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Foreign trade growth buoys intl outlook

Innovation drive, resilience to bolster global demand and supply chains

By ZHONG NAN and ZHANG CHENXU

China's foreign trade is expected to maintain steady growth momentum in the second half of 2026, supported by a strong innovation drive and resilient market players, further reinforcing the country's role as a source of global demand and a stabilizer of international supply chains, government officials and economists said on Tuesday.

Data released by the General Administration of Customs showed that China's trade in goods expanded 16.9 percent year-on-year to 25.47 trillion yuan (\$3.76 trillion) in the first half, with imports growing faster than exports. Exports rose 13.4 percent, while imports climbed 22.1 percent, exceeding export growth by 8.7 percentage points.

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Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Wang Jun, the administration's vice-minister, acknowledged that China's foreign trade will face certain headwinds in the second half, but said innovative products and continued opening-up will remain key pillars supporting its solid fundamentals.

"Stronger import growth, together with robust exports of higher-value manufactured goods, reflects a healthier and more balanced trade structure," he said, adding that the trend shows that China is contributing to global growth not only through its manufacturing strength, but also through its expanding domestic market, helping stabilize global industrial and supply chains. Alongside notable export growth in tech-intensive green products such as energy storage systems and electric trucks, China's trade in hardware that supports computing power, including electronic components and computer parts, surged 56.6 percent year-on-year to 5.13 trillion yuan in the first half.

China's artificial intelligence-powered smart glasses, translation



Shipping containers are unloaded on Tuesday at a terminal of Lianyungang Port in East China's Jiangsu province. WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

devices and robotic exoskeletons are among a growing range of intelligent products undergoing rapid innovation, Wang added.

Yan Min, a researcher at the department of economic forecasting of the State Information Center in Beijing, said that China's resilient foreign trade remains a key engine of economic growth, providing greater certainty for domestic activity while supporting global demand through imports and industrial production through competitive exports.

Rather than serving only as a manufacturing hub, China is increasingly contributing to global growth by

expanding imports, fostering innovation and strengthening industrial cooperation across international supply chains, Yan said.

Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank, said that China's exports are likely to remain resilient in the second half, supported by the ongoing AI investment cycle, the United States' relatively moderate tariff policy, and a range of supportive measures aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Chinese manufacturers.

However, Wen cautioned that risks remain, including potential disruptions to energy supply chains in the Gulf region and renewed trade

friction between China and the European Union.

Sheana Yue, senior economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said that China's competitive advantages can help offset external headwinds.

Although tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz are expected to weigh on global demand, she said that China is well positioned to fill supply gaps in affected supply chains and benefit from robust demand for products in which it has a competitive advantage, including electric vehicles, solar panels and lithium batteries.

Amid the Middle East tensions that disrupted global chemical sup-

plies in the first half, China's integrated industrial base helped fill supply gaps. Its exports of basic organic chemicals and primary plastics rose, supporting global manufacturing activity and supply chain stability, according to the GAC.

Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's department of statistics and analysis, said China's continued opening-up, expanding domestic market and innovation-driven growth are also creating new opportunities for foreign-invested companies, strengthening China's contribution to global demand and supply chain stability.

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UN official lauds land restoration progress

By HOU LIQIANG

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China's experience demonstrates that land restoration can progress alongside economic development, highlighting a viable pathway for global efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and drought, said a senior United Nations official.



Yasmine Fouad

Yasmine Fouad, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, told China Daily that, despite this promising example, a persistent

financing gap remains one of the biggest obstacles to fighting desertification, land degradation and drought worldwide.

She said that addressing these issues requires about \$355 billion annually, but the current investment falls significantly short, leaving many proven solutions underfunded despite their strong economic, social and environmental returns.

Fouad emphasized that China's progress is significant because it integrates restoration into a broader strategy for rural development, poverty alleviation, ecological protection and long-term resilience, rather than treating it as a stand-alone environmental objective.

China's experience offers important lessons, because it demonstrates that ecological restoration and economic development can reinforce each other when restoration is integrated into long-term national development strategies, she said.

In 2021, China declared "complete victory" in its fight against absolute poverty. Fouad said that the nation is still making progress in land restoration.

