



Elegant legacy

Preserver of Manchu culture has flair for ancient embroidery **PEOPLE, PAGE 5**



Strength and strategy

Fitness event emphasizes joy, camaraderie, healthier lifestyle **BIZ LIFE, PAGE 9**

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Chinese competitor Bao Fangtao takes part in the bricklaying contest at the WorldSkills 2024 vocational competition, held at the Eurexpo Lyon exhibition center in Chassieu, France, on Wednesday. **JEFF PACHOUD / AFP**

Nation takes top spot at global skills competition

By **WANG MINGJIE** in Lyon, France
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The closing ceremony of WorldSkills Lyon 2024 transformed into a sea of celebration as China claimed the top spot in the competition. Meanwhile, the city of Shanghai proudly accepted the competition flag from Lyon, as it prepares to host the next edition of the event in 2026.

China emerged as the lead nation at the 47th WorldSkills Competition, securing 36 gold, nine silver and four bronze medals, cementing its leadership in the global vocational skills arena.

The event, held at the OL Stadium in Lyon, France, concluded on Sunday, with the final medal tally announced during the closing ceremony.

In the Manufacturing Team Challenge, competitors Lu Yanlin, Zhan Xianda and Ma Jiajia were honored with the Best of Nation award. Additionally, in the Industry 4.0 skill dis-

cipline, Lu Junwei and Xie Huiyuan earned the prestigious Albert Vidal Award, which recognizes the competitor with the highest overall points across all skill competitions. This marks the second time China has claimed this prestigious accolade.

Among the gold medalists were Fan Canbao and Jiang Jiajun, who triumphed in the Autonomous Mobile Robotics discipline. Reflecting on their success, Fan said, "I am extremely happy to have won this gold medal for China and to bring honor to the country, especially since the win was somewhat unexpected."

Jiang added: "The biggest takeaway is that international competitions are quite different from domestic selections. We'll definitely review this experience and prepare for the next WorldSkills in Shanghai, focusing on adaptability, time management and attention to detail."

A significant highlight of the evening was the ceremonial handover of

the WorldSkills flag. China's Minister of Human Resources and Social Security Wang Xiaoping and Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng accepted the flag from the WorldSkills Lyon 2024 organizing committee. This marked the official start of the "China era" and the "Shanghai chapter" of WorldSkills, as Shanghai prepares to host the 48th competition in 2026.

Shanghai also put on a captivating cultural performance during the ceremony, blending modern and traditional elements, and setting an inspiring tone for the next competition.

Chris Humphries, president of WorldSkills, addressed the assembled champions, saying: "You are the changemakers. You are the people who will now go out into the world, shaping it and finding new solutions to the challenges we face. We need your creativity, your bold ambition, and your exceptional skills. Go forward knowing we believe in you and want you to thrive."

The weeklong competition, which began on Sept 11, saw over 1,600 participants from 69 countries and regions competing across 59 skill disciplines within six major categories.

This year marked China's seventh participation in the biennial event. The Chinese delegation, composed of 68 contestants with an average age of 22, fielded entries in all skill categories, the largest number of entries by any nation at the event.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security sent a congratulatory message to the Chinese delegation, praising their exceptional achievements and extending heartfelt thanks to all members of the team.

Known as the "Olympics of Skills", WorldSkills is a global competition that not only showcases professional talent but also serves as a platform for participants to exchange knowledge, experience and technological innovations.

City contends with impact of Bebinca

Hundreds of thousands evacuated as typhoon sweeps through Shanghai

By **XU XIAOMIN** and **WANG YING** in Shanghai

Despite the lingering impact of the strongest typhoon to make landfall in Shanghai since 1949, life and traffic were resuming gradually on Monday. As the center of typhoon Bebinca left Shanghai at noon, the all-out preparations and efforts made by people from all walks of life had paid dividends.

Bebinca, the 13th typhoon of this year, hit Shanghai's Lin-gang Special Area in Pudong New Area early on Monday morning with wind speeds reaching 42 meters per second, surpassing typhoon Gloria to become the strongest to hit Shanghai in 75 years, said the National Meteorological Center. No deaths had been reported in Shanghai as of press time.

On Monday, the second day of the three-day Mid-Autumn Festival holiday, residents who stayed at home on the advice of the city government uploaded videos showing strong winds and heavy rain, as well as fences blown down, trees uprooted, and power being cut off

in some communities.

More than 414,000 people had been relocated across Shanghai and 811 ships had been evacuated as of early morning on Monday, according to the Shanghai Flood Control Headquarters.

The authorities in the city pulled out all the stops to ensure that all those evacuated were taken care of, such as by providing hot lunches to the relocated and delivering meals to elderly residents.

Jin Shuigen, a 78-year-old man in the city's Jinshan district, was delivered a hot lunch by community volunteers on Monday. Jin was not alone, as dozens of seniors living in Fengpu community and many other neighborhoods around the city received lunches from community volunteers on Monday morning.

Community officials called the seniors in the morning asking them not to leave their homes and promised to deliver the food by lunch time, said Fan Chunying, a person in charge of the community's senior people's dining.

See **Typhoon**, page 2



Workers remove a fallen tree on Hengshan Road in Shanghai on Monday. Typhoon Bebinca, the 13th typhoon of the year, made landfall on the city's coast at 7:30 a.m. **CHEN HAOMING / XINHUA**

Breakthroughs will help bolster tech self-reliance

By **FAN FEIFEI**
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China's latest technological breakthroughs in homegrown deep ultraviolet (DUV) lithography machines mark a significant milestone in the country's semiconductor manufacturing equipment sector, and will help reduce its reliance on chipmaking technology from foreign counterparts, enhancing the competitiveness of the domestic semiconductor industry, experts said.

Their comments came after the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said that one of the DUV lithography machines, which operates at a wavelength of 193 nanometers with a resolution below 65 nm and an overlay accuracy below 8 nm, has been included in its guidance catalog for major technical equipment. However, the catalog did not specify which Chinese companies manufacture the DUV lithography machines.

China's first set of major technical equipment refers to equipment products that achieve important technological advancements and own intellectual property rights, but have yet to perform on the market, according to the ministry. These include complete equipment, core systems and key components.

The ministry urged local governments to strengthen policy coordination in areas like industries, finance

559.7 billion yuan

Sales revenue of China's integrated circuit industry in the first half of this year, up 16.9 percent year-on-year.

and technology, in order to promote the innovative development and application of such equipment.

DUV lithography machines are used to manufacture certain types of semiconductor devices like memory chips, which go into everything from laptops to smartphones. While new DUV lithography machines are used to produce the most advanced chips.

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecommunications industry association in China, said the latest achievements in the country's key chipmaking equipment indicate that Chinese chip manufacturers could use relatively advanced domestically made semiconductor machinery, which is conducive to improving the manufacturing level and ensuring the supply of homegrown chips.

He noted that the promotion and application of homemade DUV lithography machines are of vital importance in mitigating the negative effects of Western countries'

sanctions on critical technologies, and enhancing the independent innovation capability of China's semiconductor industry.

"As homegrown lithography systems continue to mature and the applications expand gradually, it is expected that more cutting-edge chip manufacturing technologies and equipment will emerge, further raising the country's self-sufficiency rate in chipmaking and moving the semiconductor manufacturing sector toward higher-end production," Xiang said.

The major technological breakthroughs in domestic lithography machines came after the Dutch government announced earlier in September that it will further expand export restrictions on advanced semiconductor manufacturing equipment, bringing the licensing requirements of chipmaking equipment company ASML's machines under its purview.

Li Xianjun, an associate researcher at the Institute of Industrial Economics, which is part of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the tightened export controls will seriously threaten the stability of global semiconductor industrial and supply chains and impede international technological cooperation, given China's growing presence in semiconductor manufacturing.

He emphasized that the recent remarkable progress in producing

lithography equipment will bring about new business opportunities for Chinese semiconductor companies, and further motivate them to pool more resources into technological innovation amid increasingly intensified competition in the global semiconductor sector.

As the world's largest chip market, China's semiconductor industry has made achievements in recent years, said Roger Sheng, vice-president of research at market research company Gartner.

Data from the China Semiconductor Industry Association showed that the sales revenue of China's integrated circuit industry reached 559.7 billion yuan (\$78.9 billion) in the first half of this year, up 16.9 percent year-on-year.

However, there is still a technical gap between Chinese chipmakers and their foreign peers, especially in cutting-edge semiconductor making equipment and fundamental chip materials, Sheng said, adding that "some advanced chip packaging and testing devices are dependent on imports."

He said more efforts are needed to step up policy support and encourage domestic companies in the upstream and downstream of the chip industrial chain to strengthen cooperation and increase investment in research and development, in order to master critical technologies in the sprawling semiconductor sector.

A FESTIVAL WHERE THE MOON PLAYS A SHINING ROLE

Poetry has given the lunar light a special romantic and emotional significance

By **FANG AIQING**
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It could be arguably assumed that as one ages, their emotional bond with the moon intensifies, bearing that imaginable vision in mind, extra clear in the dead of night, of themselves and their beloved ones, no matter how distant, sharing the same moonlight.

When they've seen more of life's vicissitudes and fatalistic loneliness, the moon's solid companionship becomes even more precious, just as the unwavering support they draw from the family behind them and their roots, whose gentle gaze shimmers like moonlight piercing the darkness.

In the Chinese Lunar Calendar,

there are three major celebrations of a full moon, a metaphor of the completeness brought along by a family reunion.

The first of a brand-new year, the Lantern, or Yuanxiao Festival, is when the year gone becomes past and with that pure, round moon hanging in the night sky rising hope is infused into new year resolutions, and one feels determined and omnipotent to bring their family a better taste of life.

The seventh full moon, called the Zhongyuan Festival or the "Ghost Festival", is to mourn lost ones with an unspoken wish for their spirits knocking at the door or visiting in dreams.

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NATION

More policy support to bolster growth expected

Increase in value-added industrial output, retail sales slows in August

By OUYANG SHIJIA and LIU ZHIHUA

China is likely to gradually introduce new policies to bolster quality-oriented growth in the near term, as the latest indicators suggest the economy is still feeling the pinch of lackluster demand and low confidence among investors and consumers, analysts said.

Existing policies are expected to be implemented in the following months along with additional steps to address the pressing challenges facing the broader economy, they said, adding that the central government has the fiscal capacity to leverage effective investment and spur

consumption, and plenty of room to step up support for monetary policy.

The potential moves should include expanding this year's deficit ratio, further cuts in the reserve requirement ratio and interest rates, and reducing rates on outstanding mortgages, they said.

Their comments came after figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Saturday showed slower growth in industrial production, consumer spending and investment.

China's value-added industrial output grew by 4.5 percent in August from last year, with retail sales up 2.1 percent. However, these figures were down on the previous month where value-added industrial output and

retail sales were up 5.1 percent and 2.7 percent in July.

The numbers have resulted in more calls for greater policy support to consolidate the country's economic recovery.

Darius Tang, associate director of corporates at ratings agency Fitch Bohua, said the latest figures reflect the structural imbalance embedded in China's economy with stronger supply and weaker demand.

"We believe that at the crux of the current weak consumption in China lies insufficient demand and people's unchanged low willingness to spend," Tang said.

"This is on one hand due to the fading growth of residents' disposable income, which raises concerns about employment and income stability. While on the other hand the decline in housing prices and the

flagging stock market are triggering negative wealth effects and squeezing out the expenditure potential."

From January to August, fixed-asset investments rose by 3.4 percent from last year, while from January to July, they grew by 3.6 percent year-on-year. Property investment fell by 10.2 percent in the first eight months from a year earlier, the same as in the first seven months.

Tang said his team believes that "it is highly likely the Chinese government will introduce more stimulus policies on consumption and the real estate sector step by step in the fourth quarter", in a bid to spur people's willingness to spend and increase effective demand.

Considering the recent weaker-than-expected economic indicators, Xiong Yuan, chief economist at Guosheng Securities, said China's

third-quarter GDP growth rate would probably be lower than that of the 4.7 percent in the second quarter, shoring up the case for stepped-up policy support to bolster growth.

"Policymakers will likely introduce new incremental policies in the near term," Xiong said.

"Potential moves will include expanding this year's deficit ratio, further cuts in the reserve requirement ratio and interest rates, and reducing rates on outstanding mortgages."

Looking ahead, Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, said China still has plenty of room to step up macroeconomic support this year, saying policymakers will likely further strengthen counter-cyclical and cross-cyclical adjustments.

Citing a key meeting held by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee in

late July, Betty Wang, lead economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said it sent a clear signal of plans to strengthen the counter-cyclical adjustment in the second half of this year via multiple policy tools.

Wang said her team expects the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, will cut interest rates by another 10 basis points in interest rates in the fourth quarter, along with an additional 25 basis points in the RRR during the period.

"We also expect the issuance of special local government bonds will pick up for the rest of this year with an average monthly issuance of 425 billion yuan (\$60 billion), or 68 percent higher than that of the first seven months of this year," Wang said.

