China Technology

March housing market shows early signs of stabilization

Industry Update

Retail sales moderated amid lapping subsidy and domestic NEV headwinds, while services consumption outperformed. Tier-1 cities home prices rebounded with home transactions recovering.

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China Industry Data Deck - March 2026

Retail sales moderated: March total retail sales increased 1.7% yoy, -1.1ppt vs Jan & Feb, while online physical goods sales rose 2.5% yoy, -7.8ppt vs Jan & Feb, with subsidy-eligible categories at subdued levels due to a high base. Sales of home appliances/home electronics/video/audio turned negative at -5% yoy, -8ppt vs Jan & Feb, while furniture slowed by -7ppt to 1.9% yoy in March. Auto sales dropped -9.1% yoy, -1.8ppt vs Jan & Feb, due to the reduction in NEV purchase-tax exemption. By contrast, online service consumption accelerated +1.5ppt to 8.8% yoy in March, outperforming goods consumption. Restaurant sales moderated -1.9ppt to 2.9% yoy post the Chinese New Year holiday.

Tier-1 cities home prices resumed mom growth, signaling early market stabilization: In March, tier-1 cities existing home prices rose 0.4% mom and declined -7.4% yoy (+0.2ppt vs Feb), while new home prices rose 0.2% mom and fell -2.2% yoy (flat vs Feb). Overall, more cities experienced a rebound in home prices in March than in February. Among the 70 tracked cities, 13 saw mom gains in existing home prices (+11 vs Feb), while 14 recorded mom increase in new home prices (+4 vs Feb). Home transactions are recovering, led by existing home. In March, existing home transaction area across 20 major cities rose 6% yoy. Notably, Shanghai's existing home transaction units reached a five-year high, up 6% yoy, alongside continued inventory destocking since 2H25. Meanwhile, national new home transaction area narrowed decline by +5.7ppt to -10% yoy, though still lagging the recovery seen in existing homes.

NEV sales momentum improved, supported by overseas demand: Total vehicle sales accelerated +8.3ppt to -1% yoy in March, while NEV sales improved +8.1ppt to 1% yoy (1.25mn), with NEV penetration of 43%. Higher oil prices spurred a significant increase in NEV demand in overseas markets. China's NEV exports reached 371k units in March, more than doubling yoy and up 31.6% mom. By contrast, domestic NEV sales volume achieved 882k units, down -18.3% yoy and up 82.4% mom.

Electricity consumption slowed: In March, electricity consumption increased 2.1% yoy, -4ppt vs Jan & Feb. The secondary sector was driven by high-tech and advanced equipment manufacturing, which rose 5.6% yoy. The tertiary sector grew 7.7% yoy, with internet and data services surging 40% yoy driven by AI data center, while battery charging and swapping increased 51% yoy.

A- and H-share volume remained strong: In March, SHCOMP trading volume rose 55% yoy, +18ppt vs Jan & Feb. HSI trading volume increased 2% yoy, +21ppt vs Jan & Feb. For 2026 YTD, HSI price was down -1.4% and SHCOMP was up 1.4%.

How we measure/define a trend: We measure a trend by how much the current month's yoy growth or decline rate has changed compared to the prior month. For example, total retail sales were up 1.7% yoy in March and 2.8% in Jan & Feb; the -0.9ppt rate decrease indicates a downward trend in this case.

