Xi: Green development key to building a beautiful China

President urges innovative steps to encourage people to plant more trees

By CAO DEMING
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President Xi Jinping called for concrete efforts in afforestation to build a beautiful China and reiterated that uplifting green development is a major strategy for long-term growth.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commision, made the remarks on Monday while visiting Beijing residents in a voluntary tree-planting activity.

Xi said the nation’s scenery should be improved further.

While planting saplings of different types of trees, he spoke with residents taking part in the event and learned about their families, school curriculums and some other aspects of their daily life.

This year marks the 42nd anniversary of the tree-planting. Xi has participated in the activity in Beijing every year since he became general secretary of the CPC Central Committee in November 2012. By taking part in such activities, he encourages the whole society, especially young people, to promote ecological advancement so that China’s environment improves further.

During planting activities of different types of trees, Xi spoke with residents taking part in the event and learned about their families, school curriculums and some other aspects of their daily life.

In the past 10 years, the Beijing municipal government has encouraged its citizens to plant more trees, which was an active response to the requirement of ecological advancement.

China has topped the global ranking in terms of forest coverage. Xi said, adding that the nation’s tree-planting efforts will continue.

Emphasizing that afforestation is both very meaningful and beneficial for the future generations, Xi said that China and the Chinese people should be given medals for their contribution to improving the global forest coverage and coping with climate change.

Xi remarked on his memories of the Chinese capital when he was young. “I grew up in Beijing, and I often think about trees when I comes tocdast the reform.” He added.

The country is called for planting a wider variety of trees while enhancing the ecological environment, efforts and driving Beijing into a beautiful, verdant city.

Other leaders, including Li Qiang, mayor of Shanghai; Wang Junzheng, mayor of Xi’an; Dong Xuegang, mayor of Harbin; and Zhang Xuming, also participated in the tree-planting activity in Beijing.

Trump hears NYC charges

Former US president Donald Trump is to appear in court on Thursday for arraignment on charges related to his payment of hush money to a former adult film actress.

Trump is facing a federal criminal case alleging he conspired with others to make hundreds of dollars in payments to Stormy Daniels, a former adult film actress, in return for her silence about alleged sexual misconduct.

The arraignment will focus on whether Trump, his campaign, and a US-based company had criminal intent when they arranged to pay Daniels.

The case has been closely watched as the former president tests the inquiry of US attorneys into his possible campaign finance violations.

Tax policies to boost market confidence

By LI ZHOUHA
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Amid the shaky economic recovery, China’s revenue reform and implementation of a range of supportive tax policies will further ease the burdens on enterprises and benefit market entities to improve the business environment and boost growth confidence, making the country economically attractive to foreign investors, experts and business practitioners.

Foreign enterprises are expected to expand business into research and development in China as the country strengthens its support to innovation with keen government tax policy arrangements, said Zhu Guangming, vice-minister of finance, said at a news conference on Thursday that China will strengthen its fiscal policy assistance to boost growth this year and will move steadily to deliver preferential tax and fee policies.

On March 24, the State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang decided that temporary policies will be extended until the end of 2024. These include reductions to premiums for unemployment insurance and workers’ compensation and extensions to corporate income tax on animal medical insurers up to 111 years (199,000 yuan) for more and small enterprises and offshoots of Indigenous Indians.

Moreover, the meeting decided that the policy allowing enterprises entwined to current additional pre-tax deduction of 10 percent for R&D expenses can apply a 15 percent 100 percent will continue as part of long-term institutional arrangements.

Seniors university addresses aging society

The nation plans to invest in the talents of older people and also help them remain mentally active, Zhou Shuo reports.

After the Senior University of China was formally established in Beijing last year, it was attended by among the first students to take a course at a national level facility.

On March 13, the 65-year-old enrolled in a class to learn more about the market economy, and she said that she is very satisfied with the program.

“I hope to learn some techniques to make the use of the material and planning to buy,” she said.

Jingjing, who is 79 years old, said she was surprised when the teachers taught them the key to solving the meaning of the essay and conveyed the meaning of the essay.

She also wants to take courses on dance and music. “We also must continue learning and exercising regularly so that they retain active, both mentally and physically,” she said.

