Rocketing Progress in Commercial Space Sector

Voice of the World

Edited by GONG Qian

A group of 18 low Earth orbit satellites was launched from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in south China's Hainan province in March. This mission marks the inaugural mission from the No. 1 launch pad at the launch site, while the No. 2 pad made its maiden launch back on November 30, 2024. The development and operation of the launch site has augmented China's capacity for space launches.

The satellites are part of China's commercial satellite constellation, Spacesail project, also known as Qianfan. The project aims to deploy over 15,000 satellites by 2030 and provide high-speed internet connectivity with minimal transmission delay, making them valuable for remote areas, according to *Technology Magazine*.

Commercial space in China has flourished in recent years. It appeared in the government work report for the first time in 2024 and was highlighted in 2025 again. "The noting of commercial space in the latest report underlines China's commitment to developing the sector as a part in a drive for innovation-driven development," SpaceNews said.

The Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in Wenchang, south China's Hainan province. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

China's commercial space sector is experiencing vigorous growth, with provincial governments launching initiatives that fuel the country's commercial space expansion. For example, Beijing, Shanghai and Hainan have developed action plans to promote the development of commercial space.

Meanwhile, China is encouraging the growth of its private ecosystems. The country has established a new wave of commercial space companies that are pushing the boundaries of engineering and market-driven applications, Dr. Mathieu Duchatel, a resident senior fellow and director of International Studies at Institut Montaigne, said.

Unlike Western firms that often depend on government contracts, Chinese commercial space companies prioritize consumer-oriented commercialization. "They take more risks, embrace more flexible business models, and integrate satellite technology into everyday applications," Duchatel said.

China's private space sector is already well-advanced, with companies such as Landspace achieving their second successful launch at the end of 2024, according to the Novaspace website.

This confirms that innovation by private enterprises is indispensable for driving the high-quality development of China's space industry.

China's national space program and its booming commercial space industry are propelling the country to the head of the pack of the world's major spacefaring nations, said Dr. Hema Nadarajah, program manager for Southeast Asia at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

Foreign Investment in China: Right Time, Right Place

Comment

By LIN Yuchen

In the past few weeks, a host of foreign business leaders have visited China, sounding a clear message: confidence in country's future is surging. From Apple CEO Tim Cook's visit to the arrival of senior leaders from Qualcomm and Samsung, there is no doubt that foreign investment in China is not only ongoing, but accelerating.

This momentum reflects a growing consensus among global business leaders that investing in China is investing in the future. With its colossal market scale, rapidly evolving digital economy, and commitment to high-level openness, the country remains one of the world's most attractive destinations for foreign capital.

By the end of 2024, China had attracted nearly 1.24 million foreign-invested enterprises, with actual foreign investment totaling 20.6 trillion RMB. In just the first two months of 2025, over 7,500 new foreign-invested firms were established, up 5.8 percent year on year.

The "Invest in China" matchmaking zone at the 24th China International Fair for Investment and Trade (CIFIT) in Xiamen. (PHOTO: VCG)

Beyond statistics lies a deeper truth — China's innovation ecosystem is becoming a magnetic force pulling global firms closer. Companies are no longer coming just to sell products; they are coming to co-create. BMW has launched its full-chain AI strategy in China, while Apple is scaling up its clean energy initiatives through a new fund. These moves reflect not just business expansion, but integration into China's innovation-driven transformation.

Indeed, technology is becoming China's most powerful attraction. From AI breakthroughs like DeepSeek to robotics pioneers like Unitree, China's sci-tech ecosystem is swiftly catching up by bringing in enormous potential. Mercedes-Benz Chairman Ola Källenius recently noted that innovation in China is not only tailored for local needs, but also increasingly exported to the world.

Foreign companies are also responding to China's increasingly sophisticated consumer market. Brands under the American multinational fashion holding company Tapestry plan to open 100 new retail stores in China by the end of 2025. The blending of digital and physical commerce in China provides fertile ground for global players to test, adapt, and scale new models faster than anywhere else.

