



Science China Newsletter, February 2020

Trends in education, research, innovation and policy



Wai Tan, Shanghai, China

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Swiss Spotlight

Startup: Voliro AG revolutionises Work at Height

(voliro.com, February 29, 2020)

Voliro AG, an ETH Zurich spin-off based in Zurich, Switzerland, is a project at Wyss Zurich and revolutionises work at height by providing the world's first flying robot that can perform contact-based and close-to-structure work. Voliro is producing the next generation of drones that can fly, see and touch. The drones feature a novel drone architecture in which the arms are actuated to rotate around the main body, enabling thrust vectoring. This unique technological capability enables the drone to generate forces of up to 3 kg in any direction, ensuring stable and reliable contact between the drone payload and obstacles, as well as a stable flight pattern close to structures. The Voliro drone can thus perform contact-based inspections of infrastructure in the oil and gas, chemical and governmental sectors. Moreover, this ability to fly close to structures enables the drone to perform reliable and stable spraying tasks, such as spray-painting and facade cleaning. Voliro drones are your hands in the sky. Voliro is planning on being part of the CES Asia 2020 in Shanghai and looks for partners and customers in China and throughout Asia.



[/web/2020/00-200229-6f](#)

Scientist: Crossover Designs

(studiolite.ch, February 29, 2020)

Alexandre Sadeghi is an architect and designer, a member of the Swiss Institute of Architects and Engineers, and currently Design Principal at Studiolute (SLT), based in Shanghai. Working at the intersection of narrative, technology, and design, Alex applies business, crossover strategies, and creative solutions into innovative projects. These range from the architectural and urban-scale, to spatial and product designs, and have extended to exhibition design, as well as sculptural and installation artworks. He obtained his architectural Masters Degree at EPFL in 2014, and has worked in New York, Beijing, and Switzerland. Since the founding of Studiolute, Alex has designed projects in most of China's major cities, for both international and local clients. Passionate about the relationship between data, new technology, and urban futures, his academic research on contemporary Chinese cities studied the use of parametric tools and models in the context of China's rapid urbanization, and he has since served as a guest critic and lecturer at his alma mater, and in Shanghai.



[/web/2020/00-200229-02](#)

Real-Time Update on Coronavirus Outbreak

(Global Times, February 26, 2020)

[https://www.globaltimes.cn//content/1177737.shtml
/web/2020/03-200226-38](https://www.globaltimes.cn//content/1177737.shtml/web/2020/03-200226-38)



0. Policy

Government Offers Favorable Policies to Fight Epidemic

(China Daily, February 03, 2020)

Several departments of China's central government have rolled out favorable policies or provided funds for local governments and individuals to fight the new coronavirus, an official with the National Health Commission (NHC) said. Patients confirmed to be infected with the virus will receive subsidies from the central and local governments for medical expenditures that are not covered by insurance or medical aid, said Li Bin, deputy director of the NHC, at a press conference. The Ministry of Finance has earmarked a total of 5.4 billion yuan (about \$769.8 million) to support local governments across the country to prevent and control the epidemic, including 1.5 billion yuan to Hubei province, the center of the battle, Li said.

</web/2020/01-200203-31>

Country's Biggest Political Event Put on Hold

(China Daily, February 25, 2020)

China's top legislative and political advisory bodies have decided to postpone this year's two sessions, which customarily begin in early March, as the nation focuses on fighting the novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak. The specific rescheduled time awaits further decisions, according to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The two sessions are considered to be the country's biggest annual political event, as about 3,000 national legislators and 2,200 national political advisers gather in Beijing to review work reports from the central government, as well as the nation's highest court and procuratorate, the budget and the national economic and social development plan. In some years, they also deliberate on key bills or elect State leaders.



</web/2020/01-200225-09>

Nation Bans Consumption of Wild Animals

(China Daily, February 26, 2020)

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus, which is widely believed to have originated in wild animals, has prompted China's top legislature to roll out a swift decision to comprehensively ban the eating of wildlife across the country. A decision made by the National People's Congress Standing Committee has made it clear that all wildlife on the protection list of the existing Wild Animal Protection Law or other laws, and all terrestrial wildlife, including those artificially bred and farmed, are banned from consumption. The decision, with immediate effect, also calls for harsh penalties for the hunting, trading and transportation of wild animals on the protection list of existing laws.