The Senior University of China, which was officially managed on March 3, is under the management of the Open University of China. Hui Jingying, minister of education and science, said the school’s establishment is a concrete measure to address China’s aging population and also an important milestone in the reform and development of education for older people.

The inauguration of the new university is part of China’s efforts to promote lifelong learning, advance the building of a learning society, provide seniors with opportunities to further their own parents, and studies, and enjoy themselves, he said.

Retired nine years ago and since then she has taken courses on editing short videos at the Open University of China.

She also took part in a modeling course with a private company, which she said was much more expensive than the new school’s classes.

“All the courses enrich my life, and I have also made friends with people who have the same interests,” she said.

See Education, page 3
Long hike serves as hommage to martyrs in Ningxia

By BEST DENGMei In Xinchang and YU QINGYUAN

Over 2,200 students and teachers from the local high schools of Ningxia Hui autonomous region have just taken part in a three-day hike in the heritage site ahead of Qingming Festival, or Tomb Sweeping Day, which falls on Wednesday this year.

Seeing the news, special education teacher Li Hongtao, who is on the third day of the group, told reporters 25 kilometers to the west of the city’s ancient city wall, "It was still dark for the first half of the day; but after we hiked and hiked, we felt the mountain range, roads, walkways as well as the hills became higher and higher," said Zhang Yantao, who is a high school student from No. 2 Senior High School. "We turned to look back at the distant mountains, and the trees and plants seem to be speaking to us." He said that the students and teachers were all very touched and said that the tour would remain in each of their memories forever.

Tibet offering incentives to lure high-end talent

By CHENSHENG ZHANG at zhangleisheng@chinadaily.com.cn

The Tibet autonomous region, which is a province in high-altitude areas, is offering incentives and policies for entrepreneurship and professional achievements.

As reported by the region’s government in Beijing on Thursday, the region has released a talent incentive scheme, which includes a total of four types of professional allowances, subsidies and loans, to attract Chinese scientists, entrepreneurs who have developed mature domestic techniques and other highly skilled personnel to improve the region’s stability, economy and environmental development.

Taiwanese students studying in the mainland can receive a minimum subsidy of 200,000 yuan (US$33,600) as much as 7,000 yuan per person, according to the incentive scheme.

They could also receive more incentives for jobs, education, and healthcare. For example, temporary housing will be offered in structures that are at least 70 square meters, and the workers’ child will be enrolled into kindergarten under the region’s schools.

Furthermore, the professionals will be given financial treatments worth 100,000 yuan (US$15,300) standing upon their retirement.

The regions authorities are also making efforts to encourage the professionals to apply for research funding, development projects, and other programs by giving them financial incentives.

Entrepreneurs who have developed world-class technologies will be included in the list of key scientific and technical personnel, according to the program.

Juxtaposition

Chinese decry Is太’s plan to see McCarthy

By ZHOU JIN

Chinese on Thursday slammed a planned meeting between United States Senator Kevin McCarthy and leader of the Taiwan region Tsai Ing-wen, and vowed to "resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

McCarthy’s office confirmed on Monday that the senator will host a bipartisan meeting on Wednesday in California with Tsai during her so-called "de facto" tour of the US earlier this year. Despite the press conference, Nancy Pelosi,triggering tension in the region, is not in the meeting and it is not clear what the agenda of the meeting will be.

"We strongly oppose the plans of the United States of America to see Tsai Ing-wen, and we have made it clear to the US that this is a very serious escalation of the confrontation between the two sides," according to a statement from the Chinese Embassy.

In response, McCarthy said, "We strongly believe that we should be able to meet with people of all political persuasions in a transparent manner."

Meanwhile, the Chinese government has warned the US to "firmly support" the "one-China" policy.

China talks of "mini" political outreach, speaks to US media

Beijing has started a series of confidential talks with the US, and it has been highly welcomed by the Chinese government.

The talks continue amid the ongoing high-level meeting with the US, and it is the first time they have been made public.

"We will not only engage with Tsai, but also work closely with the US to achieve a 21st-century relationship," said the Chinese government.

The statement comes as the US and China continue their efforts to manage the relationship during the current high-level meeting.

