



Campus unrest

Building taken at Columbia; 25 arrested at a university in California WORLD USA, PAGE 4

Towering span

Bridge in Guizhou set to become world's highest IMAGE, PAGE 7



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Deepening of reform to top plenary agenda

Party's core leadership sets session for July, analyzes economic performance

By XU WEI
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The Communist Party of China Central Committee will hold its third plenary session in July in a significant move to comprehensively deepen reform and advance Chinese modernization, according to a decision made at a key Party meeting on Tuesday.

The meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, the Party's core leadership, also analyzed the performance of the economy and deliberated on a document on policy measures for advancing the high-quality, integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, presided over the meeting.

According to a summary of the meeting, policymakers underscored that moving forward with reform and opening-up is a must in the face of complex domestic and international landscapes, a new round of sci-tech and industrial revolution, and fresh expectations from the general public.

"The whole Party must take the initiative in giving greater prominence to reform, and deepen reform in all respects with a focus on promoting Chinese modernization," the summary said.

In comprehensively deepening reform, the policymakers stressed the need to leverage reform in the economic system as the springboard, aiming to better promote social fairness and justice and enhance the public well-being.

The goal is to provide strong momentum and institutional guarantees for Chinese-style modernization, they said.

As for the economy, the policymakers noted the growing positive factors in economic performance this year, with continuing momentum of growth, better social expectations and concrete steps made in high-quality development.

China's GDP grew 5.3 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of

2024, beating expectations despite challenges from insufficient demand.

The meeting also pointed out challenges facing the world's second-largest economy, including lack of effective demand, significant pressure facing businesses in their operations, and risks and hidden dangers in key sectors.

The policymakers reaffirmed the need to carry out proactive fiscal policies and maintain prudent monetary policies.

They emphasized the need to promptly issue and effectively utilize ultra-long-term special government bonds, accelerate the issuance and use of special bonds, and keep up the intensity of necessary fiscal expenditure.

They pledged to adopt policy tools such as adjusting interest rates and the reserve requirement ratio, in order to increase support for the real economy and reduce the overall cost of social financing.

To boost domestic demand, the meeting underlined measures to create more scenarios for consumer spending, cater to the people's diversified needs for quality consumption, and move forward with people-oriented new urbanization.

The development of new quality productive forces must be tailored to local conditions, the policymakers emphasized, adding that more work must be done to build up emerging sectors, plan the development of future industries and employ cutting-edge technologies to empower the transformation and upgrade of traditional industries.

As part of broader measures to deepen reform and expand opening-up, the meeting called for proactive steps to expand trade in intermediate goods, service trade, digital trade and cross-border e-commerce.

Private enterprises will receive more incentives to explore global markets, and the government will take stronger steps to attract and utilize foreign investment, according to the meeting summary.

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Flooding aftermath



Men in the village of Kamuchiri in Kenya inspect a vehicle that was destroyed by floodwaters that hit the area during recent torrential rains and flash floods. More than 120 people in the region have died due to inclement weather during the March-May wet season.

LUIS TATO/ AFP



Medical and health personnel (top photo) prepare to check the condition of astronauts Tang Shengjie (from left, above), Jiang Xinlin and Tang Hongbo after the Shenzhou XVII spacecraft's reentry capsule successfully landed on Tuesday at the Dongfeng Landing Site in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. LIAN ZHEN AND WANG JIANGBO / XINHUA

Shenzhou XVII crew returns to Earth

By ZHAO LEI
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The Shenzhou XVII mission crew returned to Earth on Tuesday afternoon, concluding a six-month mission onboard the Tiangong space station.

The Shenzhou XVII spacecraft's reentry capsule, carrying the three astronauts — mission commander Senior Colonel Tang Hongbo, Lieutenant Colonel Tang Shengjie and Lieutenant Colonel Jiang Xinlin — touched down at 5:46 pm at the Dongfeng Landing Site in the middle of the Gobi Desert in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, after flying nine hours on the return journey.

Following safety checks outside the capsule, ground recovery personnel from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center opened the hatch of the bell-shaped vehicle and conducted a preliminary examination of the condition of the astronauts.

Sitting inside the capsule, Tang Hongbo told ground controllers in Beijing via radio that his team had landed and the crew members were "feeling pretty good".

The astronauts were then carried from the capsule and shared some thoughts with a China Cen-

tral Television reporter. They said they were grateful to the motherland and generations of people involved in the country's space industry and will continue to strive for ensuing missions.

After the interview, they were transferred to medical-support vans for further examination.

The Shenzhou XVII spacecraft departed from the Tiangong station at 8:43 am on Tuesday and then started the atmospheric reentry procedure.

Before setting out on their return trip, the Shenzhou XVII team handed over their work to the Shenzhou XVIII crew and sorted and transferred materials between the station and their spaceship.

Tang Hongbo and his teammates, who are the sixth crew to inhabit Tiangong, took over the space station in late October from their peers in the Shenzhou XVI mission.

After this 187-day mission, Tang Hongbo has stayed in orbit a total of 279 days, extending his lead as the Chinese astronaut to have spent the longest time in space.

Tang made his first journey into space in June 2021 on the three-month Shenzhou XII mission, becoming one of the space station's

first inhabitants. During that mission, he spent 92 days and four hours in orbit.

During the Shenzhou XVII mission, the crew conducted a total of 84 scientific experiments and technological tests in fields including life sciences, space medicine and new materials.

More than 200 pieces of samples that were obtained through these experiments and tests were sent back to Earth with the Shenzhou XVII vessel.

The astronauts also carried out two spacewalks that completed the first extravehicular repair operation for Tiangong, which accumulated valuable data and experience for the space station's long-term operation.

In the next six months, the Tiangong station will be manned by the Shenzhou XVIII trio, headed by Senior Colonel Ye Guangfu, who arrived at the colossal flying outpost on Friday morning.

One of the world's largest and most advanced spacecraft, Tiangong currently consists of three major components, the Tianhe core module and the Wentian and Mengtian science lab modules, and is connected to two visiting vessels, the Shenzhou XVIII crew craft and the Tianzhou 7 cargo ship.

Xi extends greetings to workers across nation

President Xi Jinping extended festive greetings and best wishes on Tuesday to the country's working people ahead of International Workers' Day, which falls on May 1.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, sent the greetings on behalf of the CPC Central Committee.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and is a crucial year to fulfill the goals and tasks set in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Xi said. He praised the important contributions made by the working people to the cause of the Party and the country.

Xi called on working people to actively participate in advancing Chinese modernization with high-quality development, and work tirelessly to promote the building of a strong country and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts.

He asked Party committees and governments at all levels to earnestly realize, safeguard and develop the legitimate rights and interests of workers, and to encourage working people to realize their dreams through their work.

XINHUA

Data points to modest momentum for growth

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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China's manufacturing activity expanded for the second consecutive month in April, official survey results showed on Tuesday, pointing to a modest recovery in China's growth momentum, thanks to policy support and a gradual recovery in domestic demand.

Analysts said China's GDP growth will likely accelerate in the second quarter, given a low comparison base in the previous year and stepped-up macroeconomic policy support, including driving large-scale equipment renewal and the trade-in of consumer goods.

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PIONEERING FEMALE PILOT TAKES TO THE AIR WITH PRIDE

Skilled airline captain trains aviators, juggles family life

By LUO WANGSHU
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Life is filled with pivotal moments, each capable of steering a person onto a completely different path.

For Huang He, one such moment arrived when her school's dean informed her about a female pilot recruitment advertisement in a newspaper in 2003. Seizing this opportunity, she embarked on a journey that would change her life forever.

"I entered this industry (to become a pilot) by accident. At the time, I was a sophomore at

Tianjin Normal University, majoring in computer science. One day, my dean mentioned that he thought I fit all the requirements listed in the newspaper for hiring a pilot and encouraged me to give it a try. I applied, passed all the tests, and have been a pilot ever since. I completely stumbled into this career," the 42-year-old said.

In 2003, Air China, one of China's largest airline companies and the national flag carrier, began recruiting pilots from among college students, breaking gender barriers by hiring male as well as female candidates.

The selection process was highly competitive, involving physical examinations, written tests and multiple rounds of interviews. Huang remembered sitting in a vast auditorium filled with hundreds of dreamers aspiring to soar through the skies.

Out of over 500 female applicants in 2003, only three successfully navigated the rigorous tests and secured the opportunity to become pilot trainees.

Huang transferred to Civil Aviation University of China in Tianjin to begin her pilot training, a customary process in China by which airline companies collaborate

with universities to train and nurture aspiring pilots.

Joining Air China as a trainee pilot in 2005, she became one of the company's first female pilots and achieved the rank of captain by 2011.

As of the end of last year, only 843 female pilots held commercial flight licenses, according to the Annual Report of Chinese Civil Aviation Pilot Development 2023. This figure pales in comparison with the total number of pilots in China's airline companies, which stood at 57,854 by the end of 2022.

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CHINA

Anchors aweigh



Chinese tourists disembark from the cruise ship *Dream*, which departed from Tianjin and arrived at Jeju Island, South Korea, on Tuesday, in time to enjoy the May Day holiday. YONHAP NEWS AGENCY

CULTURAL JOURNEY

Young travelers get moving

Post-2000s make up a third of bookings during Labor Day holiday, agencies say

By YAN DONGJIE

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Young travelers are driving the rebound in the tourism industry, with those born after the year 2000 accounting for nearly one-third of all bookings ahead of this year's five-day Labor Day holiday, according to travel agencies.

An average of 270 million daily trips across all modes of transportation are anticipated during the holiday, according to the Ministry of Transport, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

The top picks among young travelers are concerts and music festi-

vals, and historic sites popular on social media.

Data from travel booking platform Ctrip shows that 31 percent of its bookings for the holiday, which runs from Wednesday to Sunday, have been made by those born after the year 2000, a 20 percent increase for the group compared to the same period last year.

Data from Alibaba's fliggy travel platform shows that hotel bookings during the holiday around concert and music festival venues have doubled compared to last year.

Beijing will host two large music festivals this holiday, with the 2024

Infinite Music Festival being held in Tongzhou district and the 2024 Strawberry Music Festival being held in Fengtai district.

Other cities such as Tianjin, Qingdao and Tai'an in Shandong province, Dalian in Liaoning province, and Lianyungang in Jiangsu province will also hold music festivals during the holiday.

Tickets, priced at 580 yuan (\$80) and 680 yuan, for the 2024 Infinite Music Festival in Beijing on Wednesday have sold out, with only a few 480-yuan tickets remaining, according to ticketing website Damai.

The site shows tickets for some shows during the holiday sold out as early as two weeks in advance.

Wu Jing, a student at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommuni-

cations, wanted to attend a concert by Phoenix Legend — a popular musical duo — in Beijing on Saturday, but tickets have already sold out on official channels.

"Tickets being resold online were around 3,000 yuan for seats far from the stage, and over 8,000 yuan for the closest area," she said.

Wu added she also couldn't get tickets to see popular acts such as Wang Xinning in Wuhan, Soda-green in Chengdu, or G.E.M. in Tianjin. She and her roommate finally got tickets to a show in Zaozhuang, Shandong province.

"Many of my friends will be attending concerts in different cities all over the country during the holiday, and they are sure to share their photos and feelings with me when the holiday ends," Wu said.

Reform: Ensuring delivery of housing projects stressed

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As for the real estate sector, the policymakers reiterated the necessity to follow policies tailored to different cities and to ensure that local authorities, real estate companies and financial institutions assume their due responsibilities to ensure the delivery of housing projects to protect homebuyers' legitimate rights.

They pledged to consider new policy measures in handling the inventory in the real estate sector and to optimize efforts to build new homes, in alignment with new changes in the supply and demand of the real estate market and the public's expectations for high-quality housing.

The meeting highlighted the

need to thoroughly implement local government debt risk resolution plans, thereby ensuring that provincial-level regions and cities facing high debt risks can reduce their debt while maintaining stable development.

It called for concrete efforts to advance green and low-carbon development, including the implementation of the plan to continuously improve air quality and the 10 major actions for peaking carbon emissions.

The policymakers called for the Yangtze River Delta, one of China's economic powerhouses, to take the lead in aligning with international high-standard economic and trade rules, actively promote high-level collaborative opening-up, and forge new strengths for a higher-level open economy.

Summer games



Teachers use a bamboo basket to weigh a kid at a kindergarten in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday. The activity was held to welcome the Start of Summer, one of China's 24 Solar Terms, which falls on Sunday. Folk customs, some dating back thousands of years, are typically practiced on the Start of Summer, such as weighing activities and balancing eggs to make them stand upright. TAN YUNFENG/ FOR CHINA DAILY

Palestinian groups hold 'positive talks' in Beijing

By ZHAO JIA

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China on Tuesday said positive progress has been made during the recent talks between the two main Palestinian groups, Fatah and Hamas, in Beijing, and that they had jointly agreed to continue the process to achieve the solidarity and unity of Palestine at an early time.

Representatives of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) recently came to Beijing for in-depth and candid

talks on promoting Palestinian internal reconciliation, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian confirmed at a daily news briefing.

Lin said two sides fully expressed their political will to achieve reconciliation through dialogue and consultation and discussed many specific issues.

