

CHINA

Chan: 15th Five-Year Plan charts course for HK’s development

By GABY LIN in Hong Kong
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Hong Kong Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said on Sunday that Hong Kong’s innovation and technology development is gaining momentum, pledging that the city will capitalize on the opportunities presented by the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30), integrate more deeply into and contribute to the country’s development strategy.

Writing in his weekly blog, the financial chief said the next five-year blueprint will chart the course for accelerating and expanding Hong Kong’s next stage of development.

He noted that the city enjoys unique strengths in many sectors, such as finance, trade, and I&T, with many emerging areas brimming with fresh opportunities.

Highlighting the rapidly growing I&T sector, Chan said that under the leadership of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, various government departments and public institutions have been working closely to accelerate cultivation of the city’s new quality productive forces.

He said that tangible progress is emerging, from supporting Chinese mainland I&T enterprises in “going global” and attracting them to set up research and development centers in Hong Kong, to encouraging the clustering of targeted firms in the special administrative region.

One notable example is The Cradle — a service center launched by the Hong Kong Productivity Council to provide one-stop professional support for enterprises, including international standards

alignment, intellectual property management and protection, and overseas regulatory compliance, he said.

“Since its establishment in April last year, The Cradle has attracted interest from over 350 enterprises, with more than 100 projects having entered a substantive follow-up stage,” Chan said.

The financial secretary also stressed that the SAR must harness its strengths as an international financial center to support the I&T sector at every stage of its development.

Last year, 119 companies launched their initial public offerings in Hong Kong’s equity market, raising over HK\$280 billion (\$35.89 billion), with firms in information technology, biotechnology, new energy, and advanced manufacturing accounting for about 70 percent of the total funds raised.

Hong Kong Investment Corp — a patient-capital institution wholly-owned by the SAR government — has so far invested in over 170 projects, with every Hong Kong dollar invested leveraging more than HK\$6 in market capital, Chan added.

Looking ahead, he said the SAR will seize the opportunities offered by the 15th Five-Year Plan, integrating more actively into and better serving the country’s broader development landscape.

“We will promote the deep integration of technological and industrial innovation, further strengthen the connection between technology and industry, and propel the economy toward high-quality, high-value-added, and diversified growth,” he said.

Shanghai retains foreign investment hub status

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Shanghai has continued to solidify its position as a prime destination for foreign investment, with more than 6,300 new foreign-funded enterprises established in the city last year, an increase of 6.8 percent, the top official with the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce said on Saturday.

Contracted foreign investment in Shanghai reached \$18 billion in 2025, representing growth of nearly 20 percent, Shen Weihua, director of the commission, said at a news conference held at the conclusion of the annual plenary sessions of the city’s legislative and political advisory bodies.

“Such figures demonstrate Shanghai’s enduring appeal as a preferred location for foreign investors and a strategic hub for multinational companies’ global industrial and supply chain layouts, even amid current global challenges,” Shen said. He described the city’s utilization of foreign capital as stable in scale, superior in quality and dynamic in momentum.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), the actual use of foreign capital in Shanghai’s high-tech industries reached 33 percent, a 10-percentage-point increase from the previous five-year period.

As a result of the quality of foreign investment, the number of regional headquarters of multinational companies and foreign-funded research and development centers continued to rise. By the end of last year, Shanghai had 1,076 regional headquarters and 636 foreign-funded R&D centers, according to the commission.

Shanghai will continue to expand high-level opening-up by aligning with international high-standard economic and trade rules, steadily expanding institutional openness, deepening the national pilot program for opening-up the service sector, and advancing projects in key pilot areas such as telecommunications, healthcare, education and finance, Shen said.

The city will also focus on supporting the transformation and upgrading of foreign investment

by guiding foreign enterprises to invest more in advanced manufacturing, modern services, high-tech industries, and energy-saving and environmental protection sectors. This will strengthen the capabilities of multinational regional headquarters and foreign R&D centers, the commission said.

According to this year’s government work report, the city aims to maintain double-digit growth in the output value of leading manufacturing industries. By 2030, Shanghai plans to establish 500 advanced smart factories, raise the density of industrial robot use to 600 units per 10,000 people, and create 200 or more green manufacturing enterprises at the city level or above.