[/web/2020/01-200226-0a](#)

China selects Top 10 Scientific Advances of 2019

(Xinhuanet, February 27, 2020)

China's Ministry of Science and Technology selected the country's top 10 scientific advances of 2019. The selection has three rounds. Five leading Chinese science academic journals first recommended 320 sets of research whose results were officially published from December 2018 to November 2019. The ministry then invited experts to shortlist 30 candidates for the final selection. At last, more than 2,600 scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chinese Academy of Engineering and other academic departments voted online for the top 10. The evidence of mantle material on the far side of the moon, a hybrid chip to stimulate artificial general intelligence and potential therapy for treating DNA-mediated autoimmune diseases topped the list.

[/web/2020/01-200227-3c](#)

China to Increase Green Card Qualifications

(Global Times, February 28, 2020)

China will relax permanent residence application requirements for foreigners to attract more international talent, a move experts believe will help the country achieve greater technological innovation. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) published a draft regulation on permanent residence applications for foreigners. The measure is soliciting public opinion as new clauses have been added to expand Chinese "green card" issuance. The draft increases the channels for permanent residence applications among foreign talent who meet the urgent needs of the country's key industries and for those with advanced knowledge and skills who have been recommended by major research institutes or high-tech enterprises.



[/web/2020/01-200228-18](#)

1. Education

Education Continues via Online Platforms

(China Daily, February 03, 2020)

Online education, like online tests, live-streaming courses and learning resources, enriched students' winter vacation during the coronavirus outbreak in China, as the Ministry of Education issued a notice earlier to postpone the 2020 spring semester in an attempt to stop the epidemic before it gets on campus, and to ensure the safety and health of teachers and students, a report issued by People's Daily said. According to the notice, the ministry asked students to stay at home and to not go out, gather, or hold and participate in concentrated activities. Training institutions also were required to cancel their offline courses.

</web/2020/02-200203-e8>

Schools Encouraged to Stagger Start Times

(China Daily, February 13, 2020)

Schools have been asked to pick different time slots to start the spring semester to make sure there will not be a concentrated mass movement of students when the new semester begins, the Ministry of Education said. The ministry announced in late January that the spring semester for all schools would be postponed due to the novel coronavirus outbreak. Several provinces and municipalities, including Shanghai, Chongqing, Zhejiang and Jiangsu, have announced that the new semester would not start by the end of this month.

</web/2020/02-200213-8c>



Ministry Requests Schools to Delay Reopening

(China Daily, February 29, 2020)

All schools in China should continue delaying their reopening date in an effort to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the Ministry of Education said. Schools are required to postpone the start of the spring semester until the epidemic is under control. Meanwhile, schools should meet the basic epidemic prevention and control requirements to guarantee the public safety of the students and teachers, according to a notice issued by the ministry. Schools have also been asked to pick different time slots to start the spring semester, it said, adding that the new semester should be synchronized, however, for the senior students of high schools in the same province, as well as the senior students of middle schools in the same city.

</web/2020/02-200229-c6>



2. Life Sciences / Health Care

One Billion-Year-Old green Seaweed Fossils found in China

(CGTN, February 25, 2020)

Paleontologists in the United States and China identified one billion-year-old micro-fossils of green seaweeds that could be related to the ancestor of the earliest land plants and trees that first developed 450 million years ago. The study published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution* described the oldest green seaweeds ever found imprinted in rock taken from an area of dry land near Dalian, a coastal city in northeast China's Liaoning Province. The micro-fossil seaweeds, a form of algae known as *Proterocladus antiquus*, are barely visible to the naked eyes at two millimeters in length. The new findings show that green seaweeds evolved no later than 1 billion years ago, pushing back the record of green seaweeds by about 200 million years, according to the study.



