

NEWSLETTER

E-COMMERCE

15 - 21 December 2025



China's small-city factories bet on cross-border e-commerce

Factories in China's fourth-tier cities are pivoting to cross-border e-commerce as tariffs squeeze exports. Manufacturers shift from bulk buyers to direct-to-consumer sales on TikTok and Amazon. Data show small-order deals can generate over half of revenue, while influencer visits and content drives demand. Transition boosts margins and branding, but strains talent and operations. **(Huxiu)**

EU to levy 3-euro tax on small imported parcels from 2026

EU finance ministers have agreed to impose a 3-euro tax on all small parcels imported into the bloc from July 1, 2026, as a temporary measure. The levy targets the surge of low-priced goods sold via Chinese e-commerce platforms. It will remain in force until the European Union reaches a permanent solution on taxing such imports, aimed at protecting fair competition and customs oversight mechanisms. **(Lianhe Zaobao)**

From Ele.me to Taobao Flash Buy: Alibaba bets on a "big consumption platform"

Alibaba has unified Ele.me with Taobao Flash Buy, fully integrating the service into its "big consumption platform" strategy. The move aims to break Ele.me's food-delivery-only image, leverage Taobao traffic and logistics, and expand instant retail. Backed by heavy subsidies, Flash Buy has rapidly grown orders and users, signaling Alibaba's renewed push in local services and instant commerce. **(The Paper)**

Hangzhou livestream e-commerce enters rational growth phase

Hangzhou's livestream e-commerce sector is now cooling. Data shows 32 leading Multi-Channel Network (MCN) agencies generated 59.93 billion yuan (about USD 8.4 billion) in revenue in the first half of 2025, up 17% year on year and remaining profitable. While 20–30% of smaller or entertainment-focused streamers have exited, growth is shifting toward brand livestreaming, supply chains and technology-driven efficiency. **(CZTV)**

China's digital consumption users top 958 million

China's digital consumption users exceeded 958 million in the first half of 2025, representing 85.3% of internet users, according to CNNIC. Z Generation users accounted for 27.2%, seniors aged 60 and above 12.2%, and rural users 26.0%. Smart product buyers reached 39.1%, blind box and IP merchandise shoppers 8.2%. On-demand home services users surpassed 223 million, expanding scenarios across culture, tourism, and services. **(Science and Technology Daily)**