China sauces into McCarthy

After receiving the message, the Chinese government has issued a statement on the meeting, which said they would "grant the opportunity to Tsai Ing-wen to visit the US for work-related purposes only."
Education: New school for seniors is in a class of its own

By ZOE SIEGEL

Food delivery worker Jiang Haidong used to work from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., when there were fewer orders. However, since he was awarded an online program that allowed him to study part-time at the open University of China, he has been able to work the same hours while learning.

The 3.2-hour online program allows food delivery workers to learn from home and earn a bachelor's degree in logistics management, according to Min Haidong, vice-dean of the Experimental Institute at the Open University of China.

Last year, the program was expanded to offer bachelor’s degrees in logistics and management, and 120 workers were admitted to the program so far, he added.

Jiang said he was happy to attend the online program because it was more flexible than a traditional university degree.

“Jiang said he has worked very hard on the courses and has a high schedule of delivery work and studying, taking advantage of any spare time he has to attend the online courses.”

The courses were offered for free at first, and Jiang told himself to work hard and push himself to learn as much as possible, so he is like a “living map” for his colleagues.

Jiang’s dedication to work saw him admitted to the program in 2020, and he hopes that he can become the manager of a delivery center after he gains his degree.

He is particularly interested in attending an online school in Beijing and believes that online learning can help improve his management skills and earn him a place among the best.

Jiang also wants to set an example for his young students, a premise he says shows that it is never too late to start learning and building one’s career.

He likes the courses in the afternoon and evening, “It’s not very hard because the most difficult part is the English,” he said, but he does not want to miss any courses and is often tired despite his busy schedule.

Jiang, a participant from Jilin, Shandong province, has been awarded scholarships worth 70,000 yuan ($11,400) as a reward for his good performance because he scores more than 85 points out of 100 in every semester.

He usually attends the online courses in his dormitory, and sometimes, his two sons accompany him as he watches the lessons, he said, adding that the boys both perform well in the delivery work.

He is proud of the delivery worker during the COVID-19 outbreak in December, when there were few customers, which allowed him to work longer.

With delivery service surging and millions of customers placing orders during the time, he vividly remembers the lectures and forums and attend all of them over 100 orders every day.

Jiang said he had no time to read bad reviews, even if he were late with their delivery, as he had no time to waste and orders were important for himself and his family.

He said he often read the reviews for himself and used them to improve his service.

After he got Jiang’s bachelor’s degree from the program, he thought his life would improve and have a better future, he added.

Drivers get set to deliver own degrees

By ZOE SIEGEL

The number of food delivery workers who have participated in a program that allows them to attend free courses and receive bachelor's degrees.

Jiang said he is preparing to become a delivery center after he gains his degree.

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From top: Students study Answer arranging techniques during a class. A teacher (left) answers questions after a smartphone class. Participants practice during a walking class for students. Photos: Courtesy of NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/07/2023 5:14:10 PM

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From top: Students study Answer arranging techniques during a class. A teacher (left) answers questions after a smartphone class. Participants practice during a walking class for students. Photos: Courtesy of NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/07/2023 5:14:10 PM
Australia’s TikTok ban from govt devices opposed

BY CHINA DAILY

Australia banned TikTok on Thursday for all federal government-owned devices over concerns the Chinese-owned app may be used to collect personal data, spying, or spreading disinformation online.

The move, announced by Australia’s Attorney-General Paul Fletcher, means government departments will no longer be able to use the app on federal devices.

TikTok’s Australia-based spokesperson told Global Times on Thursday the company was “confident TikTok poses no risk to national security.”

“This is a matter of great concern for TikTok and the whole tech community. A thorough and transparent understanding of this issue is essential to the future of cross-border cooperation in the tech industry, which brings about growth, innovation and even survival for the industry itself. This is a new era of technology and the responsibility of tech companies is to ensure that they are contributing positively to the world,” the spokesperson added.

The TikTok ban follows similar decisions from governments around the world and comes as the social networking platform is banned in India and blacklisted in the United States.

The TikTok ban comes amid growing concerns over the tech company’s data security practices. The company has been criticized for its data-sharing practices and has faced scrutiny from regulatory bodies.

In late February, TikTok was banned on national and international levels over allegations of sharing user data with the Chinese government.

According to the company’s data protection policy, the company is required to ensure that all user data is stored on servers located in the United States and that the company is not able to access or retrieve the data.

