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XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Opening-up fuels trade in services

Wider access to expanding sector expected to bring more opportunities

By ZHONG NAN
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China's deeper opening-up in the services sector is set to bolster the global competitiveness of Chinese service providers and generate new growth opportunities for the global business community, according to market analysts and business executives.

Rather than merely aiming to narrow its services trade deficit, China is poised to expand room for both imports and exports via wider market access and regulatory liberalization. Digital services, technology-intensive services and other emerging segments are expected to emerge as key drivers of services trade growth, experts noted.

The comments came ahead of the 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services, scheduled to run from Wednesday to Sunday in Beijing. Around 90 countries, regions and international organizations will stage exhibitions or events, while more than 1,800 companies will participate off-line, underscoring the fair's role as a key platform for opening up China's services sector and for international cooperation.

Unlike trade in goods, services trade involves cross-border transactions in activities ranging from transportation and tourism to telecommunications, computing, education and professional services.

In a congratulatory letter to the 2025 China International Fair for Trade in Services, held in Beijing last year, President Xi Jinping said China will remain firmly committed to expanding high-standard opening-up and accelerate the opening of its services market in an orderly manner on platforms including pilot free trade zones and national demonstration zones for the innovative development of trade in services.

China is ready to work with all parties to jointly promote open and innovative cooperation in global trade in services, build an open world economy, and continuously inject new impetus into building a community with a shared future for humanity, Xi said.

China's trade in services totaled nearly 4.45 trillion yuan ($663 billion) in the first seven months of 2026, up 8.3 percent year-on-year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

Services exports rose 17.1 percent year-on-year to over 1.77 trillion yuan. Services imports reached 2.67 trillion yuan, up 3.2 percent from a year earlier. The country's services trade deficit stood at 900.25 billion yuan in the first seven months of this year.

Analysts and government officials said China's services trade should not be judged solely by the size of its deficit, as shifts in the composition of imports and exports point to a broader structural transformation, while the country's growing demand for high-quality services is creating substantial opportunities for businesses worldwide.

Nie Pingxiang, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said continued demand for imported services reflects greater market openness, while the rapid expansion of knowledge-intensive exports signals China's growing competitiveness in higher-value services.

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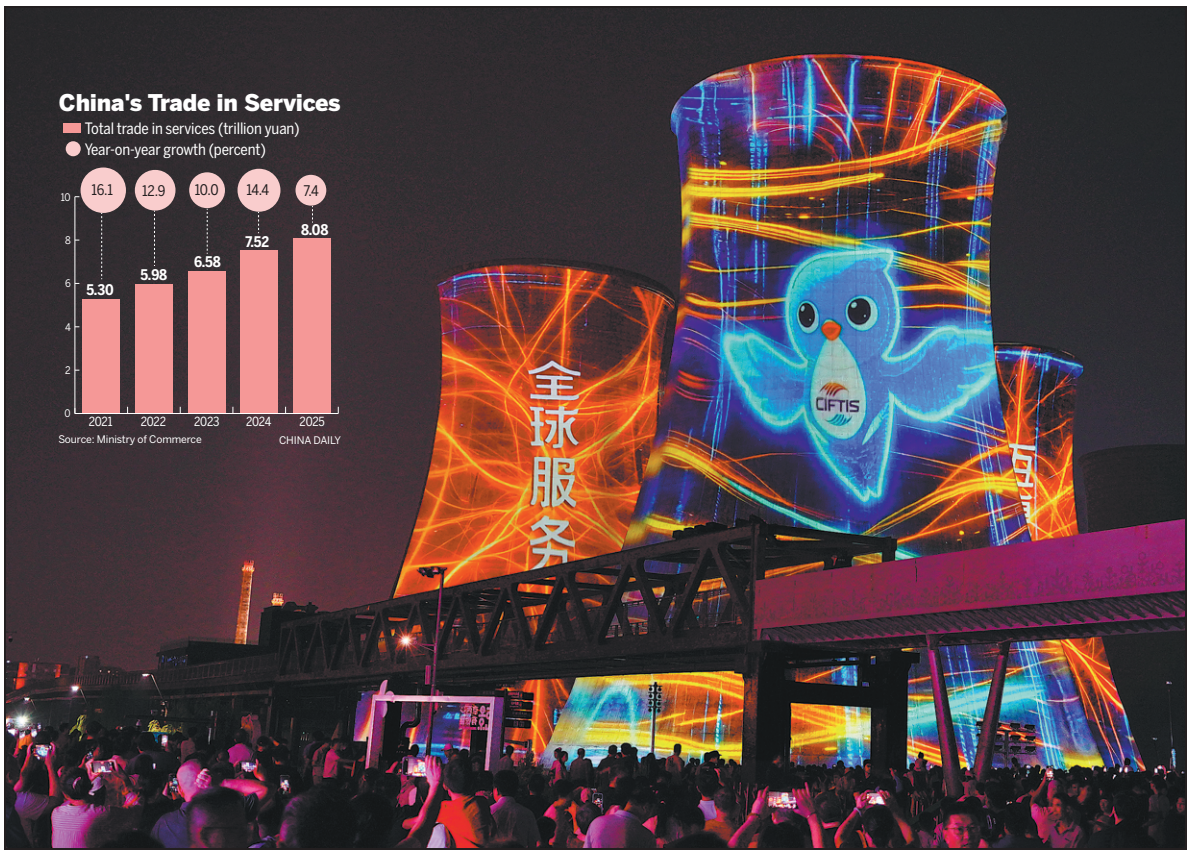