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Typhoon: Flights back to normal in Shanghai

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Over 8,420 emergency calls were received by Shanghai Fire and Rescue by noon on Monday, in response to clear risks such as fallen trees and other obstacles, according to Shanghai-based newspaper Youth Daily.

Flights at Shanghai's two airports resumed on Monday afternoon after the center of typhoon Bebinca moved away from the city, according to Shanghai Airport (Group).

The first flights of the day arrived at Shanghai Pudong International Airport and Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport at 1:43 pm and 2:11 pm, respectively, and departure of flights from the two airports resumed at 3 pm, marking the recovery of traffic at the city's two airports.

More than 40 percent of the two airports' capacity was affected on Monday, according to a notice published by Shanghai Airport (Group) on Sunday night.

As of 6 pm on Monday, the Shanghai Meteorological Service had lifted the typhoon alert as Bebinca had left Shanghai and entered Jiangsu province.

As of 6 am on Monday, 46,300 people had been relocated across Jiangsu and over 20,000 vessels had taken shelter from the typhoon, according to the provincial flood control and drought relief headquarters. The province has mobilized more than 130,000 inspection personnel in total, with 33,500 conducting dike inspections and risk assessments.

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The AS700 civilian airship conducts a demonstration flight in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Saturday. The aircraft was delivered to a local company and will be used for aerial sightseeing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sightseeing airship sold to first buyer

By ZHAO LEI zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Aviation Industry Corp of China, the nation's leading aircraft maker, has delivered the AS700 multipurpose civilian airship to its first customer, who will use the craft for aerial sightseeing.

According to a news release from AVIC, the first AS700 was delivered on Saturday to Guangxi Guilin Fangzhou General Aviation, a private company, at a ceremony in Guilin, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

The Guangxi company will use the airship for low-altitude sightseeing tours.

Before the delivery, the first AS700 had undergone a 15-day trial involving tens of flights, during which designers examined its safety and reliability.

In August, the airship flew through three provincial-level regions on a 13-hour demonstration tour, marking the longest flight — both in terms of distance and dura-

tion — ever completed by any domestically built manned airship in China.

At the ceremony on Saturday, AVIC received orders for another 12 AS700s from Guangxi Guilin Fangzhou General Aviation and China Comfort Travel Group, according to the conglomerate.

Designed and built by the Special Aircraft Research Institute, an AVIC subsidiary in Jingmen, Hubei province, research and development of the AS700 began in August 2018, primarily to meet the demand for aerial sightseeing tours.

Propelled by piston engines, the airship has a maximum takeoff weight of 4.15 metric tons, a maximum speed of 100 kilometers per hour, and a flight ceiling of 3.1 km. It can carry one pilot and nine tourists, and is capable of flying 700 km and staying in the air for up to 10 hours.

After intensive test flights, the AS700 received its type certificate from the Civil Aviation Administration of China in December, becoming the first manned airship in the

country to be domestically certified.

Before the AS700, the Jingmen institute had designed a number of manned and unmanned airships since the mid-1980s. However, almost all of them were small models used to carry scientific equipment to perform experiments or technology demonstration rather than for tourism purposes.

According to industry experts, compared with conventional aircraft like fixed-wing planes or helicopters, airships have much lower costs in terms of procurement, operation and maintenance. They can be used almost everywhere, as opposed to fixed-wing planes that require a runway. Therefore, airships are a good choice for aerial tourism and cargo transportation to remote areas.

In addition to aerial tourism, the AS700 is suitable for a wide range of civilian operations such as mineral prospecting, marine surveillance, police patrols, cargo transport and emergency rescue, according to Zhou Lei, its chief designer.

Leading scientist given nation's highest honor

75 years on

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Wang Zhenyi

Wang Zhenyi, a world-leading scientist whose breakthrough in the field of leukemia treatment has saved hundreds of thousands of lives at home and abroad, has been awarded China's top honor.

According to an order signed on Friday by President Xi Jinping, Wang was among the four notable figures to be given the Medal of the Republic, the nation's highest honor.

In 1986, Wang was the world's first medical scientist to convert cancer cells in leukemia patients into normal ones in clinical practice, a treatment that has drastically improved the remission rate of the highly fatal type of blood cancer — acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL), and has been used in many other countries and regions, including Europe, Japan, the United States, Italy, Australia and Cuba.

"In retrospect, I focused on doing just one thing throughout my entire career — to be responsible for patients," said Wang, 99, a tenured professor at Shanghai Ruijin Hospital and an academician with the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

When first embarking on his medical career, he witnessed patients afflicted by leukemia, especially APL, which took their lives within half a year in 90 percent of cases.

As a result, Wang, who later became the only physician so far among the laureates of China's highest science honor, the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award, made conquering the disease his lifelong goal.

His research in this field began in 1979, and in 1986 he prescribed the medicine, all-trans-retinoic acid (ATRA), that he had discovered in order to treat APL patients, to a 5-year-old girl suffering from the disease and in a critical condition.

The girl took the medicine for a week, and her condition was reversed. She was completely cured after a month.

This was widely recognized as the world's first case that put the theory of induced differentiation

of leukemia cells into practice.

Moreover, the woman is still alive and healthy today.

Wang and his team treated a total of 24 patients that way within a year and all of them went into complete remission.

The results were later published in a paper, which immediately caused a sensation around the world.

Wang, whose therapy was soon promoted throughout China, then focused on the pricing of the medicine to make it affordable to patients and their families.

He decided to abandon the patent application and do his best to reduce the price of the drug.

When the medicine was first launched in the domestic market more than three decades ago, the price of a box of 10 capsules was about 11 yuan (\$1.55).

Today, a box of the medicine is priced at 290 yuan, and it has been included in the National Reimbursement Drug List. Other similar tumor therapies are priced at over 20,000 yuan.

"I never calculated how much I could personally earn from the development of the medicine. My only hope was that more patients could be saved," Wang said.

Years later, Wang and his students Chen Zhu and Chen Saijuan proposed the treatment method of ATRA combined with the traditional Chinese medicine compound arsenic trioxide, raising the five-year survival rate of APL, which was once regarded as the most dangerous type of leukemia, from 10 percent in 1978 to over 95 percent, and making it the world's first curable leukemia.

Some media overseas hailed the treatment method as "the Shanghai Plan", and listed it as "one of New China's eight major contributions to the world's medical field" along with the invention of *qinghaosu*, or artemisinin.

Chen Zhu, former minister of health, said, "Wang is not only our teacher, but also a role model who deserves our respect for a lifetime for his scientific spirit, superb medical skills, ethics as a teacher, and his personality."

UNESCO listing promotes tea culture in Yunnan

By LI YINGQING in Kunming and CHEN MEILING

A year on from being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the old tea forests in Jingmai Mountain, Yunnan province, are abuzz with activity as the first shoots of the new picking season begin to sprout.

Life hasn't been the same for Yue Paxian and her friends from Jingmai village in Pu'er after the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of Jingmai Mountain was included on the UNESCO World Heritage List on Sept 17 last year.

As a result of the global honor, sales of the local tea have been booming, and despite the increased pressure on demand, the tea farmers are sticking to their tradition of only picking tea in spring and autumn.

"We all know that if we don't continue to cherish Jingmai Mountain just as our ancestors did, our happy lives today may one day be lost," said Yue. "Each tea leaf carries the gift of nature and the wisdom of our ancestors."

Jingmai is the world's first cultural heritage site related to tea, owing to its unique history of tea cultivation.

Unlike ordinary tea gardens, here tea trees grow among the forests with minimal human interference. Tall trees help shade tea plants from strong sunlight, and grass, twigs and leaves keep the soil lush. Bugs and birds help in pest control.

The nine ancient villages in the area, mainly inhabited by the Blang and Dai ethnic groups, have maintained a harmonious relationship with the forest for over 1,000 years.

Back in the 10th century, a tribal leader from the Blang ethnic group discovered the place and stumbled upon the medicinal qualities of the wild tea. They decided to settle, planting more tea plants in the forests. Their tradition of tea cultivation has been well-preserved to maintain the authentic quality and flavor.

Now that the area has become a world-famous attraction, thanks in part to the UNESCO listing, the local government has promised to prioritize protection to realize sustainability.

Tea protection teams made up of villagers have been established. A series of regulations have been released such as banning improper construction that may harm the

landscape, or destroying forests to plant more tea.

Conservation awareness among villagers has also increased. They now request that visitors do not litter or throw cigarette butts, and they pay more attention to the environmental hygiene of their villages, keeping their own homes and the surrounding areas clean.

"In the past, we focused more on our own economic development. Now every household knows that every blade of grass, every brick and every tile of Jingmai Mountain needs to be protected," said Shai Kan, from Mangjing village.

Since September last year, Jingmai Mountain has had 402,000 visits, up 33.52 percent year-on-year, generating tourism revenue of 338 million yuan (\$47.6 million), a year-on-year increase of 184 percent, according to the local authorities.

Dao Yanliang runs a homestay at Mangjing village where tourists can wake each morning to see a sea of clouds out of their bedroom windows. He said that after the world heritage listing his 15 rooms have been basically fully booked during the holidays.

"The fame and reputation of Jing-

mai Mountain have rapidly increased, attracting a large number of domestic and foreign tourists," he said.

Er Ken and her husband said their tea garden, restaurant and ethnic costume rental store brought in an income of 340,000 yuan in the past year.

She said villagers used to rely on either selling tea or working away from home. But now young migrant workers are returning to their villages.

Yu Meng started livestreaming two months ago to introduce Jingmai Mountain and sell local specialties to the wider world. Over the past two months, she has earned 20,000 yuan. She is one of the about 100 young returnees who've taken up livestreaming.

Last year, the comprehensive output value of the tea industry in Jingmai Mountain reached 517 million yuan, a year-on-year increase of 31.55 percent, according to local authorities.

Over the past year, 19.82 million yuan has also been invested to renovate three villages.

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Wing and a prayer



A competitor dives off Tianmen Mountain at the 10th World Wingsuit League China Grand Prix that got underway in Zhangjiajie, Hunan province, on Monday. The four-day event attracted 16 top wingsuit pilots from 11 countries. ZHU XINGJIN / CHINA DAILY

COVER

Colors: Season of rich imagery

From page 1

Due to the many connotations with which people have endowed autumn through the ages, both joyful and sorrowful, the Mid-Autumn Festival is only just barely overshadowed by the bustle of Spring Festival, and is constantly referenced in literature and art.

Autumn is a season for harvest and decay alike. Autumn is a season of varied colors: flaming maple leaves, amber persimmons, golden sweet-scented osmanthus and straw rolls in the field. Autumn is a season for the sounds of falling leaves, cracks of pomegranates and songs of migratory birds flying south.

It is in this light that the Mid-Autumn Festival, falling on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, holds in it both the joy of fruitfulness and lament of things past and the ice-cold winter ahead, and that, no different from many other prominent literary works, it seems ancient poetry could only be told long and wide by revealing the frustrations left in contrast to the completeness of the full moon, and the solitude felt in crowds.

Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) literati Su Shi (1037-1101) marked the Mid-Autumn Festival in 1076. He was at the time governor of Mizhou, today's Zhucheng city in Shandong province.

Missing his younger brother — by then Su had lost both parents and elder sister and been demoted far from home — he wrote down the household lines about the moon, *Prelude to Water Melody*, which have been read and sung for almost 1,000 years.

A translation by Nobel nominated Chinese writer Lin Yutang (1895-1976) conjures up a rich imagery:

*Why does she, bearing us no grudge,
Shine upon our parting, reunion deny?*

*But rare is perfect happiness —
The moon does wax, the moon does wane,
And so men meet and say
goodbye.*

"It was in Michow (Mizhou), thinking of his absent brother, that he wrote what is considered the best poem on the mid-autumn by any poet. Critics say that after this poem was written, all the other poems on the harvest moon could be well forgotten," reads Lin's biography of Su, *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo*, originally written in English and published in 1948. Su Tungpo, or nowadays, Su Dongpo, is another name of Su Shi.

Su, a polymath and talented in literature, calligraphy and painting, rose to fame at a young age. Throughout his official career, he served in many places across the country and cared for the people. Legacies of his good deeds passed down through history.

Yet, a hopeless, righteous dissenter, he was promoted and demoted over and over again, experiencing a full play of fickleness in human relations.

"It was a matter of sustenance of the spirit to have on one's shelves the works of a man with great charm, originality, and integrity of purpose, an enfant terrible, a great original mind that could not conform," Lin wrote of Su, the mention of whom, as he put it, always elicits an affectionate and warm admiring smile in China.

In his life, Su created many works on the Mid-Autumn Festival.

His sole brother by his side, he wrote of the cloudless sky, cool air, the Milky Way and the moon round



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Seeing the tide, some sigh at the gathering and parting of life, some contemplate its ups and downs, while others have generated courage to stand on a high tide and battle through the challenges of life. The tides rise and the moon sets just like in Li Song's time, waiting for generations of people to find their own sentiments within them."

Wang Aihua, doctoral candidate at the School of Philosophy of Zhejiang University

as a jade plate — a wonderful night of course, but not so often had Mid-Autumn Festival been like that, he thought, and the current happiness could not withstand the sorrow of the upcoming parting, nor could it declare a brighter future ahead of him.