The TikTok ban is part of a broader trend of governments around the world cracking down on foreign technology companies.

The TikTok ban is expected to have a significant impact on the company’s business in Australia. The company is one of the country’s most popular social networking platforms and has a large user base.

The TikTok ban is also expected to have a negative impact on the company’s global operations. The company is one of the world’s most popular social networking platforms and has a large user base around the world.

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It’s only human nature to fear the unknown, and police officers are just ordinary people who have to make extraordinary choices.

Wu Deyuan, officer at Shenzhen’s Changying Command District

Online tutorials offer vital advice on conquering life’s daily challenges

By ZHANG BODONG

Performing tasks for the first time can be overwhelming, ordering fast food, or receiving tickets for a long-anticipated event.

Such difficulties prompted the construction of a new website, and one of the most successful was the TV series "Zhang Mei’s Life’s Skills," which has attracted millions of viewers.

Zhang, who is known by the nickname "Zhang Mei," a TV personality, spends two to three minutes in her programs offering advice on activities such as riding the subway, using a blender, and performing similar tasks.

“Many people look to me for help,” she said. "I really need editors like me to help them feel less anxious and have already taken a plane before," she continued.

Zhang, who was raised in Shenzhen, lives in Shenzhen, capital of Guangdong province, said that she started her career in the late 1980s and has been on the air for 21-25 years.

She has published a book, "Life Skills," and is a popular TV personality, often offering advice on how to overcome daily challenges.

Online influencer Zhang Meng from Shenzhen, China, speaks to China Daily

Online influencer Zhang Meng from Shenzhen speaks to China Daily about overcoming life’s daily challenges.

Science-fi writer happy to break new ground

By GUT QIAN

Science fiction writer Tianyi Shoun’s first full-length novel

Chinese writer Tianyi Shoun has just published his first full-length novel, "Corridor of the Unknown," which is a science-fiction novel set in the future.

The novel is about a young woman who discovers a secret society that has been hiding on Earth for centuries.

The book has been well-received by readers and critics alike, with many praising the author’s creativity and imagination.

"I am happy to have broken new ground in science fiction," said Tianyi Shoun. "I hope to continue writing more books in the future."
NANJING RIVERINE REVIVAL

The city’s Yangtze banks have been a focus of conservation efforts, green development

By YANG JUN in Nanjing

The Nanjing Yangtze River Flotilla Species Conservation Center, which is open to the public for free, is also engaged in a series of activities every year to raise public awareness, especially young people’s awareness of the conservation of the Yangtze and habitat biodiversity.

The city’s first volunteer service station for the finless porpoises has been set up in Nanjing, where volunteers can learn about the Yangtze and the porpoises and participate in volunteer work.

Jiang Weifang, who lives near the Yangtze, said that she chose to move to Jiangze district due to its comfortable living environment. "Born and raised in Nanjing, I know that small forests and cherished ducks were suffered in the district. No one wanted to live here that time. But after years of pollution control, this is now one of the cleanest cities in the country with both modern buildings and a good living environment." She said.

"We want our family members to live in an environment that is not polluted," said the 70-year-old. "I"m willing to get involved in the whole process." Jia said.

The finless porpoises are now on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, but the Porpoise Conservation Association has set up a watchlist for species in Nanjing to keep a close eye on the finless porpoises, said Weifang. The conservation group has started the Nanjing Yangtze River Flotilla Species Conservation Center, which is open to the public for free and is also engaged in a series of activities every year to raise public awareness, especially young people’s awareness of the conservation of the Yangtze and habitat biodiversity.

The city’s Yangtze River Flotilla Species Conservation Association was set up in 1993, with the goal of raising public awareness and protecting the Yangtze species.

But the finless porpoises have always been a threat to the Yangtze because they are very sensitive to pollution. The Yangtze River Flotilla Species Conservation Association has been monitoring the finless porpoises and has seen a significant increase in their population in recent years.

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An eye-opening anthropotomy experience

Just before Tomb-Sweeping Day, an opening ceremony of anthropotomy course for 2022 grade of clinical medicine was held in the anatomy laboratory of Peking Union Medical College. During the ceremony, attendees presented anatomotomization viewed three times and stood in silent homage to pay tribute to the “silent masters,” which is a hallowed title in the medical field for those who donated their bodies for medical research and education.