A three-dimensional light show, which features the slogan and mascot "Fu Yan" of the 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services, is projected onto the cooling towers at Shougang Park in Beijing on Sunday. The light show will run daily through the end of the CIFTIS, which will open at the park on Wednesday and concludes on Sunday. It is drawing crowds with images of Shougang's industrial past, the Yongding River and the city's transformation. SONG JIARU / FOR CHINA DAILY

China, Qatar pledge closer ties, deeper collaboration

By JI HAISHENG
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Premier Li Qiang has called on China and Qatar to strengthen alignment of their development strategies, advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and deepen collaboration in traditional energy, new energy, infrastructure, artificial intelligence and finance to pursue win-win outcomes at a higher level.

Li made the remarks on Monday in Beijing while meeting with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who is visiting China from Monday to Tuesday.

Lauding Qatar as China's important strategic partner in the Middle East and the Gulf region, Li said that China stands ready to work with Qatar to further strengthen communication and coordination, firmly support each other on issues concerning their respective core interests, and advance bilateral relations to deliver greater benefits to the two peoples.

The premier said China welcomes more Qatari investment and pledged support for more Chinese enterprises to invest in Qatar to enhance the quality and efficiency of two-way investment.

He voiced his hope that Qatar will continue to provide a sound development environment for Chinese enterprises and ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects in Qatar.

The two sides should also boost people-to-people and cultural exchanges covering culture, education, giant panda conservation and research, to bring the peoples of the two countries closer, Li added.

Amid the current international landscape marked by both change and turmoil, China and Qatar should strengthen multilateral coordination and cooperation to promote the establishment of a more just and reasonable global governance system, Li stressed.

China supports Qatar in playing a mediating role in the Middle East situation, and is ready to work with Qatar and other countries in the region, as well as the international community, to promote the early restoration of regional peace and stability, he added.

Al Thani said that Qatar values its relations with China, and the two countries have consistently upheld mutual trust and respect, and achieved mutual benefit and win-win results.

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Visitors explore artificial intelligence-powered coffee machines at the Appliance & Electronics World Expo in Shanghai on March 12. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

TECH POURS NEW LIFE INTO CHINESE COFFEE MACHINES

Powered by large language models, smart appliances are reshaping global market

By CHENG YU
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Imagine waking up one morning and telling your conventional coffee machine: "I didn't sleep well last night. Make me something that won't hit too hard." The poor machine would be stumped. Does "not too hard" mean less caffeine, less bitterness or more milk — or all three?