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SHENZHEN UPGRADES CYCLING CREDENTIALS

Riders make a beeline to southern tech hub to explore its meticulously designed bike lanes and lush greenways

By XING WEN

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For Chen Liang, a 26-year-old resident of Shenzhen, Guangdong province, a typical weekday morning usually begins with a solo bike ride in the Phoenix Mountain Forest Park. There, he finds himself riding through countless warm beams of light cast by the morning sun peeking through the dense canopy of towering trees along the trail.

"Pushing my pedals up the greenway, wrapped in that gentle light, is when I feel most at ease all day," he said.

The park marks the start of the 200-kilometer Kunpeng Trail, which links more than 10 of the city's major peaks, 17 nature parks, eight large reservoirs, over a dozen historical and cultural sites and nine key urban development areas. Along the way, riders and hikers can enjoy a rich variety of scenery, ranging from mountain ridges and forests to lakes, streams and urban landscapes.

The Kunpeng Trail forms part of the

Shenzhen Mountain-Sea Vistas greenway network, an urban ecological initiative launched in 2020 that also saw the creation of a coastal cycling route stretching across the city from east to west, linking parks, fishing harbors, docks and ancient villages.

Chen's favorite place to ride at dusk is the coastal greenway in the Qianhai area. From there, he can enjoy the sunset vista over the sea, the glittering office towers piercing the sky and a cross-sea bridge stretching into the distance, as well as the Bay Glory Ferris Wheel rotating slowly against the fading light.

"The greenway really brings nature and the city together," said Chen. "With the sea on one side and skyscrapers on the other, riding here offers the perfect combination: the pure joy of exercise and a real sense of the city's energy."

For years, Shenzhen's cycling environment lagged behind those of other first-tier cities in China. Its urban fabric, built around expressways and overpasses, largely neglected nonmotorized traffic, leaving cyclists with fragmented routes and dead ends.



Bicyclists pedal through the Crescent Valley of Shenzhen Bay Park, enjoying a fantastic view of the skyline in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Cycling infrastructure was an afterthought. Most bike lanes were painted onto existing roads, with little physical separation from cars or pedestrians.

In recent years, however, the city has been playing catch-up by retrofitting continuous bike lanes, building greenways, and introducing buses with bike racks. Consequently, more locals and visitors are now exploring Shenzhen by bike.

Chen, the manager of a bike rental and repair station near Shenzhen Bay, noted that, since the station opened in April, over 60 percent of out-of-town renters have come from the Pearl River Delta region, with about 30 percent of visitors hailing from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, and foreign tourists accounting for a further 10 percent.

Pan Yong, president of Shenzhen's cycling association, credited the shift to three factors: expanding greenways and bike lanes, a thriving local bike industry and weather conducive to recreational riding for most of the year.

The transformation extends beyond infrastructure. The ecology has also been restored along the greenways. Take the Dashahe River ecological corridor, which forms a core section of the sixth segment of the Kunpeng Trail, as an example. The river cuts through the city's Nanshan district and was once notorious for carrying industrial sewage and household wastewater. Today, however, its clear waters attract wild ducks and egrets, while residents enjoy cycling and jogging along the riverside path.

Media join forces to shape shared narrative

By YANG FEIYUE, YANG WANLI and LI YINGQING in Kunming

Dinh Thuy Dung, a bilingual Vietnamese broadcaster, owes her career to the influence of Chinese culture. The young woman, who hails from a small Vietnamese village, said she learned Chinese because of a pop song.

"It was the first time I felt the charm of the Chinese language, and it sparked my desire to learn Chinese," she said on Tuesday while addressing the audience at the South and Southeast Asian Media Network Annual Meeting 2026 in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province.

"After choosing to learn Chinese, I was able to participate in exchange programs and travel. ... I

became a Vietnamese-Chinese bilingual broadcaster."

At work, Dung found a purpose larger than herself. "I could introduce Vietnam's culture, landscape and people to Chinese audiences," she said. "At the same time, I could bring China's culture and stories back to my Vietnamese friends."

Her career embodies the very cooperation that media professionals from across South and Southeast Asia have gathered at the Kunming meeting to advance.

Representatives of more than 170 media outlets, news organizations and think tanks from the region attended the annual meeting of the network that was launched in 2024.

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Zheng pulls off first-round upset at Athens Open
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