FIGURE 1. China Industry Data Overview and Details in Attached PDF

	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Nov Δ yoy	Dec Δ yoy	Jan Δ yoy	Feb Δ yoy	Mar Δ yoy
New home sales volume (mn sqm)	92.7	53.7	58.9	86.1	48.6	48.7	69.8	52.1	55.5	74.8	77.4		82.7					
Δ yoy	3%	-2%	-2%	-3%	0.2%	-2.6%	-1.7%	-8.2%	1.0%	0.7%	1.9%		5.7%	↑	↑	↑		↑
New home sales price index, Δ yoy (70-City)	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.3%	-0.2%	-0.1%	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Tier-1, Δ yoy	0.2%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	-0.1%	-0.4%	-0.5%	-0.4%	-0.1%	0.0%	↓	↓	↓	↓	→
Tier-2, Δ yoy	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	-0.2%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-0.2%	-0.2%	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Tier-3 or below, Δ yoy	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.1%	0.0%	↓	↓	↓	↓	→
Existing home listing volume index	72.3	60.8	57.6	56.5	55.6	55.0	60.2	50.3	50.0	47.9	93.0		47.7					
Δ yoy	-43%	0%	-7%	-4%	-6%	3%	6%	-20%	4%	0%	5%		-0.9%	↑	→	↑		↓
Existing home sales price index, Δ yoy (70-City)	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	-0.2%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-0.1%	-0.1%	0.0%	↓	↓	↓	↓	→
Tier-1, Δ yoy	0.8%	0.9%	0.5%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-0.1%	0.3%	-1.2%	-1.4%	-1.2%	-0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	↓	↓	↓	→	↑
Tier-2, Δ yoy	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	-0.2%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	↓	↓	↓	→	→
Tier-3 or below, Δ yoy	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-0.1%	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
SHCOMP stock index trading volume (tn)	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.2	2.3		1.5	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑
Hang seng index trading volume (bn)	83.2	90.8	66.9	79.2	78.7	69.0	78.4	63.4	58.9	53.9	118.3		84.5	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Total retail sales (RMB bn)	4,094	3,717	4,133	4,229	3,878	3,967	4,197	4,629	4,390	4,514	8,608		4,162					
Δ yoy	1.9%	-0.8%	1.3%	-1.6%	-1.1%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-0.1%	-1.6%	-0.4%	1.9%		-1.1%	↓	↓	↑		↓
Online physical goods sales (RMB bn)	1,132	932	1,061	1,131	960	1,017	1,056	1,246	1,421	1,273	2,081		1,080					
yoy	6.9%	6.1%	8.2%	4.7%	8.3%	7.1%	7.3%	4.9%	1.5%	0.8%	10.3%		2.5%					
Δ yoy	1.9%	-0.8%	2.1%	-3.5%	3.6%	-1.2%	0.2%	-2.4%	-3.3%	-0.7%	9.5%		-7.8%	↓	↓	↑		↓
Postal package volume (bn)	16.7	16.3	17.3	16.9	16.4	16.2	16.9	17.6	18.1	18.2	30.5		17.2					
Δ yoy	-2.2%	-1.2%	-1.9%	-1.4%	-0.7%	-2.8%	0.4%	-4.8%	-2.9%	-2.7%	4.8%		-3.6%	↓	↓	↑		↓
Restaurant sales (RMB bn)	423.5	416.7	457.9	470.7	450.4	449.6	450.9	519.9	605.7	573.8	1026.4		435.9					
Δ yoy	1.3%	-0.4%	0.7%	-5.0%	0.2%	1.0%	-1.2%	2.9%	-0.6%	-1.0%	2.6%		-1.9%	↓	↓	↑		↓
Home appliances/home electronics/video/audio sales (RMB bn)	100.5	91.4	114.2	147.5	97.8	86.1	90.4	89.1	100.0	97.1	157.2		93.8					
Δ yoy	24.0%	3.9%	14.2%	-20.6%	-3.7%	-14.4%	-11.0%	-17.9%	-4.8%	0.7%	22.0%		-8.3%	↓	↑	↑		↓
Electricity consumption (bn kWh)	828.2	772.1	809.6	867.0	1022.6	1015.4	888.6	857.2	835.6	908.0	1654.6		859.5					
Δ yoy	3.5%	-0.1%	-0.3%	1.0%	3.2%	-3.6%	-0.5%	5.9%	-4.2%	-3.2%	3.1%		-4.0%	↓	↓	↑		↓
Total vehicle sales (mn units)	2.92	2.59	2.69	2.90	2.59	2.86	3.23	3.32	3.43	3.27	4.15		2.90					
Δ yoy	-4.9%	1.6%	1.3%	2.7%	0.8%	1.8%	-1.6%	-6.0%	-5.4%	-9.6%	-2.6%		8.3%	↓	↓	↓		↑
Total NEV sales (mn units)	1.24	1.23	1.31	1.33	1.26	1.40	1.60	1.72	1.82	1.71	1.71		1.25					
Δ yoy	-12.1%	4.1%	-7.4%	-10.2%	0.7%	-0.5%	-2.2%	-4.7%	0.6%	-13.4%	-14.0%		8.1%	↑	↓	↓		↑
Flight passenger volume	59.4	60.9	63.7	61.2	71.8	75.4	62.7	67.8	60.2	60.6	131.3		66.6					
Δ yoy	-2.0%	5.4%	-0.7%	-3.9%	-0.4%	-0.6%	1.3%	1.2%	0.8%	-0.2%	-2.5%		8.2%	↑	↓	↓		↑

Δ = yoy of current month – yoy of previous month
Source: NBS, IDC, CAAM, CAAC, Gov.cn, National Energy Administration, Wind, Bloomberg, Barclays Research