Meanwhile, the country's commitment to openness remains firm. The government has pledged to improve market access, protect intellectual property rights, and foster a world-class business environment. Forums like the China Development Forum and Boao Forum have become not just venues for discussion, but launchpads for new investment and collaboration.

As the world navigates an era of geopolitical uncertainty and technological disruption, China offers both stability and innovation. It's a country where one can find scale, talent and policy clarity — all in one place.

Looking ahead, China's role as a global innovation hub will only deepen. Its large consumer base, digital infrastructure, and ambition for green development make it indispensable in shaping the future global economy. In this pivotal moment, foreign investors have a unique opportunity not just to profit, but to participate in the next chapter of global growth.

To invest in China now is not just wise — it is visionary.

U.S. Tariff Tactics Draw Strong Criticism

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Small businesses face existential threats. Global toy company Basic Fun! had to put all shipments of its products from Asia on hold due to the inability to pass on the cost hikes. The company's chief executive Jay Foreman told *The New York Times*, "It's one thing to try to absorb or pass along 10 percent to 20 percent, but 54 percent to 104 percent, it's impossible. The consumer will just shut down."

This supply-demand vise has compressed corporate margins to historic lows. After the tariffs were announced, the market continued to be turbulent.

Soaring household costs and public backlash

Ultimately, it is the U.S. general public who will bear the brunt of the policy's costs.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture data, Americans rely heavily on imports for their daily coffee, fresh produce, seafood, and olive oil. With the additional tariffs, products such as Brazilian and Colombian coffee face 10 percent tariffs; EU wines and olive oils are subject to 20 percent tariffs; and Indian basmati rice and Thai jasmine rice have incurred tariffs of 26 percent and 36 percent, respectively.

The Associated Press reported that estimates from Yale University's Budget Lab indicate the tariffs could lead to an average annual increase of 3,800 USD in U.S. household consumption expenses. Clothing and textile prices are projected to rise by 17 percent, while furniture prices could surge by 46 percent.

Meanwhile, public anger has erupted across the U.S. According to CBS, on April 5 alone, over 1,300 protests were held across all 50 states, with hundreds of thousands participating. This highlights the widespread public discontent.

Retreating from globalization

Trump's tariff policies have pushed U.S. trade barriers to their highest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s, directly undermining the global trade order established after World War II.

Major economies, including the EU, China, Canada and Brazil, have swiftly announced retaliatory measures. They are responding to America's unilateral trade actions through various measures such as lodging complaints with the World Trade Organization, raising import tariffs, and restricting market access for certain American products. As the situation evolves, more countries may join in these counteractions.

Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase, warns that the cumulative effects of tariffs could "lead to lasting negative consequences," potentially pushing the U.S. to the brink of a recession. Goldman Sachs has already raised the probability of a U.S. economic recession in 2025 to 45 percent and significantly lowered its American GDP growth forecast.

Trump's protectionist tariffs are a reckless gamble without strategic merit. They fail to address trade imbalances while weakening U.S. business competitiveness, burdening consumers, and destabilizing the global trade system. As Wall Street warns of "accelerating inflation and recession risks," the policy's collapse is inevitable.

History shows trade wars have no winners. To avoid deeper crises, restarting dialogue and returning to international cooperation is the only viable path forward.

Opinion

Expansion of Entity List Won't Stop China's Tech Rise

By GONG Qian

The U.S. recently added over 50 Chinese tech companies to its export control list. The move aims to restrict China's ability to develop high-performance computing capabilities, quantum technologies and advanced AI.

The list also includes the Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI), a private non-profit scientific research institution. "We strongly oppose this wrong decision without any factual basis and ask the relevant U.S. departments to withdraw it," BAAI said in a statement.