Both sides highly appreciated China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights and thanked China for its efforts to help strengthen Palestinian internal unity, he said.

In another development, Lin

warned the Philippines to immediately stop its provocative actions in the South China Sea and not challenge China's firm determination to safeguard its sovereignty, after a Philippine coast guard ship and another Philippine vessel intruded into waters near Huangyan Island on Tuesday without China's permission.

He slammed the intrusion for seriously violating China's sovereignty as Huangyan Island is an inherent part of China's territory.

Gan Yu, spokesman for China Coast Guard, said it has taken necessary measures, including tracking

and monitoring, the use of water cannon as well as blocking and control measures, to expel the two vessels.

The maneuvers were professional, standardized, reasonable and legitimate, he added.

China has indisputable sovereignty over Huangyan Island and its adjacent waters, Gan said, accusing the Philippines of gravely violating international law and basic principles of international relations.

China Coast Guard will continue its operations of rights protection and law enforcement in the waters under China's jurisdiction, he added.

Political Lens

Xi's article on mobilizing workers to build a strong country, realize national rejuvenation to be published

An article by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, on mobilizing the country's hundreds of millions of workers to vigorously participate in the great cause of building a strong country and realizing national rejuvenation, will be published on Wednesday.

The article by Xi, also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, will be published in this year's ninth issue of the *Qiushi* Journal, the flagship magazine of the CPC Central Committee.

XINHUA

China, Vietnam complete joint coast guard patrol

By CAO YIN

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A three-day joint patrol conducted by Chinese and Vietnamese coast guards in the Beibu Gulf has been completed, playing a big role in maintaining the security and stability of the waters, according to China Coast Guard on Tuesday.

China Coast Guard said the patrol, which was carried out by two Chinese ships and two Vietnamese ships from Saturday to Monday, aimed to continuously deepen the maritime law enforcement cooperation between the two countries.

It was the first joint patrol by Chinese and Vietnamese coast guards in the Beibu Gulf this year, as well as the 27th joint patrol conducted by the two nations' maritime law enforcement agencies since 2006, according to a statement by China Coast Guard.

The two nations' coast guard fleets carried out the patrol along the maritime demarcation line of the gulf from south to north, during which they recorded and inspected vessels of the two countries and also sent cautions to

fishermen, the statement said.

The patrol lasted a total of 49 hours over 255.5 nautical miles, inspecting 43 fishing boats — four from China and 39 from Vietnam — and cautioned the crews of 12 vessels, it added.

The joint patrol in the gulf, as a concrete move to implement the consensus reached by the two countries on deepening the cooperation between coast guards, is scheduled to be held twice a year, and it has become a model for maritime law enforcement cooperation in the South China Sea, it said.

The patrol has also helped conserve fishery resources in the gulf, maintain fishery production order, jointly fight against maritime crimes and guarantee regional security and stability, it added.

"China Coast Guard will continue to take the patrol as an opportunity to strengthen commercial exchanges and pragmatic cooperation with Vietnam, and properly handle maritime emergencies, so as to jointly maintain the security and stability in the waters and build the two countries into a community with a shared future that bears strategic significance," it said.

Growth: Need seen for greater policy support

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Meanwhile, they cautioned that the economic recovery trend is not yet solid, with factory activity expanding at a slower pace, and said this underscores the need for greater policy support to tackle the insufficient demand faced by some sectors and to address property sector woes.

A meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee stressed on Tuesday that the broader economy is still facing challenges, including a lack of effective demand, high operational pressures on enterprises, and risks and potential dangers in key areas.

The meeting said the country will take moves to actively expand domestic demand and implement the plan for promoting large-scale equipment renewal and trade-in of consumer goods. It also said more efforts should be made to ensure delivery of presold homes and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of homebuyers.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Tuesday that China's official purchasing managers index for the manufacturing sector stood at 50.4 in April versus 50.8 in March, above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction.

Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, said the latest data indicates a stabilizing economy, while the slower expansion rate points to a moderate recovery in domestic demand.

China's nonmanufacturing PMI, which incorporates subindexes for service sector activity and construction, came in at 51.2 in April versus 53 in March. The country's official composite PMI, which includes both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing activities, dropped from 52.7 in March to 51.7 in April, the NBS said.

Zhou said May's manufacturing activity growth may slow due to the five-day May Day holiday, while the services sector will likely improve significantly in May.

"With robust support from macroeconomic policies coupled with

the low base effect from last year, economic growth in the second quarter is expected to further accelerate," he said.

NBS data showed a mixed picture of the economic recovery, with China's GDP growth accelerating to 5.3 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, while March's industrial profits declined 3.5 percent.

Although the first-quarter's real GDP growth beat expectations, "March monthly data confirmed slowing activity momentum at the tail end of the last quarter, with retail sales and industrial production declining on a sequential basis," said Louise Loo, lead economist at British think tank Oxford Economics.

Meanwhile, she said the external environment is likely to offset some of the domestic oversupply pressures, providing support to the Chinese economy this year.

"We expect China's goods exports, in real terms, to sustain a healthy 6.3 percent growth this year, which should contribute to a smaller, but still sizeable, current account surplus of around 1.1 percent of GDP. Should external demand conditions turn out to be weaker, we expect domestic policy stimulus to provide a buffer," Loo said.

Looking ahead, Loo said policy easing is likely to continue until the growth target is within sight.

"Our baseline expectations include a small uptick in the fiscal impulse in 2024, driven by centrally funded policy tools such as central government bond issuances and policy bank support," she said. "A round of a 'Cash-for-Clunkers' trade-in program for big-ticket household goods and equipment trade-in has been announced, and we expect this to provide some support to household consumption."

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said that domestic economic rebalancing is unlikely to progress very far without a stabilization of the property sector.

"We do expect China to eventually become more supportive of the worsening property sector by paying directly for the rescue," Lu said.

COVER

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Breaking gender barrier

Throughout her career, Huang has striven to be recognized as a pilot rather than just a "female" pilot, advocating for true gender equality.

"When people stop calling us 'female' pilots, it will be true gender equality," she said.

Despite being one of the first female pilots in the industry, she never leveraged her gender for professional advantages.

Huang is deeply grateful that throughout her career, the company has consistently upheld gender equality and provided her with various opportunities to showcase and prove herself.

Huang's journey from co-pilot to captain in less than five years was a testament to her exceptional talent and relentless work ethic.

At a time when the average transition from co-pilot to captain took five to eight years, a period that has now been extended to eight to ten years, Huang's swift ascent was a result of seizing the opportune moment when China began training more pilots for its civil aviation industry.

As an instructor captain, Huang was sometimes challenged by older male trainees, but her proficiency and proactive approach won their respect.

"Fortunately, being a pilot is a technical profession. There were trainees — who were older than me — who challenged me, perhaps not because of my gender but my age. However, as soon as I took action, they were impressed and gave me a thumbs-up," Huang recalled.

"My skills speak for me," she said. While she is comfortable working alongside her male colleagues, she is delighted to witness an increasing number of women joining the ranks.

Air China now has about 80 female pilots and co-pilots, a significant increase from the past.

"Even in the pilots' dining room, I can see more women," she said.

Huang is qualified to train co-pilots and pays particular attention to treating them equally, regardless of their gender, in an effort to avoid the biases she encountered two decades ago.

"Many girls in China dream of becoming flight attendants, a job associated with beauty and elegance. However, with the changing times, I believe that Chinese women have truly achieved the milestone of being able to work in the cabin as well as in the cockpit. Beautiful, graceful, and professional women can also work in the cockpit," Huang said.

Balancing family life

Although very busy, Huang has a happy family with a 12-year-old son. However, balancing her demanding career with family life has been a challenge.

Huang's profession often requires her to be away from home for extended periods, preventing her from participating in her son's daily activities. Being a pilot, it is impossible to pick up her child from school every afternoon or join all the parent and teacher meetings.

Despite this, she has found unwavering support from her family, par-



Pilot: Female flyers encouraged to reach high



Top: Huang He (center), a pilot at Air China, coaches trainees in a simulator. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above left:** Huang He (right) goes over a checklist for a flight with crew members. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY **Above right:** Huang He (left) heads for a flight with her crew members. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

ticularly her parents and in-laws, who have played a crucial role in caring for her son during her absences.

Thanks to Chinese tradition, the older generation (big family) usually supports the young family.

"I cannot spend as much time accompanying my son as mothers in



Do not be afraid. Give it a try. Being a pilot is a wonderful experience."

Huang He, pilot at Air China

many other professions do. In terms of that, there is no way to make up for it. It is a sense of loss," she said, adding that her family has been a great support in caring for her son.

Huang's son is independent and has grown accustomed to his mother's frequent absence, she said. However, as a child, he has

expressed his desire for her to pick him up from school occasionally.

"I told him honestly that I cannot pick him up from school, but I can share with him the work experiences from my journeys. I can tell him about my trips across the world, which might be different from other mothers' stories," Huang said.

Despite the challenges, there have been memorable moments. She fondly recalls being invited to her son's kindergarten to talk about her profession.

"I showed the class a picture of the cockpit and told them that it was my office. I also explained the basics of flying to the class. Many children, including my son, were curious and interested in aerodynamics. Some mothers even asked me if there were any storybooks about this topic. After the activity, some kids approached me and wanted to take photos with me. My son proudly said to them, 'That's my mother'. It was a delightful and proud moment," she said.

Calm demeanor

Huang's passion for flying was evident from the moment she flew solo during her training. The sense of freedom and responsibility she felt while piloting a small private jet for the first time was profound.

Her meticulous approach to her craft, constantly envisioning and preparing for potential emergencies, has been key to her success.

To become a proficient pilot, it is essential to thoroughly understand every detail in the flight handbook, a substantial manual, in addition to accumulating experience in flight operations. Core qualities such as adaptability and the ability to remain calm in challenging situations are also crucial, Huang said.

Having flown for nearly 20 years, Huang continually considers how to respond to emergencies when the air control officer radios her during takeoffs, carefully considering all potential scenarios.

"During takeoffs, I always consider what I should do in various emergency scenarios. What if I have to abort the takeoff? How should I react? Similarly, during every landing, I contemplate what I should do if I am unable to land, or if I need to initiate a go-around," she said.

Huang has developed the habit of envisioning various emergencies in advance and mentally rehearsing her responses to them.

"Sometimes, before I fall asleep, I close my eyes and contemplate different scenarios, considering how I would handle each one," she said.

In addition to her technical prowess, Huang's calm demeanor, emotional stability, and excellent communication skills have set her apart.

Her outgoing personality and passion for sports have contributed to her success in the cockpit, where good communication is vital for safety.

Huang also enjoys operating machines. "If I were not a pilot, I might be teaching computer science at universities," she said.

Reflecting on her journey, Huang encouraged aspiring pilots, regardless of gender, to pursue their dreams.

"Do not be afraid. Give it a try. Being a pilot is a wonderful experience," she said.

Women take the controls as perceptions, prejudices change

In the 1920s, the legendary female aviator Amelia Earhart obtained her pilot's license and embarked on a life full of adventures, becoming one of the first women in the world to enter the aviation industry. Over the past century, she has become a cultural icon, inspiring thousands of women across the globe.

However, more than 100 years later, on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, female pilots in China still remain something of a mystery.

During a discussion about this topic, a colleague asked me if I had ever encountered a female captain during my flights. She also asked how I would feel if I heard a woman's voice coming from the captain's seat.

I had never considered the question in that way, and after careful contemplation, I realized that I couldn't recall hearing a female airline captain. It is still a male-dominated profession. In China's airline companies, the number of female pilots remains less than 1.5 percent, official data indicates.

When I met two female pilots,

Huang He and Lin Tong, I was immediately drawn to them. Both had striking features, were elegant, and had the poise of models. Dressed in impeccable uniforms, when they spoke, both did so with an unwavering focus and sincerity. Even when answering tough questions they remained composed, pausing briefly to organize their thoughts before delivering articulate responses.

Both pilots are from Air China, one of the country's largest airline companies and the national flag carrier. Most female pilots in China are employed by major airline companies. Company data showed that Air China has about 80 female pilots. Data from the Civil Aviation Administration of China showed that as of the end of last year, the country had 843 female pilots with commercial flight licenses.

With nearly 20 years of flying experience, Huang, 42, represents the first generation of female pilots in China's civil aviation sector. In contrast, Lin, 29, symbolizes the new generation, having commenced her flying career in 2021.



Luo Wangshu
Reporter's log

Both women are outgoing, mentally tough, and adept at providing logical responses, characteristics they developed when they were young.

Their families have been staunchly supportive of their careers. When concerns about the safety of the profession were raised by some of Huang's relatives and friends, her mother responded by saying air travel is the safest mode of transportation in the world.

Lin also hails from a progressive family that has consistently supported her decisions.

"In my hometown, most parents encourage girls to pursue education within the province instead of venturing far from home. However, my parents never doubted me; they have always been supportive of all my decisions, including my choice

to become a pilot," Lin said.

Born in a small town in Shandong province, Lin made the decision to attend college in Xiamen, Fujian province, over 1,000 kilometers away from her home.

While both pilots have a lot in common, they have each faced their own challenges.