Wang Chen, vice president of Chinese Academy of Engineering and principal of Peking Union Medical College, said that anthropotomy, revealing the structure of human body, is one of the most important basic medical courses. As a valuable tradition of the human anatomy teaching at Peking Union Medical College, the opening ceremony is the medical students’ first lesson on their professional journeys. With the inheritance of the “silent master” spirit, they will commit themselves to the medical profession, aiming to ease human suffering and promote health. Peking Union Medical College established a voluntary body donation program in 1980 and, which has received body donations from thousands of individuals from all walks of life.
China's winter sports run at red-hot white

Beijing 2022 a vital role in driving the country's ice and snow economy

By WENQI MENGJIE in London

Ten years ago skailing and snowboarding with a rich choice of different sports for a group of people in China. Today, dozens of millions of people, with a vividly rich choice for winter sports, participating in the Winter Olympics in Beijing last year.

Tyrol's regional-based competitive advantage in the 1990s and 2000s was based on the ever-tighter market around the world and more and more ski resorts in the Alps. For the growing winter tourist market in China, the country's leading ski resort is Tyrol.

In 2018, China's tourism slogan was "snowboarding to the world". In China, there are more than 400 million people taking part in some form of winter sports by the end of 2021. WBin, author of the China Ski Industry White Paper, said: "The hosting of the Beijing Winter Olympics has undoubtedly played a vital role in driving the development of China's national winter sports. It has brought a golden opportunity for China's ski industry."

According to the latest update of the book, 771 ski resorts were operating in China in the 2020–2021 snow season. The figure was over 1000 in 2022, compared with 700 in 2019, 460 in 2013, and 68 in 2007, though Chinese ski resorts fell to 600 in 2020–2021 as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns.

In 2020-21 there were 21.54 million skiers in domestic ski resorts, compared with 11.25 million in 2019-20.

By the beginning of 2021, China had built 654 cross-country ski courses, 117.5 per cent more than in 2015, and 856 indoor and outdoor ice rinks, 41 per cent more than in 2016, according to the Beijing 2022: A Year On, by the International Olympic Committee.

"I think the real growth opportunity for winter sports is in the post-Winter Olympics period, and this trend will continue. The market has been significantly estimated that there will be a continuous growth trend for the next eight years, " said Laijun Wei, author of the China National Tourism Bureau's White Paper on Tourism Industry.

In fact, the number of ski resorts has failed slightly in the past three years, because of the pandemic. "However, it is expected that the development process is down and up, and the pandemic period that small ski resorts and unprofessional ski resorts are facing is becoming more and more difficult."

The growth of the winter sports industry is highly influenced by numerous very small areas that may have problems in peak times and when the weather is not too conducive. However, the large facilities, such as ski resorts, have continued to grow year after year and will remain so in the future.

Now the country has all the conditions to develop winter sports, said Laijun Wei, adding that urban indoor and outdoor ice rinks in China have been on the rise, and the development of the ski industry, which is making ski accessible, is happening even in those northern Chinese cities, which have never had snow.

"It is not the same reason it would develop water sports. The winters of China are the best conditions for skiing, and especially in places like Tyrol and the Alps of Europe, " said Laijun Wei, "and we are seeing the rise of the ski industry, which is making ski accessible, which is happening even in those northern Chinese cities, which have never had snow."

"The second challenge is that China is moving from a ‘hobby’ to ‘mainstream’ - to get skiing adopted by the young urban generation."

China's winter sports run at red-hot white

In its bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics, China pledged to 2020 to make the number of people taking part in winter sports reach 50 million. In fact, the National Bureau of Statistics says more than 340 million Chinese have taken up winter sports since the Games.

China won 7 gold medals, including six from gold medal-rich hockey. In Beijing last year, its most successful Winter Olympics, China has won two more sports than it did in previous tournaments.

WBin said: "We have obtained the historic opportunity to compete in the Winter Olympics. The Chinese population has grown from 700 million to 1.4 billion, and the Chinese people are more and more confident in the development of winter sports."

Mark Thomas, manager-director of MiMA Consulting, a China-focused ski events company, said: "The success of Chinese skiers, such as the Winter Olympics and China's in-depth work in international winter sports competitions, means that China has become the new center of winter sports development in the world."

