

BUSINESS

Green shift, digitalization to step up in energy sector

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China's oil and gas industry is entering a pivotal phase of high-quality development as it transitions into the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) period, aiming to balance energy security with an accelerated shift toward green energy and digitalization.

Following several production records in 2025, the National Energy Administration has outlined a strategic roadmap to transform the sector into a core pillar of a modern, resilient energy system.

Liu Hong, director of NEA's oil and gas department, said the industry is moving beyond its traditional role to become a "comprehensive energy provider".

"As a pillar of the national economy, oil and gas remain fundamental energy sources and industrial raw materials, carrying the mission of ensuring supply while empowering the broader energy transition."

According to the NEA, the sector concluded the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) with unprecedented momentum, with annual investment in exploration and development averaging 387 billion yuan (\$56.57 billion), a 48 percent increase over the previous five-year cycle.

Domestic crude oil production last year reached approximately 216 million metric tons, while natural gas output hit 261.9 billion cubic meters — marking nine consecutive years of growth exceeding 10 billion cubic meters annually, the NEA said.

Both figures represent historic highs for the world's second-largest economy, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

The shift toward renewables has gathered speed, with traditional energy security remaining a top priority. Infrastructure development has also kept pace with production, he said.

China's long-distance oil and gas pipelines now exceed 200,000 kilometers in total length, supported by a domestic storage capacity of 54 billion cubic meters and a gas pipeline transmission capacity of over 400 billion cubic meters per year.

This national grid has been instrumental in stabilizing energy prices and supply despite international market volatility, said NEA's Liu.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, China maintained stable imports of an average of 540 million tons of crude oil and 167 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually, bolstered by four major strategic import channels.

According to the NEA, one defining feature of the 15th Five-Year Plan will be the deep integration of fossil fuels with renewable energy and digital technologies.

The country has already overseen successful pilot programs, including using green electricity to boost oil production and injecting over 11 million tons of carbon dioxide through carbon capture, utilization and storage technology, it said.

"The development of a new energy system provides a major opportunity for oil and gas transformation," Liu said.

He highlighted that oil and gas fields are uniquely positioned to become "comprehensive energy suppliers" because they often possess abundant solar, wind and geothermal resources alongside existing infrastructure.

The NEA is accelerating a low-carbon transformation by evolving traditional oilfields into "multi-energy hubs" that integrate renewables, supported by the deployment of artificial intelligence across the value chain to enhance everything from smart exploration to predictive grid scheduling.

For 2026, the NEA will prioritize "artificial intelligence plus oil and gas" initiatives to improve the efficiency of exploration, grid scheduling and supply-demand forecasting.

It aims to establish a modern industrial system that is green, low-carbon and internationally reliable, to ensure a robust start to the new planning cycle of the 15th Five-Year Plan for the oil and gas sector.

It vows to continue pushing for upstream expansion in major basins to secure domestic energy supplies and guarantee stable crude output, while enhancing infrastructure connectivity by optimizing the national gas backbone and exploring the transport of green hydrogen through existing pipelines.

The 2026 roadmap also emphasizes global cooperation and market reform to foster a more efficient global and domestic marketplace, including strengthening trade ties with resource-producing nations, said Liu.



Visitors browse imported goods during a trade fair in Beijing on Feb 4. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA

Catalog of services imports to expand

Opening-up move to spur innovation, green transition and global cooperation

By ZHONG NAN
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China's latest move to unveil an updated catalog aimed at expanding services imports will provide broader market space for companies worldwide and help facilitate the efficient allocation of high-quality global services resources, said government officials and company executives on Thursday.

According to details published by the Ministry of Commerce on Wednesday, the government will encourage the import of research and development, design, testing, intellectual property and digital technology services to strengthen innovation capacity, accelerate industrial upgrading and advance the ongoing green and low-carbon transition.

The revisions were made by multiple authorities, including the Ministry of Commerce, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

The head of the department of trade in services and commercial services at the Ministry of Commerce said the latest revision follows principles designed to better align services imports with China's high-quality development goals.

Priority is given to services related to urgent domestic demand that can support the development of new quality productive forces in the production sector and improve people's quality of life through enhanced consumer services, said the commerce official in a statement.

