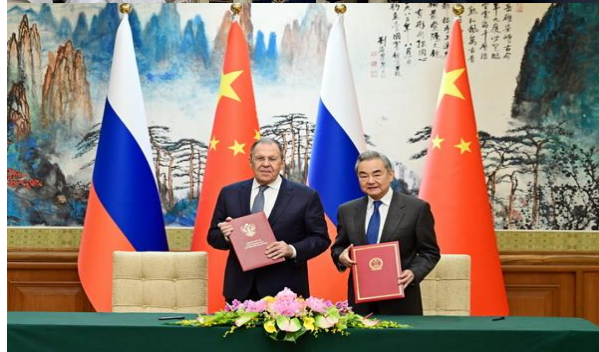
APRIL 2026

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Volume IX, Issue 4



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**China Monitor**

**Vol. IX, Issue 4**

**April 2026**

## ABOUT US

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## China Monitor

The DPG China Monitor features developments related to China during the month and is compiled by our research team comprising Ambassador Biren Nanda, Senior Fellow and Sanket Joshi, Research Associate, from open-source reports and publications.

*The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Delhi Policy Group as an Institution.*

## Cover Images:

1. India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and China's Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun met on the margins of the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 28, 2026. Source: [Official X Handle/Rajnath Singh](#)
2. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met in Beijing on April 14, 2026. Source: [MFA PRC](#)
3. President Xi met Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez in Beijing on April 14, 2026. Source: [Official X Handle/Mao Ning PRC MFA Spokesperson](#)

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## Abstract

On April 10, 2026, China released a new list of 23 “standardised” names for places in India’s state of Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing refers to as Zangnan (South Tibet). Reacting to this, on April 12, 2026, India categorically rejected China’s mischievous attempts to assign fictitious names to places in Arunachal Pradesh, adding that “false claims” and “baseless narratives” cannot alter the reality that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. New Delhi cautioned that such actions by the Chinese side undermine efforts to stabilise and normalise bilateral relations between India and China.

High-level engagements between India and China continued. On April 28, 2026, India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and China’s Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun met on the margins of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers’ meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The two sides discussed the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC as well as broader regional security issues, including the ongoing conflict in West Asia. Earlier, on April 16-17, 2026, India and China’s National Coordinators for SCO matters met in New Delhi and exchanged views on the implementation of SCO Leaders’ decisions and the future course of the organisation.

On April 2, 2026, one year after President Trump announced ‘Liberation Day’ tariffs, the White House announced that the U.S.’ goods trade deficit with China had decreased by 32 percent over the past year, and by 46 percent from April 2025 to January 2026. The statement highlighted that America had “thrown away the illusion of free trade”, secured “America First” trade deals, and seen a resurgence in American manufacturing.

Ahead of President Trump’s visit to China, on April 30, 2026, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio held a phone conversation. In his reported remarks, Wang Yi cautioned the U.S. that the Taiwan question is fundamental to China’s core interests, and that it poses the “biggest risk to China-U.S. relations”. He urged Beijing and Washington to safeguard the hard-won stability in bilateral relations.

Chinese analysts suggested that the Xi-Trump summit in Beijing had the potential to foster “medium-term stability” in China-U.S. relations, extending beyond the U.S. midterm elections in November 2026 until the end of President Trump’s term

in January 2029.

Cheng Li-wun, the Chairperson of Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT) party, visited mainland China from April 7-12, 2026. She met President Xi on April 10, 2026, wherein the two leaders called for joint efforts between the CPC and KMT to promote cross-strait peace and oppose "Taiwan independence".

Amidst the European countries' refusal to participate in U.S.-Israeli military strikes on Iran, Chinese analysts observed that for Europe, the damage that the Trump administration has inflicted on both NATO and the global order "far outweighs" Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, a widening transatlantic rift will not trigger any major change in Europe's policy toward China.

Following Hungary's elections held on April 12, 2026, Chinese analysts were of the view that while that country's new leader Peter Magyar has pledged to move Hungary closer to the European Union, the foundation of China-Hungary relations is strong and unlikely to undergo any disruptive changes.

Continuing the deepening trend of China-Russia strategic partnership, on April 14, 2026, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held talks in Beijing. Amidst intensifying turmoil in the international situation, FM Wang Yi noted that China-Russia relations remain "unshaken", with cooperation becoming stronger across various fields.

Following Japan's deployment of long-range missiles in Kumamoto and Shizuoka prefectures capable of "attacking enemy bases", on April 9, 2026, Beijing warned that Tokyo's reckless and dangerous push for remilitarisation is spiralling out of control. China's Ministry of National Defence cautioned that "neo-militarism" in Japan is becoming a real menace and that if an "evil tiger" is unleashed from its cage, it would inevitably wreak havoc, plunging Japanese society into disaster.

China's GDP grew by 5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2026. Reacting to this, Beijing emphasised that this demonstrates China's economic resilience and reinforces the country's role as a "stabilising force in a volatile global economy".

On April 24, 2026, Chinese AI company DeepSeek launched the preview version of its Large Language Model (LLM) V4 that is designed to run on Huawei Ascend chips. Analysts emphasised that DeepSeek-Huawei collaboration highlights

China's progress in high-technology self-reliance, in the face of the U.S.' widening export controls on semiconductor chips and chip-making equipment.

