

# TOP NEWS

## Targets set for growth of digital sector

Five-year plan seeks infrastructure upgrade, transformation of industries

By XU WEI  
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China has laid out a blueprint for the growth of its digital economy until 2025, pledging to further upgrade the nation's digital infrastructure, increase the role of data as a production element and promote the digital transformation of industries.

The plan to develop the digital economy during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, released on Wednesday by the State Council, China's Cabinet, highlighted the role of the sector as a key force in reshaping the global economic structure and international competition.

It set out a number of targets for the nation to achieve by 2025, when the added value of the core industries in the digital economy is expected to account for 10 percent of GDP, up from 7.8 percent in 2020.

China is expected to establish a market system for data elements, achieve progress in the digitalization of its industries and offer more equitable digital public services by 2025.

In upgrading the nation's digital infrastructure, the government will coordinate the construction of gigabit broadband and 5G networks, the plan said. Efforts will be undertaken to promote more commercial and large-scale use of 5G and scale up support for the research and development of 6G, the next generation of wireless technology.

The number of China's gigabit broadband users is expected to jump from 6.4 million in 2020 to 60 million in 2025, according to the plan.

### Trade ties



Workers load pine nuts into a plane at Kabul International Airport in Afghanistan on Monday. The cargo plane later left the Afghan capital for China carrying about 45 metric tons of pine nuts, the first airborne shipment of the nuts to China this year.

SAIFURAHMAN SAFI / XINHUA

## Area: More efforts urged to boost region's global recognition

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More efforts should also be made to boost technological innovation, and promote upgrading of the industrial structure and green and low-carbon development, Zhang added.

"I firmly believe that with the support of the central government and the engagement of all circles of society, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao can build the Greater Bay Area into a leading landmark worldwide and a world-class city cluster," he said.

In February 2019, the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council jointly released the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, marking a new phase in the construction of the Greater Bay Area.

According to the plan, the main focus will be building the area into a vibrant world-class city cluster, a globally influential international innovation and technology hub, a key component of the Belt and Road Initiative and a showcase for in-depth cooperation between the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao. It will also become an ideal place to live, work and visit, the document said.

Having lived in the Greater Bay Area for almost two decades, Peter Helis, chief adviser of the Guangzhou Huangpu District, said he believed it is one of the most vibrant areas and possibly the fastest developing one in the world.

"Remember the slogan quite well, which was 'from made in Guangdong to create in Guangdong'. The drive gained such momentum that the GBA now not only accounts for

### Powerful link



Construction workers complete the final part of a 385-meter power transmission tower in Taizhou, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. The tower will help to transmit electricity across the Yangtze River between Fengcheng and Meili in Jiangsu to ease power shortages in those areas. TANG DEHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## China, Gulf states to bolster strategic partnership

By WANG QINGYUN  
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China and the Gulf Cooperation Council have agreed to set up a strategic partnership as soon as possible to enhance pragmatic cooperation, tackle challenges and serve their common interests.

According to a joint statement issued on Wednesday, the two sides agreed to sign an action plan for 2022 to 2025, finish negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement and set up a China-GCC free trade zone as soon as possible.

They also agreed to hold a fourth strategic dialogue in Riyadh at an appropriate time.

The statement was issued after State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Nayef bin Falah Al-Hajraf, secretary-general of the GCC, in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, on Tuesday, and reached consensus on a series of issues.

Both Wang and Nayef agreed

that China and the GCC should strengthen coordination on international and regional affairs, and work together to tackle global challenges such as COVID-19 and climate change.

Welcoming Nayef on his first visit to China, Wang said the council is the most vigorous regional organization in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, and has played a positive role in the international community and the region.

China and the GCC have strengthened mutual political trust and deepened pragmatic cooperation to become development partners with the same ideas and intertwined interests, he said.

Wang said China praises the council for understanding and supporting the nation over issues related to its core interests and major concerns. Also, China firmly supports GCC states in their efforts to safeguard independence, security and stability, he added.

China will continue to oppose any country interfering in GCC

states' domestic affairs in the name of "human rights" and object to associating terrorism with certain religions or ethnic groups, the foreign minister said, adding that both sides should cooperate to contribute to regional and world peace.

Nayef said that China is an important strategic partner and the largest trade partner of the GCC, and that the council appreciates China for its important and positive role in international and regional affairs.