The following year, the two brothers were parted on the Mid-Autumn Festival, and Su was not in a good physical condition. They exchanged poems written for each other by mail. Su's long poem described multiple images and emotions to the extreme, so as to comfort his brother.

Lin pointed out that it's striking that his brother always made the occasion for Su to write some of his best poetry.

Through another poem in dedication to his absent sibling, translated by late scholar Xu Yuanhong, Su's true heart was told, full vent toward what he'd learned about the vanity fair and of the concern for public affairs, hidden deeply in lines seemingly describing the most common evening scenes:

*Like dreams pass world affairs untold,
How many autumns in our life are cold?*

My corridor is loud with wind-blown leaves at night.

See my brows frown and hair turn white!

Of my poor wine few guests are proud;

The bright moon is oft veiled in cloud.

Who would enjoy with me the mid-autumn moon lonely?

Wine cup in hand, northward I look only.

More than once, alone, Su inherited the spirit of Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai, a hearty drink taken, dancing with the moon and his moonlit shadow, or feeling as if he were riding the wind to visit the legendary palace in the moon — his spiritual home — ascending to become an immortal and removed of the troubles of the human world.

Legend has it that in the fancy crystal and jade palace of the moon reside fairy Chang'e, a rabbit, a toad and an osmanthus tree. Her husband Houyi shot down nine redundant suns to end torrid-

ity and crop failures of the world and was awarded the elixir of longevity. Chang'e swallowed the whole of the elixir secretly, floated off the ground and flew toward the moon.

A young and beautiful immortal, yet her atonement is to stroll up and down in the cold, desolate palace for eternity, solitude being her accompany, together with ceaseless labor of the rabbit and toad grinding to make futile elixirs.

Su, in the end, fed his poetry nostalgia for the human world, which he was nonetheless loath to leave, while making no secret of his anguish soothed by his optimism, passion and generosity.

It's always the duality, either in Su's literary works or of all those

well-known ancient legends about the moon, that makes the day evocative, apart from the serving of mooncakes and lantern exhibitions, family gatherings, feasts and ceremonial admiration of the full moon.

An unchangeable cycle emerges with the moon's ever-changing wax and wane. Alongside its delicacy and serenity as it usually impresses people with, the moon lets out its power and grandeur every now and then.

Around new moon and full moon, when the sun, the Earth and the moon stand almost in a straight line, the gravitational pull of the sun and moon lifts the tides on Earth to their maximal range.

At this time of the year, within three days after the Mid-Autumn Festival, roaring tides of the Qiantang River, mostly in East China's Zhejiang province, drench everything that gestures a challenge, making a name as a spectacle for millenniums.

One creation of Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) poet Yang Wanli (1127-1206) compares the swells to city walls made of silver, or as if wrapping the Qiantang River with a jade belt.

On the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1073, Su observed the tidal bore during his tenure in Hangzhou and recorded his reverence and awe into a suite of poetry. In the first of the five poems he wrote:

*Tell the Moon Goddess not to lock the door tonight,
Tis best to watch the tidal bore in the moonlight.*

Southern Song Dynasty court painter Li Song (1166-1243) marked these lines on one of his works that depicts the scene of nobles watching the tidal bore from a luxurious mansion. This painting is among the collection of the Palace Museum in Taipei.

A full moon hangs on top of mountains shrouded in mist, and a small boat in the distance moves forward steadily. Not far from the river bank, a spring tide surges forward, its crest pushing and shoving, spraying water droplets like pearls and jade, its momentum akin to a stampede of ten thousand horses, interprets Wang Aihua, doctoral candidate at the School of Philosophy of Zhejiang University.

She's been writing to introduce and appreciate ancient Chinese paintings since September 2020, based on the achievements of the grand book project *A Comprehensive Collection of Ancient Chinese Paintings*, led by Zhejiang University and the provincial cultural heritage administration of Zhejiang, which has systematically compiled images of more than 12,000 ancient Chinese paintings housed in over 260 museums and cultural institutions at home and abroad.

In Li's painting, the luxurious timber-structured mansion has intricately carved beams and painted rafters. Surrounding trees are turning yellow. Onlookers lean against the railings in small groups, gazing out at the tidal spectacle. It's a pity that the figures have faded, and their expressions can no longer be identified, according to Wang.

"Seeing the tide, some sigh at the gathering and parting of life, some contemplate its ups and downs, while others have generated courage to stand on a high tide and battle through the challenges of life.

"The tides rise and the moon sets just like in Li Song's time, waiting for generations of people to find their own sentiments within them," Wang adds.



Left: People appreciate the moon and take photos at a park in Gaoqing county, Zibo, Shandong province, during Mid-Autumn Festival. ZHANG WEITANG / XINHUA Center: Primary school pupils hang lanterns as part of Mid-Autumn celebrations in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, early this month. ZHU HUANAN / FOR CHINA DAILY Right: Tourists gather for the Qiantang River tidal bore in Haining, Zhejiang province, early this month. TANG FANGXIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

WORLD

Briefly

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

At least 20 killed in violence: UN official

Violence among illegal miners in Papua New Guinea has left between 20 and 50 people dead, a United Nations official said on Monday. The unrest started last month when "illegal miners" inflicted life-threatening injuries on a landowner in the Porgera Valley, home to one of Papua New Guinea's largest gold deposits, according to police. Mate Bagosy, the UN's humanitarian adviser for Papua New Guinea, said, "We have confirmed that at least 20 people have been killed, but as per the last news that I have, it's likely up to 50 people."

UNITED STATES

Congress searches for stopgap funding

The US Congress returned from a weekend recess on Monday and will attempt to broker a deal on legislation to temporarily fund a range of federal programs, with no clear path and just 15 days remaining before money runs out. Unless a stopgap spending bill is sent to President Joe Biden by midnight Sept 30, the end of the current fiscal year, many agency operations will cease with thousands of federal workers furloughed for lack of funds. Last week, House Speaker Mike Johnson had to abandon his attempt to pass a spending bill when it became clear he did not have enough support for passage from his rank-and-file Republicans.

JORDAN

King appoints new prime minister

King Abdullah II of Jordan on Sunday tasked Jaafar Hassan with forming a new government, succeeding Bisher Khasawneh, whose resignation was accepted by the king. Khasawneh's government will continue handling daily affairs until the new government is formed and assumes its duties, the state-run Petra news agency reported. The resignation followed parliamentary elections in which the Islamic Action Front, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, won 31 out of 138 seats.

JAPAN

Elderly population hits record high

The number of people in Japan aged 65 or older hit a record high of 36.25 million this year, government data showed on Sunday, as the country contends with one of the world's fastest-aging societies. The elderly now account for 29.3 percent of Japan's population, also a new high, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Japan is facing a steadily worsening population crisis as its expanding elderly population leads to soaring medical and welfare costs, with a shrinking labor force to pay for it.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Swimming trunks



An elephant swims for visitors at Khao Kheow Open Zoo in Chonburi Province, Thailand, on Sunday. LILLIAN SUWANRUMPHA / AFP

Suspect waited 12 hours near Trump golf course

By HENG WEILI in New York
hengweili@chinadailyusa.com

A man suspected in an apparent attempt to assassinate former US president Donald Trump at his Florida golf course hid out for nearly 12 hours beforehand, according to a court complaint.

The suspect, Ryan Wesley Routh, 58, was charged with two federal gun crimes on Monday.

The incident Sunday afternoon raised questions about how an armed person was able to get so close to Trump, the Republican presidential candidate in the Nov 5 election, two months after a gunman fired at Trump during a July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, cutting his ear with a bullet.

Trump's visit to his golf course in West Palm Beach was not on his public schedule, US Secret Service Acting Director Ronald Rowe said Monday.

A Secret Service agent who was "walking the perimeter" of the course, according to the criminal complaint, opened fire after seeing a rifle barrel poking out of bushes a few hundred yards away from Trump, who was on the fifth hole fairway.

The gunman fled in a Nissan sport utility vehicle "at a high rate of speed," according to the complaint filed in US District Court in West Palm Beach. Officers found a loaded SKS assault-style rifle with a scope, a digital camera and a plastic bag of food.

Records show a phone associated with Routh was located at the golf course starting at 1:59 am on Sunday EDT, according to the complaint. Federal agents had requested Routh's location data from his wireless provider.

The suspect was on the public side of a fence along the course's boundary,

Rowe said.

Routh was arrested about 40 minutes after the incident, driving north on Interstate 95. The license plate on his vehicle had been reported stolen from a Ford truck. Bodycam footage of Routh's arrest was released by the Martin County Sheriff's Office.

"There have been previous individuals who have taken pictures of the former president while he's golfing," Dave Aronberg, the state attorney for the district that covers Palm Beach County, told Fox News. "They've gone through the shrubs and been able to poke a camera through the fencing. You would think that perhaps maybe they would consider someone scoping the perimeter."

A 2019 tip to the FBI alleged that Routh was a convicted felon who illegally possessed a firearm, Jeffrey Veltri, the agent in charge of the FBI's Miami field office, told reporters.

In court on Monday, Routh was charged with possession of a firearm as a convicted felon and possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number. He is expected back in court for a bond hearing on Sept 23 and an arraignment on Sept 30.

In 2002, Routh pleaded guilty to possession of an unregistered fully automatic gun, which in North Carolina is defined as a weapon of mass destruction, according to the county district attorney's office. He was sentenced to probation.

Routh is a staunch supporter of Ukraine and has traveled there, seeking to recruit foreign fighters in the country's military conflict with Russia.

Social media accounts linked to Routh's name showed posts on Ukraine as well as claims that Trump is a threat to American democracy.

On April 21, Routh directed a post on X to Elon Musk, owner of X and founder of SpaceX: "I would like to buy a rocket from you. I wish to load it with a warhead for Putins Black sea mansion bunker to end him. Can you give me a price please?"

In another X post, Routh wrote to US President Joe Biden: "@POTUS Your campaign should be called something like KADAF. Keep America democratic and free. Trumps should be MASA...make Americans slaves again master. DEMOCRACY is on the ballot and we cannot lose."

Public access to the Facebook and X profiles has been removed.

Trump has questioned the amount of aid the United States has provided to Ukraine and has vowed to end the war immediately if elected.

Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential candidate, has promised continued support for Ukraine.

Trump claimed that Routh was acting on Democrats' "highly inflammatory language".

"Their rhetoric is causing me to be shot at, when I am the one who is going to save the country, and they are the ones that are destroying the country — both from the inside and out," he said, according to Fox.

Biden and Trump had a "cordial conversation" on Monday, White House Senior Deputy Press Secretary Emilie Simons posted on X.

The Secret Service has been under scrutiny since the July shooting. The agency needs more help, including possibly more personnel, Biden told reporters on Monday, adding: "Thank God the president's OK"

Agencies contributed to this story.

UAE dismisses Israel's 'day after' plan in Gaza

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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The United Arab Emirates said on Saturday it will not support Israel's "day after" plan in Gaza unless a Palestinian State is established, making its stance clear despite having signed the Abraham Accords in 2020 to normalize relations with Israel.

UAE Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan reiterated this position in a post on X.

In May, Abdullah also rejected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's suggestion the UAE could participate in the civil administration of the Gaza Strip, with security control under Israel.

Abdullah said Netanyahu "lacks legitimate authority to implement this step, or take any similar measures". The UAE "refuses to be involved in any plan aimed at providing cover for the Israeli presence in the Gaza Strip", he added.

The Abraham Accords are a series of agreements aimed at normalizing diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab countries.

"It is an assertion that for the UAE, the Palestinian cause is a critical issue and that was clear through utilizing the relationship with Israel to send humanitarian aid, initiate the vaccination campaign in Gaza, etc," Rasha Al Joumy, a senior researcher at the Dubai Public Policy Research Centre, told China Daily.

"There is no scenario that the region will enjoy peace without a Palestinian State. Any other temporary solution, the UAE doesn't have an interest to be part of."

"Signing the Abraham Accords

doesn't mean that Israel gets to be arrogant in its proposals for the day after, especially (with) its neighbors."

Almost a year into the conflict, Israel has yet to meet its objectives of eliminating Hamas in Gaza and securing the release of about 100 hostages still being held by the militant group, while Palestinian civilians continue to pay a heavy price.

The Palestinian death toll has swelled to at least 41,226, while Netanyahu faced criticisms from citizens and the hostages' families over his prolonged efforts to reach a cease-fire deal.

Recently, the Israeli military, after months of denial, admitted a high probability that three Israeli captives who died in Gaza in November might have been killed in its own strikes.

Israel's military assault has also begun to spill over to other parts of the region, particularly against Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, and more recently Iran.

On Sunday, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, leader of the Houthi group, warned their military actions against Israel would intensify. This warning followed a missile attack launched by the Houthis earlier in the day targeting central Israel.

"Our operations will continue as long as the aggression and siege on the Gaza Strip continue," al-Houthi said in a televised address, Xinhua News Agency reported.