## Foreign and Security Policy

### I. China-India Relations

On April 10, 2026, China released a new list of 23 “standardised” names for places in India’s state of Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing refers to as Zangnan (South Tibet). Reacting to this, on April 12, 2026, India categorically rejected China’s “mischievous attempts” to assign fictitious names to places in Arunachal Pradesh,<sup>1</sup> adding that, “false claims and “baseless narratives” cannot alter the reality that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India.<sup>2</sup> New Delhi also cautioned that such actions by the Chinese side undermine efforts to stabilise and normalise bilateral relations between India and China.<sup>3</sup>

In response to India’s statement, on April 14, 2026, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that “Zangnan is China’s territory and that Beijing has never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally set up by India”.<sup>4</sup> However, China described the bilateral ties with India as “generally stable”, emphasising that Beijing’s policy of improving relations with New Delhi remains unchanged.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, on April 16-17, 2026, India and China's National Coordinators for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) matters met in New Delhi. The two sides exchanged views on the implementation of the SCO Leaders’ decisions and the future course of the organisation.<sup>6</sup> On April 28, 2026, India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and China’s Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun met on the margins of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers’ meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The two sides discussed the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC and broader regional security issues, including the ongoing conflict in West Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Further, on April 23, 2026, China’s Special Envoy for the Middle East affairs, Zhai Jun, called on Dr. Neena Malhotra, Secretary (South) in India’s Ministry of External Affairs. The two sides exchanged views on issues including strengthening

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<sup>1</sup> “Official Spokesperson’s response to media queries regarding China giving fictitious names to places”, [MEA India](#), April 12, 2026

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “China calls naming of places in Zangnan sovereign matter”, [China Daily](#), April 14, 2026

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “First India-China Bilateral Consultations on SCO matters”, [MEA India](#), April 17, 2026

<sup>7</sup> “Rajnath Singh meets with Chinese Defence Minister, discusses LAC peace and West Asia crisis”, [The New Indian Express](#), April 29, 2026

cooperation under the BRICS framework, the Iran conflict, and the Palestinian question.<sup>8</sup>

Reacting to the continuing high-level engagements between India and China, analysts observed that this indicates a “slow but steady reset”, one that is deliberately cautious, reversible, and bound by a certain level of “strategic mistrust”.<sup>9</sup> They cautioned that fundamental issues causing border tensions have not been resolved and that a thaw in China-India relations indicates a desire to promote mutual economic gains while managing differences.<sup>10</sup>

China surpassed the U.S. as India’s largest trade partner in the financial year 2025-26, with bilateral trade reaching USD 151.1 billion. India’s exports to China expanded by 36.66 percent to USD 19.47 billion, while its imports from China increased by 16 percent to USD 131.63 billion.<sup>11</sup> Thus, India’s trade deficit with China swelled to an all-time high of USD 112.6 billion in FY 2025-26.

As the U.S. continues to diversify its import sources away from China, India has emerged as a key supplier of smartphones, meeting about 40 percent of American demand that was earlier fulfilled by China.<sup>12</sup> There is also an increase in India's exports of electronic components to China, due to the Production Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme and the rise of companies such as Tata Electronics and Foxconn (Apple's ecosystem).<sup>13</sup>

A business delegation representing India’s startup ecosystem visited China after a five-year hiatus. In light of this, Chinese analysts noted that a pragmatic cooperation model is being shaped by Beijing and New Delhi, and that this rapprochement is an inevitable byproduct of external geopolitical crises and internal economic demands.<sup>14</sup> It was observed that, as part of a new model of

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<sup>8</sup> “China hopes BRICS consultation on Middle East affairs contributes to regional peace and stability: Chinese special envoy”, Global Times, April 24, 2026

<sup>9</sup> “India and China wall off border rows to focus on trade and security”, South China Morning Post, April 20, 2026

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> “China surpasses US as India's largest trading partner in FY26; trade gap swells to USD 112.16 bn”, The Economic Times, April 15, 2026

<sup>12</sup> “India replaces China in US smartphone supply chain, captures 40% share: Report”, The Economic Times, April 18, 2026

<sup>13</sup> “India turns the tables on China: The great supply chain flip begins”, The Economic Times, April 17, 2026

<sup>14</sup> “A pragmatic China-India co-op model is taking shape”, Global Times, April 9, 2026



pragmatic business cooperation, Indian companies are seeking technology transfer and joint ventures with Chinese companies over direct investments.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, Chinese state media reports indicated that, in January 2026, a delegation from the Shanghai International Studies University visited Delhi, Kolkata, and Bengaluru in India. In their interactions with universities, think tanks, local governments, and enterprises, the Chinese delegation noted the huge development potential of India and New Delhi's efforts to promote national integration.<sup>16</sup> However, they also noticed the Indian public's sense of insecurity about the development gap with China. In this regard, Chinese analysts urged "New India" to view China as a development partner rather than a threat.<sup>17</sup>

On April 3, 2026, China's Embassy in New Delhi informed that India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, and China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao met on the margins of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) 14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon. During this meeting, the Chinese side reiterated its commitment to deepen trade and economic engagement with India.<sup>18</sup> However, as India opposed the inclusion of the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) plurilateral agreement into the WTO framework, the Chinese analysts urged New Delhi to "adopt a pragmatic approach to IFD".<sup>19</sup> Adding that, if New Delhi supports this agreement, it would boost international investors' confidence in India and drive growth in the country's manufacturing sector.<sup>20</sup> India has opposed IFD as it believes the WTO's core focus should be on trade in goods and services, not on non-mandated, non-multilateral issues such as investment.<sup>21</sup>

Amidst the U.S.-Iran conflict in West Asia and its impact on the energy security of countries in the East, Chinese analysts urged Beijing and New Delhi to cooperate on developing alternative oil sources in Africa to secure energy supplies from countries which are less exposed to U.S. sanctions.<sup>22</sup> Energy collaboration between

