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Policies

Xi calls for developing China into world science and technology leader

[Xinhua, 29-05-2018] President Xi Jinping on Monday 28 May called for efforts to develop China into a world leader in science and technology.

Xi said as China strives for prosperity and rejuvenation, it needs to devote great energy to promoting science and technology, and endeavor to be a major world center for science and innovation.

Xi said the circumstances, challenges and missions are pressing. He called on the country's science and technology personnel to grasp the main trends, seize opportunities, face problems squarely, and rise to challenges.

Xi made the statement at the opening of the 19th Meeting of the Academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the 14th Meeting of the Academicians of the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE).

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Sustained reforms to drive growth

[China daily, 19-05-2018] China's economic transition toward high-quality development requires further reform and opening-up, a senior Chinese official said at a forum hosted by the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"Governments should substantially reduce their role in direct resources allocation, and channel more energy into macro regulation, public services, market supervision, social management and environmental protection," said Yang Weimin, deputy head of the Office of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs.

As the world's second-largest economy, China is in the process of a major economic transformation, shifting its focus from speed to quality. Slower GDP growth is now considered more tolerable, while other factors are being given greater importance, including employment, the environment and industrial restructuring.

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Future looks bright for better pig welfare in China

[Pig Progress, 02-05-2018] It is clear that there is a growing interest in animal welfare in China with the first official welfare standards being signed in November 2017. Research, animal welfare standards, and certification are moving forward to catch up with international levels. What does it mean for China's huge pig population?

In China, producers directly associate animal welfare with increased productivity. When animals are well cared for they will produce better, that is the thought. That is one major reason for producers to embrace the concept of animal welfare. Another reason for pig producers to adopt animal welfare standards is for reasons related to international trade. Large producers who wish to export to Europe may have to comply with EU standards.

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Rebuilding consumer trust in dairy industry

[China Daily, 29-05-2018]The State Council, China's Cabinet, decided to revitalize the domestic dairy industry and improve the quality of such products at an executive meeting, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday, 23 May.

Three measures were disclosed in a guideline, approved at the meeting, to rebuild consumer confidence in the dairy industry. A better breed of cows will be introduced and bred in key farms while bases for high-quality milk will also be built, said a statement released after the meeting. National standards for fresh milk and other products will be revised to improve quality supervision.

The premier said advanced technologies and management expertise should be adopted from leading dairy producing countries. The opening of the domestic market will in return push forward upgrading of China's dairy industry, he said.

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China's total arable land falls for fourth year in 2017

[Reuters, 19-05-2018] China's total arable land declined for a fourth consecutive year in 2017 as a result of new construction, natural disasters and environmental requirements, as well as agricultural production changes, the natural resources ministry said.

The Ministry of Natural Resources said the country's total arable land fell to 134.86 million hectares, a decline of 60,900 hectares compared to the previous year.

The cabinet, the State Council, said earlier this year that it would hold local governments fully responsible for retaining and protecting arable land under their jurisdiction, and for improving food quality, with failures likely to affect promotion prospects and even result in dismissal.

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China acts tough on insurance industry violations

[China Daily, 29-05-2018] Chinese regulators have taken a tough stance against violations in the insurance industry, meting out millions of dollars in fines in the first four months of 2018.

Over 60 insurance institutions received a total of more than 63 million yuan (about \$9.8 million) in penalties in the January-April period, the Securities Daily reported, citing incomplete statistics.

For property insurers, fiscal data fraud was the most frequent illegal practice, while car insurance and agricultural insurance were areas that saw heavy penalties.

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China will increase purchases of US goods - if it wants them

[China daily, 22-05-2018] The US-China trade talks produced a joint statement in which China pledged to significantly increase purchases of United States goods and services. There is, however, an important caveat to such a commitment.

It is that the products and services from the US, or indeed from any other country, must be those that the Chinese people are willing to buy.

It is an important caution; it means China won't buy additional US products and services it doesn't need, nor is the country likely to switch purchases from other countries to the US.

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Migrants now find jobs closer to home

[China Daily, 20-05-2018] For decades, many of China's vast army of migrant workers - rural workers who leave their hometowns - had to travel far from their families to seek better jobs. Now, more are finding employment closer to home.

In Chinese statistics, rural workers are people born in rural areas who are not engaged in farming. Migrant workers are those from rural areas who work outside their hometowns.

