

Surreal charm

Yuncheng Salt Lake offers a host of natural marvels **IMAGE, PAGE 7**



Conflict intensifies

Reports of Israeli ground operations in Lebanon prompt new evacuation efforts **WORLD, PAGE 4**

CHINA DAILY

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Celebrating National Day



A grand flag-raising ceremony is held at Tian'anmen Square in Beijing on Tuesday to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. ZHANG WUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Overseas niche destinations popular among tourists

By ZHU WENQIAN
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Chinese tourists have shown an ever increasing enthusiasm for traveling abroad, embarking on trips during this year's week-long National Day holiday to more niche destinations, such as countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative and Africa.

The bookings of international flights for the holiday had already doubled the level seen last year as of mid-September.

Qunar, a Beijing-based online travel agency, said that its global bookings were for some 1,600 destinations in more than 140 countries, and over half of the new destinations are African countries. In particular, bookings made by people living in third-tier and smaller cities jumped by 250 percent year-on-year, indicating Chinese residents' stronger travel demand, according to Qunar.

Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, said, "Based on data of travel product bookings, it is expected that the number of tourists taking trips during

the holiday will reach a new historical high."

Furthermore, since this year's National Day holiday marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, travel for Red tourism was expected to increase, along with that for autumn sightseeing and family reunions, Dai said.

Topping the list of outbound tourism destinations that have seen the highest number of flight bookings from the Chinese mainland are the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; Bangkok, Thailand; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Seoul, South Korea; and Osaka, Japan, Qunar said.

Although most travelers from the Chinese mainland chose destinations within five hours of flying time, the number traveling farther has increased.

For the holiday period, also known as Golden Week, the countries that have seen the fastest growth in flight and hotel bookings by Chinese travelers include Azerbaijan, Cuba, Georgia, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco and Tajikistan, Qunar found.

"Azerbaijan's and Georgia's visa-free entries for Chinese travelers have significantly boosted their tourism popularity," said Cai Muzi, a Qunar researcher. "Fueled by the building of the Air Silk Road and a further increase of flights, the demand for tourism and commercial exchanges between China and countries along the Silk Road will continue to grow rapidly."

Furthermore, thanks to a rising number of flights connecting China and Africa, and more frequent trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges, traveling to Africa has become increasingly popular for Chinese tourists, Cai said.

"The demand for hotel bookings and flights from China to Africa is expected to continue its growth momentum," the researcher added.

With the recovery of the entire supply chain of international travel after the COVID-19 pandemic, including the rebound of flight capacity, there has been a significant decline in the cost of outbound travel. As a result, supported by the large volume of bookings, the overall revenue of the outbound tourism market is expected to far surpass that of last

year, industry insiders have said.

The average prices of flight tickets from China to popular outbound destinations such as Japan, Thailand and South Korea have fallen more than 20 percent, according to FlightAI, a market insight platform affiliated with Chinese online travel agency Trip.com.

In addition, the overall decline in the prices of global hotel bookings has made outbound travel more competitive, with travel expenses from China to some Southeast Asian countries becoming lower than for some domestic destinations, FlightAI has found.

Meanwhile, the number of visa applications for outbound travel during the National Day holiday surged 70 percent year-on-year.

Chinese tourists have shown a stronger awareness of applying for visas in advance. On average, they applied for visas 68 days before departure, about one month earlier than last year, according to Trip.com.

For example, Xu Yunlei, 40, a teacher from Chongqing who went on a weeklong trip to Australia this year with his friends, applied for a visa two months in advance.

Shenzhou XIX crew to launch in weeks ahead

Mission set for October; astronauts currently in space station celebrate holiday in orbit

By JIANG CHENGLONG
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China will launch the Shenzhou XIX spacecraft in late October and see the return of the Shenzhou XVIII crew, whose three astronauts marked their first National Day celebration in orbit aboard China's Tiangong space station.

According to the China Manned Space Agency's October mission schedule, which was released on Monday, the Shenzhou XIX manned spacecraft is scheduled for launch later this month, and after its arrival at the space station, the Shenzhou XVIII crew will return to Earth.

The Shenzhou XVIII crew has three astronauts — Senior Colonel Ye Guangfu, who is the mission commander, Lieutenant Colonel Li Cong and Lieutenant Colonel Li Guangsu — who entered the space station on April 26.

During the seven-day National Day holiday, which runs from Tuesday to Monday, the Shenzhou XVIII crew will continue to maintain a regular and orderly work-life schedule, according to a China Media Group report.

Despite balancing work and rest, their schedule remains packed with tasks. The crew's primary responsibilities over the coming days include conducting scientific experiments, gathering and organizing data and performing routine maintenance on life-support and environmental control systems, the report said.

In preparation for the arrival of the Shenzhou XIX crew, the astronauts currently aboard the space station will organize and categorize supplies to facilitate the upcoming work handover to the new crew, which will be the sixth group of astronauts to inhabit Tiangong.