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "How the evolving 'New India' faces China anew", Global Times, April 1, 2026

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "China calls for stronger trade cooperation with India after ministerial talks during WTO conference", The Economic Times, April 3, 2026

<sup>19</sup> "GT Voice: Pragmatic approach to IFD will benefit India's economy", Global Times, March 29, 2026

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> "India stood alone to oppose IFD pact at WTO meet, won't join crowd just to look better: Goyal", The Economic Times, April 2, 2026

<sup>22</sup> "India-China energy cooperation doesn't require warm relations, or lofty civilisational rhetoric", The Economic Times, April 16, 2026

China and India in relevant African countries does not require lofty civilisational rhetoric. Instead, mutual need and shared vulnerability can sustain a joint venture through difficult circumstances.<sup>23</sup> They also called upon China to be wary of the U.S.' focus on global maritime chokepoints, especially the 'Strait of Malacca', as Washington deepens its defence partnership with Indonesia.<sup>24</sup>

A waiver allowing countries to purchase sanctioned Russian oil was renewed by the U.S. on April 18, 2026, in order to ease pressure on global oil prices, which have risen above USD 100 per barrel. Consequently, China and India scrambled to secure as much Russian oil as possible.<sup>25</sup>

Among other developments, reports indicated that India and China continue to invest heavily in clean energy, especially in creating a "green hydrogen" market.<sup>26</sup>

## II. China-South Asia Relations

The 15<sup>th</sup> Expert Group Meeting on China-Bhutan Boundary Issue was held in Beijing from March 30-April 1, 2026. Following the meeting, in a joint statement, the two sides informed that they had held frank and constructive discussions on the ways to make further progress on the implementation of the Three-Step Roadmap.<sup>27</sup> On the margins of the expert group meeting, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Joint Technical Team on Delimitation and Demarcation of China-Bhutan Boundary held discussions on boundary alignment in areas where there are no disputes.<sup>28</sup>

During his meeting with Nepal's Home Minister, Sudan Gurung, China's Ambassador Zhang Maoming urged Kathmandu not to allow Tibetan and Taiwanese activists to use Nepali soil for anti-China activities. China reportedly noticed Taiwan-related activity at a cultural event in Kathmandu in March 2026.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Beijing cautioned Nepal's government against participating at any

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> "Undeniable reality': why China should be wary of US focus on global maritime chokepoints", South China Morning Post, April 24, 2026

<sup>25</sup> "How the Iran war has stoked competition between India and China for Russian oil", CNBC, April 23, 2026

<sup>26</sup> "China, India place strategic bets on clean energy out of favour in the West", The Economic Times, April 22, 2026

<sup>27</sup> "Joint Press Release of the 15th Expert Group Meeting on China-Bhutan Boundary Issues", MFA PRC, April 1, 2026

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> "China presses Nepal to keep distance from Tibetan and Taiwanese activities", The Kathmandu Post, April 14, 2026

official level in the swearing-in ceremony of Penpa Tsering as President of the Central Tibetan Administration in exile in Dharamshala, India.<sup>30</sup>

On April 21, 2026, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng met in Beijing a delegation led by the Secretary-General of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir. Vice President Han congratulated Bangladesh on its successful parliamentary elections and reaffirmed China's intent to strengthen traditional friendship, mutual trust, and pledged to advance a comprehensive strategic partnership as part of the Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>31</sup> In his remarks, Mr. Alamgir described China as a trusted friend and partner of Bangladesh and reiterated Dhaka's commitment to the one-China principle.<sup>32</sup>

### III. China-United States Relations

On April 2, 2026, after one year since President Trump announced Liberation Day tariffs, the White House announced that the U.S.' goods trade deficit with China had decreased by 32 percent over the past year, and by 46 percent from April 2025 to January 2026.<sup>33</sup> The U.S. no longer has its largest trade deficit with China for the first time since 2000.<sup>34</sup> Major issues discussed in the statement included "America throwing away the illusion of free trade", securing "America First" trade deals, and driving a resurgence in American manufacturing.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer pledged to expand trade investigations to counter China's "unfair trade practices" and requested more funds from Washington for the same.<sup>36</sup>

On April 30, 2026, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio held a phone conversation. In his remarks, FM Wang Yi cautioned the U.S. that the Taiwan question is fundamental to China's interests, and that it poses the "biggest risk to China-U.S. relations".<sup>37</sup> He urged Beijing and Washington to safeguard the hard-won stability in bilateral relations and prepare

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "China has long been a trusted friend of Bangladesh," says secretary-general of Bangladesh Nationalist Party", Global Times, April 21, 2026

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "America is Winning Once Again a Year After Liberation Day", The White House, April 2, 2026

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> "US' Greer pushes for funds to escalate Trump's trade war with China", South China Morning Post, April 17, 2026

<sup>37</sup> "Taiwan question constitutes biggest risk in China-U.S. relations: Chinese FM", Xinhua, May 1, 2026

for the meeting between President Xi and President Trump.<sup>38</sup> Secretary Rubio, on his part, stressed the importance of properly handling differences and seeking strategic stability in U.S.-China relations.<sup>39</sup>

Ahead of President Trump's visit to China, a delegation led by U.S. Republican Senator Steve Daines is reportedly scheduled to visit Shanghai and Beijing beginning May 1, 2026.<sup>40</sup> The U.S. delegation's objective is to understand China's innovation ecosystem and infrastructure, such as the Shanghai-Beijing High-Speed Rail (HSR).<sup>41</sup> President Trump emphasised that he expects his meeting with President Xi to be both "special and historic" and an opportunity to accomplish much for the two countries as a whole.<sup>42</sup>