When Huang began her career, there were few female trainees in China's civil aviation industry, and captains had never flown with female colleagues. They were unsure how to train them. Huang and other female pilots had to demonstrate their strength and professionalism to earn respect.

When Lin began her training, her captains had been trained by former female colleagues. But as China's civil aviation industry has grown, competition for jobs has intensified for Lin's generation.

Huang completed her pilot training in two years and swiftly joined the company to commence flying. In contrast, Lin's training took about four years due to a more developed and intricate

training system. The path to becoming a captain has also become more competitive. In a field where the average transition from co-pilot to captain typically takes five to eight years, this period has now been extended to eight to 10 years.

Huang took about five years to move from co-pilot to captain, and her rapid rise was a result of seizing opportunities when China began training more pilots for its civil aviation industry.

Lin's trajectory might take longer, not because she is inferior to Huang, but due to the more rigorous training she has undergone. While training in Australia, Lin received certification from the local civil aviation authority, and was the second-ranked woman in the national test.

"With the booming development of the civil aviation industry, the number of pilots is increasing, and it is becoming more competitive. Therefore, whether I can become a captain and how long it will take are unknown. However, I will work hard and continuously strive

toward the goal of becoming a captain," Lin said.

Their passion for flying deeply moved me. Huang described being a pilot as a remarkable experience and encouraged those who are interested in it to bravely pursue it as a career. Lin, a resilient co-pilot, said that flying represents freedom.

When Huang trained in the United States 20 years ago, she said that seeing female pilots was a common occurrence.

"It's not a big deal there, and now in China, female pilots have become more common as well," she said, emphasizing the progress in gender equality.

In China, more professional women like Huang and Lin are breaking into male-dominated professions, serving as inspirations for others.

From now on, I will pay more attention to the captain's announcements in the cabin and look forward to hearing more women's voices soon.

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WORLDUS



Pro-Palestinian protesters occupy space at an entrance to Hamilton Hall at Columbia University on Tuesday in New York. MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO / AP

Columbia building taken over

Pro-Palestinian protesters occupying historic Hamilton Hall face expulsion

By AI HEPING and MINGMEILI in New York

Columbia University told dozens of pro-Palestinian demonstrators who took over a campus building early Tuesday that it would expel them if they didn't leave the building.

Late Tuesday, New York police entered the building through a second-floor window, CNN reported.

The protester takeover took place overnight, several hours after the school started suspending student protesters who defied an order to voluntarily vacate an encampment on the school's West Lawn by 2 pm Monday.

Videos taken by students on the scene showed a group of student protesters hauling items early Tuesday, including metal tables to barricade the door of Hamilton Hall, one of the university's main academic buildings for undergraduates and where the dean's office is located.

The student group in the building — Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD) — said protesters had renamed the building Hind's Hall, after Hind Rajab, a 6-year-old girl who was killed in Gaza City in January. They unfurled a banner from the building that said "intifada," meaning "an uprising" in Arabic, which Jewish leaders say is an incitement to violence against Israelis and Jews.

"An autonomous group of students has taken matters into their own hands. They will remain in Hamilton [Hall] until the University divests from death," the group CUAD said in an Instagram post.

In an email, CUAD warned university administrators against calling in the New York Police Department. "Do not incite another Kent or

Jackson State by bringing soldiers and police officers with weapons to our campus," the group said, in reference to deadly shootings amid campus unrest at the universities in Ohio and Mississippi, respectively, in 1970. "Students' blood will be on your hands."

The White House on Tuesday denounced the takeover of the building as "absolutely the wrong approach" and "not an example of peaceful protest."

John Kirby, White House National Security Council spokesman, told reporters: "A small percentage of students shouldn't be able to disrupt the academic experience and the legitimate study for the rest of the student body. Students paying to go to school and wanting an education ought to be able to do that without disruption."

Kirby said there is no active effort to involve the National Guard at this time. "That decision-making has to start with the governor," he said.

Protesters earlier said that unless Columbia met their demands, including for the university to divest investments in companies doing business with Israel, they had no intention of disbanding.

The university said Monday it wouldn't divest. A separate message from the school said the university would restrict campus access to students who are residents there, and essential employees. The only media allowed on the campus were ABC-TV, CNN, The Associated Press, NY1, Getty, The New York Times and the New York Daily News.

"If they need to go to the bathroom, they don't even leave for that, because people don't want to leave the tent knowing it might be

removed," Neel Murty, a 21-year-old engineering student, told China Daily outside the closed campus about protesters still in the tent encampment.

"There are still same tents on the lawn," a student living in a campus dormitory told China Daily off-campus. "We are voluntarily transporting watering inside."

The Columbia Daily Spectator, the school newspaper, reported that the group who made it inside the building and barricaded themselves covered security cameras inside with tape and black trash bags.

When the group barged into the building, several campus facilities workers were still inside, the newspaper said. The protesters removed some of the barricades to let them out. One of the workers yelled, "They held me hostage," as he left the building, according to the newspaper.

The building is along the South Lawn, which has been the scene of the school's anti-Israel encampment for more than a week. Hundreds gathered outside the building, and some linked arms to form a human chain blocking the entrance.

Four protesters wearing masks over their heads lowered a banner reading "Hind's Hall" from a window overlooking the crowd, who cheered its unfurling, according to a clip on X.

Students, faculty and staff were told to "immediately vacate" Pulitzer Hall, the building housing the university's journalism school, citing "safety concerns related to the situation on campus", a message sent to students from the university early Monday morning read.

The email noted that all classes will be remote and that "it will not be possible to enter the building. Everyone must leave."

Hamilton Hall was one of five buildings that students took over in

1968 during anti-Vietnam War and civil rights protests on the campus.

In 1985, students calling for Columbia's divestment in apartheid South Africa renamed the building "Mandela Hall". In 1992, protesters took over the hall rallying against the school's plans to turn the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965, into a biomedical research center.

Over the past week, hundreds of protesters have been arrested at more than 20 campuses across at least 16 states. Protests on many campuses have been orchestrated by coalitions of student groups. Some universities say outsiders have joined student protesters and caused trouble.

The protests have spread to Canada and Europe, with French police removing dozens of students from Sorbonne University after pro-Palestinian protesters occupied the main courtyard.

Dozens of protesters were arrested Monday at the University of Texas in Austin, a student group said.

Cornell University announced Monday that it is suspending students after those in an encampment on campus declined to move to an alternate location.

The University of Florida said protesters who broke the rules face being banned from campus for three years, suspended from the school and warned they wouldn't be treated "like children".

At least nine were arrested at the University of Florida campus in Gainesville on Monday night, while three were arrested at the University of South Florida campus in Tampa, according to NBC affiliate WPTV of West Palm Beach.

Agencies contributed to this story. Contact the writers at aiheping@chinadailyusa.com.

25 pro-Palestinian protesters arrested at California school

By RENALI in Los Angeles
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Police arrested 25 pro-Palestinian protesters early Tuesday at California State Polytechnic University in Humboldt and ended the occupation of an administration building, university officials said.

Those arrested face a range of charges, including unlawful assembly, vandalism, conspiracy and assault of police officers, the university said in a statement.

"What was occurring was not free expression or a protest," the university said. "It was criminal activity, and there were serious concerns it would spread even further on campus."

The protesters took over Siemens Hall on April 22 and renamed it "Intifada Hall". They fought an early attempt by the police to remove them and later rejected requests from school officials to leave the building. Siemens Hall includes the university president's office, which protesters also occupied.

On Monday night, police at the university, which is known as Cal Poly Humboldt and is more than 275 miles north of San Francisco, began trying to disperse the protesters outside the building.

Media reports said that about 2:30 am, police from various agencies in California moved in and arrested protesters and secured Siemens Hall and a second building, Nelson Hall East, which had been taken over.

Protesters took over Siemens Hall last week and put up dozens of tents on lawns around it. The university then shut down its entire campus.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators in California have expanded their protest to another college campus, the University of California, Irvine (UCI).

Approximately a dozen tents were set up by midafternoon Monday. The protesters are demanding that UCI divest ties to Israel in response to the Jewish state's military actions following the Oct 7 Hamas attack on Israelis.

"We are demanding diversity from the Western manufacturers. We are also demanding reinvestment into the students, staff and faculty, instead of going to Israel," UCI Diverse Coalition member Sarah told China Daily. "We urge that the school acknowledge genocide of Palestinians and express support for Palestinians, rather than remaining silent on the matter."

Brook Haley, a professor in UCI's

humanities department, claimed that Israel's action toward medical professionals in Gaza is part of an effort of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

"And if that's the way Israel decides to treat professionals who are attempting to save people's lives, I'm here to let people know that I disagree with that," he told China Daily.

"And I'm deeply troubled that my tax dollars are contributing to that death, and the university might make money off it, because they invest in companies that are doing business with Israel," Haley added.

A UCI spokesperson emphasized in a statement that the university respects students' rights to engage in free speech and expression, including lawful protest.

On Monday morning, hundreds of students and faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) joined together for a rally in the center of a pro-Palestinian encampment.

UCLA Faculty for Justice in Palestine staged a mass walkout in solidarity with student protesters. The marchers chanted slogans in support of Palestine as they walked on the campus.

Protesters at UCLA are demanding that the university divest from companies doing business with Israel, cut ties with Israeli universities and call for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza.

On Sunday, dueling demonstrations at UCLA led to skirmishes between groups supporting a pro-Palestinian encampment and counter-protesters rallying around the university's Jewish students. Demonstrators breached a barrier established by the university.

School officials said they were "heartbroken" by the violence.

"As an institution of higher education, we stand firmly for the idea that even when we disagree, we must still engage respectfully and recognize one another's humanity," said UCLA spokesperson Mary Osako. "We are dismayed that certain individuals instead chose to jeopardize the physical safety of the community."

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass expressed her desire for peaceful expression among protesters at UCLA and USC.

"People have the right to free speech," Bass said in an interview on CNN. "But hate speech, antisemitism, all of that is unacceptable. All students on campus need to feel safe."

Agencies contributed to this story.



Tents and banners are set up by pro-Palestinian demonstrators on the campus of the University of California, Irvine, on Monday.

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4 officers fatally shot, 4 wounded in North Carolina

By MAY ZHOU in Houston
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Four law enforcement officers were shot dead and four wounded Monday afternoon in Charlotte, North Carolina, as they were serving warrants to a felon illegally possessing firearms.

The shooter was also shot dead during the confrontation, police said, on the deadliest day for US law enforcement in recent history.

Around 1:30 pm Monday, a group of officers from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) and the US Marshals Fugitive Task Force went to serve warrants to Terry Clark Hughes Jr, 39. He was wanted for being a felon possessing a firearm and for eluding arrest.

Police said in a statement that when the officers approached the house where Hughes was, he opened fire with a "high-powered rifle." The gunfire struck several officers. Immediate response was requested and the gunfire continued, hitting more officers. The standoff lasted three hours,

according to The Associated Press.

"There's indication that the suspect saw them coming to the house prior to them getting to the front door," Johnny Jennings, the chief of the CMPD, said during a news conference Tuesday.

Jennings said the suspect used an AR-15-style rifle and a 0.40-caliber handgun, and he had additional ammunition for both weapons. Police were investigating how he acquired them.

Hughes was initially shooting from the upstairs of the house, police said. "Even though our officers were trying to take cover, they were at a disadvantage because the suspect was up at a higher level, and they were trying to return fire from a lower position to an elevated position," Jennings said.

Police initially believed there were two shooters. On Tuesday, Jennings said it was likely Hughes was moving through different parts of the house firing.

Hughes then left the house while armed; officers opened fire and shot

him in the front yard, where he was found dead, police said.

After a long standoff and negotiation, two women — one 17 — came out of the house and were taken by police for questioning. Police said that they are cooperating with the investigation.

In total, eight officers were hit, and four of them died. The deceased included Sam Poloche and Alden Elliot, both 14-year veterans of the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction and assigned to the US Marshals Carolinas Regional Fugitive Task Force; Deputy US Marshal Thomas Weeks Jr and CMPD Officer Joshua Eyer.

The three US marshal's officers died on the scene, and Eyer died with his wife and family by his side after fighting for several hours, police said.

The four wounded — three CMPD officers and one US marshal — are in stable condition, police said.

"Today is an absolute tragic day for the city of Charlotte and for the profession of law enforcement," Jennings said in a post on social media on

Monday. "Today, we lost some heroes that are out simply trying to keep our community safe."

President Joe Biden said in a statement late Monday: "They are heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice, rushing into harm's way to protect us. We mourn for them and their loved ones. And we pray for the recoveries of the courageous officers who were wounded."

Eventually, armored vehicles smashed into the house, ripping off windows and entire doorways.

Local station WSOC-TV said its helicopter captured an armored vehicle driving through yards and knocking over recycling bins before officers removed a person with a bloodstained shirt. The helicopter pilot said he couldn't show the front lawn of the home because the scene was graphic and disturbing.

According to the Fraternal Order of Police, 2023 had the highest number of police officers shot since the organization started to collect such data — 378 — with 46 killed.

PEOPLE

By ZHAO RUINAN

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In 1993, when Lai Dequan went to Japan to exchange ideas with local artists, he left them astonished.