The policy document states that priority will be given to services in

energy conservation, resource recycling, environmental governance and climate solutions, including pollution control, ecological restoration, carbon reduction and circular economy services that enhance sustainability and underpin high-quality development.

The catalog also promotes the import of consulting, supply chain management, green building, healthcare and rehabilitation services, with the aim of improving public well-being and modernizing governance.

Nie Pingxiang, a researcher specializing in trade in services at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said that by expanding imports of high value-added services, the updated catalog aims to boost China's innovation and public services while underscoring its commitment to higher-level opening-up, balanced trade and win-win cooperation.

"These measures are expected to help ease trade imbalances and foster a more balanced and sustainable international trade structure, while offering China's market opportunities to support the global green transition, digital economy development and modernization of public governance," said Nie.

China's trade in services reached 8.08 trillion yuan (\$1.18 trillion) in 2025, up 7.4 percent year-on-year, while its services imports stood at 4.46 trillion yuan, rising 2.5 percent on a yearly basis, said the Ministry of Commerce.

Data also showed that China's imports of knowledge-intensive services reached 1.26 trillion yuan last year, up 1.3 percent year-on-year.

Against this backdrop, business leaders highlighted the growing role of services imports in supporting China's industrial transformation.

Noting that China's continued expansion of services imports signals its shift from a major goods exporter to a key driver of global value chain collaboration, Denis Depoux, global managing director of management consultancy Roland Berger, said that producer services are emerging as a key accelerator for the high-quality development of the real economy across China.

"In regions with strong industrial foundations, producer services should be leveraged to extend the value chains of leading manufacturing sectors both upstream and downstream, while also facilitating these chains' own transition toward higher-end capabilities and fostering a new wave of horizontal clustering," said Depoux.

Also encouraged by China's latest push to promote trade in services, Poh-Yian Koh, president of FedEx China, said the United States-based express transportation services provider will also deepen its footprint in the country.

Operating more than 300 international flights to and from China each week, Koh said that the country serves as one of the key engines of global trade and an integral part of FedEx's global strategy.

"We are dedicated to making supply chains smarter for all our customers, and strengthening connections between China and the rest of the world in the logistics sector," she said. "By leveraging our extensive global air and ground networks and smart digital solutions, we look forward to empowering Chinese customers to grow to the next level."

Ice, snow economy reshaping rural lives

XIAN — It's early spring, but in Northwest China's Shaanxi province, frozen waterfalls still cling to the mountainsides of the Qinling Mountains while skiers carve across snowy trails on the Loess Plateau.

Shaanxi straddles China's north-south geographical divide. In both southern and northern Shaanxi — from the Qinling Mountains to the Loess Plateau — winter chill has been turned into economic heat, unlocking the potential of ice and snow while reshaping local livelihoods and the regional economy.

In the city of Shangluo, deep in the Qinling Mountains, restaurateur Wu Xianpeng runs a small eatery in the Jiangshan scenic area. Since January, tourists have been pouring in.

"Usually, the scenic area would close in late October, and I'd have to go out looking for work," Wu said. "I never imagined that this winter I'd be so busy that I wouldn't even have time for my kids."

Li Yong, an official with the scenic area's administrative committee, shared that sentiment. "We used to shut down for the winter, with no revenue and little for local villagers to do," he said. "This January, we created a snow park and icefall landscapes using the natural terrain, and visitors loved it."

Visitor Zhang Xue spent a full day at the scenic spot with her child. "There wasn't much to do around here in winter. Kids got bored at home," she said.

"Now we have ice and snow tourism right at our doorstep. Besides playing in the snow, we can also experience intangible cultural heritages like clay sculpture, shadow puppetry and paper-cutting."

Wang Qiufeng, deputy director of Shangluo's culture and tourism bureau, said: "Shangluo's tourism market used to be bustling in summer but quiet in winter. Now, beyond the Jiangshan scenic area, multiple attractions are tapping into the winter economy. Winter is no longer an idle season but a new opportunity for farmers to increase their income."

Heading further north, across Qinling's main range, another remarkable winter transformation unfolds in the city of Yan'an on the Loess Plateau.

Yaodian village under Yan'an sits at an altitude of about 1,600 meters, with winter temperatures often dropping to -10 C. Identified by sports authorities as having natural conditions ideal for cross-country skiing, it was selected as a winter sports base. From Dec 8, 2025, to Feb 17, 2026, skiers raced down its trails daily.