In an interview with the BBC, the United Nations' Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator Sigrid Kaag said the international community is collectively failing innocent civilians in Gaza as it is not meeting the needs or creating prospects and hope for civilians in the besieged enclave.

Bolivia grappling with record number of fires

By JIMENA ESTEBAN
in Buenos Aires, Argentina
For China Daily

Wildfires in Bolivia are on track to set a record for the number of blazes this year, fueled by the destructive agricultural practice of land clearing through burning, and compounded by irregular rainfall patterns.

So far, the fires have destroyed more than 3 million hectares of rainforest, surpassing the devastation witnessed during the record-breaking fire season of 2010. They are not only decimating vast areas of rainforest but also shrouding cities such as Cochabamba and Santa Cruz in thick smoke, darkening the skies and raising concerns about respiratory health.

The fight against the fires is putting a strain on Bolivia's limited resources, including a shortage of both firefighters and equipment.

Ludy Rudon, a firefighter working along a 100-kilometer fire line in the central region, emphasized the need for more manpower to control and extinguish the major blazes.

"The workdays are tough considering the length of the fire line, the heat, the wind and especially the type of fuel, which is very dense and tall," Rudon said. "The rain helped very little because the density of the trees prevented the rain from reaching the ground — it was almost superficial."

South America is currently at the peak of its fire season, but Bolivia has experienced an earlier outbreak because of drought. The country's Defense Minister Edmundo Novillo announced emergency measures

on Sept 7 to secure international support, adding to the 2,500 firefighters and 20 aircraft already deployed.

Wildfires across Latin America have grown increasingly severe in recent years.

"Farmers tend to clear and burn the vegetation to enrich the soil with nutrients," said Erick Sossa Sanchez, an engineer and departmental director for Cochabamba at the National Meteorology and Hydrology Service. "Then, they plant ... and harvest. Due to changes in the agricultural frontier, this (practice) has been increasing."

Addressing this practice, known as *chaqueo*, may require legislative changes. *Chaqueo* involves burning vegetation before the rainy season to clear land for planting, with the ash enriching the soil. However, these fires frequently get out of control, causing massive destruction.

"Despite regulations prohibiting burning, many people ignored the warnings," said Oswaldo Mailard, head of the Chiquitano Dry Forest Observatory. Wildfires have ravaged the Chiquitano forest in eastern Bolivia, destroying thousands of hectares.

John Zambrana Nogales, an agricultural engineer, said about 40 percent of forest fires occur on farmland, about one-fourth on public land or protected areas and 15 percent on indigenous lands.

Sanchez said the Bolivian Parliament should repeal lenient regulations on *chaqueo* to help curb the issue.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

Tanzania's FM highlights mutual benefits with China

By YANG RAN and PAN YIQIAO

Tanzania's Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation Mahmoud Thabit Kombo lauded the outcomes of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, highlighting its significant role in fostering development and strengthening their relationship.

In an interview with China Daily, Kombo spoke about the benefits of China-Africa cooperation for Tanzania and the entire continent, as well as the potential for increased collaboration on the path to modernization.

"The just-ended FOCAC provides a clear vision on how China and Africa are going to benefit from their cooperation. China's vision for China-Africa cooperation is based on equality, human-to-human touch and people-to-people development. It's not just China benefiting, and we are the evidence because we see tangible development from collaborating with China," he said.

China has been Tanzania's largest trading partner for eight consecutive years. Last year, bilateral trade volume of goods reached \$8.78 billion, marking an 8.9 percent year-on-year increase, according to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Mahmoud Thabit Kombo

He reminisced about the historical significance of the TAZARA Railway, built by China in the 1970s, which links Zambia with the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam.

"At that time, China was not a rich nation, yet it spent an amount equivalent to 5 percent of its GDP to build the TAZARA Railway. It's not easy," he said.

"This railway, after it was opened, significantly boosted the economies of Tanzania and Zambia, especially since Zambia is a landlocked country that relies on Tanzania for the transport of oil, fuel, goods, minerals and crops."

The railway has had a profound effect on the social, economic, industrial, agricultural and energy sectors of both countries, he said. "This railway contributed so much to the development of these two

countries. So, it stands as one of the biggest commitments in the history, an iconic project that China has done for these two nations."

During the FOCAC summit earlier this month, leaders from China, Tanzania and Zambia witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding on the revitalization project of the TAZARA Railway, aimed at improving the rail-sea intermodal transport network in East Africa.

"We understand when China invests in our countries, we can benefit from that Chinese investment," Kombo said. "When China supports our infrastructure, the real aspect is a mutual respect and beneficial relationship with both sides reaping the benefits."

Citing soybean cultivation, he said boosting soybean productivity and its exports to China requires mechanization, modernization and infrastructure, all areas where partnership with China is crucial.

"In producing soybeans, we need mechanization and modern agricultural technology, which China already possesses. We also need infrastructure to transport the soybeans from the farm to the port.

"If you visit Tanzania today, you will

see a lot of infrastructure developed and built by the Chinese," Kombo said, adding that Chinese loans have enabled Tanzania to develop its infrastructure. "These loans enable us to develop, produce more and to be able to pay back the loans."

Looking to future China-Africa cooperation, Kombo pointed to the 10 partnership actions announced at the FOCAC summit, which address Africa's critical needs such as trade prosperity, industrial chain, connectivity, health, agriculture, livelihood and green development.

He particularly emphasized the potential for cooperation in green development.

"China leads the world in the battery industry in terms of technology and market share. I recently learned that for 25 to 30 percent of the components of Chinese-made batteries, the raw material is sourced from Africa. This presents a great opportunity for Chinese industries to open factories in Africa, where such components can be made locally, creating local employment and facilitating technology exchange," he said.

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PEOPLE



Zhu Wenjun introduces fabrics and embroidery patterns to her customers at Jilin Qipao Hall in Jilin city, Jilin province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Jilin's Qipao Hall preserves ancestral threads

Zhu Wenjun leans on nostalgia to revive Manchu elegance



The Manchu cheongsams presented at Jilin Qipao Hall.

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

In Jilin Qipao Hall of Jilin city, Jilin province, the employees are tasked with selecting materials, fastening buttons, crafting inlays, cutting fabrics and sewing inlays and trims. They are artists, designers, and keepers of cultural tradition.

Jilin city is one of the birthplaces of the ethnic minority Manchu people. The Manchu cheongsam, a type of *qipao*, integrates multiple intangible cultural heritage techniques.

Born into a Manchu family, Zhu Wenjun, the hall's founder, developed a passion for cheongsams during her childhood.

"In Manchu tradition, all the girls must know how to sew," said 52-year-old Zhu. "My grandmother, who was skilled at needlework, made a living from sewing, so I started learning the skills from her at the age of 5."

By the time she was in primary school, she could sew bedcovers with sharp edges and corners.

"Before major festivals, such as the Spring Festival, my grandmother would make traditional Manchu clothes for me, such as bloomers and tiger-head shoes," she recalled. "Her embroidery, such as pillow covers and door curtains, were welcomed by relatives and neighbors when they prepared for marriage."

Zhu still remembers the beautiful cheongsam that her grandmother only wore on special occasions.

"She never let me touch it, which made me greatly desire to possess one," she said. "As I grew older, I began to understand the significance of clothing in Manchu families, which is not just a necessity, but also represents culture, status and family heritage."

After graduating from a local secondary technical

school in 1993, Zhu became a civil servant in Jilin city, but she retained her fondness for cheongsams.

In 2005, Zhu quit her job and opened a tailor shop with her husband.

"Together with three tailors, we helped our customers choose suitable fabrics and tailor clothing, and sometimes we collaborated with other shops," she said. "Although I didn't make much money, I found fulfillment."

They expanded their shop in 2009 and added more employees. Throughout her success, she never forgot about her dream of owning the perfect cheongsam.

"While visiting different cheongsam shops, I found it difficult to find one that could provide me with satisfactory fabrics, patterns and tailoring skills simultaneously," Zhu lamented. "I believed it wasn't about the tailors' skills but rather the lack of effective coordination, leading to clothing that fell short of ideal."

She invited several skilled cheongsam tailors she had worked with and turned her shop into the current Qipao Hall in 2012.

Zhu has her own interpretation of inheritance. "Preserving the belongings of ancestors is the best form of inheritance," she said. "I used traditional Manchu techniques to embroider patterns left by the elders onto the clothing."

Furthermore, she delved into the more primitive memories of Manchu clothing in Jilin city, striving to restore them as much as possible.

While searching, she discovered her calling: to craft unique Manchu embroidery that reflects the essence of the region. Her designs seamlessly blend elements such as fishing, hunting, ice and snow, and cultural expressions of the tradition of labor.

In 2019, Zhu became a municipal-level inheritor of traditional Manchu embroidery.

At Zhu's Qipao Hall, clients must wait seven to 15 days for their custom cheongsams.

"The customers first choose the fabric and style, and then the tailor takes measurements," she said. "After three days, they can try on the samples, and the tailor will make corrections. Embroidered patterns will be matched based on the customer's height and stature."

Depending on the fabric and style, the price of each custom cheongsam varies from several hundred yuan to tens of thousands of yuan.

"In the beginning, most of my clients were middle-aged and elderly people who wanted to participate in important occasions, such as their children's weddings," Zhu explained. "In recent years, with the popularity of Chinese-style clothing, Manchu cheongsams have also attracted young people."

"Some mothers and teachers are choosing to wear *qipao* to cheer on students taking life-altering exams, such as the college entrance exam, or *gaokao*, and the senior high school entrance exam," she said.

In Mandarin, the character *qi* also refers to a flag, symbolizing victory, courage and good luck.

To adapt to young people who make specific requests to showcase their individuality, the designers at Qipao



Zhu Wenjun creates Manchu embroidery at the hall.

Hall have started incorporating modern elements and fashion design. "In some situations where cheongsams may not be suitable, we have developed cheongsam-related products such as bags and outerwear with buttons and trims," Zhu said.

The hall now has over 50 employees and an annual output value of 16 million yuan. More than 30 percent of orders come from abroad.

"Most of the foreign orders came from Chinese who wanted to show the traditional Chinese culture in foreign countries, such as Australia, Canada, Japan, the USA and the UK," she said. "Some mothers told me they were quite proud of wearing a cheongsam to attend their children's graduation ceremony, and some even customized cheongsams for their daughters."

In 2019, Zhu opened a Qipao Hall in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, attracting more customers from the province, Hong Kong, Macao and Singapore.

"Young people and Chinese abroad are more interested in traditional Chinese culture," said Pi Fusheng, a researcher of literature and history with the city's Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. "Cheongsams make them feel the charm of traditional culture and enhances cultural identity and pride."

"On the basis of maintaining the uniqueness and cultural value of intangible cultural heritage, inheritors and practitioners should be encouraged to innovate," he said. "The design of new products and the improvement of the process make the intangible heritage full of new vitality."

Han Junhong contributed to this story.

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Left: Models showcase Manchu cheongsams made by Jilin Qipao Hall during an intangible cultural heritage festival in the city of Jilin. Right: Visitors take photos with Zhu Wenjun (center) at an expo in Changchun, Jilin province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



AI takes ancient fashion to next level

By CHEN YE in Hangzhou
chenye@chinadaily.com.cn

A fashion company founded in October 2021 by Generation Z students is bringing artificial intelligence to the world of traditional Chinese clothing — known as *qipao* — and has created a design database that no ancient clothing designer could have imagined.

The team of 15 designers is called Lin Chun Jie Qi, suggesting a traditional Chinese poetic aesthetic. "Lin Chun" references "springtime approaching" and "Jie Qi" means "to be both sophisticated and exquisite." They are led by a young founder, 19-year-old Cai Chenhan, an art management major at Zhejiang University of Finance & Economics.

All members of the team are from Gen Z. With their youthful vision, they infuse modern elements, patterns and design concepts into traditional *qipao*, making the clothing more appealing to the younger generation. They employ advanced weaving techniques to imprint intricate patterns and create styles that resonate.

Cai comes from a family immersed in the *qipao*-making tradition, with both her mother and grandmother designing primarily for older women. Growing up in that environment, Cai began learning the craft from a young age.

"My childhood dream was to become a fashion designer," Cai said. "While my family has been in the business for generations, they never ventured into custom design or design services. That's why I chose to study design — I wanted to carry the tradition forward."

Cai's team is mostly stocked with fellow students from ZUFE, particularly those studying graphic design. The university's international school naturally has many foreign students. Cai and her classmates also collaborate with the ZUFE's Oriental College on fashion design projects.

They introduce their designs by having international students wear the clothing in Chinese fashion shows on campus. This opportunity led Cai and two of her classmates to embark on the path of *qipao* design, initially focusing on visual design and user analysis.

In 2021, Cai founded Hangzhou Lin Chun Jie Qi E-commerce Co. In just three years, her team won a silver medal in the Internet+ innovation and entrepreneurship competition for college students and a gold medal in Zhejiang province's 14th Challenge Cup entrepreneurial plan competition. They have sold between 3,000 and 4,000 pieces of traditional clothing in one year, with 30 percent of sales coming from abroad.

