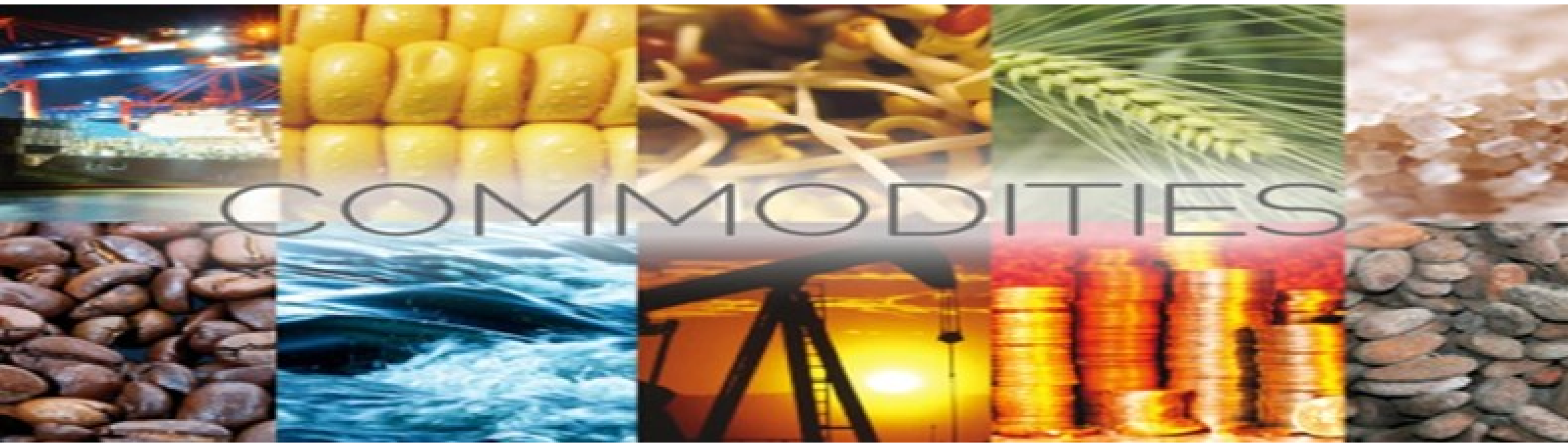
ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY

ITA Beijing Office

NEWSLETTER

COMMODITIES
23 February - 1 March 2026



Gold prices surge in China as consumer and investment demand heat up
During the Chinese New Year, gold consumption and investment in China surged, with small bars and zodiac-themed items popular in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou. Spot gold briefly exceeded 5,200 USD per ounce on February 25, driven by U.S. trade uncertainties and geopolitical risks. Investors favor small bars for phased entry, while high-end jewelry and investment gold remain in strong demand. (**Securities Daily**)

Tungsten prices climb in China as downstream firms push technology upgrades
Tungsten prices in China surged in early 2026, with 55% black concentrate at 730,000 yuan/ton (99,900 USD/ton) and ammonium paratungstate at 1.07 million yuan/ton (146,400 USD/ton) on February 24. Tight supply, rising demand from high-end manufacturing, and strategic metal status drove the rally. Downstream firms are upgrading processes, boosting efficiency, and exploring recycled tungsten to manage costs. (**Securities Daily**)

Lithium prices rise in China as industry chain faces intensified tensions
Lithium prices in China continued climbing, with battery materials surging since Q4 2025, gradually impacting downstream. Orders are locking supply: top LFP makers secured 936,940 tons through 2031; Tianqi supplied 2.945 million tons of electrolytes. Cost pressures hit midstream and battery makers, boosting vertical integration, tech upgrades, and large-capacity cells to maintain margins amid strong 2026 demand. (**Xinhua Finance**)

China steel social inventory hits 9.53 million tons mid-February
By mid-February 2026, China's social inventory of five major steel products across 21 cities reached 9.53 million tons. This represents a 1.72 million ton, or 22.0 percent, increase compared with late January, and a 2.32 million ton, or 32.2 percent, rise compared with early 2026 levels. However, the inventory was 1.2 million tons, or 11.2 percent, lower than in the same period last year, indicating a mixed trend of rapid short-term stock accumulation and year-on-year reduction. (**China Iron and Steel Association**)

Brazil replaces United States as China's largest soybean supplier
Brazil has overtaken the United States as China's largest soybean supplier after Chinese importers purchased at least 2.4 million tons via about 40 cargo ships in one week. From 2016 to 2024, the U.S. share of China's soybean imports fell from 40 percent to 18 percent, reflecting China's push to diversify agricultural sourcing despite remaining the top destination for U.S. soybean exports. (**National Business Daily**)