Lai is a master of porcelain art. Every step of making porcelain is second nature to him, from shaping and glazing to finishing paintings on porcelain or ceramic plates.

"We were at the home of a Japanese potter. Japanese potters at that time thought Chinese ceramic artists were like 'porcelain fossils', only capable of painting and decorating ceramics," Lai said.

Lai indeed painted for them, but when they later challenged his knowledge of the subsequent steps for making porcelain, he proved them wrong. For Lai, who had worked as a technical director in a ceramics factory, the answers were elementary.

"I told them the right temperature to fire the glazed colors and the specific steps to follow. They were amazed, saying I was a very different kind of artist," Lai said.

Taking his art pieces out of China and exchanging ideas with international peers is common for Lai. He has visited Japan nine times and participated in three Asia-wide ceramic art festivals.

He has exhibited his works in over 10 countries and regions, including Japan, the United States, Canada, Singapore, South Korea, Australia and Indonesia.

"Part of art is about communication," Lai said. "In March, two mayors from Italy came to Jingdezhen for a visit. They were excited when they visited my art gallery, saying the colors in my paintings resembled those of Vincent Van Gogh and Oscar-Claude Monet. They were surprised by the richness of ceramic art."

Lai is a Chinese master of arts and crafts with an extended family heritage in porcelain and ceramic art.

The 69-year-old was born and lives in Jingdezhen, a city in East China's Jiangxi province. It is often called the porcelain capital for its essential role in the domestic and international ceramic industry.

Lai's grandfather was a famous ceramic artist in Jingdezhen during the Republic of China era (1911-49).

Although immersed in traditional Chinese ceramic art from a young age, Lai never confined himself to it. He has always been interested in Western and contemporary art.

"I often look at Western oil paintings, like Monet's and Van Gogh's. I think their use of color is excellent. Monet's sense of light and color is very delicate. So, I use ceramics to create colors and light that oil paintings cannot bring," Lai said.

In 2005, his porcelain plate paintings caught the attention of a British museum curator at an auction in Hong Kong's Pacific Place.

"The collector saw one of my porcelain plate paintings and was amazed. He said it looked like a Chinese oil painting but didn't feel like an oil painting. Later, when he found out it was done on a ceramic plate, he was wowed," Lai said.

The British collector told Lai that he had never bought ceramics but bought one of Lai's porcelain plate paintings for 800,000 yuan (\$110,480).

Lai believes that the benefit of Jingdezhen's ceramic artists going global is bridging the communication between Eastern and Western art.

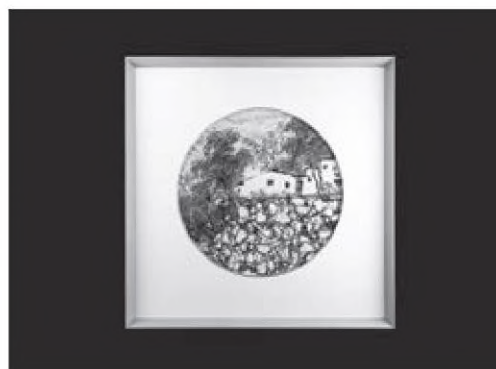
"It's just like what I did in the late last century. If I didn't go out of my country and meet my artist peers in



Visitors appreciate Jingdezhen ceramic artworks exhibited in Paris in January. The exhibition marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of China-France diplomatic ties. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese artist redefines porcelain art to go global

Master of the craft Lai Dequan bridges Eastern tradition with Western aesthetics



Clockwise from above: A visitor learns about Jingdezhen ceramic artworks at the exhibition in Paris; an artwork by porcelain artist Lai Dequan depicting the landscape of Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province; Lai touches up an original piece at his workshop in Jingdezhen. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Japan, South Korea, or any other place, they wouldn't know how China's artists are doing and what China's porcelain art looks like," said Lai.

Lai combines traditional Chinese art with Western style, adopting techniques such as finger painting. Pearl-colored porcelain is a unique style he developed.

"Art should retain its national character while appropriately incorporating some Western colors and styles to integrate the East and the West," Lai said. "By doing it this way, Chinese artists' artworks can go beyond borders, and people in other countries can appreciate and collect Chinese art."

Lai said the move would expand the exchange of art creation while promoting the export sales of Chinese ceramics.

Jingdezhen, where Lai resides, is accelerating China's ceramics and its creators' path to the global stage.

In 2012, Jingdezhen transformed a former state-owned porcelain factory into Taovichuan park, a ceramic-themed business, tourism and cultural district. In recent years, it has attracted more than 1,000 international artists for residencies and exchanges, hosting hundreds of international art exhibitions.

At the same time, Jingdezhen has established friendly city relationships using ceramics as a medium and set up cooperative ties with 21 ceramic-producing cities in countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Jingdezhen has also hosted international cultural exchange activities, with more than 100 foreign diplomats and experts from more than 100 countries visiting the city.

However, Lai believes that current international exchanges are still insufficient and calls on the government to do more. "Exchange is not an individual issue. International exchange requires channels," said Lai.

"This requires governments and institutions to figure out a way. The government and non-governmental organizations should work together to set up exchange institutions and mechanisms so that young people can go out more frequently," Lai said.

Ran Xiangfei was a young artist who went abroad in 2016. For the millennial, going global means being modest and embracing change.

In 2016, he spent three months as an artist in Delft, the Netherlands, before returning to Jingdezhen to continue his creative work and operate his ceramic product brand.

"For Chinese ceramic artists and brands to enter Western homes, they need to understand Western aesthetics and habits. Artists cannot just stay at the bottom of a well," Ran said.

"If artists cling to past glories and refuse to accept new things, it's difficult to continue the inheritance, let alone go global," said Ran.

Zhang Jingjing, dean of the International School of Jingdezhen Ceramic University, agreed.

"Traditional ceramic craftsmanship has a rich history and cultural heritage, but inheritors should not just be immersed in tradition. Instead, they should find their innovative path. This is the foundation for the survival and development of ceramic art creation," Zhang said.

Lai, the master for whom Jingdezhen built an individual art museum, said that modern people's aesthetic consciousness and living environment have changed.

"In addition to artistic creation concepts, in the future, we can introduce high-tech techniques and materials from Western countries, as well as new equipment for producing ceramic products," Lai said.

Shaanxi foot care chain makes int'l debut in Uzbekistan

By QIN FENG in Xi'an
and ZHAO RUINAN

Fan Lihua, a pedicurist from Shaanxi province, recently welcomed her first customer in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan.

"How's the water temperature?" In a Zheng Yunyun pedicure and foot massage store, Fan provided pedicure and foot massage services while communicating in simple English.

Zheng Yunyun Health Industry Development Co is a foot care chain that originated in Shaanxi in 1998. The company opened its first international branch in Tashkent with a 130-square-meter store that began its trial operation on March 28.

Four pedicurists from Ziyang have started working at the store. They received professional and foreign language training in Ziyang county, Shaanxi province's Ankang city.

According to Fan, eight customers visited the store during its trial operation and were delighted with the pedicurists' services and techniques.

One customer said, "I had my first pedicure in 32 years, and it felt amazing and comfortable. Initially, I was a bit nervous, but the more they worked, the more relaxed I felt. I am going to bring my friends here."

Another customer praised the pedicure technique from China as "excellent".

"They used sharp knives to remove all the calluses from my feet in a very short time, and the foot bath and massage were so relaxing," said a customer from Tashkent, who paid \$30 for a 60-minute pedicure and foot bath.

Zheng Yuanbin, the CEO of Zheng Yunyun, said that the company has successfully opened over 300 stores throughout China, covering provinces and cities such as Shaanxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Beijing, and Shanghai.

Zheng believes their recent expansion into Uzbekistan, a country involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, is a positive step for Ziyang county's pedicure and foot bath industry.

"This marks the acceleration of

Shaanxi brands' internationalization. We plan to open more branches overseas and establish a chain operation model in the future," said the businessman.

Zheng Yuanyan, another pedicure service company, also opened its foot care shops at the end of the last century.

As their business expanded, they established companies and opened branches nationwide. Zheng Yunyun Health Industry Development Co and Yuanyuan Group are now the two leading companies in foot massage in Shaanxi.

At the same time, the local government began promoting professional foot care worker training to address employment issues.

Ziyang county is well-known for its pedicure and foot care industry. In recent years, the county has focused on pedicure and foot care training as the primary way to boost its economy, improve the employment rate, and accelerate poverty alleviation.

In 2004, the county government

allocated over 45 million yuan (\$6.2 million) to establish training programs, making foot care an increasingly popular local industry for poverty alleviation.

From April 2014 to the end of 2017, Ziyang integrated various resources and conducted over 300 pedicure and foot therapy trainings. Over 25,000 trainees participated, and the post-training employment rate was over 70 percent.

More than 20,000 pedicurists from Ziyang found jobs in the industry, with a monthly salary exceeding 4,000 yuan.

The pedicure and foot massage industry is proliferating in China, with over 130 large-scale enterprises such as Zheng Yunyun and Zheng Yuanyan, and Wushi Pedicure Health Services Group. Ziyang pedicurists operate more than 19,000 pedicure stores across China.

In 2019, United Nations agencies recognized the county's poverty alleviation model as one of the world's best cases of poverty reduction.



Pedicurists from Shaanxi province provide foot care service to customers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In 2020, Ziyang county officially completed poverty alleviation.

According to Jia Xueping, director of Ziyang county's labor training center, the poverty alleviation model works. Since 2014, more than 13,000 low-income households have received training, driving over 30,000 people out of poverty and forming a pedicure industry chain.

After the success of the Uzbekistan

store, Ziyang county is now looking to expand further.

"We are targeting the overseas market, starting from Asian countries and then Europe and North America. We plan to bring our pedicurists to at least 15 countries in four years and open over 1,000 shops by 2030," Jia said.

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READ

Allergies leave some pet lovers in conflict

Despite discomfort, owners look to alternative ways to keep their furry friends around

By WANG XIAOYU
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Even as symptoms of severe allergies became impossible to ignore, Zhang Yangwei firmly rejected the prospect of giving up his pet dog.

Zhang, 31, adopted a Shibu Inu dog in the autumn of 2021. "At the time, I knew I was allergic to cat hair but did not experience any discomfort when occasionally walking my friend's dogs. After I settled in Beijing, I decided to get a dog."

The first year and a half with his furry companion Echo was filled with joy and warmth as she trotted by Zhang's side on trips to parks, boutique coffee houses and seaside resorts. "I think we share the same smile," said Zhang.

In March of last year, Zhang began to experience shortness of breath when climbing stairs, which he chalked up to having a cold at first. But the telltale signs of allergies — sneezing more than 10 times upon waking up, runny nose and pain behind his eyes — continued to affect him.

"I had allergic reactions before, so I got suspicious and went to the hospital to have an allergy blood test administered," he said. "The results showed that he has an extreme allergy to dogs. Pet allergies are often caused by proteins in pets' saliva, urine and dander, or pollen, dust mites and mold carried by their fur."

"When asked if I could give Echo away, my immediate reaction was 'That's impossible,'" he said. "I knew I must find other solutions to cope with the condition."

As a growing number of Chinese families raise pets, the number of people suffering from pet allergies — often caused by dogs and cats — has also increased, leaving them with the dilemma that their love for their pet and living with a health condition may not be reconcilable.

China had about 116.6 million pet dogs and cats in 2022, a 3.7 percent increase from the previous year. The increase is primarily driven by a 12.6 percent year-on-year jump in the number of pet cats, according to a white paper released by Petdata.cn, a data science company, in early 2023.

Nationwide, there were about 67.3 million pet owners, and the proportion born after 1995 was rising, as did the ratio of middle-aged and elderly pet owners.

The value of China's urban market for pet dogs and pet cats was 270.6 billion yuan (\$37.34 billion) in 2022, a rise of 8.7 percent from 2021, the report stated.

Meanwhile, according to a study in 2019 led by the Allergy Center at Beijing Shijitan Hospital Affiliated to Capital Medical University, allergies to cat dander affect about 12.3 percent of people in China who said they were troubled by allergies, registering an uptick from the previous two years while allergies to dog dander dropped from 7.4 to 4.6 percent.

To meet patients' rising demands and promote standardized diagnosis and treatment of the condition, the center announced in early March that it will offer an outpatient clinic for pet allergies every Thursday.

"Over the years, an increasing number of Chinese families have begun keeping pets, and around 10 percent of patients visiting the department are found to have pet allergies," said Wang Xueyan, head of the center, during an interview.

Wang added that families that do not raise pets could also have allergy problems due to encounters with animals in elevators and other public spaces. Some people begin exhibiting symptoms after friends or family members who keep pets pay a visit.

Wang said that the pet allergy clinic now receives around 20 to 30 patients daily. "A large number of visitors are young and middle-



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Wang Xueyan, head of the Allergy Center at Beijing Shijitan Hospital Affiliated to Capital Medical University, talks with a patient. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

aged adults. There are also many children, as well as couples without children, as this group is more inclined to raise pets," she said.

Reducing exposure to known allergens is the most effective way to cope with pet allergies. "A patient who kept parrots used to have an asthma attack whenever he came inside. He later quit the hobby and moved to a new home and all symptoms vanished quickly," she said.