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Sustainable development

In addition, a large number of events held under the influence of the Beijing Winter Olympics, including domestic and foreign events, have also laid a solid foundation for the sustainable development of winter sports in China, which will have a profound impact on the winter sports industry in China.

The Beijing Winter Olympics were held at the height of the 2019–2020 Beijing period, with more than 300 million tourists visiting China in 2020, the country's tourism revenue reaching 8.5 trillion yuan (€1.1 trillion), and more than 400 million people participating in winter sports by the end of 2021. And 2022 China’s Beijing Winter Olympics were held in China, which has taken the lead in the world in terms of the number of events and the improvement of China's ski industry.

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BIZ LIFE

Incomes, expenses, spark snacks and brands

Innovative products set to expand more than $10 billion market toward US, Japanese scenarios

BY ZHENGYA N 

With disposable incomes rising and more consumption scenarios appearing, China’s snack consumption market is expected to experience tremendous rapid growth.

Data from market consultancy Fluinca/Orpip/Spotight Chain Management to Cod showed that Chi- na’s snack manufacturing capacity is soaring steadily in recent years. In 2022, the market size reached 23,243 billion yen ($106.6 billion). Between 2022 and 2027, the compound annual growth rate of the market is expected to reach 8.1 percent, and sales volume is estimated to reach 97.06 billion yen by 2027.

According to Corral, compared with developed countries in the United States and Japan, China’s snack consumption level is relatively low.

“China’s snack consumption market is still in the early stage of development, with a certain growth potential,” said Mauro Zhi, chief of Yum China in an interview with China Daily.

In the past one or two years, the snack consumption market has kept surging, and snacks are increasingly popular among consumers.

“The findings, presented in the August 2021 report from market research firm Propriano Research Laboratories, included 1,500 subjects in each of the 14 surveyed cities. A total of 23,243 billion yen ($106.6 billion) was estimated as the snack consumption market size in 2022, with a 14.4 percent increase from the 20,305 billion yen ($100 billion) market size in 2021.”

In their analysis, snacks accounted for 21.5 percent of China’s total food consumption, and consumption of snacks has surged and its market value has exceeded 100 billion yuan, the price and quality of their products surpassing 100 yuan.

“With the economy on the rebound, the snack consumption market has entered a stage of explosive growth.”

To date, snack consumption has already become a new growth point of the Chinese consumer market. As China’s disposable income rises, demands for diverse, high-quality and healthy snacks are increasing.

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Cultural tourism effort in Dongtou bears fruit

By ZHU BAOXIAO and ZENG WEI in Huzhou, Zhejiang

On a recent sunny day, villagers dressed in traditional attire of the Shao ethnic group, showed brilliantly in a square surrounded by blooming fields of rapeseed flowers in Dongtou township of Huzhou county in Zhejiang province. The performances created a charming pattern by tapping the local culture, as artists tried to jump, leap or step between the poles, attempting to avoid stepping on them, while leaping and bouncing along the way to stay on the beams.

This creative and atmospheric dancing that couldn’t resist jocoting in the public has attracted a lot of attention.

Apart from the bamboo dance, local artists also showcased the traditional Shao ethnic folk dance, creating a lively atmosphere. The Shenloujia dance, paper-cutting, and rabbit dancing were presented at various scenic spots throughout the county, providing visitors with a unique cultural experience.

One of the scenic spots of Dongtou was the Bamboo Tower, whihc was experienced by the members of the Shao ethnic group and the local tourists. It is a 7.5-kilometer visual walk combining 5G technologies, designed for the visitors to experience the local culture.

The rural tourism has been leveraging the potential of Shao culture as an attraction in recent years. The Shao folk culture and local spots have drawn the interest of many foreign tourists, such as English teachers, who were very interested in the local culture and traditional tales.

In addition to the local attractions, the local residents have been using the traditional culture to attract more visitors. They have been impressing the visitors with their unique techniques and skills.

For the visitors, this is a unique opportunity to experience the local culture and enjoy the beautiful landscape.

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Fulfilling the impossible dream

After losing his father to cancer, amateur runner He Shuai resolved to complete his dad’s 100-marathon mission.