Some 2.51 million rural residents joined the migrant workforce last year, taking the total to 172 million, a 1.5 percent rise year-on-year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

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Science, Technology and Environment

Chinese vice premier calls for technological innovation in agriculture

[Xinhua, 26-05-2018] Chinese Vice Premier Hu Chunhua on Saturday called for more technological innovation to modernize the country's agricultural sector.

Hu, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during an inspection tour to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Agricultural tech innovation should be treated as the core in agricultural and rural development, and favorable policies should be made to support it, Hu said.

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Chinese fish farm tests deep-sea waters with 'world's biggest' salmon cage

[SCMP, 05-05-2018] A Chinese fisheries company will soon launch a massive deep-sea salmon farming facility in the eastern province of Shandong to help meet the country's growing appetite for seafood.

Shandong Wanzefeng Fishery, the operator, said a fully submersible net cage called Deep Blue No 1, the world's biggest, was delivered to the shipyard of state-owned Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry on Friday 4 May.

The 35-metre-high cage will be deployed in the Yellow Sea about 130 nautical miles east of Rizhao where the cold water is believed to be a suitable habitat for the fish.

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Test planting of saltwater rice begins

[China Daily, 29-05-2018] Renowned Chinese agricultural scientist Yuan Longping and his research team planted saltwater-tolerant rice on six plots of saline-alkali land on Monday, 28 May.

It was the first time this kind of rice has been planted simultaneously on different types of such land, a major step in exploring its commercial viability.

The planting sites are in Kashgar, in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region; Daqing, Heilongjiang province; Dongying and Qingdao, Shandong province; Wenzhou, Zhejiang province; and Yan'an, Shaanxi province. The sites represent virtually every type of saline-alkali land in China.

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Chinese team succeeds in planting saltwater rice in Dubai's desert

[China daily, 31-05-2018] Renowned Chinese agricultural scientist Yuan Longping and his research team's experiment of planting saltwater-tolerant rice in desert areas of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates proved to be a success, with one type of rice yielding more than 7.5 tons per hectare.

It was the world's first successful case of planting rice in a tropical desert area, standing as China's contribution to improve the capability of people in desert areas to be self-sufficient in staple foods, a move that can safeguard global food security and improve the desert ecological environment.

The technology of saltwater-tolerant rice plays a key role in the success as the natural environment of the Dubai desert is harsh for rice growth.

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New soybean variety to benefit China's oil companies

[China Daily, 24-05-2018] Recently, a new variety of soybean named Dongsheng 79 has received the approval of the Heilongjiang Crops Variety Examination.

The new variety has been developed by Heilongjiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Its average fat content can reach up to 24.16 percent, 3 to 4 percent higher than genetically modified soybeans, which will help reduce domestic oil companies' dependence on the import of GM soybeans.

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China establishes database for pesticide residue

[Xinhua, 26-05-2018] Chinese experts have established a database for pesticide residue on fruits and vegetables, scientists said at the China International Big Data Industry Expo 2018 in Guiyang.

Researchers performed pesticide checks on 40,000 samples of 150 types of fruits and vegetables in 1,470 different locations. The aim is to present a picture of pesticide residue across the country and aid pesticide control.

China has established electronic IDs for 1,200 types of pesticides and developed screening methods to test for their presence and quantity.

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China launches new Earth observation satellite for environmental monitoring

[Xinhua, 09-05-2018] China on Wednesday 9th May launched Gaofen-5, a hyperspectral imaging satellite, as part of the country's high-resolution Earth observation project.

Gaofen-5 is the first China-developed satellite that can monitor air pollution. It can dynamically reflect the state of air pollution in China through the monitoring of air pollutants, greenhouse gases, and aerosols.

Gaofen-5 is able to obtain spectral information from ultraviolet to long-wave infrared radiation. It is the world's first full-spectrum hyperspectral satellite for comprehensive observation of the atmosphere and land.

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Chinese scientists develop new controlled-release pesticide

[Xinhua, 20-05-2018] Chinese scientists have developed a light-responsive controlled-release pesticide that can increase efficiency and is more environmental-friendly.

Conducted by scientists from Hefei Institute of Physical Science under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the research was published online in Chemical Engineering Journal in May.

The pesticide is made with a nanocomposite and has high sensitivity to ultraviolet-visible light. It can efficiently regulate the release of pesticides through light, realize the on-demand supply of pesticides, and significantly improve the utilization rate.

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Nation's artificial intelligence boom to open new vistas

[China Daily, 22-05-2018] Riding the global wave of artificial intelligence, China aims to improve productivity and inject new momentum into its economy by encouraging more businesses to tap into the fledging industry.