Chinese analysts stated that the Xi-Trump Summit in Beijing had the potential to foster "medium-term stability" in China-U.S. relations, extending beyond the U.S. midterm elections in November 2026 and aiming to sustain this stability until the end of Trump's tenure in January 2029.<sup>43</sup> However, reports indicated that several global uncertainties are shaping the U.S.-China Summit, which may result in Beijing talks becoming more about optics than substance as expectations shrink and planning falters.<sup>44</sup>

A section of Chinese observers noted the Trump administration's transactional and often erratic approach in its foreign policy and urged Beijing to pursue cautious engagement with the U.S. They compared President Trump's diplomacy with "drunken boxing" (traditional Chinese martial arts), which is unpredictable and elusive.<sup>45</sup> The Xi-Trump Summit will showcase two divergent visions of global order, where the Chinese side advocates building a "community with a shared future", while the U.S. is driven by the unpredictable impulses of rivalry and division.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "Trump ally Steve Daines to visit China as US turns up pressure before May summit", South China Morning Post, April 24, 2026

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> "Donald Trump predicts meeting with Xi Jinping will be 'special' ahead of China visit", South China Morning Post, April 18, 2026

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> "Trump-Xi summit shaped by uncertainty, not strategy: experts", South China Morning Post, April 15, 2026

<sup>45</sup> "How can Beijing prepare for Trump's 'drunken boxing' style before he meets Xi in China?", South China Morning Post, April 9, 2026

<sup>46</sup> "Can a 'community with a shared future' prevail over zero-sum rivalry?", South China Morning Post, April 10, 2026

The U.S. continues to push for tighter export controls on exports of semiconductor chip-making equipment to China. U.S. lawmakers have proposed a bill – ‘Multilateral Alignment of Technology Controls in Hardware (Match) Act’, which aims to pressure allies, such as Japan and the Netherlands, to align with the U.S. on export controls.<sup>47</sup> To counter China’s growing influence in the AI industry, Washington has unveiled an AI export initiative in which U.S. companies are asked to form preset consortiums to offer full-stack AI solutions around the world.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the U.S. accused the Chinese government of engaging in “industrial scale” theft of American frontier AI systems. Reacting to this, the Chinese Embassy in Washington opposed “the baseless allegations” of the U.S., asserting that China “attaches great importance to the protection of intellectual property rights”.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. may also possibly ban all Chinese labs from testing electronic devices used in America. In light of this, China cautioned that Washington was overstretching the concept of national security and hampering the normal economic and trade exchanges between Chinese and U.S. companies.<sup>50</sup>

Amidst the continuing Western accusations of industrial overcapacity against China, Beijing reiterated that the “China shock 2.0 is a false narrative, demonstrating Western anxiety”. Adding that, China’s success stems from the strength of the country’s system and its vision of modernisation and national rejuvenation.<sup>51</sup>

Reports indicated that President Trump is seeking U.S. Congressional approval for USD 1.5 trillion in defence spending in his new budget proposal for FY 2027. This would mark a historic 44 percent increase in the U.S. defence budget aimed at maintaining America’s status as the world’s most powerful military.<sup>52</sup> Reacting to this, analysts noted that the Pentagon was using China's military threat in the Indo-Pacific and space competition as a pretext to convince the U.S. Congress to bolster

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<sup>47</sup> “Washington pushes allies to match tougher China chip curbs under new bill”, South China Morning Post, April 8, 2026

<sup>48</sup> “Washington launches export initiative to ensure ‘future of AI is led by the United States’”, South China Morning Post, April 3, 2026

<sup>49</sup> “White House accuses China of 'industrial scale' theft of AI technology: Report”, The Economic Times, April 23, 2026

<sup>50</sup> “China opposes possible U.S. ban on electronics testing by Chinese labs”, People’s Daily, April 9, 2026

<sup>51</sup> “‘China shock 2.0’ is a false narrative born of Western anxiety: Chinese media”, South China Morning Post, April 2, 2026

<sup>52</sup> “Trump seeks US\$1.5 trillion for defence in new budget request amid Iran war”, South China Morning Post, April 4, 2026

the country's military capabilities.<sup>53</sup>

U.S.-Israeli military strikes on Iran demonstrated the lethality of their air power, which targeted Iran's Supreme Leader as well as senior military officers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). However, even as the U.S. and Israel targeted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, their goal of "regime change" in Iran remains elusive. According to analysts, the Iran conflict has a lesson for the PLA regarding Taiwan, that air power alone cannot achieve a decisive military victory if the adversary is determined and has national resilience to absorb the blows.<sup>54</sup>

Meanwhile, Cheng Li-wun, the Chairperson of Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT) party, visited mainland China from April 7-12, 2026. During this visit, on April 10, 2026, President Xi held a meeting with Cheng Li-wun, wherein the two leaders called for joint efforts between the CPC and KMT to promote cross-strait peace and oppose "Taiwan independence". Xi reiterated that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the Chinese nation and that the CPC and KMT must ensure that they improve cross-strait relations and work together for improving lives of the people.<sup>55</sup> KMT Leader Cheng Li-wun, on her part, emphasised the importance of the KMT and the CPC adhering to the 1992 Consensus and opposing "Taiwan independence", while strengthening political trust, preserving Chinese history and culture, and expanding exchanges.<sup>56</sup> However, it is to be noted that Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) does not acknowledge the 1992 consensus.<sup>57</sup>