He Shuai’s vision was buried from them. He felt rooted and relaxed when he crossed the finish line in the 2018 Shanghai Marathon on Sunday, just over three years since his father had completed his first and final marathon on the same course.

He’s been one of the 50 fastest marathoners in the world since 2016. He has completed over 100 marathons around the world.

He Shuai’s father, He Guo, was a famous marathon runner. He completed his first marathon in 1995, aged 18, and his last in 2016, aged 42. He completed 100 marathons in his lifetime, setting a world record.

He Shuai, who is now 28, was just seven years old when his father died. He said, “I miss him every day.”

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It's all kicking off in Wuxi

WT Grand Slam Champions Series returns with elite action in a world-class venue

By SHIFUTIAN

With Olympic places up for grabs, thrilling scenes featuring the world’s best athletes and interactive activities for fans, the World Taekwondo Grand Slam Champions Series returned to Wuxi, Jiangsu province, last week.

The 2023 World Taekwondo Grand Slam Champions Series and Olympic Qualification Tournament concluded on Monday. Over 400 athletes from 35 countries and regions took part in the tournaments, with a number of Chinese and world-class champions demonstrating their skills.

The two-day Olympic Qualification Tournament began last Thursday, with the top eight athletes in each discipline entering the Grand Slam Champions Series, which kicked off on Saturday.

After the tense and exciting 2022 edition of the competition last week, which was postponed due to the pandemic, the 2023 World Taekwondo Grand Slam Champions Series will also be staged in Wuxi in December.

After December’s tournament, the highest ranking athletes from eight disciplines will earn direct qualification in next year’s Olympics — one of the major attractions of the event.

World Taekwondo president Chungwon Choue hopes the Wuxi event can become a platform for the next generation of stars to prove and shine.

“The World Taekwondo Grand Slam Champions Series is a young tournament that’s closely connected with the Olympics. We hope more young stars can stand out in Wuxi, and then enter the Olympics,” said Chung.

“Every time I visit Wuxi, it feels like I have come home. The tournament has made Wuxi a global taekwondo hub that attracts the attention of the world.”

Taekwondo also went to top athletes to the event, which proved to be a tough test for the Chinese ace. Zuo Jie won the women’s lightweight gold in Wuxi after a tough final against Spanish Adriana Cossio Iglesias, who won silver at the Tokyo Olympics.

“I was overcoming before the final, but when it actually mattered, I just told myself to give it all here,” said Zuo. “I’m barely keep one in the final. I just told myself to relax out my some decisive moves and keep adjusting my tactics.”

“I want to always be in the top form, so I want to thank my fans for helping me through tough times and allowing me to develop my confidence.”

The Wuxi tournaments were also a great platform for young athletes to gain experience. Zan Linga from Guangdong province came up against Spanish’s Corona Iglesias in the final round of the Olympic Qualification Tournament.

Despite suffering an unexpected defeat, the king media that the match was nevertheless a great experience that “informed her to keep and show her deeper path for the future”. Yang Yi, a coach from Shangqiu Sports University, told media that such high-level tournaments in China were unthinkable a year ago when he was an athlete, and the Wuxi event was a great opportunity for all Chinese athletes.

Apart from thrilling competitions, an interactive activity was held during the tournaments to promote the sport. On Friday, several Chinese taekwondo stars, including legendary veteran Wu Fangzi and Rio Olympics champion Zhao Shuai, visited Wuxi Dongping Experimental School to interact with students.

“I hope more professional athletes can come to the local communities and schools, and become role models for the next generation,” said Wu.

We should bring positive energy to them and teach them the Olympic spirit. The chance to meet Olympic champions gives kids a great chance to fully experience the charm of sports,” said Wu, who won women’s lightweight gold at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics.

“I hope more people can see the tournaments in Wuxi, where we have the best venues and high-level competitions. That’s how we can attract more people to taekwondo,” he added.

Zheng Shuang, the 2016 Rio Olympics women’s heavy-weight gold medalist, also participated in the interactive activities, guiding young athletes at the school through a training session on Friday.

“Many of the kids I taught today have mastered the basic skills of taekwondo. I’m so happy to see the growing development of our sport at grassroots level,” said Zheng. “More and more kids are interested in our sport, and this is a very encouraging sign.”