By June 2017, about one-fourth of the world's 2,542 AI companies were present in China, where around 15,700 AI-related patents were filed, ranking it No 2 after the United States, according to the China Internet Network Information Center.

Last July, the State Council issued a plan for new-generation AI technology development, pledging to make the industry a major new growth engine and improve people's lives by 2020, and to make the country the world leader for AI innovation by 2030.

China's AI industry output last year was 18 billion yuan (\$2.82 billion) and the value of related industries reached 220 billion yuan, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

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The future of retail in China: using Big Data to create smart shops

[Just-Food, 18-05-2018] China boasts the most Internet users in the world. With around 750m people online, Internet usage is roughly the same as India (number two) and the US (number three) combined. Of these online users, the China Internet Network Information Centre says, 95% of them access the web via a mobile phone.

The country's dominance of the e-commerce arena is well-documented - and it is the same Internet giants that are starting the latest trend in shopping.

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Your Chinese takeaway is ready to be delivered by drone

[SCMP, 30-05-2018] Ele.me, one of China's leading online food delivery platforms, has been given the green light by authorities to operate in the country's initial delivery routes for drones.

The 17 newly approved routes over an industrial zone in Shanghai will enable consumers there to receive online takeaway meal orders via drones within 20 minutes after confirming the delivery on their smartphones, according to Ele.me during an event in Shanghai on Tuesday, 29 May.

Deliveries in the Shanghai Jinshan Industrial Park, which covers an area of about 58 square kilometres (22.4 square miles), are expected to benefit more than 100 food merchants doing business there, the company said.

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Carrefour launches first smart store

[China Daily, 22-05-2018] French hypermarket chain Carrefour SA opened its first smart retail store on Sunday in Shanghai, featuring technologies ranging from facial recognition payment to personalized mobile advertisements backed by internet giant Tencent Holdings Ltd.

All items sold in the store have a distinctive bar code that customers can scan using Tencent's WeChat, the ubiquitous messaging and payment mobile app that boasts over one billion monthly active users.

Customers can then either pay with WeChat Pay and leave via a designated passageway, or activate the facial recognition function embedded in the digital wallet at the counter, and choose to pay with a smile.

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Trade and Business

Tea trading volumes soar at China International Tea Expo

[China daily, 23-05-2018] The volume of tea trade at the second China International Tea Expo increased from 67.8 million yuan last year to 103 million yuan (\$16.2 million).

More than 4,000 orders were signed and nearly 100 tons of tea were sold during the five day event, held in Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang province.

More than 1,500 Chinese and overseas tea enterprises participated in the expo that closed Tuesday, which was attended by more than 150,000 visitors, according to the organizer.

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China's foreign agriculture investments

[USDA, April] Chinese companies are increasing their investments in foreign agricultural and food assets. While the United States is the largest supplier of China's agricultural imports, it has not been a major target of Chinese agricultural investment. Chinese investors tend to enter less-developed countries where there are few competitors, potential to raise productivity using Chinese technology, and potential to diversify suppliers of Chinese imports. A few companies with access to financing from Chinese banks are pursuing mergers, acquisitions, and partnerships with companies in more developed markets. These investments reflect changes in China's demand for food and its need for upgrades in technology and management, but most ventures have modest impacts on agricultural trade.

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China increases agricultural imports to benefit itself, the world

[CGTN, 24-05-2018] With a recent agreement reached by China and the US on agricultural trade, China is expected to expand and diversify farm produce imports more actively to benefit itself and other countries.

China is already the world's biggest farm produce importer, with its imports making up 10 percent of global farm produce trade.

By opening up the agricultural sector, China can increase the supply of farm produce, ease the domestic strain of resources, accelerate modernization of the industry, and offer consumers tangible benefits, said a researcher with Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

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China market ripe for fresh US foods

[China Daily, 30-05-2018] While China is geared up to increase imports of US agricultural products, its potential as a market for fresh produce means big opportunities for US companies.

US fresh produce exports to China are small because of logistics, but one way to penetrate the market would be to build processing facilities and supply chains in China with US technology, said industry experts in California.

An interesting business partnership would be taking the blueprint of a highly advanced fresh produce processing facility to China and deploy it, said Brian Curtis, CEO of Concentric Power, which provides microgrid systems to the agriculture sector to optimize their energy efficiency.