Besides Nayef, China is also hosting the foreign ministers of four GCC member states, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain, from Monday through Friday.

In Wang's talks with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah in Wuxi on Wednesday, China and Kuwait agreed to better align the Belt and Road Initiative with Kuwait's Vision 2035 project. They also agreed to strengthen cooperation in fields including agriculture, food security, new energy and 5G technology.

## Envoy rallies NHL crowd for Beijing Olympics

By YIFAN XU in Washington  
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The Chinese Ambassador to the US Qin Gang has given details of preparations for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in front of 18,000 National Hockey League fans in the United States.

In a video address to the fans, Qin also expressed his best wishes for the Chinese and US ice hockey teams competing in the men's Olympic ice hockey tournament.

The video was played on a giant screen on Monday as the game between the Washington Capitals and Boston Bruins at the Capital One Arena in Washington, DC, was coming to an end.

In a message played on the

screen above the ice rink, Qin greeted the fans and quoted famous former NHL player Mario Lemieux who said "every day is a great day for hockey".

"I wish to thank (the) players of both teams for making today a great day," Qin said.

"People love ice hockey because of its speed and skills. Hockey players have fire in their hearts and ice in their veins. People love it also because it reflects the sportsmanship of mutual respect, fair play and tenacity."

The Chinese and US men's ice hockey teams will compete in the same group in Beijing next month. Qin said he hopes there are plenty of goals from both teams. He wished both the Chinese and US

teams the best of luck.

Qin also explained to the crowd that the Beijing Winter Olympics would use the world's most advanced ice-making technology, with zero carbon emissions.

He concluded his speech with a reminder that as the COVID-19 pandemic is still spreading, everyone needs to learn from the hockey players and always wear a mask.

To mark the upcoming Chinese New Year, Slapshot, the mascot of the Washington Capitals, tossed tiger dolls into the audience during breaks in the game to cheering and applause.

The promotional event, Together for a Shared Future, was co-hosted by the Chinese embassy and China Global Television Network.

improve environmental governance, which will help improve the efficiency of making the related policies and laws.

Nathan Keith Williams, a video producer at China Daily, said that the Greater Bay Area stands out due to its great economic strength, booming manufacturing and new technology sectors, modern and comprehensive transport system and high level of internationalization.

Citing a recent 12-day tour of the area, Williams said he had seen tremendous changes and distinctive development models in the Greater Bay Area in terms of technological manufacturing and innovation.

"During my travels I have seen a vibrant and internationally competitive first-class bay area, with distinctive geographical advantages, robust economic strength, a high concentration of key factors of innovation, advanced level of internationalization and solid cooperation foundations," he added.

## Ecology: Renewable energy to be given priority

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The media release said the guideline also includes specific clauses on overseas projects involving energy, petrochemicals, mining and transportation, considering that they are key parts of the country's overseas investment and BRI construction.

Under the guideline, when energy projects are developed, priority should be given to renewable energy. Companies should avoid building hydropower stations in natural reserves and key animal habitats, and they should take necessary measures to protect aquatic organisms and other wild species.

Zhang Jianyu, executive director of the BRI Green Development Institute, lauded the importance that the guideline has attached to climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation, saying it shows China is a responsible major world power.

Many developing nations boast rich biodiversity resources, and some areas in these countries are environmentally fragile, Zhang said, adding that efforts to address such issues will help create a favorable environment for Chinese companies' operations.

He said it is "farsighted" for China to pay attention to the two issues, both of which are great concerns worldwide.

"Companies should incorporate environmental protection into their development strategy," the guideline said. "With common international practices as references, they should establish institutions and regulations on environmental protection to improve their internal environmental management system."

Aside from ramping up capacity building with training and seminars, Chinese enterprises should designate special personnel to take charge of environmental protection work, it added.

The guideline encourages Chinese enterprises to adopt international or Chinese green standards when these are stronger than the host country standards, which is also emphasized in the Green Development Guidelines for Overseas Investment and Cooperation, which the country made public in July.

China had taken a series of other concrete actions to make the BRI greener.

In September, President Xi pledged that China will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad. He announced later that the country would invest 1.5 billion yuan (\$235.7 million) to establish the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, which will be used to support developing countries' endeavors in biodiversity conservation.

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