Reacting to the KMT Chairperson's Beijing visit, an editorial by the *Global Times* asserted that "this visit echoes the mainstream public opinion in Taiwan that the two sides of the Straits are one family".<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, analysts believe Xi is pursuing dialogue with the KMT, as the PLA remains in turmoil owing to frequent

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<sup>53</sup> "China threat used to convince Congress of need to bolster US military capabilities", South China Morning Post, April 16, 2026

<sup>54</sup> "How lessons from Iran war could shape mainland China's calculus on Taiwan", South China Morning Post, April 7, 2026

<sup>55</sup> "Xi meets KMT leader, urges joint efforts to promote cross-strait peace, oppose "Taiwan independence" secession", People's Daily, April 11, 2026

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> "Grounded: Taiwan President Lai Ching-te has nowhere to fly", Think China, April 23, 2026

<sup>58</sup> "Cheng Li-wun's visit echoes the demands of mainstream public opinion in Taiwan: Global Times editorial", Global Times, April 7, 2026

purges in its senior hierarchy, making it difficult for China to capture Taiwan through a military invasion.<sup>59</sup>

The U.S. completed the "Artemis II" mission on April 10, 2026, during which four astronauts performed the first "crewed lunar flyby", humanity's first such mission around the Moon in more than 50 years.<sup>60</sup> In light of this, analysts stressed that NASA's Artemis programme advances the U.S.' plans to land astronauts on the Moon by early 2028, while adding pressure on China to stay on course or move faster in its ambition to land astronauts on the Moon by 2030.<sup>61</sup>

On April 23, 2026, President Trump shared an article from a conservative activist on his Truth Social handle, criticising "Birthright Citizenship". In this post, concerns were expressed about the babies of foreigners getting instant U.S. citizenship and then bringing their entire families from China, India, or some other third-world countries.<sup>62</sup> Further, it was observed that the immigrant class coming to the U.S. today lacks loyalty to America.<sup>63</sup> Reacting to this, analysts noted that the Trump administration sees China as benefiting from the "birth tourism industry"; however, the U.S. Supreme Court remains sceptical of this argument.<sup>64</sup>

Among other developments, U.S. Congresswoman Maria Elvira Salazar, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, stressed that the U.S. would help Peru "take back" Chancay Port from China. She claimed that the Chancay Port's dual-use potential could pose a military threat to the U.S.<sup>65</sup>

#### IV. China-European Union Relations

April 12, 2026, marked a major political transition in Hungary when Victor Orban's Fidesz Party was defeated in the parliamentary election by the Tisza Party led by Peter Magyar. This ended Prime Minister Orban's 16-year reign in Budapest.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> "Analysis: Military purges prompted Xi Jinping to meet Taiwan KMT leader", Nikkei Asia, April 16, 2026

<sup>60</sup> "After Artemis II, the real lunar race is just getting started", The Interpreter Lowy Institute, April 13, 2026

<sup>61</sup> "Race to the Moon: Power, politics and the new space order", The Economic Times, April 17, 2026

<sup>62</sup> Donald J. Trump, Official Truth Social Handle, April 23, 2026

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> "China targeted in US birthright citizenship debate, but Supreme Court justices sceptical", South China Morning Post, April 2, 2026

<sup>65</sup> "US will help Peru 'take back' Chancay port from China, Congress chair says", South China Morning Post, April 17, 2026

<sup>66</sup> "Why Beijing isn't panicking over Hungarian PM Viktor Orban's stunning election defeat", South China Morning Post, April 13, 2026

Analysts from China noted that the newly elected PM of Hungary, Peter Magyar, has pledged to move Budapest closer to the European Union, which is critical of Russia and China. However, it was observed that Magyar's closer alignment with the EU does not mean that his government would reject investment from China.<sup>67</sup> The foundation of China-Hungary relations is strong, and it will not undergo any disruptive changes.<sup>68</sup>

On April 14, 2026, President Xi met Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez in Beijing, his fourth such visit in four years. President Xi urged Beijing and Madrid to strengthen communication, consolidate mutual trust, reject backsliding into the law of the jungle, uphold multilateralism, safeguard the UN-centred international system, promote an equal and orderly multipolar world, and inclusive economic globalisation.<sup>69</sup> He also called upon the two countries to deepen cooperation in areas such as trade, new energy, and the smart economy.<sup>70</sup> PM Sánchez reiterated Madrid's intent to continue the deepening trend of China-Spain strategic partnership.<sup>71</sup> According to Chinese state media, Spain is a "rational voice within the EU" which is combining strategic autonomy with pragmatic cooperation to dispel the shadow of geopolitical rivalry and bring greater certainty to China-Europe relations.<sup>72</sup>

Besides the Spanish PM, the President of Vietnam, To Lam, and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited China in April 2026.<sup>73</sup> In light of this, Chinese analysts noted that from Europe to the Middle East to Southeast Asia, the international community expects China to play a responsible and constructive role in global affairs.<sup>74</sup>

Amidst the European countries' refusal to participate in U.S.-Israeli military strikes on Iran, President Trump derided NATO as a "paper tiger" and threatened to withdraw the U.S. from the transatlantic security alliance. Trump has also expressed his displeasure with NATO over the Greenland issue.<sup>75</sup> Chinese analysts

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> "President Xi Jinping Meets with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez", MFA PRC, April 14, 2026

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> "Where is the world heading? China answers with the 'four perspectives': Global Times editorial", Global Times, April 15, 2026