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Intl community welcomes outcome of China-US trade talks

[Xinhua, 20-05-2018] On 19th May, China and the United States issued a joint statement, vowing not to launch a trade war against each other. The international community welcomed this consensus reached by the world's two largest economies.

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China launches "emergency" campaign to boost soy output

[Reuters, 03-05-2018] China is taking extra efforts to increase its soybean output this year amid an ongoing trade spat with the United States that threatens to curb imports from its second supplier.

A document circulating online apparently published by the Heilongjiang provincial government called for an extra 5 million mu (333,333 hectares) to be planted with soybeans this year.

The so-called "emergency notice" also called for an additional 2 million mu to be included in an ongoing programme to rotate corn with other crops such as soybeans.

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B&R Initiative offers enormous opportunities to Britain: British official

[Xinhua, 15-05-2018] Rona Fairhead, minister of state for Trade and Export Promotion at the Department for International Trade, said in an opinion editorial published in British online news website CAPX that she is attending the Silk Road Expo in Xi'an, capital city of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, which she considers as a "significant, rapidly growing trade event" which will see companies across the world attending in an attempt to seize the growing commercial opportunities offered by the China-proposed initiative.

"The BRI (The Belt and Road Initiative) is at the heart of China's drive to continue its rapid development," she said, adding that the initiative involves investing in infrastructure projects throughout Asia, and central and eastern Europe, which are expected to be significant drivers of global growth and economic development across Asia and beyond for generations to come.

Fairhead said as China rebalances and reforms its economy, with the B&R Initiative as its flagship initiative, British companies, technology and services can support its development and help it achieve its ambitions.

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China drops sanctions probe into US sorghum imports

[BBC, 18-05-2018] China says it is dropping an anti-dumping probe into sorghum imports from the US, as the two sides discuss ways of easing trade tensions.

In April, Beijing introduced a high tariff on the imports as part of a tit-for-tat trade spat between with the US.

But China's commerce ministry has now said the measures affect consumers and are not in the public interest.

China said a final ruling on whether to continue April's 178.6% tariffs would be made after a further investigation.

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China April soybean imports unexpectedly drop below 7 million T due to VAT change

[Reuters, 09-05-2018] China's April soybean imports fell to 6.9 million tonnes, much lower than expected, as arrivals were delayed because of tougher port inspections and a tax change, said traders and analysts.

The 13.7 percent drop from a year ago to less than 7 million tonnes caught the market by surprise. China had been expected to take 8.5 million tonnes in April, higher than last year, amid good crushing margins in the world's top buyer of beans.

The lower-than-expected number appears partly related to a 1 percentage point reduction from May 1 in the value-added tax on agricultural imports, said traders.

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China's corn exports projection slashed due to supply gap

[Xinhua, 13-05-2018] China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has slashed its projection for the country's corn exports from October 2017 to September 2018, due to a supply gap.

Corn exports during the period are estimated at 200,000 tonnes, down 300,000 tonnes from the projection made last month, according to a report by the Chinese Agriculture Outlook Committee, an advisory body under the ministry.

In the period between October 2018 and September 2019, corn output is expected to drop 2.9 percent year-on-year to 210 million tonnes.

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China Premier Li says open to increasing Indonesia palm oil import quota

[Reuters, 07-05-2018] China is open to increasing its import quota of Indonesian palm oil by at least 500,000 tonnes, Premier Li Keqiang said on Monday, 7 May.

Li's comment came at a joint news conference with Widodo before the Chinese premier travelled to Jakarta to visit the headquarters of ASEAN. The two countries also signed a number of memoranda of understanding, including on the construction of dams in Indonesia's Sulawesi island and South Kalimantan province on Borneo.

China currently consumes 5 million tonnes of palm oil, said Li. Indonesia, the world's biggest palm oil producer, exported 3.73 million tonnes of palm oil to China last year, a leading destination after India and the European Union.

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China ramps up checks on U.S. pork imports in potentially costly slowdown

[Reuters, 08-05-2018] China has ramped up inspections of pork shipped from the United States, importers and industry sources said, the latest American product to be hit by a potentially costly slowdown at Chinese ports in the past couple of weeks.

Some trade experts said they believe Beijing is sending a defiant warning to Washington in response to sweeping U.S. trade demands made on China last week.

The stepped-up checks have even hit China's WH Group Ltd, the world's largest pork company and owner of Smithfield Foods in the United States, and come amid increasing scrutiny of other U.S. farm goods, including fruit and logs.

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