The secret to their success was in creating the largest database of *qipao* samples in China. Traditionally, *qipao* patterns were hand-drawn on leather. Cai's team digitized and organized 19,000 examples. These designs are now used to train AI models, which assist in generating altogether new *qipao* patterns. The team often works late into the night to perfect the designs and build their efficient, automated design database.

Using AI was a major breakthrough for *qipao*. The designs are updated and fresh, yet authentic, based on the accumulated information in the database. By inputting body measurements, fabric types and style preferences into the system, the team can generate custom *qipao* designs.

This revolutionary approach has drastically reduced the design cycle from 10 or 15 days to just two. And the database has significantly improved product turnover.

"One of our biggest challenges was managing inventory," Cai said.

Today, Lin Chun Jie Qi's *qipao* can be found in eight countries, with 46 stores abroad, mainly in Southeast Asia. Clients can also order custom-made *qipao*, with details such as fabric, patterns and design elements tailored to their preferences.

"The customization process involves extensive communication about styles, fabrics and detailed craftsmanship, right down to the height of the slits and the shape of the buttons," said Yu Dian, a student at ZUFE and the head of marketing and supply chains for Lin Chun Jie Qi.

The team's success is not only the result of hard work but also the result of support from their school and society.

During summer and winter breaks, the team conducted in-depth market research, collecting data on different ethnicities and preferences for clothing patterns. "We mainly focused on analyzing Southeast Asian and Western markets," Cai said. "Western clients prefer *qipao* with more skin exposure, while Southeast Asian clients prefer knee-length *qipao* with padded shoulders or cap sleeves. Their dress occasions are also more diverse, ranging from high-end balls to casual gatherings."

The team's influence has expanded beyond ZUFE, reaching other universities in Hangzhou. Every quarter, they try to host *qipao* festivals and cultural exchange events on various campuses.

"Our goal is to truly extend the reach of the *qipao*, contributing youthful energy to the promotion of traditional Chinese culture," Cai said.



Cai Chenhan (left) measures a customer in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

READ

Artists create new tea time vibes

From craftsmanship to designs and processing techniques, festival integrates modernity with tradition, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

Zhang Zhehao was busy crafting various tea lacquerware in his studio in Sanlitun, Beijing as the Mid-Autumn Festival approached.

Lacquerware and ceramic pieces adorn his place within a quiet community of the bustling commercial area, adding a particularly pleasing vibe.

He felt all his efforts had paid off and took pleasure in that his lacquerware pieces for tea rituals were well-received by visitors to the Teenage (tea and age) Life Fest last weekend through Tuesday, which presented new ways of integration of traditional tea culture and modern life.

"Lacquer-made tea utensils are lighter and resistant against bumps," said the man in his 30s originally from Northwest China's Gansu province.

After finishing animation studies in Guangdong province in 2013, Zhang worked at a local advertising agency for two years when he began to explore lacquer crafting.

"The more I practiced and learned about its history, the deeper I was drawn to it," he said.

In 2016, he quit his job, established his own brand Terra, and started selling lacquer-made tea utensils, including saucers, cup holders and coasters.

"I liked tea since childhood and have found its taste varies with different brewing utensils," he said.

Lacquer has always paired best with wood. The earliest lacquerware discovered from ancient times was made with a wooden core, Zhang noted.

Before the advent of ceramic and metalworking techniques, materials from the natural environment, such as gourds, melons and leaves, were used to craft objects. However, these materials would easily deteriorate over time. Thus, lacquer was discovered as a special coating to render fragile objects more durable.

Zhang uses bark-made paper as a base and applies lacquer before piling more layers into a whole lacquerwork.

"Paper comes from wood, which retains the tradition, but it takes longer to build a piece since a layer has to dry properly before being built upon," he said.

He also ingeniously designed new patterns ranging from insects and plants to minerals on the lacquerware surface through inlaying or mounting.

"The patterns are favored by young people, who find them interesting and pretty," Zhang said.

In his creations, he has also favored other natural materials for lacquerware production, working with the inherent forms of objects.

"For example, I would use gourds as a base and then highlight their appealing features to create pieces. This way, the object is true to its inner and outer beauty, embodying the vision I seek," Zhang explained.

He has spent a great deal of time introducing the culture of lacquerware to visitors who have come to his stand during the event.

"I hope more people find my work interesting and they move on to appreciate tea," he said.

Beyond lacquer

Zhang is among more than 20 young artists who have brought



From left: Artist Xu Zhiwen, festival organizer Li Qianrun and artist Zhang Zhehao attend the Teenage Life Fest in Beijing on Sept 14-17. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Left: A set of tea utensils designed by Xu Zhiwen. Right: A tea product developed by Pu Pengtao.

their innovative tea-related works ranging from porcelain painting to tea making, proving a feast for the eye at the Teenage Life Fest.

The artists arrive from across the country, including Fujian, Jiangxi, Jiangsu and Yunnan provinces, said Li Qianrun, who founded the festival.

As a tea lover, Li has gone to major tea and teaware production areas, finding many surprises among the younger generation of artists.

"They love traditional Chinese culture and have good taste in Chinese aesthetics," Li said.

"Many have made a career out of tea and teaware and have integrated tea into urban life," she noted.

Li hosts the festival because she believes there should be more room, especially in urban settings, for tea culture.

She found and invited the young artists to show the more exciting aspects of tea. Xu Zhiwen is one such artist.

At Xu's booth, porcelain ware bearing anthropomorphic pandas cooking tea, and playing mahjong or instruments, as well as rabbits wearing a silk robe resembling figures on the murals in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu, have attracted curious visitors.

"I insist on combining modern and ancient elements, rendering lovely animals with a human touch to reach young customers," Xu, in his 30s from Jingdezhen,

East China's Jiangxi province, said.

Most of his works carry auspicious Chinese symbols that represent good fortune.

Xu has brought in products of a dozen themes, including the Mid-Autumn Festival.

"My style is mostly inspired by the scholarly elegance of the Song Dynasty (960-1279)," Xu said.

He achieved a bachelor's degree in sculpture from Jingdezhen

Ceramic University in 2013, which he said gave him a good understanding of form and structure, laying the foundation for his porcelain painting.

He made inroads in traditional Chinese porcelain painting over two years following graduation to acquire the necessary skills and started his own business in 2019, which combines traditional Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) porcelain-making techniques with modern concepts that target a younger market for ceramic tea sets.

"I am fascinated by ancient styles but don't aim to create replicas," Xu explained his drive to create modern elements in a historical setting.

His love of tea has focused his attention on design and making tea utensils.

Xu uses gas and wood-fired kilns to craft porcelain that bears a smoother texture resembling that of Xuan paper originating from ancient China, which is known for its excellent presentation of both Chinese calligraphy and painting.

"The materials I use undergo a unique process where pine wood is added midway to produce ink-like textures. Then I create artwork based on these natural textures," he said, adding that since natural ash would fall onto the surface differently during each fire session, each piece is one of a kind.

Under a magnifying glass, one can see the fine details, such as the feathers on a crane's wings, of Xu's hand-painted patterns.

He has two other business partners and can produce around 200-300 pieces each month.

"I hope that when people use my products, they feel joy and happiness, adding to the pleasure of tea drinking," he said.

Passion for leaves

Diverting from the other two teaware artists, Pu Pengtao, from Guangdong province, and his team deliver the traditional kung fu tea ritual with various tea species.

"We've been exploring tea regions such as Wuyi Mountains in Fujian province, Fenghuang Mountains in Guangdong province and Dongting Mountain in Jiangsu province, over the years to thoroughly understand the local growing environments, culture and tea-making techniques," said Pu in his 40s who cofounded the Ten Plus Terrace tea house in Beijing.

Pu's team has carefully selected seasonal varieties from hundreds of tea samples that align with traditional values while meeting modern tastes, he added.

Pu said there are many lesser-known tea types as the market is dominated by mainstream popular types.

"We want people to appreciate the country's diverse tea resources," Pu said.

He has found that many young people, especially those with higher education, have taken a shine to the different yet interesting taste of niche tea varieties.

"They have been actively attending the tea gatherings we host three to four times every week," Pu said.

"I intend to have those in big cities realize that time can slow down over a cup of tea, which can relax and cure us," he said.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



Left: A lacquered incense burner by Zhang Zhehao. Middle: Lacquerware featuring ancient book pages by Zhang. Right: A porcelain cup featuring Dunhuang elements by Xu Zhiwen.

IMAGE



A hydrological gem among the cliffs

The Longmen Hydrological Station is the only hydrological station located on the cliffs of the Yellow River. PHOTOS BY DENG FANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Longmen Hydrological Station, which has a history of 90 years since its establishment in 1934, is the only hydrological station located on the cliffs of the Yellow River.

Providing hydrological information and data for various tasks, such as flood control, drought relief, disaster reduction, reservoir operation, water resources allocation and water conservancy project construction, it is a key national level hydrological station.

The hanging crane box on the cable path across the Yellow River is the only way to access the station.

The flood season signifies the busiest time of year for the station. Staff must stay up all night, fighting with the stormy waves in the valley, in order to get accurate and timely data.

For generations, hydrologists have been working here, and now the station is entering a new era. "Compared with the traditional measurements such as testing flows with a wooden boat, the current measurements are quite high-tech," said Yang Wenbo, the 19th head of Longmen Hydrology Station.

"The newly-used water level identification system can not only obtain the fluctuating water level information timely, but also generate it into data automatically," Yang said.

With an average age of 28, the staff working at the station today are younger than those in previous years.

In September 2019, ecological protection and high-quality development in the Yellow River basin were made a major national strategy.

Throughout the whole Yellow River basin, 145 hydrological stations are scattered along the watercourse. More than 2,000 hydrologists are giving full play to the role of "eyes and ears" and guarding the Yellow River with responsibility and hard work.

-China Daily



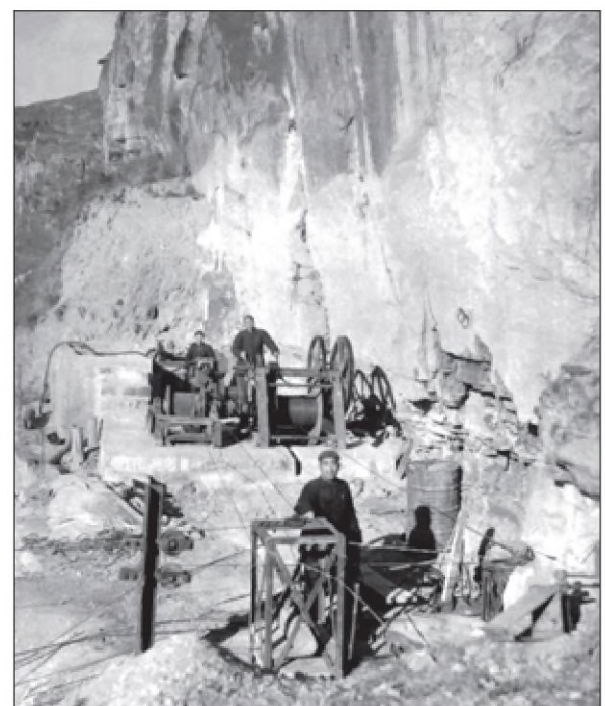
Station staff conduct analysis on the hydrological information.



The hanging crane box on the cable path across the Yellow River is the only way to access the station.



Station staff work in the rain.



In the early days of New China, the staff of Longmen Hydrological Station set up the test cable road by themselves. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Young workers play badminton at the hydrology station during their spare time.



A photograph of the original Longmen Hydrological Station, taken in 1964. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

TREND

The bald truth of hair today, gone tomorrow

Transplant ads are booming as hair problems become a headache for many, but experts warn people against exaggerated claims

By WANG XIAOYU

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Pearl Ren, a doctoral candidate at a Beijing university, has a healthy volume of hair but is distressed about her naturally high hairline and widening down the middle parting. Further fueling her anxiety are the innumerable promotions of hair growth remedies embellished by beautiful models with flowing locks falling in glossy waves over their shoulders — down to their waist in many cases — and picture-perfect hairlines.

"There are many such advertisements at subway and bus stations, especially in areas full of tall office buildings," said Pearl, who prefers to be called by her English name. Pearl first contemplated undergoing a hair transplant surgery about three years ago after completing her master's degree. But she is yet to take the plunge, so to speak.

"I have done some research and it appears that the recovery period is long, which could disrupt my work schedule. Besides, I am worried that implanted follicles and attached hair could become a mess when I grow older," Pearl said. "So nowadays, I just apply hairline powder to the white patches to make them look fuller," she added.

Pearl belongs to a cohort of cautious consumers, and her prudence is justified, according to medical experts. The increasing number of people with thinning hair, receding hairline or spot baldness has given rise to a booming hair restoration/transplant industry. But experts have been warning people against being swayed by the exaggerated claims of such advertisements, stressing that hair loss treatment could be a lengthy process and is not foolproof.

Official data show that in China about 250 million people suffer hair loss or thinning hair, with 130 million of them affected by a condition called androgenetic alopecia, also known as pattern hair loss. Two other common forms of hair loss are telogen effluvium, temporary hair loss caused by stress, hormonal changes or medication, and alopecia areata, which is characterized by hair loss in small, coin-sized patches.