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> "Paper tiger: what's behind Donald Trump's renewed Greenland threat?", South China Morning Post, April 7, 2026



believe that, for Europe, the damage that the Trump administration has inflicted on both NATO and the global order “far outweighs” Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. However, a widening transatlantic rift will not trigger any major change in Europe's policy toward China.<sup>76</sup>

As part of the EU’s proposed cybersecurity regulations, the European Commission plans to compel member-states to remove companies identified as posing a “high security risk” from their 5G networks. Reacting to this, China’s Ministry of Commerce warned Brussels that if companies such as Huawei and ZTE were targeted under these cybersecurity regulations, Beijing would hit EU companies with reciprocal measures.<sup>77</sup>

China also opposed the EU’s imposition of sanctions targeting Chinese companies as part of Europe’s 20<sup>th</sup> sanctions package against Russia.<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, as the EU's anti-subsidy investigation found billions in Chinese government subsidies backing CRRC's bid for the Lisbon metro, the Chinese railway manufacturer CRRC pulled out of the project.<sup>79</sup>

The US-Israeli military strikes on Iran and the subsequent spike in oil prices has led to China increasing its electric vehicles (EVs) market share in Europe. Reports indicated that in the first two months of 2026, Chinese-made EVs accounted for 16 percent of the EU market, up from 12.2 percent in 2025.<sup>80</sup>

Among other developments, the U.S. and the EU signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a partnership on securing critical minerals. Analysts noted that Western allies are becoming aware of the need for coordination in order to loosen China's grip on critical minerals such as rare-earth materials.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> “China threatens EU firms over cybersecurity plans targeting Chinese companies”, South China Morning Post, April 20, 2026

<sup>78</sup> “Beijing lashes out at EU after Chinese firms included in latest Russia sanctions”, South China Morning Post, April 26, 2026

<sup>79</sup> “China’s CRRC drops bid for Lisbon metro deal as EU finds ‘billions’ in subsidies probe”, South China Morning Post, April 21, 2026

<sup>80</sup> “Jump in EU EV sales amid Iran war boosts Chinese brands’ fortunes”, South China Morning Post, April 21, 2026

<sup>81</sup> “US and EU sign critical minerals plan in push to loosen China’s grip on key materials”, South China Morning Post, April 25, 2026

## V. China-Russia Relations

Continuing the deepening trend of China-Russia strategic partnership, on April 14, 2026, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held talks in Beijing.<sup>82</sup> In his remarks, FM Wang Yi noted an intensified turmoil in the current international situation, resulting from the unilateral hegemony of certain countries.<sup>83</sup> He added that, in the face of a volatile external environment, China-Russia relations remain “unshaken”, with cooperation becoming stronger.<sup>84</sup> Major issues touched upon by him included “coordinating and echoing each other's views” on the international stage, especially in multilateral frameworks such as the UN, SCO, and BRICS, promoting the interests of the “Global South”.<sup>85</sup> FM Lavrov, on his part, reiterated that Moscow and Beijing enjoy a high degree of mutual trust and that China and Russia must further deepen their relations to maintain the stability of the international system.<sup>86</sup>

Amidst widening strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, a Russian naval flotilla from its Pacific fleet visited a military port in South China's Zhanjiang in mid-April 2026. Analysts noted that the Russian Navy's presence in the SCS sends the U.S. and its allies in Asia-Pacific a strategic signal that China and Russia are enhancing the interoperability of their forces without formal alliance commitments. Adding that, this would reinforce China's deterrence posture in the region.<sup>87</sup>

On April 7, 2026, China and Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council Resolution presented by Bahrain, calling upon states to coordinate efforts to protect commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>88</sup> In vetoing the UNSC resolution, China and Russia demonstrated that they view the draft resolution as biased against their strategic partner Iran, and this came at a time when President Trump threatened the destruction of Iranian civilisation.

Despite the U.S.' blockade, sanctions, and coercion of Cuba, China and Russia pledged to support Havana diplomatically. The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergei Ryabkov, stated during his visit to Cuba in April 2026 that Washington is

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<sup>82</sup> “Wang Yi Holds Talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov”, MFA PRC, April 14, 2026

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> “Russian naval flotilla visits South China's Zhanjiang, showcasing routine exchanges and strategic trust: Chinese experts”, Global Times, April 15, 2026

<sup>88</sup> “China and Russia veto UN resolution on protecting Hormuz shipping”, Reuters, April 7, 2026

obsessed with pushing Russia and China out of the Western hemisphere, but the two countries have no intention of leaving the region.<sup>89</sup>

## Internal Developments

### Key Developments and Addresses by Chinese Leaders

On April 8, 2026, President Xi addressed a training session for high-ranking military officials at the National Defence University in Beijing. In his remarks, Xi called for intensified efforts to deepen political rectification within the PLA, ensuring the military's absolute loyalty to the CPC. Major issues discussed by him included the need for the Party and the PLA to have firm faith in Marxism, combating corruption, and advancing military modernisation as the PLA advances towards its centenary in 2027.<sup>90</sup>

The high-speed railway (HSR) network in China is considered one of the most notable symbols of the country's modernisation. Chinese state media shed light on the experiences of foreign leaders travelling on the "Fuxing" bullet train. It was observed that foreign leaders, while travelling on the bullet train, are noticing the "key code" behind China's high-quality development, which is facilitating the efficient flow of talent, capital and technology. The bullet train demonstrates China's institutional strength, industrial capacity, and strategic planning.<sup>91</sup>