[/web/2020/03-200225-36](#)

Approval for Drugs Sped Up to Fight Virus

(China Daily, February 26, 2020)

China has simplified the process for approving drugs and protective gear necessary to tackle the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, allowing medical professionals and patients greater access to safe and effective products, officials said. Yan Jiangying, deputy director of the National Medical Products Administration, said in a news briefing that the administration has accelerated the drug approval process with dedicated expert teams and paramount emphasis on safety and potency. The administration has approved five drugs for clinical trials against the pneumonia, including remdesivir and favipiravir. It has also approved diagnosis kits from 10 companies, she said.



[/web/2020/03-200226-b4](#)

Shanghai Scientists make Anti-Aging Discovery

(China Daily, February 27, 2020)

Shanghai scientists have identified two novel anti-aging targeting genes in human brains that could provide insights into the clinical prevention and treatment of degenerative diseases. Subsequent studies found that the decrease of functions of the two genes in elderly mice had boosted their cognitive function and slowed down weight gain. Researchers also discovered that the expression of the two homologous genes in humans increase while aging and has a positive correlation with the progress of Alzheimer's disease. These finding led to a conclusion that the two genes identified in

human brains could be an important factor in regulating the aging process and the new anti-aging targeting genes

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Coronavirus Vaccine Set for Testing

(China Daily, February 27, 2020)

A rapidly developed coronavirus vaccine will be tested on healthy volunteers in the US in April, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) said. The vaccine, by drugmaker Moderna and NIAID, will be tested on 20 to 25 humans to determine whether two doses will be safe and generate an immune response to protect against infection, with results available in July or August, NIAID's Dr Anthony Fauci told The Wall Street Journal. NIAID is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), an international funding body, is also backing the effort.

[/web/2020/03-200227-48](#)

3. Engineering / IT / Computer Science

Robots and Scanners Bring Tech to Front Line

(China Daily, February 11, 2020)

China has been stepping up technology-assisted efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus pneumonia, with technologies from facial recognition to artificial intelligence kicking in to arrest the epidemic. With the number of confirmed cases rising in Hubei province, the epicenter of the outbreak, and other parts of China, local transport authorities nationwide have been taking full advantage of multiple technologies in a bid to effectively combat the disease.



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Big Data Helps China's Emergency Management

(Xinhuanet, February 27, 2020)

Big data technologies have helped with China's nationwide fight against the novel coronavirus in fields including monitoring analysis, virus tracing, treatment and prevention, and resource allocation. Big data is shining a light on monitoring population flows and trends, which are of crucial importance in the epidemic control and prevention. In southwest China's Chongqing municipality, a big data map

has been used for citizens to search if there are any confirmed patients nearby, as well as their activity trails. This technology helps citizens take the necessary precautions in their daily lives. In north China's Tianjin, local authorities have put into use a registry system to collect information from people who return to the city to facilitate further big data analysis.

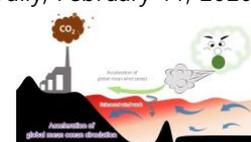
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4. Energy / Environment

Greenhouse Gases accelerate Global Ocean Circulation

(China Daily, February 11, 2020)

A study by the team from the Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences found that the global average ocean circulation has accelerated significantly in the past 20-plus years, which may lead to the reshaping of the global marine environment. The researchers made the findings by integrating various data of ocean circulation and sea surface wind speed, and analyzing changes in ocean circulation on a global scale. The acceleration of ocean circulation will lead to greater material and energy transport, potentially reshaping the global marine environment and exerting a significant impact on marine ecology and the Earth's biochemical system.



[/web/2020/05-200211-99](#)

Energy Demand falls as Virus hits Factories

(Reuters, February 14, 2020)

China's power consumption growth could fall by 1 percent in 2020 if virus is not contained by March, analysts say. The outbreak of the new coronavirus has curtailed factory output and prevented some workers from returning to their jobs. China's industrial energy demand in 2020 may decline by as much as 73 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh), according to research firm IHS Markit. The cut represents about 1.5 percent of industrial power consumption in China. China has tried to curtail the spread of the coronavirus by extending the Lunar New Year holiday for an extra week and encouraging people to work from home. Last year, industrial users consumed 4.85 trillion kWh electricity, accounting for 67 percent of the country's total.