However, most patients are hesitant or outright opposed to sending their pets away.

"I have patients who cry in front of me, devastated by the thought of re-homing their pets," she said. "In some cases, an allergic mother had to move out of her son's home and rent an apartment on her own because the son was unwilling to send his pet dog away. Some couples had to live separately or divorce because they refused to prioritize their

partners over their pets."

Wang said that she understood patients' deep bonds with their pets. "Pets have an irreplaceable part in their lives," she said. "As doctors, we will strive to persuade them to minimize contact with pet allergens to protect their health."

"It is important to raise awareness about pet allergies and offer psychological consultations for allergic pet owners," she added. Zhang visited several hospitals

"Pets have an irreplaceable part in their lives. As doctors, we will strive to persuade them to minimize contact with pet allergens to protect their health."

Wang Xueyan, head of the Allergy Center at Beijing Shijitan Hospital Affiliated to Capital Medical University

in Beijing and researched solutions to pet allergies in developed countries. "There were no magic cures and receiving allergen immunotherapy seemed to be the best and viable way for me to deal with it."

Allergen immunotherapy involves taking allergy shots regularly from low to high doses to teach the body to tolerate allergens. "Patient compliance is significant because the treatment typically lasts two to three years," said Wang.

Zhang said that he initiated treatment at Beijing Shijitan Hospital about a year ago.

"At first, I had to get the prescription from the Beijing Shijitan Hospital located about an hour's drive away from my home about once a month, and brought the shots back to community clinics nearby and received them once a

Q&A

The Allergy Center at the Beijing Shijitan Hospital Affiliated to Capital Medical University answers some common questions about pet allergies.

Q: What types of pets cause the most allergies?

A: Household pets, especially cats and dogs, are the most common that can trigger allergic reactions such as nasal congestion and itching, sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, cough and rash. Rabbits, parrots, squirrels and other animals can also cause allergies.

Q: How do you get pet allergies?

A: Allergens from animals are found in not only their fur but also in their dander, secretions and excretions, such as saliva, urine and sweat. Some people may even get allergies from using products made from fur or feathers.

Q: Can I be allergic to cats and dogs at the same time?

A: Research shows that cat dander is more likely to cause allergies. Among cat dander allergy sufferers, 30.6 percent are also allergic to dog dander, while 60.7 percent of dog dander allergy sufferers are also allergic to cat dander.

Q: How do I cope with pet allergies?

A: The most effective way is to avoid allergens, such as refraining from keeping pets or raising hypoallergenic breeds. It is also suggested to keep pets outdoors, prevent them from entering bedrooms and living rooms, bathe pets and trim their hair, as well as clean and replace pet supplies regularly.

Remember to wash hands immediately after touching pets and wash clothes and other fabrics regularly. Keep rooms clean, dry and well-ventilated. Using air purifiers is also recommended.

Q: What is allergy desensitization?

A: Allergy desensitization, or immunotherapy, involves administering allergens to train the body to not react to their presence, starting from low to high doses to alleviate allergic symptoms, reduce the use of other drugs and prevent reactions to new allergens. The course of treatment could last at least two years and the recommended duration is three to five years, with an efficacy rate of 60 to 80 percent.

WANG XIAOYU

week," he said. "It felt troublesome because of the long trip back and forth to the hospital."

"Now as the treatment regimen has changed, I only need to go to the hospital every few months."

Zhang said that he feels his condition has stabilized, although sometimes he still suffers from severe sneezes or breathing difficulties.

"I pay attention to my daily habits to mitigate allergic reactions, such as regularly cleaning my home and using air purifiers," he said. "But regarding doctors' suggestions that I should avoid hugging or kissing Echo, they are too difficult to follow."

Aside from treatment and medications, Wang said that it is important to stay positive and strengthen your immune system by ensuring sufficient sleep, exercising regularly and keeping a healthy diet.

Liu Xinyin, a 32-year-old in Jiangsu province, adopted a Pomeranian in 2016 despite constant allergic reactions to pollen and seafood. "I've liked animals since childhood and just wanted to give it a try to see if my love for her would prevail over allergies," she said.

Her allergic reaction got worse in 2018, but the turning point was when her baby son began showing serious symptoms — an all-over body rash and asthma.

"As difficult as the decision was, I decided to find a new owner for my dog because it would be unfair for my son to endure the discomfort and put him at a potential health risk," she said.

IMAGE

Bridging gap between nature and technology



Workers install protection nets on the bridge on March 27.
PHOTOS BY YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



Workers on the bridge.

By YANG WENBIN / xinhua

Above the grand canyon of Huajiang River, which features towering cliffs and fast-flowing currents in Southwest China's Guizhou province, a steel-truss girder suspension bridge is under construction.

The main span of the bridge is 1,420 meters long. With a height of 625 meters from the bridge deck to the water's surface, the bridge is expected to become the highest in the world after its completion. It will cut travel time across the canyon from about two hours to two minutes.

The main structure of the bridge is expected to be completed by the end of 2024 and is set to be put into use in early 2025.

Structure spanning Guizhou's Huajiang River set to become highest in the world

The 2,890-meter-long bridge is part of an expressway linking two cities in Guizhou province. Guizhou is renowned for its vast mountainous areas.

With the bridge, visiting the Huajiang Grand Canyon scenic area will also become easier. The scenic area has a planned area of 298 square kilometers, with a total length of 79 kilometers and average width of 3.8 kilometers.

As a representative of karst landscapes, Huajiang Grand Canyon is a unique canyon nicknamed the "fissure of the Earth" in China.

Working above the canyon to build the world's highest bridge is by no means an easy task, but the workers have been overcoming all difficulties to make the two ends meet.



A tower crane delivers food for workers on the bridge on March 27.



Workers eat their lunch that has been delivered by a tower crane on March 27.



An engineer checks the progress of the bridge on March 26.



A worker on the bridge tower.



A view of the construction site and surrounding area.



Workers on the bridge tower.

TREND

A blooming success story

Flower sales blossom amid growing appreciation of their benefits and symbolism, **Wang Qian** and **Li Yingqing** report.

For Li Mengying, 32, a white collar worker in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, her flower balcony with vibrant blooms and green foliage provides her a soothing retreat from the outside world.

"It is my healing corner that provides the brief solace that keeps me from stress and anxiety after a tiring day," Li says, adding that flowers have the power to make her happy.

The beautiful blooms are her daily necessity, offering slivers of joy. Li is among the increasing number of flower enthusiasts in China who realize that horticulture has emotional benefits, such as stabilizing moods and increasing the sense of tranquility.

A recent report released by e-commerce platform Taobao in March echoes the trend, which says more than 1 billion users have bought plants and gardening tools on the platform, with 60 percent of them female.

It found buyers from Shanghai topped the regional consumer ranking of flower purchasing with more than 120,000 pots of plants delivered to more than 20,000 consumers in Shanghai every day on average.

The trend showed that buying a bouquet of flowers is no longer an occasional activity, but a huge market in China. According to statistics from the China Flower Association, the planting area for flowers in the country stands at nearly 1.6 million hectares.

Data from the Kunming International Flora Auction Trading Center, which is one of the country's largest such hubs, showed its total transactions last year exceeded 2.56 billion yuan (\$353.6 million), up 20 percent year-on-year, with its volume reaching 2.34 billion units of fresh-cut flowers.

A country analysis of cut-flower exports by the International Association of Horticultural Producers finds that China is starting to be a major player in the international flower trade market, with exports valued at \$125 million in 2020.

At the annual conference analyzing the country's floral industry held in Zhengzhou, Henan province, in March, Feng Huaibin, general manager of the Kunming center, said it is expected that the country's flower industry will continue to grow in the coming 10 years.

Wang Bo, deputy director of the sales department of Hua Jiang Pu, an enterprise providing flower-related services, under the leading manufacturer of chemical fertilizer Yunnan Yuntianhua Co, is optimistic about the market potential.

"In recent years, fresh flowers have hitched a ride on economic development, completing a transformation from being merely gifts to becoming daily goods. This change indicates that the floral industry will have even broader prospects for development," Wang says.

Flourishing art

The country's booming flower industry has offered tremendous potential for young entrepreneurs and florists with passion and innovation to build their career and business.

What's more, social media has facilitated the accessibility and visibility of flowers, allowing consumers to explore and purchase blooms, anytime and anywhere. The virtual realm has become a canvas for showcasing floral arrangements and sharing the beauty of flowers, further fueling their appeal among the younger generation.

Zhao Yun, a 36-year-old florist with nearly 2.2 million followers on short-video platform Douyin, has witnessed how Chinese consumers have undergone a remarkable shift in their attitudes toward flowers.

Before getting interested in flowers and opening her own flower store in 2017, Zhao used to work at a bank in Hunchun, Northeast China's Jilin province, which was a predictable life with stable income.

"It was a tedious job, which made me feel anxious, but all my



Floral arrangements by Ding Yichen from Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, which are influenced by Western and Eastern schools of floral design. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



With nearly 2.2 million followers on short-video platform Douyin, Zhao Yun (fourth from left) demonstrates her floral design skills on a China Central Television program in Beijing.



Left: At her studio in Kunming, Yunnan province, Zhao shares her expertise in floral design to store owners.



Right: Ding learns flower arrangement in London. The florist explores her own style with elements of Eastern aesthetics.

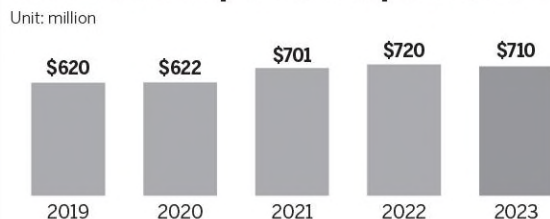
unhappiness was healed by the bouquets of flowers sent by my husband, then my boyfriend," Zhao says.

"When seeing a flower, it 'tells' a story, conveying an emotion. The arrangement of different flowers, with different layers and colors, shows the silent dialogue between a florist and the flowers," Zhao says.

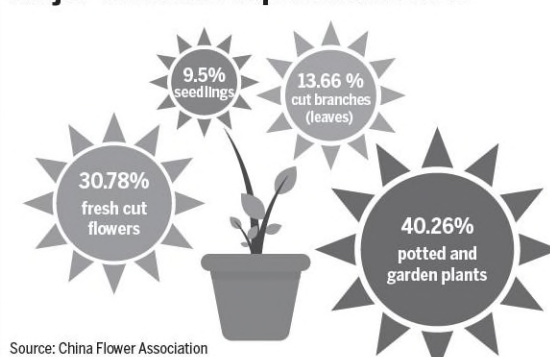
Although there were limited flower varieties available at the market, mainly roses, carnations, lilies and chrysanthemum, she found a soothing power in flower arrangement. Although neither of her parents agreed with her decision to quit the secure job, she started her own flower business and tried to let more people appreciate floral beauty. From selling a bouquet of flowers a week to being busy in the city, it took her half a year.

In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting the country, Zhao and her husband Chu Yunfeng moved to Kunming, Yunnan, to restart their business promoting floral culture and instructing how to start a floral

Total flower import and export numbers



Major varieties exported in 2023



business on social media.

As a knowledge-sharing ambassador for the platform, Zhao has been using Douyin to educate viewers about floral art. So far, she has posted more than 600 videos on Douyin, accumulating a total of 9.75 million likes. Zhao has also been invited by the State broadcaster China Central Television to demonstrate her floral design on television.

While promoting floral culture on social media, young florists, including 29-year-old Ding Yichen in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, are exploring ways to create their own style with elements of Eastern aesthetics. Learning floristry in Seoul and London, Ding enjoys flower arrangement and opened her own brand — YCharm Studio.

"Guofeng (a kind of Chinese style using elements from traditional culture) is experiencing a resurgence in contemporary floral design. This year, I found increasing packaging designs featuring traditional Chinese patterns and motifs and some use *xuanzhi*, or rice paper, which

reflects a growing interest in integrating traditional cultural elements into floral design," Ding says.

She adds from extravagant Western to Eastern minimalist displays, it still takes time for Chinese florists to explore their design vocabulary to craft unique contemporary works fusing Chinese traditional culture and philosophy.

E-commerce prospers

According to the global market data provider Statista, thanks to the country's booming e-commerce and fast-growing express delivery industry, China's online flower market is on the rise, with its total transaction value reaching approximately 127.91 billion yuan last year, an increase from about 20 billion yuan in the previous year. Its market size is expected to reach 164.4 billion yuan by 2025, data shows.

Flower-related enterprises, like the high-end flower brand Roseonly, flower subscription delivery company Reflower, traditional e-commerce platform Taobao and fresh food retailer Freshippo, have been riding the wave.

During International Women's Day on March 8, flower consumption experienced a peak in sales on fresh grocery delivery apps like Freshippo and Dingdong.

Dingdong estimates that the app's flower sales on March 8 increased by around 30 percent year-on-year. The company states that classic flowers, such as roses, tulips, and carnations, continue to be the mainstays for the Women's Day bouquets.

Priced at tens of yuan to hundreds of yuan, Dingdong and Freshippo have offered simple daily bouquets and elaborately packaged gift bouquets to meet various consumer demands.