"For generations, we farmed the land. When winter came, both people and land rested," said Ruan Changguo, the village Party chief, pointing to a hillside. "Now it's still the same land, but in winter it 'grows' ski trails. When the trails close at the end of the ski season, farmers will plow and plant corn again."

Today, 78 mu (5.2 hectares) of sloping farmland in Yaodian has achieved a "crop rotation" of sorts — professional ski trails in winter, corn and vegetables in spring. During winter, athletic teams train here. A long-vacant school building has been converted into a fully functional athlete service base, creating employment opportunities for locals.

Yaodian's transformation reflects a new winter landscape across the Loess Plateau. At various ski resorts in Yan'an, visitors flocked in, with combined numbers surpassing 1,000 on weekends. In neighboring Yulin, more than 30 ski venues have been built, and the city even hosted the first Shaanxi Provincial Winter Games this month.

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Back on track



Technicians at Nanchang Railway Station in Shanxi province conduct real-time operations to advance the smooth completion of a major overhaul project at the station — a key project facilitating operations of the Houma-Yueshan Railway. Administered by the Houma signaling and telecommunications section of China Railway Taiyuan Group, the project covers dismantling and installation of new equipment and cable reconnection. FENG YUE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Nvidia gets nod to ship H200 chips to Chinese market

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US-based semiconductor company Nvidia Corp said on Thursday that it had secured a license from Washington to ship a small number of its less-advanced H200 chips to customers in China.

However, the company also pointed out that, due to regulatory uncertainty, it would not include any data-center revenue from China in its first-quarter sales outlook.

"While small amounts of H200 products for China-based customers were approved by the US government, we have yet to generate any revenue, and we do not know whether any imports will be allowed into China," Colette Kress, Nvidia's executive vice-president and chief financial officer, said during a post-earnings call.

This came after Nvidia's revenue in China fell to \$19.7 billion for the financial year ended Jan 25, down

21.2 percent from \$25 billion a year earlier, according to its latest results announcement.

Kress also warned about rising competition in China, where domestic chipmakers have rushed to initial public offerings in recent months to meet soaring demand and position themselves as alternatives to Nvidia.

Chinese chip companies have the potential to reshape the structure of the global AI industry over the long term, Kress said.

A wave of IPOs is sweeping China's graphics processing unit, marking a critical phase in the nation's push for self-reliance in advanced computing power amid Washington's export restrictions.

On Jan 22, Shanghai-based Enflame Technology's application to list on Shanghai's Nasdaq-style STAR Market was accepted by the exchange. This paves the way for "The Four Dragons" — Enflame, Moore Threads, MetaX and Biren

Technology — to complete their convergence in the capital markets.

It also follows the successful listing of another Shanghai GPU firm, Iluvatar CoreX, on the main board of the Hong Kong stock exchange on Jan 8. It became the second home-grown GPU company to go public in Hong Kong after Biren. Earlier, industry leaders Moore Threads and MetaX had already debuted on the STAR Market to significant investor interest.

Dong Peng, a senior economist and member of the assets committee of the China Enterprise Confederation, described this listing wave as "a collective breakthrough for domestic computing power during a strategic window of opportunity."

"Beneath the surface heat in capital markets lie two fundamental drivers," Dong said.

"First, the national demand for autonomy and controllability in AI and high-end manufacturing has

created an unprecedented dual engine of policy and market support. Second, Washington's export restrictions on US leaders like Nvidia have opened a precious market window for domestic firms."

He emphasized that listing is not merely about fundraising, but a crucial step in establishing industry standards and ecosystem influence.

Zhou Di, a senior engineer and expert with the National Science and Technology Expert Database of the Ministry of Science and Technology, said China's AI computing market is likely to evolve toward a "dual-track, domestically led" new market landscape.

"Nvidia is likely to retain a share in the high-end AI training market, represented by the demand of hyperscale internet companies and cutting-edge research institutes, by virtue of its technical advantages. Domestic GPUs, leveraging cost-performance ratios, customized services, policy

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Colette Kress, Nvidia's executive vice-president and chief financial officer

support and security advantages, are positioned to dominate vertical sectors like government affairs, finance, industry and healthcare, as well as broader cost-performance-sensitive markets," Zhou said.