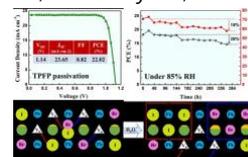
[/web/2020/05-200214-1f](#)

Moisture-Resistant Perovskite Cell with 22.02% Efficiency

(PV magazine, February 21, 2020)

Scientists in China have used a fluorine-containing Lewis acid treatment to develop a perovskite cell that is said to retain between 63% and 80% of its initial efficiency after 14 days under 75% and 85% relative humidity.

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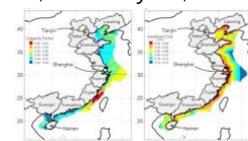


Offshore Wind Energy for Coastal China

(Reve, February 22, 2020)

Under the Paris Climate Agreement, China committed to rely on renewable resources for 20 percent of its energy needs by 2030. Currently, the country is on track to double that commitment. In recent years, China's wind power growth has slowed and the hopes have dampened. Climate change is making historically windy regions, like Inner Mongolia, less windy. Much of the wind power from those regions isn't being used because of when it's produced. Research has suggested that some 16 percent of total potential wind generation was wasted between 2010 and 2016, costing more \$1.2 billion. Because of significant technological advances, the economics have changed such that offshore wind could be cost-competitive now with coal and nuclear power in China.

[/web/2020/05-200222-59](#)



China orders Asia's biggest Offshore Wind

(Recharge, February 25, 2020)

State-owned Chinese power giant China Three Gorges (CTG) ordered the start of work on 25 renewable energy projects that include beginning Asia's largest offshore wind build in an \$8.3bn bid to jump-start a supply chain stalled by coronavirus. The 25 projects will need total investments of 58bn yuan and will employ 17,000 people during their construction, said CTG. They include two offshore wind 'super projects' of 1.4GW and 800MW. One of those will be in Yangjiang off Guangdong.

[/web/2020/05-200225-06](#)



New Tesla Battery combines Dry Cell and Supercapacitor

(The driven, February 26, 2020)

New electric vehicle battery technology from Tesla to be outlined at its upcoming Battery Day in April will involve a combination of dry cell and supercapacitor



technology, sources in China have revealed. Tesla did not immediately respond to a request to confirm this report, but if it proves correct it could put Tesla – already 6 years ahead of other electric vehicle makers with its version 3 hardware, according to Japanese engineers – even further ahead of the game. Anticipation about what Tesla will reveal for its next generation of batteries is high; recent news indicated that “advanced talks” with battery maker CATL were progressing and that “Made-in-China” Model 3s may be built with a cobalt-free lithium iron phosphate (LFP) chemistry made by CATL.

[/web/2020/05-200226-8e](#)

5. Physics / Chemistry / Material Science / Nano- & Micro Technology

Breakthrough in Quantum Entanglement

(China Daily, February 13, 2020)

A Chinese research team has realized entanglement of two quantum memories via fibers over 50 km, making a breakthrough in the field of quantum communication. The successful experiment has laid the foundation for the development of a quantum internet that should enable a number of revolutionary applications such as distributed quantum computing. The experiment was jointly conducted by researchers with the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC), Jinan Institute of Quantum Technology, and Shanghai Institute of Microsystem and Information Technology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The researchers in the experiment with USTC include Pan Jianwei, often dubbed the “Father of Quantum” in China, Bao Xiaohui, and Zhang Qiang.

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Last Satellites for Network near Finish Line

(China Daily, February 25, 2020)

Construction of China's Beidou Navigation Satellite System will be finished in May through the deployment of the last third-generation Beidou satellite, according to the China Satellite Navigation Office. The rocket to be launched in March was transported to the Xichang center on Feb 14 and is undergoing final inspections, the statement said, adding that about 200 engineers and technicians are working on the coming mission at the launch center. The satellite had arrived sometime earlier. The most recent deployment for Beidou's space-based assets took place in December, when the 56th and 57th Beidou satellites were lifted into space atop a Long March 3B at the Xichang center.