On April 9, 2026, at an event on Artificial Intelligence, China's Permanent Representative to the UN, Li Song, reiterated Beijing's support for the United Nations as the central international organisation for global AI governance. He shed light on China's Global AI Governance Initiative that prioritises both development and security, advocates a people-centred approach, and promotes values of equality, mutual benefit, and respect for the interests of humanity.<sup>92</sup>

Pan Gongsheng, the Governor of the People's Bank of China, at a meeting of the IMF's Monetary and Financial Committee, called for "quota reforms" and better

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<sup>89</sup> "China, Russia rally behind Cuba as US squeezes Havana in deepening crisis", South China Morning Post, April 11, 2026

<sup>90</sup> "Xi stresses deepening political rectification at training session for military officials", People's Daily, April 9, 2026

<sup>91</sup> "What do foreign leaders experience when riding China's high-speed rail?: Global Times editorial", Global Times, April 18, 2026

<sup>92</sup> "China supports UN as main channel for global AI governance: Chinese envoy", People's Daily, April 13, 2026

surveillance of the advanced economies. Amidst the Middle East conflict and its impact on food and energy security, he urged the IMF to take a stand against “rising unilateralism”, “protectionism”, and “defend multilateralism”.<sup>93</sup>

African countries reportedly praised China's zero-tariff policy for imports from Africa at the 14th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, emphasising that this policy would advance the industrialisation of the continent. Chinese analysts noted that, at a time when certain countries are raising tariffs and building barriers to free trade, Beijing is lowering them. Adding that, this is a strong response to the tide of protectionism.<sup>94</sup>

## Trade and Economy

On April 16, 2026, China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) released the country's economic data for the first quarter of the year. Amidst the geopolitical conflicts that have sent international energy prices soaring, China's GDP grew by 5 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2026.<sup>95</sup> Beijing emphasised that this demonstrates China's economic resilience and reinforces the country's role as a “stabilising force in a volatile global economy”.<sup>96</sup> An editorial by *Global Times* highlighted three bright spots in China's economy, namely consumption, industrial profits, and a surge in foreign trade.<sup>97</sup> It was argued that the consumption of services is becoming a key engine of expanding domestic demand, industrial profits are expanding because of the growth of high-technology manufacturing sectors, and foreign trade continues to surge, demonstrating the quality of Chinese products.<sup>98</sup>

The CPC Political Bureau, at its meeting held on April 28, 2026, noted the economic resilience demonstrated by the country's economy in the first quarter of 2026. However, it cautioned that the Chinese economy still faces difficulties and challenges and called for greater efforts to bolster economic work.<sup>99</sup> Major issues

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<sup>93</sup> “China presses IMF for quota reform, better surveillance of advanced economies”, South China Morning Post, April 20, 2026

<sup>94</sup> “China's zero-tariff policy for Africa: a development opportunity that concerns the West”, People's Daily, April 13, 2026

<sup>95</sup> “Xinhua Headlines: China secures solid Q1 growth, offering stability amid rising global volatility”, Xinhua, April 16, 2026

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> China Focus: Xi chairs CPC leadership meeting on economic situation and work, Xinhua, April 28, 2026

discussed in the meeting included achieving self-reliance in Science and Technology, expanding domestic demand, and ensuring that the manufacturing sector maintains a reasonable share in the country's economy.<sup>100</sup>

In the first quarter of 2026, China's foreign trade surged by 15 percent year-on-year to CNY 11.84 trillion (about USD 1.73 trillion), reportedly marking the fastest quarterly growth in five years.<sup>101</sup> The country's exports grew by 11.9 percent to CNY 6.85 trillion (about USD 1 trillion), while imports surged by 19.6 percent to CNY 4.99 trillion (about USD 730 billion).<sup>102</sup>

It is to be noted that, amidst the trade war with the U.S., China's market diversification strategy has gained momentum with growth in trade with countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>103</sup> China's trade with ASEAN, Latin America, Africa, and the EU registered a double-digit growth.<sup>104</sup> However, as global geopolitical tensions and protectionism rise, the CPC's Qiushi Journal reiterated Beijing's intent to rebalance trade from the current "unsustainable" export-driven growth model.<sup>105</sup>

On April 8, 2026, in his message conveyed at a National Conference on the Service Sector held in Beijing, President Xi reiterated the need to view the service sector from a strategic perspective and promote its high-quality and efficient development.<sup>106</sup>

On the energy front, a report by Caixin Global stated that China's investment in domestic nuclear power infrastructure hit a high of CNY 161 billion (USD 23.6 billion) in 2025, up 10 percent from the previous year.<sup>107</sup> This highlights China's accelerated efforts to expand its nuclear energy capacity to meet national climate goals and bolster energy security.<sup>108</sup> Meanwhile, China is also deepening its energy cooperation with Turkmenistan, as President Xi's special representative Ding

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> "China's Q1 foreign trade data consolidate "stabiliser" role in global economy", People's Daily, April 15, 2026

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> "Qiushi reaffirms China's trade-rebalance push, calls old export-led growth 'unsustainable'", South China Morning Post, April 1, 2026

<sup>106</sup> "Xi urges breaking new ground in high-quality development of service sector", People's Daily, April 8, 2026

<sup>107</sup> "China's Nuclear Power Investment Hits Record in 2025", Caixin Global, April 17, 2026

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Xuexiang attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the fourth phase of the Galkynysh gas field.<sup>109</sup>