To celebrate Mother's Day, which falls on May 12, Roseonly, the Beijing-based startup founded in 2013, promotes its special edition called The Pink, which consists of rose, carnations and hydrangeas, selling at 1,999 yuan.

With both the quantity and quality of the country's flower supply having been improved, the consumption patterns are changing, says Li Shenchong, director of the flower research institute at the Yunnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

For brands, this is a lucrative opportunity — but one beset by fierce competition.

Shanghai-based flower subscription delivery company Flowerplus paused operations due to lack of funds in September. In December, a statement released by the company said after negotiation and communication with suppliers and logistic partners, Flowerplus would recover delivery service as soon as possible.

Wang Ke, founder of Flowerplus, said in a livestreaming broadcast in December that, the nine-year-old company achieved profits in 2018, 2019 and 2020 and the core issue lies in the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021 and 2022, as well as the company's high operating costs.

He added that in the next step, the company would halve marketing and management costs, retaining only the WeChat mini-program as the channel, and simplifying its production line.

"Household purchases to spice up routine life have now become the trend of flower consumption," says Fei Xuemei, vice-president of the China Flower Association's retail arm. With the development of the romance economy, consumer demand for high-quality flowers has been growing year by year, Fei adds.

According to the country's floriculture development plan (2022-35) released by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the country aims to realize the modernization of its flower industry by 2035, with the annual sales surpassing 700 billion yuan.

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BIZ LIFE

Elderly perk up exercise regimen to stay fit

Senior citizens joining gyms and working out with same enthusiasm, frequency and training levels as younger members

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
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It seems sporting activities these days are not only for Gen Z or the middle-aged, but also for health-conscious elderly residents.

Of late, an increasing number of elderly Chinese are making their way to gyms and training centers to improve their physical and mental health.

Wang Kexin, a 57-year-old former business owner, has once again regained his passion for fitness training and lifting weights.

Wang, whose childhood dream was to become a track-and-field athlete, now trains four times a week, with each session lasting one-and-a-half to two hours.

In two years, his body weight has fallen from over 100 kilograms to 80 kg. "I feel strong mentally and look better compared to friends of the same age," Wang said.

On weekends, he meets up with former schoolmates to play football. "Sportsmanship is not only the privilege of the young," Wang said.

"I have had so much joy from keeping the habit of fitness and a healthy diet; being disciplined physically and mentally provides clarity at my age."

Wang's physical trainer, Sarah Shao of Ujoy Fitness Studio in Beijing, said in recent years, she has seen a rising number of older participants joining gyms and starting to work out with the same frequency and training levels as younger members.

"After retirement, elders have more leisure time to mark steady attendance at the courses," Shao said. "Fitness workouts help them improve health and prevent muscles from diminishing during aging."

She said: "I have a member who is 68 years old. Her daughter encouraged her to visit the gym, have a more active social life and grow stronger as she ages."

Silver economy

China's silver economy has been boosted by the rising number of elderly in the country.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, by the end of 2023, China's population aged 60 and above accounted for 21.1 percent of the total population, with those aged 65 and above making up 15.4 percent, indicating that the nation has entered a stage of a moderately aging society. The large senior population translates to ample potential consumption market for the elders.

This trend is more evident in first- and second-tier cities, where a greater number of middle-aged and elderly people are embracing new retirement lifestyles, which include taking up such pastimes as playing musical instruments, traveling, exercising and attending senior universities.

The stereotype of elderly people



Top: Senior citizens exercise at an elderly care service center in Tangshan, Hebei province in April 2023. In recent years, Hebei has been accelerating the construction and optimization of such service centers.

MOU YU / XINHUA

Right: Villagers exercise at a gym in Nanxun district, Huzhou, Zhejiang province in July 2023. Huzhou has been building a fitness service system that covers rural and urban areas.

LU ZHIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Bottom: Elderly Chinese use fitness equipment to exercise at a home care service center in Fuyang district, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province in October 2023. Fuyang has been building gyms and other facilities within a walking distance of 15 minutes from their homes.

XU YU / XINHUA



“After retirement, the elders have more leisure time to mark steady attendance at the courses. Fitness workouts help them improve health and prevent muscles from diminishing during aging ... I have a member who is 68 years old. Her daughter encouraged her to visit the gym.”

Sarah Shao, physical trainer at Ujoy Fitness Studio in Beijing

living frugal and sedentary lives has gradually evolved into them learning to work for a healthy life expectancy. However, in the area of senior fitness, a supply-demand mismatch still exists.

While creating corresponding products and courses to attract the elderly to the gym, the first step should be to set up exercise plans that can match the basic needs of seniors, said trainer Shao.

Besides emphasizing exercise, gyms marketing for seniors should also focus on promoting healthy lifestyle habits such as a balanced diet.

Regularly organizing member gatherings and guiding and communicating with the elderly by sports instructors can alleviate the psychological barriers of the elderly, said Shao.

Over the past few years, some gyms exclusively for the elderly have sprung up in Shanghai. Fitness operators such as Shangti Health Technology are exploring solutions for gyms that serve seniors in China.

The elder sports center in Shanghai operated by Shangti Health Technology offers workout facilities that allow the elderly to train passively through vertical vibrations that imitate rope jumping to stimulate and boost their physical cycles. These facilities help to significantly improve insomnia and digestion issues among senior citizens.

The company provides professional trainers to teach how to use workout facilities designed for the elderly.

Hou Suxi of Shangti said the facilities are designed to protect the knees and other vulnerable body parts of the elderly during exercises.

However, a considerable number of seniors in China still lack awareness about actively participating in fitness regimens and exercise routines.

The centers now have members aged over 65. The member system tracks age, body condition, workout duration and content while providing suggestions and support in training, according to the company.

Physical fitness is an important component in the healthy lifestyles of elderly people.

The National Fitness Plan (2021-25) proposes that by 2025, the proportion of residents in China who regularly participate in physical exercise will reach 38.5 percent.

The Healthy China Action (2019-30) also states that by 2030, the proportion of urban and rural residents who regularly participate in physical exercise will exceed 40 percent.

Survey results indicate that nearly half of seniors participate in physical exercise at least once a week, and overall, two-thirds of them regularly engage in fitness activities.

As the main force in the fitness community, the proportion of middle-aged and elderly people who regularly participate in physical exercise will increase even more in the future, according to the survey.

In addition to deepening the level of participation in physical exercise, the categories of fitness participation among elderly people will also become more diversified.

This poses a challenge to companies on how to inspire middle-aged and elderly people through concepts and organizations, and to drive more gray-haired residents to enter the gym.

Healthy aging picks up currency in graying China

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

The concept of healthy aging is gaining momentum in the country, driving growth in the nutrition and health food sector for middle-aged and elderly.

According to a blue book "China's Nutrition and Health Food Industry" released by China Insights Consultancy, the scale of China's nutrition and health food industry is projected to exceed 800 billion yuan (\$126.98 billion) by 2027.

Nutritional and healthy foods can be divided into health foods and functional foods, according to the report.

The report also highlights the shifting attitude among the elderly consumer group toward health products.

The emerging elderly demographic, represented by the "post-1960s" generation, demonstrates

distinct preferences compared to their predecessors, said the report.

The report reveals that over half of the population has shifted their focus to nutritional supplements following the COVID-19 pandemic, with the most significant increase observed among individuals aged 36 to 40. This age group, typically the family's main support, is particularly concerned about the overall health of their loved ones.

The report suggests that functional foods are becoming more popular in the Chinese nutrition and health food market, with a relatively large proportion of sales and continuous improvement, making them a vital growth driver for the future of the market.

Nestle SA, a global food and beverage company, is eyeing the healthy aging business in China, recognizing the middle-aged and elderly as the fastest growing

groups of consumers.

Mark Schneider, CEO of Nestle SA, said during his recent visit to China that globally, while birthrates are still declining, the middle-aged and elderly groups are expanding very fast. "These people are very interested in their health. They know more about health because of digital. And they have become increasingly aware that appropriate foods and beverages can advance their health very much," he said.

Schneider said these groups of consumers, who tend to have savings accumulated over a lifetime, have good purchasing power. Additionally, middle-aged consumers, often in their peak income years, also possess substantial purchasing power.

"So, you have a need and you have purchasing power coming together, which creates a business opportunity," he said.

The company has introduced N3 milk specifically tailored for this target audience, recognizing the importance of slowing down or preventing the loss of muscle mass and maintaining bone health among the elderly.

In Asia, milk consumption is hindered by lactose intolerance, which becomes more prevalent as people age. Nestle said the N3 milk addresses this issue by utilizing proprietary technology to convert lactose into prebiotic fibers, providing consumers with all the benefits of milk without the digestive discomfort.

The product was first launched in China last November, signifying a shift in the company's approach to innovation. Rather than introducing new products in other markets before China, the company now sees China as a leader in innovation, with valuable insights gained for

international markets.

On healthy aging, the CEO said the company is committed to making significant contributions in areas such as dairy, vitamins, minerals and supplements. The company has also introduced products aimed at supporting weight loss and controlling blood sugar levels to promote healthy aging.

Another example is Nestle's Yiyang Low Sugar Milk Powder, which utilizes patented technology and offers a new approach for the aging demographic in China, aiming to effectively manage blood sugar levels while allowing dietary flexibility as well as enhancing sleep quality, according to the company.

Additionally, the report found a significant rise in attention among the 20 to 25 age group, indicating a growing awareness of health among young adults.

With the continuous expansion of market scale, new trends such as snack products have emerged in nutritious and healthy foods, catering to the younger demographic,

emphasizing daily well-being and showcasing diversified demand, according to the report.

The nutrition and health food industry is pivoting toward snacks through innovations, focusing on taste enhancement and improving eating habits, said the report.

This trend has increased the convenience of nutritious and healthy foods, allowing consumers to easily access essential nutrients amid their busy lifestyles.

Meanwhile, according to the CIC, online sales of nutritious and healthy foods have experienced explosive growth, emerging as a vital market for both traditional and emerging brands to compete in.

The compound annual growth rates of leading companies, such as Alibaba Health and JD Health, have exceeded 50 percent from 2017 to 2022, said the report. Additionally, livestreaming e-commerce has significantly boosted sales of nutritious and healthy foods, said the report.

TRAVEL



A visitor poses for a photo next to the No 101 bus parked in Sanxing village, Jiaxing, Zhejiang province in March.



Travelers explore the rural scenery of Jiaxing on the No 101 bus.



Cherry blossoms in the spring are among the highlights in rural areas of Jiaxing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Jiaxing bus is a ticket to prosperity

A brightly-colored bus emblazoned with the slogan "driving to happiness" has been parked at the entrance of Sanxing village since late March, luring visitors to the village in Fengqiao town, in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province. Vivid illustrations and texts on board immediately take you down the road of coordinated urban and rural development across the region.

"It's pretty much how I feel about the changes over the years," says Wang Wanling, who now lives in downtown Jiaxing but previously lived in Yonghong village, about 5 kilometers from Sanxing.

"Nowadays, the countryside has really changed a lot. The roads are wider, the water is clearer, and the air is fresher," Wang says.

The authorities chose the No 101 bus to host the exhibition because it was the first public link to connect urban and rural areas in Jiaxing two decades ago, and has borne witness to the city's synchronized urban and rural development.

At the beginning of reform and opening-up in 1978, residents in Jiaxing primarily relied on boats to travel, due to the area's extensive river networks.

Public buses began to run in the downtown area in 1984 and took over the main role in transportation after roads and bridges were built, as they were much faster than boats.

However, rural residents had to rely on privately-owned buses to visit the downtown area to do things like selling farm produce, says Shen Shuigen, who used to run such a service in 1997.

The drawbacks of rural buses became increasingly apparent. There were no fixed stations or departure times, ticket prices were generally determined by market demand, and sometimes there were issues with overloading, Shen says.

To solve the problem, more than 200 private buses were taken over by the local government-funded public transportation company.

Shen became a driver for the company. "I was thinking long-term. I got insurance and housing funds, as well as a higher salary and benefits," Shen says, explaining why he accepted the offer.

"It's better this way, the government taking the lead, so that things are standardized and made convenient and affordable for common people," he says.

In 2003, the No 101 bus was introduced to address those problems, cutting the commute time between many

Urban-rural network has changed the face of the countryside, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



Visitors to Sanxing village at an exhibition recounting integrated urban and rural development in Jiaxing.

villages and the city area.

Zhang Xiuzhen from Sanxing still takes the bus several times a week to purchase groceries downtown.

"It takes only about 40 minutes to get there, and I can still make it back home for lunch, which is very convenient," Zhang says.

She has also seen changes to the operation of the No 101 bus.

"In the past, the bus was small and crowded, and it took much more time to get to the city. Now, it's spacious, the waiting time is much shorter, and the ticket is cheap, only 2 yuan (\$0.28) to get to the city," Zhang says, adding that the scenery along the route has also changed significantly.

The 101 bus runs 24 kilometers through more than 30 stations, including a train station, the site of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and the city's central park.

"You can see towering buildings on one side of the road and vast, fertile fields on the other, a balance of bustling metropolis and tranquil home," Zhang says, describing the journey.