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Construction of China's Space Station About to Start

(Xinhuanet, February 27, 2020)

China aims to complete construction of the space station around 2022. According to the CMSA, more than 10 missions are planned in the next three years to complete the construction and master technologies for in-orbit assembly and construction of large complex spacecraft, long-term manned spaceflight in near-Earth space and large-scale space science experiments. China still faces many challenges, so joint drills at the space launch center and the maiden flight of the Long March-5B are very important, said experts. The space station will be a T shape with the Tianhe core module at the center and a lab capsule on each side. The core module -- at 16.6 meters long and 4.2 meters in diameter, with a takeoff weight of 22.5 tonnes -- will be the management and control center.

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6. Economy, Social Sciences & Humanities

Ministry's Prediction of China's Consumer Market in March

(Xinhuanet, February 20, 2020)

China's consumer market is likely to stabilize and bottom out by March as the influence of the outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) fades away, an official with the Ministry of Commerce. The epidemic, which broke out in late January, would not affect long-term stability and continued upgrade of China's consumer market, Wang Bin with the Ministry of Commerce told an online press conference, who expected its market impact to peak in February. Wang estimated that while consumption in the first quarter would be the most heavily affected, the market would recover in the second quarter and further improve in the latter half of the year over a compensatory rebound in consumption activities.

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Introduction of Risk Categories to Encourage Resuming Production

(Global Times, February 25, 2020)

China will classify regions outside Hubei Province and Beijing into low, medium, and high-risk areas based on the extent and severity of the local COVID-19 epidemic situation, The National Development and Reform Commission announced. County-level administration regions outside Beijing and Hubei Province will be categorized into three classes, namely low, medium, and high-risk regions, Ou Xiaoli, an official with the commission said during a press conference. Regions with a low-risk classification will resume overall normal life production, and lift transport restrictions. Governments of these regions should help



companies address challenges and problems including the lack of employment and raw materials, the commission noted.

[/web/2020/07-200225-7a](#)

Joint Efforts in Virus fight to deepen China-Japan-S.Korea Friendship

(Global Times, February 26, 2020)

China is willing to work with Japan and South Korea to carry out joint COVID-19 related epidemic prevention and control, in addition to strengthening management at ports in-between and decreasing unnecessary cross-border travel.



Alongside its own battle against the epidemic situation at home, China is willing to provide related information and experience with the international community especially with Japan and South Korea, to strengthen cooperation and offer help using its maximum capability during this extremely difficult time.

[/web/2020/07-200226-38](#)

Imports, Exports, Foreign Capital affected by Coronavirus Outbreak

(CGTN, February 26, 2020)

Although the World Health Organization has suggested countries should not impose restrictions on travel or trade with China, individual countries have imposed limitations on China's live animals, animal products and certain foods they import.



The coronavirus outbreak had posed severe challenges to China's foreign trade. China's imports and exports for January and February will slow down sharply, mainly due to logistics, company delays in resuming operations, and the Spring Festival holiday. China's foreign capital companies have also suffered the negative effects of the coronavirus outbreak. In January, China used 87.6 billion yuan of foreign capital, or 12.5 billion U.S. dollars. That was up 4 percent compared to the same period last year. But the increase was slightly lower than the previous year.

[/web/2020/07-200226-8e](#)

New Business Trends Brought by Covid-19

(CGTN, February 29, 2020)

The Coronavirus outbreak may have disrupted global supply chains and dealt a big blow to many economies, especially that of China's. However, opportunities always come out of crises. The advice of reducing body contact to fight against coronavirus has led Chinese to embrace a growing number of business innovations, like the rise of O2O (online-to-offline commerce) business, online-education, cloud service, 5G technology.