A smart coffee machine made in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, would know what to do. Kaxfree, a home coffee machine brand developed by commercial coffee equipment maker Kalerm, is turning the machine that merely follows recipes into an "AI barista".

For decades, Europe largely set the standards for premium coffee machines, but artificial intelligence is beginning to shake up that hierarchy. Kaxfree is among the brands climbing the ranks, with products already sold in more than 100 countries and regions.

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Top court sets rules to curb AI misuse

By CAO YIN
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The Supreme People's Court released a guideline on Monday to address the misuse and abuse of artificial intelligence, and bolster the protection of individuals' rights in the digital age.

This marks the first set of judicial rules on the handling of AI-related cases to be released by the country's top court.

The 24-article document responds to hot-button issues that have stirred public debate over the past few years, including AI face-swapping, voice cloning and doxing, providing criteria for identifying those who use AI to infringe on personality rights and holding them accountable.

According to the guideline, using someone's voice without consent to create synthetic speech that mimics their timbre, tone and speaking style constitutes an infringement of their voice rights.

Similarly, using AI to process a person's name or likeness without permission to create and distribute a recognizable digital avatar is considered a violation of their right to name and likeness.

Zhou Jiahai, head of the SPC's research office, noted that the basic aim of the guideline is to balance development with security.

"It strikes a balance between curbing AI abuses to strengthen judicial protection of people's rights in the digital era, and supporting technological and industrial innovation to safeguard the healthy development of AI," he said.

Si Yanli, deputy head of the office, said that these rights are fundamental to personal dignity and rank among the most essential individual entitlements.

She advocated a tolerant yet prudent approach to balancing the protection of these rights with the growth of the AI industry. However, she noted that tolerance should not be mistaken for permissiveness, nor should prudence be interpreted as acquiescence.

"In practice, many people express their strong concerns about AI deepfakes. AI face-swapping technology can indiscriminately harvest anyone's likeness, making ordinary people potential targets of deepfakes," she said. "AI voice cloning technology can also 'steal' voices at a very low cost, with results that can be convincingly realistic."

Si noted that these issues are key reasons behind the formulation of the guideline and underscore the need to standardize judicial practices across the country — a move that sends a clear message against the misuse of AI technologies that infringe on personality rights.

In recent years, Chinese courts have heard AI-related cases. For example, a 2024 ruling by the Beijing Internet Court found AI voice imitation without consent to be an infringement of personality rights. The case involved a voice-over artist whose recorded audiobooks were used, without her consent, to build a commercial AI text-to-speech product sold on other platforms, and the court ordered compensation.

While calling for an intensified crackdown on those using AI to infringe upon people's name, voice and reputation rights, the guideline also calls for a stronger crackdown on doxing — the practice of obtaining and publicly disclosing others' personal information online.

"Doxing has emerged as a prominent form of cyberbullying, gravely violating victims' privacy, disturbing their daily lives and eroding public security in cyberspace," Si said.

In response, the guideline clarifies that using AI to track and analyze publicly available information about individuals — such as phone numbers, online accounts and social media profiles — to obtain private information, leak it or disclose it should be deemed an infringement upon the right to privacy, and those responsible will face punishment.

Furthermore, the guideline sets forth provisions concerning consumer rights protection, intellectual property protection and autonomous driving in the context of AI.

Noting the fast-evolving nature of AI, Tao Kaiyuan, vice-president of the SPC, said the guideline deliberately leaves some aspects open-ended, with more specific provisions to follow as experience accumulates.

"We hope to draw clear legal boundaries amid rapid technological change, in order to support innovation while ensuring that AI develops swiftly, soundly and steadily," she added.

INSIDE

Arsenal comes from behind to sink Chelsea 2-1

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