The U.S. using national security as an excuse to impose illicit, unilateral sanctions is typical hegemonism. This will severely damage the legitimate rights and interests of enterprises and undermine the security and stability of global supply chains.

Similar actions taken by the U.S. in the past proved ineffective in curbing the fast growth of Chinese technology. A 2024 study by U.S. scholars found that export controls on AI are less effective than U.S. policymakers would like.

A recent prominent case is DeepSeek. The emergence of the Chinese AI startup, which has been driving the adoption of low-cost AI models in China, has stunned the world. Meanwhile, it has also put pressure on U.S. companies that rely on more expensive and proprietary models. Washington's latest move may reflect its anxiety and lack of confidence over the rapid development of China's tech field.

In recent years, the U.S. has also imposed controls on semiconductor exports to China but China has continued to find ways to adapt. The chip shortages, contrary to U.S. expectations, have driven the Chinese chip sector to pursue self-reliance and prompted Chinese companies to innovate cutting-edge products. For example, Huawei made a splash in September 2024 by launching the industry's first tri-fold phone, Mate XT, which is powered by an advanced semiconductor made in China.

In February, Huawei held a global launch of Mate XT. The Associated Press quoted analysts as saying that this marked a symbolic victory for the Chinese tech giant amid U.S. technology curbs. "Right now, Huawei kind of stands alone as an innovator" with the tri-fold design, Bryan Ma, vice president of device research with the market intelligence firm International Data Corporation, said.

This demonstrates China's capacity to overcome technological barriers, undercutting the Trump administration's efforts to constrain its technological advancement.

The over-securitization of the U.S. should not be used as a weapon and a tool to address trade and sci-tech issues. Securitizing technologies in the name of national security risks accelerating the fragmentation of global supply chains. The U.S.'s "small yard, high fence" should not become "large yard, iron curtains."

However, whether the entity list gets longer or shorter in the foreseeable future, it won't stop China's technology development.

Hi-Tech

Emergency Rescue, Transport Robot Unveiled

By GONG Qian & LU Chengkuang

China has unveiled a new emergency rescue and transport robot. The machine, jointly developed by CSSC Haishen Company and DEEP Robotics, made its debut in Beijing on March 26.

These robots feature three optional mobility modes: quadrupedal, wheeled, and tracked. They are capable of walking, running, climbing stairs, ascending slopes, lying down, obstacle avoidance, and overcoming barriers. Designed to operate stably in temperatures ranging from -20°C to 55°C, they can be widely used in various scenarios such as natural disaster rescue, complex environment operations, safety incident response, and pre-hospital and intra-hospital transfers.

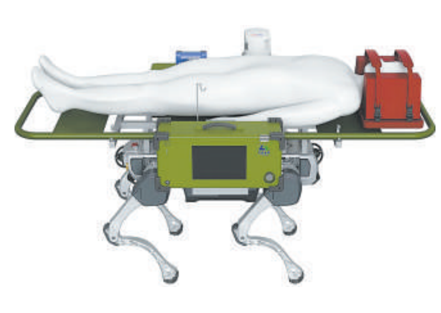
The wheeled emergency rescue robot carries a portable emergency medical system with seven core functions: respiration, monitoring, intravenous infusion, ultrasound, defibrillation, CPR, and oxygen supply.

Upon receiving a command, it can quickly climb stairs and traverse obstacles to reach its destination, providing immediate on-site emergency treatment to save critical time for life-saving interventions.

The quadrupedal emergency transport robot can swiftly carry injured individuals while utilizing its side-mounted portable emergency medical system to perform "in-motion emergency treatment."

Experts say that the introduction of such robots fills a gap in embodied intelligence for emergency medical rescue equipment. They address some limitations of traditional manual rescue operations, significantly enhancing China's comprehensive emergency medical rescue capabilities.

◄The emergency rescue robot. (COURTESY PHOTO)



► The emergency transport robot. (COURTESY PHOTO)