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7. Corporates / Startups / Technology Transfer

Huawei Marks Two Decades in Europe

(Xinhuanet, February 05, 2020)

Chinese technology firm Huawei marked its two decades in Europe with a reception, on the heel of positive regulatory decisions in the United Kingdom and European Union that defied pressure from the United States. Abraham Liu, Huawei's chief representative to the EU Institutions, applauded in a speech at the reception "the recent decisions by the UK Government and the EU with the toolbox enabling Huawei to continue to be a major participant in the 5G roll-out," saying "their emphasis on a fact-based, fair approach to a multi-vendor model, founded on verification as well as trust is what we believe should be the standard globally." Last week, the European Commission, the EU's executive, issued the non-binding guidelines -- agreed by 28 member states -- known as a "toolbox" for 5G security, where the EU sets out detailed mitigation plans for each of the identified risks and recommends a set of key strategic and technical measures.

</web/2020/08-200205-ad>

Alibaba to Lower Costs for SMEs Amid Anti-virus Campaign

(Xinhuanet, February 10, 2020)

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba and fintech firm Ant Financial announced 20 measures to mitigate the impact of the novel coronavirus outbreak on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by lowering their costs. Alibaba will waive the service charges for all merchants on the company's Tmall shopping platform in the first half of the year, said the company. Cainiao Network Technology, Alibaba's logistics arm, decided to exempt two months' storage charges for warehousing merchants who join the platform prior to March 31. To ease the financing pressure of SMEs, MYbank, an online bank affiliated to Ant Financial, offered loans worth 10 billion yuan (about 1.43 billion U.S. dollars) to

merchants registered in virus-hit Hubei Province.

[/web/2020/08-200210-fe](#)

Robotics Company Showcases Innovative Gadgets at NYC Toy Fair

(Xinhuanet, February 26, 2020)

Robosen Robotics (Shenzhen) Co., a Chinese tech startup, made its debut at the annual Toy Fair in New York City, aiming to bring innovative gadgets to overseas consumers. A lineup of miniature robots called T9 has been on display during the exhibition. The company hopes the gadget with a combined focus on education and entertainment could be well-received by international consumers including those in North America and Europe. Equipped with 22 servomotors, the programmable robot is able to perform high-speed, upright bipedal walking, while also automatically converting from robot to vehicle form.



[/web/2020/08-200226-73](#)

8. Calls for Grants/Awards

UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in Life Sciences

(China Daily, February 10, 2020)

As the winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, Prof. Tu Youyou of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, discovered an entirely new anti-malarial treatment, artemisinin, which made possible the treatment of thousands of patients in China in the 1980s. Since the turn of the century, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been recommending artemisinin-based combination therapies as the first-line treatment for malaria; and these combination treatments have saved 6.2 million lives reducing malaria mortality in Africa by 66 percent, and by 71 percent among children under 5 years of age.



[/web/2020/10-200210-f1](#)

Call: Solar Decathlon China

(solardecathlon.gov/international-china.html, February 29, 2020)

Initiated by the U.S. Department of Energy, Solar Decathlon (SD) is an award-winning program that challenges collegiate teams to design, build and operate solar-powered houses that are cost-effective, energy efficient, and attractive. In 2018, the City of Dezhou in Shandong Province successfully hosted the second SDC event: 19 teams from 34 universities, 370 enterprises and 500,000 visitors. Solar Decathlon China 2021 invites up to 15





teams to build up competition prototypes to meet a triple challenge in the context of the host city—sustainable development, smart connection and human health. Each selected team will receive up to 1million Chinese RMB in cash and local logistic support. More details can be found in the RFP at the SDC website. (solardecathlon.gov/international-china.html/ http://39.100.137.237/)

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Upcoming Science and Technology Related Events

Webinar: The Rise of Mass-scale Digital

Education: Sino-Swiss Perspectives

March 12, 2020

<https://is.gd/RqEoPU>

Education, Digitalization and Innovation

Shanghai

Solar Power China Expo

March 31- April 2, 2020

<https://is.gd/UHzH1>

Sustainable, Solar Energy Engineering

Beijing

Fireside Chat: Building an Empowering

Business Ecosystem

March 31, 2020

<https://is.gd/wxo9dB>

Innovation, Experience sharing

Shanghai

Auto China 2020

April 21- 30, 2020

<https://is.gd/OArC0G>

Networking, Innovation

Beijing

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