

China Injects Momentum into Global Economy

Voice of the World

By LI Linxu

China's economy is gaining new momentum, as sustained growth across key sectors like domestic consumption, foreign investment and high-tech industry, demonstrates the nation's economic strength, resilience and vitality.

The World Bank has just raised its forecast for China's GDP growth in 2024 and 2025 by 0.1 and 0.4 percentage point respectively, reflecting a series of policy-easing measures recently announced by China as well as the strength of the country's exports.

On the upside, higher-than-expected fiscal spending and more decisive policy actions to stabilize the property sector, following recent guidance from policymakers, could lift the growth forecast above the current baseline projection, according to the World Bank.

"Expanding opportunities for everyone to move up the economic ladder is important for achieving China's goal of common prosperity," Elitza Mileva, World Bank lead economist for China, said. "Equal opportunities and greater social mobility will, in turn, support growth through higher human capital and greater entrepreneurship and risk taking by economically secure households."

The tone-setting annual Central Economic Work Conference recently



The Port of Qingdao, a seaport in Shandong province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

held in Beijing noted that the Chinese economy is underpinned by a stable foundation, multiple advantages, strong resilience and great potential, and the supporting conditions and fundamental trends for long-term sound economic development have not changed.

The conference proposed implementing more proactive and impactful macro policies, expand domestic demand, and promote the integrated development of sci-tech innovation and industrial innovation.

The latest released national economic census showed that the country's

economy has achieved progress while maintaining stability over the past five years, with great strides in key areas including economic scale, structural optimization, and innovation-driven and digitally fueled development.

The census has revised the country's GDP of 2023 to 129.427 trillion RMB, up 2.7 percent from initial estimates, based on an economic census conducted once every five years.

"Over the past five years (2018-2023), China's contribution to global economic growth has averaged around 30 percent, making it the largest driver of

growth for the world economy," Kang Yi, commissioner of the National Bureau of Statistics, said.

China's digital economy has experienced robust growth, injecting new momentum into its social and economic development. At the end of 2023, there were 2.916 million corporate enterprises engaged in the core industries of digital economy, with 36.159 million persons employed. In 2023, the business revenue of China's digital economy reached 48.4 trillion RMB.

Meanwhile, the country's economic structure has been continuously optimized. The census showed that a total of 33.27 million legal entities were engaged in the secondary and tertiary industries at the end of 2023, up 52.7 percent compared with that of 2018.

Looking forward, China's economy is on track for long-term sustained growth, given its ultra-large domestic market, the advancement of industrial transformation and upgrading, a thriving digital economy, and comprehensive deepening of reforms.

A more buoyant Chinese economy is particularly important to emerging economies because China has become the most critical development partner, including in green energy transition and green development, according to Adhere Cavince, an international relations expert, adding that the country's development success has brought prosperity to many countries and territories around the world.

BRI in Its Second Decade: A Path to Global Prosperity

Opinion

By LIN Yuchen

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) enters its second decade, poised to enhance its role as a catalyst for global development and integration.

Since its inception in 2013, the BRI has emerged as a widely welcomed international public good and cooperation platform grounded in the principles of consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. It has significantly transformed global connectivity and economic cooperation, and continues to deliver substantial benefits across diverse fields such as infrastructure, trade and public welfare projects.

Tangible impact

Over the past decade, the BRI has produced a series of remarkable and tangible outcomes. In Latin America, Peru's Chancay Port, a green and smart port, is bridging continents by significantly reducing shipping time between Shanghai and Peru. In Asia, the China-Laos Railway has redefined regional travel, making cross-border trips from Kunming to Vientiane possible in a single day. In Africa, Chinese-built industrial parks are accelerating local manufacturing, driving economic growth, and empowering "Made in Africa."

In 2024 alone, BRI cooperation reached new heights. China signed numerous agreements with other participating countries, established over 30 multilateral cooperation platforms in fields such as energy and disaster reduction,

and hosted major international events like the China International Import Expo.