The 101 bus is one part of a well-developed public transport system that covers all major towns and villages.

It has not just made commuting easier, but has brought positive change to rural areas.

Fengqiao has been known for its sweet, juicy peaches for over a century.

But 10 years ago, underdeveloped public transport kept the fruit from being known outside.

"We had to take a boat to the market to sell our peaches, it was a long journey, and arduous," says Ying Huaxing, a peach farmer from Sanxing village.

The five bus stations in the village now enable him to reach urban customers more easily.

"If anyone in the village has problems growing peaches, they come to me for advice. Whether it's about seedling supply, pest control, technical management or sales channels, I'm happy to help them all," Ying says, adding that seeing fellow villagers growing premium-quality peaches and making more money gives him a great sense of achievement.

Additionally, easy public access means more urban travelers visiting the villages.

"They come here to pick peaches and enjoy countryside fun, which in turn drives up our prices," says Xu Lijun, Sanxing village Party secretary.

Together with the other fruits grown in the village, the total output value of Sanxing's farm produce has reached 180 million yuan (\$24.9 million) a year, according to village authorities.

"Now, per capita disposable income in Sanxing has reached 58,000 yuan, and more than 90 percent of all households have an annual income of over 200,000 yuan," Xu says.

The reform of urban and rural public transportation is a microcosm of Jiaxing's coordinated urban-rural development.

In 2004, the city took the lead among prefectural-level cities nationwide in issuing the outline of an urban-rural integration development plan, which proposed deepening the reform of urban-rural integration and narrowing the urban-rural gap.

The outline's goal was the comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable development of the economy, social affairs, culture, and environment of urban and rural areas.

In 2022, the per capita disposable income of rural residents in Jiaxing was 46,276 yuan and has been the highest in Zhejiang for 19 consecutive years, according to a report from the Jiaxing government.

The income ratio between urban and rural residents has narrowed to within 1.6 percent, and the urban-rural gap is the smallest in the province.

Tang Zhiyun, who lives near the Yuxin town government, four bus stops from Sanxing village, says she has come to feel fortunate to be a villager in Jiaxing.

"In the past, I always wanted to be a city dweller, but now I feel that my life is not much different from theirs. Sometimes, even city dwellers envy us," she says.

In March, local officials announced a plan to establish a common wealth service circle, where 11 regular programs will be implemented.

They include both "Red" (of the country's revolutionary culture and heritage) and rural tourism bus routes, health service stations, and local student internships, says Zhu Jianhua, a senior official at the Jiaxing Communication Investment Group.

"We will leverage resources from all parties to meet the needs of the people, and collectively strive for a better life," Zhu says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

Zhejiang villages blossom with government effort

When I am on the eve of a business trip to cover an event in a rural area, I always pack some instant coffee. It's important I am able to satisfy my caffeine addiction and get my head straight to face a new day.

After all, chances are slim that I'll find freshly ground coffee in most villages. Yet, my trip to Jiaxing in late March made these preparations redundant.

A strong fragrance of coffee greeted my nose as I entered Lianfeng village in Nanhu district. The bar's rustic setting threw the features of its metallic coffee machine into sharp relief, while its wooden chairs and tables blended perfectly with the pastoral scene outside the window.



Yang Feiyue
Reporter's Log

I had no hesitation ordering a cup to refresh myself and kick off my visit to the village.

The bar's owner, Chen Kaile, seemed laid back as he took my order, and the right corner of his mouth tilted up in the suggestion of a faint smile when I asked him why he'd opened a cafe in the village.

Chen was blunt. He said that the surprising changes to the village he'd felt whenever he returned there after working in cities had been the reason. His pride overflowed as he said how convenient transportation and the changing taste of residents were providing his business with a steady flow of patrons.

That made me a bit jealous, to the point that I pictured what it would be like if I had my own small business, or worked as a freelancer in such beautiful countryside.

My sense of envy only increased as I went a bit farther into the village. Women dressed in red and green martial art costumes were exercising against the backdrop of golden rapeseed flowers and two giant waterwheels, while neatly arranged houses with pink walls and black tiles were strewn across Lianfeng's vast green expanse.

I came across Xu Maorong holding an infant as I passed in front of her three-story house, which faces onto something of a miniature garden.

Pedestrian routes meandered across the grasslands, and stone bridges crossed over pools with fish and artificial lotus flowers.

She insisted I come inside and take a look at her new home, as if I was an old acquaintance.

Urban social decorum led me to partially accept her offer by standing near the threshold and having a quick look around the living room. It was spacious, and other guests were inside, drinking tea and chatting at a round table.

They were all villagers, and had been invited by Xu to celebrate the day her family moved into their new home, which was built on the site of her old house in 2022. "My friends from the city said that my house is practically built in a park," she said with a big smile.

Xu normally lives in downtown Jiaxing, about a half-hour drive from Lianfeng village where she was born.

She readily accepted the local government's offer to upgrade her old family property, as she got to pick the house's design for free, as well as renovate its external environment, such as the courtyard, which was all taken care of by local authorities.

She spent a little more than 400,000 yuan (\$55,320) to have the house built, and around 1 million on decoration.

Xu said that her financial state has been greatly improved, which has enabled her to make her family's life better, especially as her parents are getting old.

"We will certainly come back more often," she said.

As I said goodbye and walked farther into the village, the picturesque pastoral scenes continued with winding green pathways and stone bridges over flowing water.

This is all a far cry from the landscape of roughly a decade ago, when unchecked pig farming caused heavy pollution.

This was addressed after years of effort, the removal of polluting pig farms, environmental restoration and nurturing new rural tourism.

Bidding farewell to Lianfeng, I dropped by the Zhongxi cherry blossom festival, which seemed to be the talk of the town. It was being held at a resort built at an urban-rural juncture in Pinghu district, about a 40-minute drive from Lianfeng.

Clusters of colorful cherry blossoms dominated the view at the resort, which resembles a huge park about 110 hectares in size.

The guide told me there are more than 10,000 cherry trees of eight varieties, complemented by other plant species, like tulips.

It was cloudy that day, but this obviously didn't prevent visitors from crowding into the place, taking pictures, camping or lying on the grass to relax.

I blended in, treating myself to some local specialties.

As I headed back to the train station, I couldn't help but think of Xu's hospitality and the modern conveniences in rural areas. They seemed to be proof of what local officials have said about Jiaxing's endeavors toward integrated rural and urban development.

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SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Fernandez sees youth as key to Nets gain

Spaniard seeks early success in Brooklyn in wake of team's playoff disappointment

NEW YORK — Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving and James Harden weren't the only ones who didn't stick around long in Brooklyn.

The Nets have gone through coaches almost as quickly as superstar players in recent years, even when the team had been good enough to make five straight playoff appearances from 2019-23.

Maybe Jordi Fernandez will be the coach to have lasting success.

The first Spanish head coach in NBA history said that he expects the Nets to improve quickly after finishing 32-50 last season.

"We will see results right away, because, like I said before, this industry is about getting results and getting better," Fernandez said.

The coach of Canada's men's national team spent the past two seasons as the assistant head coach of the Sacramento Kings, and stood out during a search that began almost immediately after the Nets fired Jacque Vaughn during the All-Star break.

"I think something that separates Jordi from a lot of the candidates is that we found that he could look at a developmental roster, and could see various different pathways," general manager Sean Marks said. "I mean, he's coached stars before, he's been the head, director of development before. So, as I said, he's worn many hats and, I think with our roster, that he's going to be able to get the respect of those guys."

The Nets have to decide what kind of roster that will be. Early in Marks' tenure, the team was build-



Jordi Fernandez looks on during an NBA basketball game in Denver on Feb 28. The Spaniard has since been appointed as the new head coach of the Brooklyn Nets, which are looking to bounce back from missing the playoffs for the first time in six years. AP

ing gradually under Kenny Atkinson, before he was replaced during the 2019-20 season. Then the Nets tried the superstar route under Steve Nash, signing Durant and Irving, before acquiring Harden in a blockbuster trade.

With those players all traded, the Nets were back to a younger squad, which finished last season under interim coach Kevin Ollie. Fernandez said that he likes having this kind of roster.

"The youth is always great, right, because it allows you to have a team for a long run," Fernandez said.

"You never want to have to let people go from positions, whether

that's coaches or staff members, and so forth," Marks said. "I think what it is, is that we're in professional sports, and there's turnover. I mean, we're all very, very lucky, and very fortunate to have the jobs that we have and to hold on to them for as long as we can."

"You hope you do it the right way, and that you do it with the right people, and you continue to build. As I said before, hopefully with Jordi this is a long-term fit, he can continue to grow and develop just the same as we all have."

The 41-year-old Fernandez, who is from Badalona in Spain, began coaching in his teens. He was an assistant with the Spanish national

team when it won the bronze medal at the 2017 EuroBasket, and for Nigeria at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. Last year, he led Canada to its first medal in the Basketball World Cup when the Canadians beat the United States to claim bronze.

Marks said that he has received positive feedback from people who had worked with, and played under, Fernandez, who was also an assistant coach in Denver from 2016-22.

Fernandez said that he couldn't fully explain why things haven't worked out for recent coaches in Brooklyn, but he sees the possibilities for himself. He thinks the youthful squad will allow the Nets to play fast, and thinks they can

build a top-10 offense and defense, adding that he believes center Nic Claxton can win the Defensive Player of the Year award.

Fernandez said he's already spoken to the team's players. He will begin working with them and set up his staff before leaving for six weeks to rejoin Team Canada. He will return to the Nets in August.

"It's going to take time, it's going to take direction and structure," Fernandez said, "but I believe, with the team we have, and the partnership that we have right now, there's no doubt in my mind that we'll start the right way."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

OLYMPICS

Salt Lake City 'all but guaranteed' to get 2034 Games

NEW YORK — Salt Lake City is all but guaranteed to be awarded the 2034 Winter Olympics later this year, and officials said that its robust infrastructure and enthusiastic public support are what has paved the way.

Utah's capital city hosted the Games back in 2002 and International Olympic Committee representatives recently toured the city and heard plans for its "no-build" Games.

No other cities are in the running for the 2034 Games. Salt Lake City 2034 and France 2030 were picked as preferred hosts for the Winter Olympics in November.

"They got an opportunity to see our venues and how they are still thriving," Catherine Raney-Norman, chair of the Salt Lake City — Utah Committee for the Games, said in an interview.

"They left excited by what they had seen. It was extremely positive."



The hockey rink at the Delta Center is shown with the new NHL logos in Salt Lake City. AP

While other cities have soured on the idea of hosting an Olympics for fears of cost overruns, that is not the case in Salt Lake City, where the legacy of the 2002 Games endures.

"Our polling has shown that we have over 80 percent public support," said Raney-Norman, a four-time Olympic speed skater. "That's amazing. And we've had that consistently for the past 20 years."

Ensuring the public remains on board is one of the challenges that comes with having a 10-year lead-up to the opening ceremony. "Our challenge is making sure we maintain that enthusiasm, and also making sure we have an impact on our community," she said.

"We don't have to build anything, so our headline in 2034 is going to be based on our community impact."

The Winter Olympics have grown by about 40 percent, with more sports and disciplines added since Salt Lake City hosted them, but the city can handle the additional action, Raney-Norman said.

"We know that, within our venues and with our technical side, that we can execute those events," she said.

"We're embracing it, we're excited about it."

New events, like big air, could be held at a temporary downtown venue, while the University of Utah will serve as the athletes' village, she said.

Salt Lake City initially wanted to bid for the 2030 Games, but dropped those plans due to its proximity to the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. The IOC is expected to formally name the city as host on July 24.

Hosting an Olympics within 10 years of LA28 is a "generational opportunity" for the United States, and Raney-Norman said dialogue is already happening between the organizing committees.

"As we look to a future award, and Salt Lake hopefully being officially named as host for 2034, we see opportunities and synergies as we continue to collaborate," she said.

"This is an opportunity to elevate the Olympic and Paralympic movement in the United States, and that requires collaboration between the two groups."

REUTERS

SKIING

King of the hill returns — to ski for famously flat nation

Marcel Hirscher, one of the most successful ski racers of all time, is planning to return next season after five years in retirement. And, surprisingly, the record eight-time overall World Cup champion is going to compete for the Netherlands — his mother's country — instead of his native Austria.

The Austrian winter sports federation, known as the OSV, announced recently that it had released the 35-year-old Hirscher and endorsed his change of national representation.

"For people asking why I am doing this, for me it's clear — because the joy of skiing never left, it's just so much fun for me," Hirscher said on Instagram.

While there have been Dutch skiers who have competed on the elite level, never has the Netherlands — a country with no mountains — had a top racer anywhere near Hirscher's caliber.

The change of national allegiance also allows Hirscher to compete on Van Deer skis — the brand he helped create with Red Bull, his sponsor. Van Deer is not on the list of brands approved for use by the Austrian federation.

"It was better, and easier, for the Dutch federation to put this project into practice," Hirscher said. "For me, personally, it was important not to take any resources from young athletes in Austria."

The Austrian federation said it "tried very hard to offer Marcel in the best possible, and individual, conditions." The OSV added, "We very much regret his decision to request a change of his national representation to the Dutch Ski Association, but in the end we supported it."