Yang Dingquan, head of the Trichology Center at China-Japan Friendship Hospital, said on average people have between 100,000 and 150,000 hairs on their head. Most people with pattern hair loss have about 40,000 hairs, and the majority of them can maintain them with standard treatment and about 70 percent of them can increase the number to between 50,000 to 70,000.

"But it is very difficult to restore their hair to the level when they were 18," Yang said. More importantly, they could suffer further hair loss after stopping treatment, and the condition could also worsen, leading to baldness.

Referring to hair transplant surgery, which involves removing natural hair follicles and transplanting them in bald spots, Yang said constant monitoring is required to check for inflammation and infections. One also needs to take meticulous care of the spots where hair is transplanted to prevent further hair loss.

"Hair loss is like a condition that requires long-term management," Yang said. "People undergoing treatment should follow the medication regime under the guidance of doc-



LIANG LUWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY



A salesman explains to a potential customer how a hair transplant therapeutic robot works at the fifth China International Import Expo in Shanghai in 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Advertisements of hair transplant displayed at a subway station in Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tors and reinforce the outcome by taking proper care of their hair or constantly consulting professionals."

Despite the risk of failure, many private hair care companies claim a success rate of up to 95 percent for implanted follicles. A woman named Zhang, who lives in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, said during an interview with China Central Television that a year after she underwent a hair transplant surgery at a local cosmetic surgery facility, she found that the hair on the treated spots still looked thin.

"When I confronted the facility about their self-proclaimed success rate, they simply told me that my follicles lacked 'vitality,' she said. "I am in my 20s. And yet, according to them, my follicles lack 'vitality'. If that is indeed the case, these companies should not boast a success rate of 95 percent, because they should be aware that such conditions could drastically bring down their success rate."

Chen Yinjiang, deputy secretary-general of the Consumer Protection Law Association of the China Law Society, said that some hair growth and transplant advertisements tend to exaggerate the severity of hair loss and the efficacy of their treatment, triggering anxiety among viewers.

China's Advertisement Law stipulates that advertisements for medical products should not contain assertions of efficacy or safety, nor should they claim any success rates. "Claims like the survival rate of hair follicles of up to 95 percent are a violation of the law," he said.

Li Fang, a 34-year-old Beijing resident, said he began losing hair a couple of years ago. But despite being intrigued by the hair transplant and hair growth advertisements, he doubts the claims these ads make. "I feel like the market is a mixed bunch, and I'm not sure where to find reliable services or whether the technologies are mature and foolproof," he said. "I am slowly getting comfortable with my look, although I know my hair does not look good when I look at myself in the mirror."

Wei Aihua, chief physician at the Dermatology Department of Beijing Tongren Hospital, which is affiliated with Capital Medical University, said that her department used to attend to a handful of people more than a decade ago. But today, appointment slots quickly run out.

"The demands of people have also widened. While in the past, people simply sought treatment for baldness, visitors nowadays want to make their scalp look less greasy and feel less itchy. Many girls want to look more beautiful by 'correcting' their high hairline or creating an aesthetically pleasing hairline," she said.

While many youths seek the professional advice of hair specialists before or immediately after detecting early signs of hair loss, an increasing number of hospitals have set up clinics specializing in the treatment of 'hair-related diseases' rather than redirecting patients to dermatology clinics and private hair transplant enterprises, Wei said.

"At hospitals, we focus on providing comprehensive services, from hair wash and nourishment to anti-hair loss treatment and hair transplantation surgery," she said. But one needs patience and constant care to cope with hair-related conditions.

Li Ren and Yang Xuanze contributed to this story.

Rising hair concerns drive the appearance-conscious toward treatment

By WANG XIAOYU

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A growing number of youths are suffering hair loss and other hair problems, and they are more than willing to splurge on professional hair treatment compared with the older generations, according to a report on Chinese people's hair health.

About 74 percent of people born in the 1990s and 73 percent born in the 2000s suffer from hair problems, according to the report jointly issued by the Shanghai Institute of Nutrition and Health, affiliated with

the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Chinanews.com, a news outlet, in September 2023.

Besides, 52 percent of the younger respondents to the survey, on which the report is based, said they prefer getting treatment for their hair problems in professional healthcare institutes, compared with less than 40 percent of people in their 40s or 50s.

Beyond basic requirements such as improving their hair coverage, 25.7 percent of the respondents born in the 2000s said they are also interested in "hair aesthetics" apart from seeking hair treatment. The corre-

sponding figures for those born in the 1990s, 1980s and 1970s are about 19 percent, 17 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

The survey gathered data through questionnaires and in-depth interviews with respondents, according to the Shanghai Institute of Nutrition and Health of the CAS. Chen Daming, a researcher at the institute, said that the demand for hair care among residents in second-tier and third-tier cities — usually provincial capitals and cities with moderate economic growth — has risen dramatically in recent years.

"Our survey shows that 54 per-

cent of the people in third-tier cities and 48 percent in second-tier cities have considered seeking hair treatment in hospitals," Chen said.

The report also shows that people born in the 1990s are more open to paying for hair care products and services and spend an average of 9,980 yuan (\$1,400) a year on them.

Chen said a significant trend in the hair care industry is the rising demand for personalized and holistic services. "About half of the respondents said they look for combined hair transplant and hair care services," Chen said. "And 66 percent said they will factor whether a

medical institution offers postoperative services after hair transplant into their choice."

An increasing number of services and products are available in the market for the treatment of thinning hair, and they include shampoo and hair conditioner infused with traditional Chinese medicines to prevent hair loss, finasteride and other common hair loss pills, hair transplant surgery, laser light therapy and injections.

"The stereotype of hair treatment (for baldness and other medical conditions) has been shattered, as some young women tend to under-

go hair treatment to look more beautiful. Also, personalized services with good aesthetic taste are becoming increasingly popular," he said.

The report also said that hair health issues are now closely related to confidence, with 79 percent of the respondents saying they would opt for a hair transplant if they have bald spots or their hair loss worsens to the point of "ruining" their appearance.

Given this trend, novel hair care technologies could emerge in the near future to meet the customized demands of consumers, Chen said.

BIZ LIFE

Interest in sport tourism hits new highs in China

As consumers shift toward more health-conscious experiences; cycling, hiking and running emerge as top choices

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

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Jia Xiaomeng, the owner and manager of Beijing-based tourist property 5Lmeet, completed her first triathlon recently in the nation's capital city, where she swam, biked and ran all the way to the finish line.

For Jia, triathlons are just one of the many athletic pursuits, as she also participates avidly in marathons and cycling races around the world.

"These sports events are recreational hobbies for me," Jia said. "They've enriched my free time, improved my fitness, and helped me make new friends."

This year, she's noticed a growing trend among peers, as more urban people embrace running, cycling, and other sports to stay active and unwind.

"Nowadays, people are focusing more on their personal well-being, and sports have become the answer," Jia said.

"Rather than working overtime in the office to earn more, many people are shifting their priorities toward health and quality of life."

Her observations mirror a rise seen in the sport tourism market this year.

According to an industry report released on Aug 16 by Tongcheng Travel and Gudong app, there has been an 87 percent increase in sport tourism-related searches from January to July.

The surge has been driven by both the popularity of spectator events and the increased demand for outdoor participatory activities.

A major catalyst for this growth has been the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The international sporting event not only sparked excitement for global games, but also drove a 225 percent increase in group tour bookings to France.

Tongcheng Travel data showed that the desire to witness sports in person was a key driver for many tourists.

Additionally, the Olympics fueled an interest in domestic outdoor sports, with cycling and hiking emerging as top choices for those seeking both adventure and fitness.

Beyond the thrill of competition, outdoor sports have gained significant traction, said the report.

The Gudong app reported a 19 percent year-on-year rise in outdoor sports participants in the first half.

Cycling saw a 38.7 percent growth in participation, especially among the younger generation born after the year 2000, whose numbers have surged by 53.5 percent.

The buzzword "city ride" has pro-



Tourists hike and enjoy their visit to the Emei Mountain Scenic Area in Leshan, Sichuan province, in August. QI LIGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Cyclists from both home and abroad participate in a ride in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, in April. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

pelled the sales of cycling equipment such as bicycles and watches, and other products including shoes, clothing, socks and helmets.

According to the latest data from the China Bicycle Industry Association, the production of bicycles

worth over 1,000 yuan (\$140.4) in China will reach 12.15 million units in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 15.1 percent. Sales of high-end sports bicycles are expected to grow by over 10 percent.

Jia, who owns a bicycle from Brit-

ish brand Brompton, said bike riders are into the speed and thrill generated through biking, plus the outdoor views and a sense of community.

Duan Xu, general manager of Brompton China, said earlier this year, "We are not selling a bicycle,



Rather than working overtime in the office to earn more, many people are shifting their priorities toward health and quality of life."

Jia Xiaomeng, owner and manager of Beijing-based tourist property 5Lmeet

we are delivering a lifestyle. The penetration requires the power of the community and bike riders."

This increase in demand for outdoor activities reflects a broader consumer shift toward health-conscious and nature-focused experiences.

Running, cycling, and walking are the most popular sports, with Tongcheng Travel users embracing hiking, marathons and water activities.

According to short-video platform Douyin, in the first six months of 2024, the key word search for running surged 142.5 percent, suggesting a strong demand from viewers to learn and understand the nuances of running.

This year has also seen a marathon craze, with cities across China attracting long-distance running enthusiasts.

Beijing tops the list of marathon participants, with popular running routes within Olympic Forest Park and Chaoyang Park. Other cities, such as Chengdu, Sichuan province, Shanghai, and Shenzhen of Guangdong province, are also seeing increased interest in sport tourism, particularly in cycling and running.

Outdoor enthusiasts from around China are flocking to scenic destinations like Chang'an Avenue for night cycling in Beijing, Qiandao Lake for water activities in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and the rainforests of Yunnan province for hiking adventures, said the report.

Different demographic groups are fueling the rise of sport tourism in unique ways.

First-tier city residents, including those in Beijing and Shanghai, tend to prefer more intense activities such as ice and snow sports or extreme outdoor adventures.

On the other hand, residents of second-tier cities favor activities like hiking and marathons, balancing their desire for fitness with socialization.

Smaller cities are not being left behind, as more travelers from third-tier cities are venturing abroad to witness sports events firsthand, with bookings more than doubling compared to 2023.

Interestingly, gender plays a role in sport tourism preferences.

The majority of those interested in watching live sporting events are male, accounting for 53 percent of the total. Female travelers, however, are dominating the experience-based sports travel segment, making up 58 percent of the market.

According to Tongcheng Travel, China's most sought-after sports-related destinations include the iconic Bird's Nest and Water Cube in Beijing. Cycling tours around Hangzhou's West Lake, and diving in Sanya, Hainan province are other popular activities.

As demand for both spectator and experiential sport tourism grows, businesses in the travel sector are capitalizing on this momentum.

The report said that cities like Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen are seeing higher per capita expenditures on sports travel, with residents willing to invest in more frequent and premium sport tourism experiences.

With more international sporting events on the horizon and an increasing number of consumers embracing outdoor fitness, the sport tourism market is poised for continued growth, said the report.

Intense competition, camaraderie boost popularity of local games, events

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

This summer, a team of six people from Shanghai, including professional trainers and office workers, participated in a nationwide fitness race, as community sports enthusiasts in China tuned in with the spirit of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

After a monthlong preparation and regional competition, the national final of the 2024 Lululemon Summer Sweat Games was held in Beijing last month.

Scarlet Wan, leader of Team Shanghai, said the games were more about enjoyment and camaraderie than intense competition. "The matches I usually participate in are very competitive. These games prioritized joy, fun and teamwork," said Wan, who is in her 30s.

The team members said they dedicated almost an hour each day over the prior five weeks to prepare for the games.

The event brought together eight winning teams from regional finals across the country. Team Fengtian Summer from Shenyang, Liaoning province, won in the finals.

The campaign, which kicked off in June, attracted more than 1,000 teams from nearly 40 cities across the country.

The 751 D-Park Locomotive Plaza in Beijing was transformed into a vibrant community space, offering more than 10 interactive activities, such as the Warrior's Bell, Hurricane Cycling, Curling Bumper Cars and



Participants in a tug of war at this year's Lululemon Summer Sweat Games in Beijing in August. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tug-of-War. A variety of fitness classes such as yoga, boxing, Zumba and Pilates were held for public visitors.

Chen Yulu, a member of the Shanghai team, said "the challenges require strength, cardio, balance, flexibility, teamwork and mental resilience", referring to the comprehensive physical demands of the games.

"Because of the community and fun aspects, this event brought together people from all walks of life to experience the joy of sports and the importance of well-being in daily life," Chen said.

The games also generated buzz across social media.

Rong Ping, a member of Wan's team, shared his experiences on social platforms like Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book).

"Many people read my posts about the games, and now they're interested in joining next year," said Rong, who is in his 50s. "This campaign can encourage people of various age groups to engage in fitness and exercise."