## Defence and Security

Following Japan's deployment of long-range missiles in Kumamoto and Shizuoka prefectures capable of "attacking enemy bases", on April 9, 2026, Beijing warned that Tokyo's reckless and dangerous push for remilitarisation is spiralling out of control.<sup>110</sup> China's Ministry of National Defence cautioned that "neo-militarism" in Japan is becoming a real menace and that if an "evil tiger" is unleashed from its cage, it would inevitably wreak havoc, plunging the Japanese society into disaster.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, as a Japanese destroyer transited through the Taiwan Strait on April 17, 2026, a Xinhua report warned that this undermines the political foundation of China-Japan relations and poses a direct threat to China's sovereignty.<sup>112</sup> Reacting to these developments, an editorial in the *People's Daily* warned that if Japan continues to meddle in the Taiwan question, it will inevitably face resolute and forceful countermeasures from China.<sup>113</sup>

On April 30, 2026, China's Foreign Ministry released a working paper on Japan's pursuit of nuclear weapons. In this paper, China urged Japan to abide by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, which include not possessing, not producing, and not allowing the introduction of nuclear weapons on Japan's territory.<sup>114</sup> Beijing urged the IAEA to strengthen its safeguards and verification mechanisms regarding Japan to ensure that any non-peaceful nuclear activities are detected promptly.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, reports shed light on satellite imagery indicating that China is pursuing a significant nuclear weapon modernisation campaign.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> "New gas field project to further boost China-Turkmenistan energy cooperation: Chinese vice premier", *People's Daily*, April 18, 2026

<sup>110</sup> "Regular Press Briefing of the Ministry of National Defence on April 9, 2026", *MND PRC*, April 14, 2026

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> "Japan's neo-militarism becoming clear and present danger", *People's Daily*, April 20, 2026

<sup>113</sup> "Any provocation seeking to meddle in Taiwan question will come at a cost", *People's Daily*, April 9, 2026

<sup>114</sup> "China issues working paper on Japan's nuclear ambitions", *CGTN*, April 30, 2026

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> "As arms agreements fray, China secretly expands its nuclear weapons infrastructure", *CNN*, April 2, 2026

The U.S.-Philippines joint military exercise 'Balikatan' commenced on April 20, 2026 and will conclude on May 8, 2026. Amidst the widening U.S.-China strategic competition, analysts noted that despite the Balikatan drills' growing scale and multinational reach, countries from Southeast Asia are hesitant to join it.<sup>117</sup> While the Balikatan exercise underscores the U.S.' commitment to the region, ASEAN countries do not wish to be drawn into the strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China.<sup>118</sup> Meanwhile, even as China and the Philippines held a new round of diplomatic consultations on the South China Sea in late March 2026, Chinese analysts remain sceptical about Manila's strategic intent and its continuing provocations in the SCS.<sup>119</sup>

China's third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, which is equipped with an electromagnetic aircraft launch system, is expected to achieve full operational capability in 2026. Once the aircraft carrier completes the far-sea training in the Western Pacific Ocean, it can be considered fully ready for combat missions.<sup>120</sup>

## Technology

On April 17, 2026, China's National Space Administration (CNSA) shed light on its key missions for this year. CNSA's major missions include Tianwen-2's close approach and observation of its target asteroid, crewed missions to China's Space Station, and promoting the high-quality growth of the commercial space sector.<sup>121</sup> Beijing informed that the preparations for China's crewed lunar exploration programme are progressing steadily. Other major issues discussed included the large-scale application of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System across key industries and the development of China's satellite internet system.<sup>122</sup>

On April 24, 2026, Chinese AI company DeepSeek launched the preview version of its Large Language Model (LLM) 'V4' that is designed to run on Huawei Ascend chips. A report by the South China Morning Post emphasised that the DeepSeek-Huawei collaboration highlights China's progress in high-technology self-reliance,

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<sup>117</sup> "Why Southeast Asian nations are hesitant to join major US-Philippine Balikatan drills", South China Morning Post, April 15, 2026

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> "Improving China-Philippines ties requires more than Manila's verbal gestures: Global Times editorial", People's Daily, March 31, 2026

<sup>120</sup> "China's aircraft carrier Fujian to achieve full combat capability in 2026, set for far-sea drills: official media", Global Times, April 12, 2026

<sup>121</sup> "China to carry out intensive space missions in 2026: CNSA", People's Daily, April 18, 2026

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

in the face of the U.S.'s widening export controls on semiconductor chips and chip-making equipment.<sup>123</sup>

As part of China's accelerated efforts to develop the country's "low altitude economy", EV maker Xpeng is expected to start large-scale production of "flying" cars in 2027.<sup>124</sup> Meanwhile, China's robotics industry continues to advance. On April 19, 2026, Honor's humanoid robot won a gold medal in a humanoid half-marathon held in Beijing, defeating robots of companies such as Unitree.<sup>125</sup>

Citing national security concerns, China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has blocked Meta's acquisition of AI-startup Manus. This illustrates the nature of high-technology strategic competition, in which Beijing is willing to use antitrust reviews to protect Chinese technology in response to U.S. sanctions and investment restrictions.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> "Huawei, DeepSeek strengthen China's AI self-reliance with collaboration on V4 model", South China Morning Post, April 24, 2026

<sup>124</sup> "China's Xpeng expects to start full-scale delivery of 'flying' cars in 2027", Reuters, April 24, 2026

<sup>125</sup> "Chinese tech giants advance robotics push as sector sees rapid growth", South China Morning Post, April 20, 2026

<sup>126</sup> "Is China's Manus block a warning for other AI firms with global ambitions?", South China Morning Post, April 30, 2026





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