Hirscher was born and raised in Austria to an Austrian father and a Dutch mother, Sylvia. His father, Ferdinand, coached him throughout his career.

Patrick Riml, Red Bull's ski racing director, said that Hirscher plans to enter lower-level races in New Zealand in August to get the necessary points to return to the World Cup circuit, and that his main aim is to compete at next season's world championships in Saalbach-Hinterglang, Austria.

"He's been training the whole season. He's been on snow pretty much every day of the winter, testing his equipment," Riml said, adding that Hirscher plans to compete in both slalom and giant slalom.

Hirscher retired in 2019 following his record eighth straight overall World Cup title. Marc Girardelli is next on the men's list with five overall titles. Annemarie Moser-Proll tops the women's list with six overall trophies, followed by Mikaela Shiffrin with five and Lindsey Vonn with four.

In terms of World Cup race wins, Hirscher's 67 victories are second behind men's record holder Inge-



Austria's Marcel Hirscher celebrates on the podium after winning a men's World Cup slalom competition in 2019. AP

mar Stenmark's 86. Shiffrin holds the overall record with 97 wins.

So can Hirscher still compete at the highest level?

"He was amazing when he was racing, he was the best one out there," Riml told The Associated Press. "Marcel is Marcel."

French skier, Victor Muffat-Jandret, who is also 35 and still com-

petes, told L'Equipe: "It won't be easy to win. The sport has evolved in five years."

Hirscher's return follows that of another Red Bull athlete, Lucas Braathen, who is switching from Norway to Brazil — his mother's home nation.

"I've spent hours studying your performance throughout my career, attempting to integrate bits and pieces into my own movement patterns," Braathen wrote Hirscher on Instagram. "There is one thing I really wish I had the chance to do — race against you. It's an honor to have you back, and I can't wait to ski with you."

Skiers must comply with International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) rules to change national eligibility — though the process is made easier if the team they are leaving agrees to the move.

"Taking the sport to a whole new level of off-season entertainment," Aksel Lund Svindal, another former overall World Cup winner, wrote on Instagram. "It seems like we have a transfer market in ski racing."

Riml said there was no shared planning or communication between Hirscher and Braathen, and noted that Hirscher has not formally joined the Dutch association yet.

"The last couple of years, he was always thinking about it," Riml said. "Then he decided on very, very short notice that he really wants to do this."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

OLYMPICS

Lee looks toward Paris after battling kidney disease

NEW YORK — Olympic champion Sunisa Lee has said the kidney disease that threatened her gymnastics career is in remission and she feels better than ever, as she bids for a spot on Team USA at this year's Paris Games.

The 21-year-old, who won the all-around gold at the Tokyo Olympics, revealed late last year that the disease caused her face, fingers and legs to swell, making it difficult to even get out of bed at times.

"I was really nervous and obvious-

ly very sad, because gymnastics is all I know," she told Reuters at a Team USA media summit in New York last month.

"Getting sick was very random. It kind of happened one Tuesday, and it's something you can't wrap your head around."

Lee said the uncommon disease caused her to gain 20 kilograms of water weight.

"I kept flying off the bar because my fingers were so swollen that they didn't fit into my grips," she said,

adding that treatment has made the incurable condition manageable.

"Now that I am doing a lot better, I am so grateful for the way that things turned out."

Lee said she feels great in practice and is looking forward to the Olympic trials, which will be held in her home state of Minnesota in June.

"Being in the gym consistently, I realized that I am so much better now with my gymnastics — even better than I was at the last Olymp-

ics — and that has motivated me," she said.

Lee has been helped along on her journey by four-time Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles, who withdrew from the team competition in Tokyo citing mental health issues.

"She is someone who inspires me every day," Lee said.

"She has helped me to be a lot more open about talking about my mental health."

Lee said that, despite reaching the mountaintop in Tokyo, where as an

18-year-old she won the all-around title, as well as bronze in the uneven bars and silver in the team event, she feels even more pressure now.

"Having the title at the last Olympics has added a tremendous amount of pressure," said Lee, who is the only Asian American woman to win Olympic gold in the all-around. "But this time, I'm just trying to prove to myself that I deserve to be there."

REUTERS

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Murray's late shot sinks LeBron's Lakers

Nuggets take series 4-1, setting up second-round Timberwolves tie

DENVER — Jamal Murray scored 32 points despite a strained calf, sinking the game-winner with 3.6 seconds left on the clock, as the defending NBA champion Denver Nuggets bounced LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers from the playoffs with a 108-106 Game 5 win on Monday night.

James' two free throws tied it at 106 with 26 seconds to go, and the Nuggets, just as they did in Game 2, eschewed the timeout. Murray took the ball on a high screen and roll to his left, shaking Austin Reaves as he crossed through the lane and swished the 14-footer.

It was Murray's buzzer beater that also won Game 2.

"This one was a little better," Murray said, as confetti swirled around him and his celebrating teammates.

Nuggets coach Michael Malone said he had "the utmost confidence" in Murray making the game-winning shot. "That's why I didn't call a timeout. Let the best in the business play their game and get to their spots."

Nikola Jokic, who committed an uncharacteristic seven turnovers, narrowly missed his 19th career playoff triple-double with 25 points, 20 rebounds and nine assists and Michael Porter Jr scored 26.

James had 30 points and 11 assists



Jamal Murray of the Denver Nuggets shoots against Austin Reaves of the Los Angeles Lakers in the final seconds of Game 5 of their NBA playoff series on Monday to complete a 4-1 series win. GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

and Davis had 17 points and 15 rebounds, but appeared bothered down the stretch after banging his left shoulder into Porter in the second half.

The Nuggets advance to face the Minnesota Timberwolves in the second round, which starts next weekend in Denver, where the Nuggets are a Western Conference-best 36-8, including 3-0 in the playoffs.

Not that it's been easy.

The Nuggets trailed for about three-fourths of the minutes in this series, they scuffled through extended shooting slumps and they're a

banged-up bunch that can definitely use the rest.

The Nuggets, who swept the Lakers in the Western Conference finals last summer on their way to winning the franchise's first NBA championship, beat the Lakers for the 12th time in their last 13 games.

The only other time James was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs came in 2021, when the Phoenix Suns beat LA in six games.

So, this was the shortest of James' 17 trips to the playoffs, where he's now 183-104 overall, with a 41-13 series record and four titles.

After warming up with an ice pack on his injured calf, Murray got medical clearance to play. He wasn't his usual explosive self on drives to the basket — at first — but he managed 16 points in the first half, including 12 in the first quarter, which ended with Denver ahead (28-24) for the first time all series.

The Lakers led 53-50 at halftime and pushed that advantage to nine points, but the Nuggets closed on a 21-10 run to take an 81-79 lead into the fourth quarter, which remained tight until the buzzer.

Malone said it was an emotional

scene before the game when he allowed Murray to play.

"He just told me, 'I'm glad I played, because I didn't know if we'd win if I didn't play tonight.' I said, 'well, that's the understatement of the year,'" Malone recounted. "That kid's a warrior, man. The bigger the moment, the kid just continues to shine."

Taurean Prince heaved up a contested half-court shot that fell short as time expired, sending the Lakers to an early exit, despite taking the defending champs to the brink in all five games.

"I couldn't be more proud of our crew despite everything that's happened," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said. "Obviously, the series didn't go in our favor, it didn't start the way we wanted it to, but to win that one at home, and fight tooth and nail today to get this one, our guys showed a lot of guts and a lot of character and resilience to continue to fight."

Thunder grounds Pelicans

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Jalen Williams each scored 24 points, and the former added 10 rebounds as the visiting Oklahoma City Thunder completed a first-round playoff sweep of the New Orleans Pelicans with a 97-89 victory on Monday.

Williams put up eight of his points during a pivotal 10-0 fourth-quarter run for the top-seeded Thunder, who advance to face either the fourth-seeded Los Angeles Clippers or the fifth-seeded Dallas Mavericks in the Western Conference semifinals.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

SOCCER

Silva says tearful farewell to Chelsea faithful

LONDON — Brazilian defender Thiago Silva will leave Chelsea at the end of the season after a "dream" four-year spell at Stamford Bridge.

Silva announced his farewell on Monday in an emotional video message on Chelsea's website. The 39-year-old centerback arrived at the Premier League club on a free transfer in August 2020 after leaving Paris Saint-Germain.

He has made 151 appearances in all competitions for the Blues, winning the Champions League, FIFA Club World Cup and the UEFA Super Cup.

"Chelsea means a lot to me. I came here with the intention of only staying for a year and it ended up being four years. Not just for me, but for my family, too," Silva said during a tearful goodbye speech. "My sons play for Chelsea so it's a source of great pride to be a part of the Chelsea family. I hope they can continue their careers here at this victorious club that many players wish to be part of."

"I think, in everything I did here over the four years, I always gave my all. But, unfortunately, everything has a start, a middle and an end."

Silva became a popular figure among Chelsea fans after making an immediate impact in its 2020-21 Champions League-winning campaign, which climaxed with victory over Manchester City in the final in Porto.

The fond feelings are clearly mutual as Silva saluted the fanbase and revealed his intention to return to Chelsea in a different capacity in the future.

"It's an indescribable love. I can only say thank you," he said.

"It's definitely been a dream. Not even in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I could achieve such great things and win one of the best professional titles, the Champions League, at one of the biggest clubs in the world."

"Goodbyes are for those that leave and don't come back. I intend on coming back one day. I hope to leave the door open so that, in the near future, I can return, albeit in another role here."

Capped 113 times by Brazil, Silva has made 34 appearances in all competitions for Chelsea this season. But, the former AC Milan star suffered a groin problem in Chelsea's 2-2 draw at Aston Villa on Saturday, raising the possibility that he has, perhaps, made his last appearance in the blue shirt.

AFP

AFP

SOCCER

Terzic hopes to repay Dortmund trust by reaching CL Final

BERLIN — Borussia Dortmund coach Edin Terzic faces Paris Saint-Germain in Wednesday's Champions League semifinal first leg, enjoying a rare spell of certainty in the job.

Dortmund's progression to the last four would have been scarcely believable to anyone watching the 2-0 loss at PSG which opened its Champions League campaign in September.

A string of domestic setbacks including a German Cup exit in December had Terzic on the ropes.

He only survived a crisis meeting shortly before Christmas because of Dortmund's improved Champions League form.

Terzic's side qualified top of a group including PSG, last year's semifinalist AC Milan and Saudi-backed Newcastle United.

Reaching the semifinals with wins over PSV Eindhoven and Atletico Madrid has all but guaranteed Terzic will be in the Dortmund dug-

out next season.

While not all the doubters have been silenced, getting past PSG would make Terzic just the third Dortmund manager, after club legends Ottmar Hitzfeld and Jurgen Klopp, to take the club to the Champions League final.

'Super impressive'

Terzic's story is the kind that the Dortmund hierarchy, not to mention the club's fans, find appealing.

He was born in Menden, near Dortmund, in 1982, just two years after his parents had moved to Germany from the former Yugoslavia.

The life-long Dortmund fan attended his first game in 1991 at the Westfalenstadion against Duisburg, aged just nine.

"I don't remember much from my childhood, but that was super impressive," Terzic told German football magazine 11Freunde in May 2021.

Pictures from the 2012 German



Edin Terzic

Cup final show a boyish Terzic among the tens of thousands of Dortmund fans in Berlin's Olympic Stadium.

On that day, Dortmund thumped rival Bayern Munich 5-2 to seal a league and cup double in what was the pinnacle of Klopp's reign.

After playing in the lower tiers of German soccer, he joined Dortmund as a scout in 2010. Apart from brief spells with Besiktas and West Ham, Terzic has been at Dortmund ever since.

Taking over as interim head coach

in December 2020, he led Dortmund to the German Cup the following May, by which time Marco Rose had been announced as his successor.

Terzic stayed with the club as technical director and returned to the dugout ahead of the 2022-23 season, this time as head coach on a permanent basis.

That season ended with a final-round 2-2 draw to lowly Mainz which cost it the league title on goal difference.

Despite the heartbreak, Dortmund felt it had its man — a decision which has paid off, in Europe at least.

'Stay humble'

England winger Jadon Sancho, who returned to Dortmund on loan in January after an unhappy spell at Manchester United, plays some of his best soccer under Terzic.

Terzic was central in bringing Sancho, who scored 50 goals and

made 64 assists in 137 matches in his first spell at the club, back to Dortmund.

Speaking with the UEFA website on Monday, Sancho said: "It's a very nice feeling coming back here."

"I have belief in myself again. I heard the crowd screaming my name."

Julian Brandt, another of Dortmund's creative forces, praised the Englishman's skills.

"Opposing players respect the name Sancho. What he can do with his feet is unbelievable."

"Jadon is skill personified." Sancho, who lifted the German Cup under Terzic, Dortmund's last piece of major silverware, said his side could emulate Klopp's efforts in 2013 and return to Wembley for the Champions League final.

"Paris will be a tough test for us. We have to stay humble and give it our all to get to the final."

Recognition
that
Every Occupation
Every Worker
Every Contribution
Counts
May 1

CHINA DAILY

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