Speaking at the news conference, Luo Dajin, director of the Science and Technology Commission of Shanghai Municipality, said the city is focusing on frontier fields such as brain-computer interfaces, quantum computing, cell and gene therapy, 6G and controlled nuclear fusion to accelerate the development of future industries and bring them into practical application.

According to officials, Shanghai’s foreign trade imports and exports exceeded 4.5 trillion yuan (\$648.5 billion) last year, setting new records for imports, exports and total trade value.

Growth rates for imports, exports and total trade surpassed national averages by 1.8, 4.7 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively.

Meanwhile, Shanghai’s service trade continued to grow steadily, accounting for about one-fourth of the national total and ranking first among Chinese cities.

“Shanghai has effectively responded to external challenges, driven foreign trade toward higher-quality development, and demonstrated strong economic resilience and new momentum for high-quality growth,” Shen said.

Looking ahead, Shanghai will continue to improve the facilitation of cross-border trade, cultivate new forms and models of foreign trade, promote high-quality development across the entire cross-border e-commerce chain, and advance innovation in service trade and digital trade, he said.

Fish festivities



Villagers proudly display their catch during a fishing festival in Daoxian county, Hunan province, on Saturday. The event featured activities such as pond fishing, lion and dragon dances, drawing crowds of visitors. JIANG KEQING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Solar drives growing green energy capacity

New report predicts China's expansion in renewable power generation in 2026

By ZHAO YIMENG
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A strong growth in solar power is projected to drive the expansion of China’s renewable energy generation capacity in 2026, even as average wind power utilization hours decrease slightly, according to a new report.

The Global Wind, Solar, and Hydropower Capacity Outlook for 2026, released on Thursday, projects that average wind power generation hours in China will reach about 2,100 hours in 2026, slightly lower than in 2025. The indicator measures how effectively wind resources are utilized, with higher hours reflecting better wind conditions and operational efficiency.

Despite the modest decline in utilization, China’s total wind power generation is expected to grow by around 2 percent, supported by continued expansion of installed capacity, said Liu Yunyun, a chief expert at the National Climate Center.

Solar power is set to remain the main growth engine, Liu said. Average photovoltaic generation hours are forecast at about 1,320 hours, roughly unchanged from the previ-

ous year. “With rapid capacity expansion, total solar power generation is projected to surge by about 25 percent,” she said.

Liu noted that hydropower output in 2026 may show clear regional divergence. Water inflows in northwestern China are expected to increase, while southwestern regions may see reduced inflows, potentially reshaping the country’s hydropower generation pattern.

Xiong Shaoyuan, deputy director of the China Meteorological Administration, said China’s power system has entered a new stage dominated by renewable energy, which now accounts for more than 60 percent of the country’s total installed power capacity.

“The new power system has an urgent need for climate resource assessment and early warnings for extreme weather,” Xiong said.

The outlook was jointly released by the National Climate Center and the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization. It will provide scientific support for power planning, market trading and system operation, Xiong said, adding that China will further improve energy-related meteorologi-

cal monitoring and forecasting.

Meanwhile, global renewable energy development has entered a phase of full acceleration, according to Liu Zehong, vice-chairman of the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization.

Newly installed renewable energy capacity worldwide is expected to reach about 700 gigawatts for 2025, up 20 percent from 2024.

Globally, average usable wind power generation hours are forecast at about 2,310 hours in 2026, with total wind power generation rising by around 6 percent.

Average global photovoltaic generation hours are expected to reach about 1,340 hours, while total solar power generation is projected to increase by roughly 25 percent.

Global hydropower generation is also expected to post moderate growth, with total output rising by about 7 percent year-on-year, the report said.

Given the inherent intermittency and volatility of wind and solar power, Liu said improving long-term generation forecasting is essential for high-quality development. Building an integrated forecasting system for wind, solar and hydropower is crucial to ensuring power supply security, mitigating risks from extreme weather, and optimizing resource allocation across regions, he added.

Chang’e 6 samples contest moon theories

By LI MENGHAN
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A common belief holds that the moon’s far side is more rugged and cratered because it acted as a “shield,” bearing meteorite impacts originally headed for Earth. However, recent research on soil samples from the Chang’e 6 mission challenges this long-held assumption, suggesting that impacts are essentially the same on both the near and far sides of the moon.