Trade between China and other BRI countries surged, reaching 16.94 trillion RMB in the first 10 months of 2024, a 6.2 percent increase year on year. Infrastructure projects like the China-Europe freight train and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor further facilitated global logistics and connectivity.

The BRI benefits are not limited to large-scale projects. Many "small but beautiful" livelihood initiatives, such as clean water systems, solar power stations and agricultural technology transfers are directly improving the lives of millions, fostering local development, enhancing resilience, and building lasting connections among nations.

New decade of high-quality development

As the BRI embarks on its second decade, the focus has shifted to high-quality development. This involves a more balanced approach, as outlined in a recent symposium on Belt and Road construction.

There are three key priorities. "Hard connectivity" will be integrated with "soft connectivity." It means going beyond building physical infrastructure, the BRI will align with international standards and foster closer people-to-people ties.

It will also balance large-scale projects with livelihood improvements. Major infrastructure projects remain critical,

but smaller, community-focused initiatives play an equally important role in enhancing people's well-being and fostering mutual understanding.

Besides, collaboration will be expanded in emerging fields, such as green development, digital technology and health. This will reflect the evolving needs of participating countries and align with global trends.

These priorities underscore the BRI's adaptability and relevance in addressing both traditional and modern challenges. They also highlight its potential to promote inclusive growth, sustainability and resilience.

Shared vision for future

By strengthening partnerships with other developing countries and exploring synergies with developed countries' initiatives, such as the EU's Global Gateway, the BRI has created new opportunities for global collaboration. These efforts contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and fostering a more interconnected and equitable world.

Ultimately, the BRI is more than a series of projects — it is a vision of shared prosperity and a testament to the power of international cooperation. As it evolves, the initiative holds the promise of building a "road of happiness" that transcends borders, cultures and economies, paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future.

Comment

Finding Right Way to Get Along in New Era

By TANG Zhexiao

With profound changes unseen in a century, the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change. China and the U.S., whose relationship is one of the most important bilateral relations in the world, should uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, and jointly shoulder responsibilities for world peace and development.

China and the U.S. account for more than one-third of the world economy, nearly a quarter of the world population, and about one-fifth of world trade. Whether the two can handle their relationship well is crucial to the future of mankind.

It is important to start with mutual respect. China and the U.S. are different in history, culture, ideologies, social systems and current national conditions. It is impossible for them to agree on all issues, and it is normal to have differences.

History shows that China and the U.S. gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. A stable, sound and sustainable China-U.S. relationship serves the two countries' shared interests and meets the aspiration of the international community.

Robert Hormats, vice chairman of Kissinger Associates, who previously served as under secretary of state, called on the U.S. and China to strengthen exchanges in education, tourism and culture, and gradually rebuild mutual trust.

Peaceful coexistence is a baseline of bilateral relationships. Peace is the eternal aspiration of mankind and the core value of the coexistence of major countries. Conflict and confrontation are not in the interests of anyone.

Both China and the U.S. are permanent members of the UN Security Council. Turning their back on each other is not an option, and trying to remodel the other is unrealistic, said Xie Feng, the Chinese ambassador to the U.S., at the

15th U.S.-China CEO and Former Senior Officials' Dialogue on December 17, 2024. Any conflict or confrontation would have unbearable consequences for both sides, he added.

The U.S. and China should avoid falling into the Thucydides Trap and find the right way to get along with each other. That is important for both countries and the world at large, Graham Allison, a professor at Harvard University, said during his visit to Beijing on December 19, 2024.

The two nations should strive for win-win cooperation as a goal. After decades of development, their interests are already deeply intertwined. "Economically, our total trade has exceeded 660 billion USD. Over 70,000 American companies are doing business in China, earning a profit of 50 billion USD annually," Xie said.

Laurence Freeman, an American economic-political analyst, said: "In fact, there is no objective inherent contradiction between the development of China and the development of the U.S. China and the U.S. actually share a common interest in the development of humankind."