Wan praised the valuable role Rong played in the group. "The fact that Rong is older brings more life experience and maturity to our team — he's the stabilizer of our journey."

Huang Shiguo, another team



Volleyball fans play a match during the Lululemon Summer Sweat Games. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

member, shared his unwavering commitment to fitness. "For me, exercising is as essential as sleeping and eating," Huang said. "I'll continue my daily routine and look forward to joining more games in the future."

Sports events connecting communities in cities across the country have also translated into rising awareness of sports brands and driven sales of activewear makers.

Leading athletic apparel, footwear and accessories company Lululemon Athletica Inc said it posted a 34 percent year-on-year increase in net revenue from the Chinese mainland in its fiscal sec-

ond quarter that ended July 28, driven by an influx of new customers through its stores and e-commerce platforms, alongside a diverse product portfolio.

"Our business remained strong in the second quarter as we continue to bring new guests into the brand through our stores and multiple e-commerce platforms," Calvin McDonald, chief executive officer, said about the brand's continued robust performance in the mainland market.

McDonald attributed the growth to Lululemon's "innovative product offerings and omnichannel operating model."

"We are acquiring guests through our unique made-to-feel positioning, which comes to life through our commitment to movement and community, all of which supports the Healthy China 2030 initiative," McDonald added.

During the second quarter, Lululemon's Summer Sweat Games expanded to more than 70 stores across nearly 40 cities, engaging about 10,000 participants.

Looking ahead to the third quarter, Lululemon plans to leverage World Mental Health Day in October with events across several cities in China.

"We remain excited about the potential for Lululemon on the Chinese mainland," McDonald said. "Our business remains strong, and we believe several factors will continue to benefit us."

During the post-results earnings call, McDonald said Lululemon's footprint in the Chinese market is still relatively small, with 132 stores as of the end of the quarter.

Sportswear brands have geared up for more collaborations with competitions and training to enhance their community engagement.

Asia Crossfit Championship, a leading fitness event, has joined hands with Adidas to collaborate on events, user community, training, court channels and member services.

The Asia Crossfit Championship will be held in Shanghai in the fourth quarter.

TRAVEL

An ideal summer retreat

Changhai county in Dalian is drawing tourists to its archipelago-style resort where one can watch dolphins and birds, dig clams or explore the sea in a semi-submersible

By ZHANG XIAOMIN in Dalian, Liaoning
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Every person has his or her space where they find peace of body and mind. For Liu Fuyong, better known as Dalü, a mountaineer with 25 years of experience, this peaceful sanctuary lies in Changhai county of Dalian, Liaoning province.

After summiting Yuzhu Peak on the eastern ridge of Kunlun Mountains, rising 6,178 meters above sea level in Qinghai province, for the 23rd time, he returned home to downtown Dalian in August. But in less than a week he was on his way to Changhai. "Heading out to the sea for a big catch, relishing the most delicious seafood in all of China, or simply gazing at the sea during sunset — all these moments are beautiful," said Dalü, 64.

Dalü finds tranquility in snow-capped mountains and the northeastern island county. "When visiting Changhai, a significant fishing base in China, one must savor the local seafood," said Dalü. "It boasts the best marine ranch in China. Its low water temperatures, rapid water flow and clean water quality ensure quality seafood."

National tourist resort

Changhai is the only island county in Northeast China, and also the only bordering island county. Situated in the northern Yellow Sea off the eastern side of the Liaodong Peninsula, it consists of 195 islands (about 20 inhabited) and 359 kilometers of coastline.

Banking on its picturesque setting and ecological features, the county has introduced island-themed tourism packages that are immensely popular with tourists. These include activities such as clam digging, fishing and seafood savoring.

In June, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced a new batch of national tourist resorts, among them the Changshan Archipelago Tourist Resort in Dalian. The country's first archipelago-style national tourist resort has transformed Changhai, where it is located, from a relatively lesser-known hidden gem into a much-loved tourist destination, earning the title of "ideal summer retreat".



Data released by the local authorities showed that during the summer tourist season, from June to August, the county attracted 800,000 visitors who came to enjoy the charm of the islands and take in the coastal fishing village culture, with the highest single-day visitor count reaching 14,320.

The resort boasts 82 hotels and 88 tourist homestays and offers a variety of themed activities at the Xiaoshuikou Forest Park, Guanglu Laotieshan Forest Park and the "bird watching and dolphin appreciation" facility on the sea.

The county has been hosting a series of island-themed festivals such as a fishing village culture festival, Matsu cultural tourism festival and fishing festival, apart from organizing premium sports events such as a master fishing competition, marathons and cycling races.

Changhai enjoys unique ecological advantages and abundant marine resources, said Liu Baoqing, Party secretary of the county. "We are committed to building a comprehensive and all-encompassing archipelago tourist destination with distinctive marine cultural characteristics and first-class tourism and leisure facilities," he said.

Understated vacation paradise

This summer, in an effort to showcase the beauty of Changhai and the national tourist resort to more online audiences, 44-year-old documentary maker Lu Yao and her 9-year-old son Cao Enshuo embarked on a journey to the county, staying on approximately 10 islands over a period of two months.

"The world is vast, not confined to



Entertainers enthuse guests at a hotel on Guanglu Island of Changhai county in Dalian, Liaoning province, in July 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Must visit and must do when in Changhai

Route 1: Hiking on Dachangshan Island
Start from Banshan Mandao to Sikuai-shiwan Park and the sports park. This is one of the representative island walks. Visitors can take in the pristine waters and other breathtaking island scenery.

Route 2: Bicycling across Changshan Bridge

From Xicaotuo, take the coastal road to Yinniuwan resort area and the bridge. With the sea on one side and fishing villages on the other, the approximately 20-kilometer cycling stretch offers spectacular views of both mountains and the sea.

Route 3: Dolphin watching

Start sailing from the Sikuaiishi Pier to the sightseeing platform on the sea. Visitors can see Liang Zeye, a local, summoning dolphins just by whistling, as well as see various seabirds.

Route 4: Beach and forest park on Xiaochangshan Island

Cycle across the Changshan Bridge to the Jinshatan bathing beach, the Xiaoshuikou Forest Park, and the viewing platform.

Visitors can enjoy on a natural sandy beach or in a forest park with a glass promenade. They can also climb the viewing platform to get a panoramic view of the small islands.

Route 5: Sightseeing and cultural tour at Guanglu Island

Start from Tieshan Xiannyu Lake to the Matsu Temple and the folk exhibition hall. The Xiaozhushan cultural site records the history of the island's early inhabitants. The temple is a place for mountain climbing and prayer, while the folk museum showcases local customs.

Route 6: Explore the deep sea at Zhangzi Island

Start from Mingzhu Park and head to the Yingzui Rock, the exhibition hall of the ocean ranch, and the maritime park. This route will take you into the depths of the Yellow Sea. Savor the fresh seafood at a place 39 degrees north, go fishing, feel the excitement of catching big fish, and take a trip in an underwater sightseeing semi-submersible.

ZHANG XIAOMIN

textbooks and classrooms. We have such beautiful places like this in Dalian, yet our knowledge about them is limited. So, I decided to take my son to the islands, believing it would broaden his horizon," said Lu.

They made some wonderful memories there.

For instance, she said, on a small island in Guanglu Island Town, when the tide recedes, a path opens up through the sea, leading to a mountain on the opposite side, like a scene from a science fiction movie.

They also met 50-year-old Liang Zeye, who can "summon" dolphins. He just blows a whistle and the dolphins begin gathering around his yacht. It didn't happen overnight. He has cultivated a mutual understanding with the dolphins over the years, paying them attention and protecting them.

Every year, over 1,000 dolphins migrate to and from Changhai, arriving in April and leaving for the south by November.

The mother and son duo also met a group of over 10 paddleboarding enthusiasts who paddle from one island to another for leisure.

The breathtaking scenery was a good reason for Cao to put his drone photography skills to good use. "Nature is the best teacher," said Lu. "After a few attempts, he realized his skills needed improvement, sparking greater interest."

Each island they visited had its own unique character. While Dachangshan and Xiaochangshan islands are buzzing with life, most other islands have a slow pace of life in the absence of industry and taxi services.

Dachangshan Island serves as the administrative center of Changshan archipelago. It is the most accessible central island of the archipelago. Along with two village-level islands, Haxian Island and Saili Island, it constitutes the Dachangshan Island Town.

"I had visited Haxian Island before, but could only take a cursory glance that time. Because of my extended stay

this time, I felt its healing powers. Watching the sunrise and sunset, as well as the ebb and flow of the tides, is like being on a fairy island," Lu said.

Other guests at the homestay included a young couple from Anshan, Liaoning province, whose greatest joy was clam digging. Keeping an eye on the tide's schedule, they would surface the moment the tides receded to go looking for nature's bounty on the shore.

"On the evening before they left, they had gathered nearly 15 kilograms of conchs. If they are able to sell it at the market price of 80 yuan (\$11.23) per kilogram, that would have covered the entire cost of their three-day island trip," said Lu.

The 3.45-km Changshan Bridge, operational since 2014, connects the Changhai's two biggest islands, Dachangshan and Xiaochangshan, benefiting 70 percent of the county's population.

Xiaochangshan Island features Xiaoshuikou Forest Park, which is built along the coastline with high vegetation coverage. Guanglu Island houses the Xiaozhushan cultural site, a typical shell mound of the Neolithic Age in northern China. It dates back 7,000 years and is one of the earliest primitive cultural sites found in the Dalian area.

Lu's group received permission to visit the tiny 9-hectare island of Fantuozui for filming. It was sheer joy for Cao, the elementary school student, to see and understand why the island is famous as the "paradise of 10,000 birds".

"Fantuozui is the largest breeding ground for the Chinese egret, a nationally protected bird species. From April to September each year, dedicated personnel are stationed to protect the area, keeping people at bay," Lu explained.

On Zhangzi Island, visitors venture out on boats, or on semi-submersible submarines, for fishing or underwater seafood harvesting. Depending on the season, it is possible to spot whales and seals in the waters off Changhai county.

"After this exploration, the beautiful scenery and cultural romance of Changhai have left an indelible mark on my son's mind," Lu said. "As for myself, the healing currents have made me realize the kind of life I aspire to have," she said.



Left: Tourists departing Changhai county arrive at a port in Dalian's Jinpu New Area on Aug 23. LIU DEBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Right: The 3.45-km Changshan Bridge, which started operating in 2014, connects the Dachangshan and Xiaochangshan islands in Changhai county. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Tourists savor wine at a hotel on Guanglu Island in July 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

SPORTS

GOLF

Ji's confidence soars after storming to victory

Teen claims second CLPGA title amid wild and windy conditions in Shanghai

China's rising teen golfer Ji Yuai believes that a confidence-boosting win at the inaugural FILA GOLF Women's Classic in Shanghai will inspire her to challenge the best golfers from around the world at major international events.

"I always have trust in my skills and mindset, but, as a player, sometimes there are challenges," said 19-year-old Ji.

In a rush to finish the final round before the arrival of Tropical Storm Bebinca on Sunday, Ji held it together in the wild and windy conditions to close with an even-par 72 and win by two shots in Shanghai. With the players teeing off the final round from a shotgun start with carts at 6:40 am on the Yangtze Links at PGA Golf Club Anying, Ji finished on 10-under 206 to claim the 180,000 yuan (\$25,385) winner's purse.

"It's great to enter the winner's club, again. I haven't lost my game since Tianjin, it's just one or two little troublesome things that have blocked the way to the winner's podium. I was confident going into this week. Since the first birdie in my first round, I became more and more confident."

Ji, who won this April's CLPGA Tianjin Open — her maiden tour victory — has been struggling with some physical issues, resulting in a mid-season drop in form. However, she was fully fit at the weekend, making a strong return in Shanghai.

"I hope, now, that I can play my best golf in the coming months. Actually, I had enough confidence in myself after the win in Tianjin. This one only cements my belief that, as long as I keep doing what I'm doing right now, I will get even better," said the Dalian native, who now moves to second place in the CLPGA Order of Merit.

The \$1 million Aramco Team Series, sanctioned by the Ladies European Tour, tees off the penultimate event of its five-tournament global series at Mission Hills Golf Club Shenzhen on Oct 4. The top 17 players on the CLPGA Tour money list will be given an exemption into the tournament.

With the US LPGA Tour making its annual stop at Qizhong Garden



China's Ji Yuai poses with the trophy after winning the inaugural FILA GOLF Women's Classic in Shanghai on Sunday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Golf Club for the \$2.2 million Buick LPGA Shanghai, starting Oct 10, the China Golf Association has 15 spots available for the championship, six of which were decided by the results of the Shanghai event.

CLPGA, as China's only and regular tour for women's golf, has developed a number of former and current LPGA champions and world No 1s, such as Feng Shanshan and Yin Ruoning.

"I'm always preparing myself for the next level, step by step," said Ji. "I will try to compete at more international events. Once my world ranking breaks into the top 400, I will try to fight to qualify for LPGA tour."