Building on this discovery, Chinese scientists have developed a new lunar crater chronology model. The model allows for precise age estimates of unsampled lunar regions using only crater density measurements. This breakthrough, published on Thursday in the journal Science Advances, provides a universal framework for lunar science study.

“The moon serves as a record of impact processes for planets in the solar system. And the moon’s surface age is key to understanding its evolutionary history,” said Yue Zongyu, first author of the study and a professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Geology and Geophysics.

Yue explained that for unsampled lunar areas, scientists mainly rely on crater density to estimate age — the older the surface, the denser the impact craters. The core of this method lies in establishing a correlative relationship between the exist-



Yue Zongyu (third from right) exchanges ideas with other researchers on the significance of Chang’e 6 samples for the new lunar crater chronology model. REN HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

ing, precise radiometric age of soil samples and their estimated age.

Previous lunar chronology models relied on samples from the moon’s near side, all from surfaces less than 4 billion years old, leading to controversy about their credibility. However, the 1,935 grams of samples brought back from the moon’s far side by Chang’e 6 have changed the situation. These samples included norites dating back 4.25 billion years, likely corresponding to the age of the South Pole-Aitken basin — the largest and oldest crater on the moon.

The research team analyzed the radiometric age of samples from the far side and combined the data with high-resolution remote sensing information. They also incorporated historical data from the United States’ Apollo missions, the Soviet

Union’s Luna missions, and China’s Chang’e missions to develop the new lunar chronology model.

The results demonstrated a consistent impact rate between the moon’s near and far sides, indicating that the number of craters formed per unit area and unit time has been essentially the same on both sides during the same period.

Notably, this model challenges the long-debated “Late Heavy Bombardment” hypothesis, which suggests a massive bombardment occurred 3.9 billion years ago, as many Apollo samples cluster around that time. The new model suggests that these may only reflect local events rather than a global cataclysm. Instead, the moon’s early impact record points to a smooth decline in impact frequency.

Xizang govt plans prioritize education

By PALDEN NYIMA
and DAQIONG in Lhasa

The Xizang autonomous region will roll out a package of education upgrades from 2026, including free preschool education in rural areas, higher per-student funding and expanded investment in schools and higher education, regional officials said.

The initiative builds on a student aid system that supported more than 2.13 million students in 2025, according to official figures.

In 2026, the per-student funding standard for preschool education will rise from 380 yuan (\$55) to 1,000 yuan. Investment in compulsory education will also increase, with 51 primary and secondary schools and related facilities planned for construction or renovation to promote more balanced urban-rural development, according to the regional government.

Delivering the regional government work report, Karma Tsetan, chairman of the region, said education subsidies had been raised four times over the past five years, making education a central focus of social and economic development.

The higher education sector is also earmarked for further upgrades. Authorities plan to expand undergraduate programs and strengthen vocational education, with construction of a new campus for Xizang Vocational Technical College already underway.

In addition, several institutional changes were achieved in 2025, including the elevation of Xizang Agricultural and Animal Husbandry College to university status and the opening of a vocational and technical college in the city of Shigatse.

The region’s department of education said in a recent report that Xizang has successfully implemented the “three complete coverages” student aid framework, according to People’s Daily.

The system provides support across all educational levels, from kindergarten to university, and applies to both public and private institutions. It focuses particularly on students from economically disadvantaged families, ensuring they can continue their studies without financial constraints before, during or after enrollment.

Official figures show that by 2025, more than 5.27 billion yuan in student aid had been allocated, benefiting over 2.13 million students across the region. During the current academic year, the region continues to fully implement its 15-year free education policy along with the “sanbao” program.

Chodron, a mother of two in Palding village near Lhasa, said her children benefit from the “sanbao” program, which covers meals, school fees and accommodation. “The government also provides textbooks, uniforms and learning materials, making it much easier for our family,” she said.

At the higher education level, students benefit from a comprehensive support system that includes scholarships, grants, loans, work-study programs and tuition waivers.

From the autumn semester of 2025, the annual per-student standard under the “sanbao” program rose to 4,700 yuan, with higher subsidies for special education.

Penba Drolma, a student at Xizang University of Tibetan Medicine, said the policies have allowed children from rural communities to pursue education without financial pressure. “Thanks to the ‘sanbao’ policy, I received free education from kindergarten through middle school,” she said. “Even at university, we have access to scholarships and financial aid. These policies have greatly reduced the burden on families like mine.”

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