Freeman also said the U.S. needs to abandon its Cold-War mentality and zero-sum game mindset. China is not the enemy of the U.S., he said. Cooperation between the U.S. and China can benefit both countries and the world.

Stable China-U.S. relations are the cornerstone of world peace and stability, according to Straton Habyarimana, a Rwandan economic analyst. Whether it is addressing climate change, food crisis or global public health issues, China-U.S. cooperation will play an irreplaceable role, Habyarimana said.

China's policy toward the U.S. has remained consistent and stable. It is hoped that the U.S. will work with China to properly manage differences, expand mutually beneficial cooperation, and work together to cope with various global challenges.

AI Rescue Robot Offers 24/7 Service

Hi! Tech

By GONG Qian

Chinese scientists have unveiled an AI-powered rescue robot which can be operated without human intervention. Researchers recently have tested the pioneering technology in a river in Luoyang city, Henan province in central China.

The robot was developed by a research team led by Dr. Yu Daoyang from Hefei Institutes of Physical Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences. It employs AI, big data and advanced tracking technologies and provides 24/7 all-weather monitoring, early warnings, and rapid rescue operation.

The robot relies on a network of 100 optical and thermal imaging cameras as employed at restricted water areas for

24/7 monitoring. Camera footage is transmitted in real time to servers using an algorithm where people entering restricted waters are detected, identified, analyzed and located. It determines whether an individual is drowning and whether it should initiate a rescue command.

Upon receiving a rescue command from the server, the robot automatically sets sail and autonomously plans a rescue route based on the location provided by the server. Using a dual-spectrum camera, it will adjust its trajectory based on the victim's real-time position, provide equipment such as a life-saving buoy, and release a rescue arm to pull people from the water.

The research team also developed an autonomous docking and charging dock. After completing its mission, the robot returns to the dock, locks into place, and initiates automatic charging.



An AI-powered rescue robot is tested in a river in Luoyang city, Henan province. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Satellite Internet: Removing 'Digital Divide'

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Their lower orbits result in reduced signal delay and better data transmission quality compared to high-orbit satellites.

However, achieving global, uninterrupted coverage requires thousands of satellites working in coordination to eliminate service gaps. Several countries are racing to deploy LEO satellite networks. The Starlink program by SpaceX has already launched thousands of satellites with an ambitious target of 42,000 in total. China is advancing rapidly, with flagship projects like the GW Constellation, the Qianfan Constellation and the Hongyan Project. Combined,

these initiatives involve plans for tens of thousands of satellites.

Despite this progress, challenges remain. The availability of orbital and frequency resources is a pressing concern. Space is not infinite, and international regulations follow a "first come, first served" principle. According to experts, the maximum capacity for LEO satellites is far less than the cumulative plans of various nations.

Another challenge lies in reducing costs. The deployment of massive satellite constellations requires frequent launches, which demand advanced, cost-efficient rocket technology. Reusable rockets are essential to make satellite in-

ternet services affordable for consumers. Additionally, integrating satellite and terrestrial networks — referred to as "space-ground convergence" — is a technological hurdle that requires breakthroughs in areas like signal routing, data security and anti-interference systems.

The future of connectivity

The promise of satellite internet is not limited to bridging the digital divide. It also forms the backbone of future communication systems like 6G, which aims to create a fully integrated global network across land, sea, air and space. Beyond internet access, satellite constellations are expected to support applications in navigation, remote sensing and

emergency response. Initiatives under China's 14th Five-Year Plan emphasize research in satellite communication, while new commercial players contribute to rapid advancements in the field. As these networks expand, they will transform not only how we connect but also how we interact with the world.

From enabling real-time communication in remote areas to supporting advanced applications in smart cities and autonomous transportation, the potential of satellite internet is vast. With continued innovation, the day when satellite internet seamlessly integrates into our daily lives may be closer than we think.