Rising amateurs

Amateur Tang Rongze finished runner-up on Sunday after also posting an even-par 72, while Cai Danlin finished four shots back in third, posting a three-under 69. Chinese

amateurs Ren Yijia (70) and Zhou Shiyuan (71) were equal fourth.

Tang, who was gunning for her first win against a pro field, lamented a missed opportunity after being tied with Ji through five holes. Her round featured three birdies that were offset by three bogeys.

"This was not a great round. I had a steady start, but my iron play wasn't great. I didn't have many birdie chances. I also had a couple of annoying lip-outs (where the ball hits the edge of the cup and spins away). I had a fantastic birdie (on the 18th) with a great chip at the end of the day. I felt great about it," said Tang, a 15-year-old from Qingdao.

"This was my best finish on the China LPGA Tour, which is a great honor, but I can't help thinking that a win was possible with a better score today."

Cai, a 21-year-old from Hainan, solidified her place on the money list, moving into third on the Order with 224,646 yuan from five events.

"I knew it was going to be hard going into the final round seven shots off the lead, but, after three rounds, I was just four shots behind. I feel a little bit of regret, to be honest. I missed plenty of opportunities during the competition. Ji is a good player and she hits long. The course suits her. She deserves this."

Notes:

FILA GOLF Women's Classic final round scores. Players are from Chinese mainland unless otherwise stated (*denotes amateur):

206 - Ji Yuai 66-68-72
208 - Tang Rongze* 68-68-72
210 - Cai Danlin 72-69-69
211 - Ren Yijia* 70-71-70, Zhou Shiyuan* 68-72-71
212 - Noramol Nuchasila (THA) 71-71-70, Hung Chieh-ning (TPE) 71-67-74
213 - Prima Thammaraks (THA) 73-71-69, Sui Xiang 70-68-75
214 - Kusuma Meechai (THA) 76-69-69, Wang Zixuan 68-76-70, Pan Yanhong 69-71-74
215 - Zhang Hui 73-69-73, Li Gengshan 71-68-76
216 - Saranporn Katesuwan (THA) 72-73-71, Pimnipa Panthong (THA) 73-72-71

CHINA DAILY



From left: Nineteen-year-old Ji Yuai, Tang Rongze, 15, and Cai Danlin, 21, are among a new generation of Chinese women golfers looking to make their mark on the international stage. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

FILA makes it fashionable to support women's golf

Chinese golfers are welcoming the launch of "The FILA GOLF Role Model Program", which will provide much-needed financial support to young players to compete in the LPGA qualifying tournament in the United States.

Following the hosting of the inaugural Women's Classic last weekend in Shanghai, FILA GOLF announced it will select 10 outstanding players from the tournament and provide them with funding to travel to the Qualifying School, or Q-School for short, a strenuous multistage program that determines which golfers earn entry to the LPGA Tour.

Speaking at PGA GOLF Club Anying, host venue for the Women's

Classic, Shi Yuli, a FILA GOLF elite team member, said the program would go a long way to easing the financial burden faced by nearly all players trying to elevate their game to the highest level of the sport.

Shi provided some insight into how expensive it can be to earn a living as a professional golfer.

The 22-year-old lives in Japan with her family and has played regularly on the CLPGA Tour since 2018 in the hunt for her maiden pro title.

She had her best season last year, finishing third at the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Championships, in addition to posting two equal-third finishes.

"The reason my older sister (Shi

Yuting, a three-time winner on the CLPGA Tour) and I now compete in the JLPGA is mainly because we live in Japan and are familiar with the environment there. Additionally, we don't need a translator. This helps us save a significant amount of money when participating in the qualifying tournaments, which is not the case for many Chinese golfers," said Shi, currently placed 764th in the world ranking.

"The FILA GOLF Role Model Program will definitely be a great help to us golfers. I also plan to participate in the US LPGA qualifying tournaments, and having such a program makes us feel much more at ease."

Liu Ruotong has recently gradu-

ated from Shanghai University of Sport and plans to earn her living from playing professional golf.

A pro since 2019, the Henan native said that playing on the US LPGA Tour is her dream, but admits she has to significantly improve her game first if it is to become a reality.

Her best result as a pro was a tie for 19th at the 2021 Lanhai Ladies Challenge, achieved while juggling her studies and playing sporadically on the CLPGA Tour.

"Currently, my level is not sufficient, so I didn't apply for the Q-school this year, but it's definitely a plan over the next three to five years," said the 24-year-old. "My plan is to start by playing in the

JLPGA, and then move on to the LPGA Tour, taking it step-by-step. The launch of the program will definitely help alleviate our financial concerns."

Feng Shanshan, the former world No 1 who won the bronze medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics, said she was grateful to companies like FILA, which are willing to throw their financial support behind the development of women's golf.

Now retired and serving as a global promotional ambassador for the CLPGA Tour, the Guangdong native noted that "the growth of players cannot be achieved without support from all sides". In addition, she said, the attraction of the lifestyle that

golf projects will also help to fuel the growth of the game.

"In my view, there is no age limit for professional golfers; as long as one is qualified, everyone can compete on the same platform," said Feng, who was the first Chinese player to win a golf major when she triumphed in the 2012 Women's PGA Championship.

"I chose to retire because I saw that the excellent players behind me had grown up and were capable of competing. I felt it was time to pass the baton," she said. "I am very optimistic about the future development of female golfers in China."

CHINA DAILY

SOCCER

Delighted Arteta says Gunners' gritty win will spur his team on

LONDON — Mikel Arteta saluted Arsenal's hunger, as the gritty Gunners ignored the absence of Declan Rice and Martin Odegaard to clinch an "ugly" 1-0 win at bitter north London rival Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

Arteta's side was without skipper Odegaard due to an ankle injury he picked up on Norway duty, while fellow midfielder Rice served a suspension for his red card against Brighton.

But, the Premier League title contender dug deep with a combative display, benefitting from Tottenham's latest display of wasteful finishing, before Gabriel Magalhães bagged the winner in the second half.

The Brazilian defender's first goal since February made it three wins from four league games for unbeaten Arsenal, as it chases a first title since 2004 after two successive runner-up finishes.

"I'm super happy, obviously. We know what it means for our club and our people to win a north London derby," Arteta said.

"We had moments in the game where we had to suffer. We had to adapt a little bit because of some of the players we lost."

"I prepared for Tottenham for five days, then in one moment I lost one player, and in another, I lost a second. I didn't sleep much!"

"There were no excuses, no cry-

ing. The players have thick skin. They love the game. Sometimes to win, you have to do the ugly things, and they love to do that."

"I loved it, because day after day, the players are hungrier and hungrier."

Arsenal has now won on its last three visits to Spurs, losing just once, in May 2022, in their last eight meetings with its hated neighbor.

The second placed Gunners are two points behind Manchester City, as it turns its attention to its Champions League opener at Atalanta on Thursday, before traveling to face Pep Guardiola's men this weekend.

Arteta believes Arsenal's latest success behind enemy lines will stand his team in good stead for a

daunting week.

"We won three years in a row here. That is a big thing in the history of the club," he said.

"It is a tough week coming up. The players believe already. We have won a lot of big games, but this will give us a lot of energy and belief."

Since the start of last season, Arsenal has scored more goals (23) from dead-ball positions than any other team in the Premier League.

No wonder Arteta turned to embrace Nicolas Jover — the German assistant coach he poached from Manchester City to become Arsenal's set-piece guru — immediately after Gabriel's goal.

"I made the decision to bring him

to City when I was there, and to Arsenal," he said. "Together with the rest of the staff, they have injected the belief that there are many ways to win games, and this is one of them, so big credit to them."

It was another dispiriting north London derby for Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou.

The Australian has come under fire for his side's sloppy start to the season, which now includes successive defeats and only one win.

Having conceded more dead-ball goals than any top-flight team except Nottingham Forest over the last two seasons, Tottenham's weak defending at set-pieces was ruthlessly exposed by Arsenal.

But, Postecoglou insisted that wasn't the reason for the loss, instead pointing to his team's lack of cutting edge and composure.

Son Heung-min was unusually quiet, while former Bournemouth striker Dominic Solanke struggled on his home debut after returning from injury.

"We had some good opportunities, but we could have had so many more," Postecoglou said. "We wasted our good play, similar to other games when we haven't had the conviction in the final third. You keep opponents in the game when you do that."

AFP

SPORTS

OLYMPICS

Games not such golden opportunity

Businesses in central Paris say they were sold false promises, as Olympics disruption took a heavy toll on their bottom lines



With the Olympic and Paralympic Games officially over, citing heightened security measures and closed streets, many shopkeepers and service industry businesses say the reality has far from matched pre-Games promises, and that they have recorded one of their worst summers ever. AP

Parisian business owners and hotel managers were promised a summer like no other. Millions of tourists would flood the French capital for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, generating huge profits for the region.

With the Games officially over, the time has come to run the numbers, and many in the Paris service industry say they had one of their worst summers ever — notably because of security restrictions around city-center Olympic venues.

Tom Denaive, who runs a jewelry store located between the Louvre Museum and Place de la Concorde — which hosted multiple Olympic events — said the season was nothing short of “dramatic”.

In mid-June, the city closed the nearest metro station, then access to the scenic Tuileries Garden. A week before the opening ceremony on the River Seine, the nearby rue de Rivoli, a major pedestrian and commercial artery, was shut down.

“It was a dead street,” Denaive said. “I felt like we were back to the

COVID-19 days.”

Even the Louvre Museum reported a 22 percent drop in visits during the Olympic Games, and a 45 percent drop during the two weeks leading up to the opening ceremony, compared to the same period a year ago.

Disappointment was also felt steps away on rue Saint-Honore, home to some of Paris’ most prestigious hotels and haute couture shops.

“I have all the records from last year, and we didn’t match a single one,” said Marina Orlando, store manager at French luxury candle brand Diptyque. Orlando said sales in August were down 29 percent year-on-year.

“We were given a whole serenade about the Olympics, that it was going to be incredible. Some of us didn’t go on vacation, it was a huge logistical effort so that we could all be present on D-Day,” she said. In the end, she added, they had a store largely empty of customers.

Tourists did come to Paris in large numbers. Government data released last week show that some 1.7 million

international visitors came during the Olympic period, up 13 percent compared with the previous year, and another 1.4 million French tourists visited the capital, up 26 percent. In addition, the Olympics drew millions more visitors who traveled to Paris on day trips.

“I think that our country’s bet has paid off,” Olivia Gregoire, who leads the ministry charged with companies, tourism and consumption, told a news conference. Gregoire said France as a whole was on track to maintain — and potentially surpass — last year’s record-breaking tourism numbers.

But, shopping was not the visitors’ priority, shop owners and managers said. “They were here for the sports,” Orlando said.

Denaive agreed. He said that tourists “spent so much on hotels, flights and tickets, they didn’t have much of a budget left for shopping”.

Many visitors were struggling to get to shops and restaurants even if they wanted to, because Paris chose to host Olympic events in the heart of the capital, rather than building an

Olympic park outside the city center.

Protecting those venues involved a boosted security apparatus, deploying up to 45,000 police officers backed by a 10,000-strong contingent of soldiers and reinforcements from more than 40 countries.

Most Parisians and visitors welcomed the security measures, but not the metal fences and barriers erected on both sides of the River Seine that made the city hard to navigate.

Only those with a QR code were granted permission to pass police checkpoints, making it nearly impossible for those without one to commute between the city’s south and north, except by metro. Permission for the precious code could take days to obtain.

For Patrick Aboukrat, whose association represents 190 shopkeepers and restaurant owners in Paris’ central Marais neighborhood, the Olympics were “more than catastrophic”. From mid-June to the end of July, sales were down roughly 35 to 40 percent on average in the area, he said.

Aboukrat, who owns a fashion store, said the ready-to-wear industry was particularly hit, with an unexpectedly bad summer sales period. The city was quiet ahead of the Olympics, he recalled.

“We expected to have a stronger activity than usual. We found ourselves with stock to sell off and a very low cash flow.”

Aboukrat, like many others who talked to reporters, eventually decided to close his store early in the summer.

“It was not worth it, and those near me who remained open told me it was empty.”

Something similar happened at the Cite Island, the small island in the Seine where Notre Dame Cathedral sits. There, most merchants lost 40 to 50 percent of their turnover, according to Patrice Lejeune, president of the island’s merchants’ association.

The area was particularly difficult to reach during most of the Olympics, as it was surrounded by security barriers. Officials have said the restrictions were necessary to guar-

antee everyone’s safety.

Gregoire, from the tourism ministry, downplayed potential losses, saying that “we often come across people who complain”.

On June 14, the government announced the creation of a commission to handle financial compensation requests from businesses claiming they were impacted negatively by the Games. Gregoire said it would apply only to those located within the perimeters targeted by security measures.

The commission will start assessing requests in January.

Jean-Marc Banquet d’Orx, president of a union representing more than 2,000 hotels, restaurants and cafes in Paris, said everyone will eventually feel the benefits of the investments made in the city ahead of the Games.

“We can’t stop grumpy people,” Banquet d’Orx said. “But to those who complain, I say: The Olympics will have an impact on the years to come, not immediately.”

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



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