As of Tuesday, mission commander Ye had accumulated a total of 340 days in orbit, including as part of the six-month Shenzhou XIII mission to the space station. Li Cong and Li Guangsu are on their first mission to Tiangong.

On Tuesday morning, the three astronauts participated in a video call with a live China Media Group news program. They shared their aspirations for the development of China's space endeavors.

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POLITICAL ADVISORY BODY RINGING OUT AS PEOPLE'S VOICE

CPPCC refines role, looks to help advance nation's modernization drive

By ZHANG YI and SHI XUEFAN
in Beijing and GU YEHUA in Hong Kong

On Sept 21, 1949, shortly before the birth of the People's Republic of China, a diverse array of representatives from across the nation — including leaders of political parties, intellectuals, ethnic minorities and overseas Chinese — converged in Beijing, optimistic about helping shape the country's future.

They had assembled to take part in the inaugural plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The delegates had responded to Chairman Mao Zedong's call on May 1, 1948, when the War of Liberation (1946-49) was still underway, to engage in a political consultative conference and unite to forge a new nation.

This landmark gathering in Beijing was extended until Sept 30, and laid the groundwork for the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Deliberations centered on key issues such as deciding the location of the capital city, the national flag, and the national anthem. On Oct 1, many

of the participants stood shoulder to shoulder with Chairman Mao atop the Tian'anmen Rostrum and bore witness to the birth of New China.

The CPPCC subsequently evolved into a key institution fostering multiparty cooperation, with political consultation forming its bedrock.

Eager to listen

The 2,000-plus members of the current 14th CPPCC National Committee have been divided into 34 participating groups, mainly political parties, people's organizations and various industries. They serve as advisers for government, legislative and judicial bodies and put forward proposals on major political and social issues.

Their suggestions are sent to State leaders and government departments for reference in making decisions. The topics are closely related to the central tasks of the Communist Party of China and the State, including economic development, healthcare and environmental protection.

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Festive display



Children perform a lion dance in Hefei, Anhui province, on Tuesday to commemorate National Day. The colorful display was among the many diverse celebrations that unfolded across the nation as people marked the 75th anniversary of New China's founding and revelled in the holiday spirit.

RUAN XUEFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hong Kong, Macao mark National Day with fervor

By SHADOW LI and WU KUNLING in Hong Kong

A festive vibe permeated the streets of the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions on Tuesday as officials, residents and tourists turned out in droves to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In separate speeches marking the special occasion, the leaders of the Hong Kong and Macao SARs lauded the nation's enduring support. They also renewed their pledges to uphold the "one country, two systems" principle and integrate both cities' development with that of the nation.

Following a flag-raising ceremony at Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said at a reception that the city will persist in seizing the opportunities arising

from national development, and in bolstering the economy and making its residents happier.

He highlighted Hong Kong's commitment to making full use of the advantages of the motherland's strong support and being closely connected with the world under "one country, two systems".

Lee vowed to lead Hong Kong in proactively integrating its development with that of the nation. He also pledged to give full play to its roles as a "super value adder" and "super connector" in the country's domestic and international dual-circulation economic paradigm — especially within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. The city will thereby make greater contributions to the nation's opening-up and high-quality development, he added.

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INSIDE

Innovative game has global players abuzz

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NATION

SARs: Nation's enduring support lauded

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Lee also pledged that the city will further deepen reforms for economic advancement and strive to create a better quality of life for residents with improved housing, enhanced youth development, better elderly care and a peaceful and friendly environment in which to live and work.

He noted that local households have seen monthly income increase on average about HK\$2,800 (\$360), which is growth of more than 10 percent since his administration took office.

Meanwhile, in Macao, Chief Executive Ho Iat-seng pledged to comprehensively seize the historic opportunities presented by the nation's deepening reform by aligning its development with that of the nation, and by relentlessly buttressing its advantages and uniqueness.

He noted that the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held in Beijing in July, issued a clarion call for the further and comprehensive deepening of reforms.

In addition to being the 75th anniversary of the founding of New China, this year also marks the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland. Ho called for Macao to keep up with the times and to respond to changes accurately, scientifically and proactively, adding that the city has been the apple of the nation's eye for the past 25 years and appreciates the strong backing and great opportunities that the nation has provided.

Days before National Day, festivities had already kicked off with choir performances, sports competitions and other activities. A myriad of colorful activities throughout the cities fostered a festive ambiance for all residents.



Helicopters carrying the Chinese national flag and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region fly over Hong Kong on Tuesday during a flag-raising ceremony and reception hosted by the SAR government to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. LYU XIAOWEI / XINHUA

In Hong Kong alone, the government and various sectors organized over 400 celebratory events.

The two regions began the official National Day celebration on Tuesday with flag-raising ceremonies, followed by receptions attended by social dignitaries. The celebratory mood reached its height on Tuesday night with grand fireworks displays.

Residents of both regions enjoyed free or discounted rides on various modes of transportation in the city, with numerous entertainment facilities like museums and parks offering free admission to the public on National Day. The business sector, including the dining and retail industries, also joined in the festivities by distributing elec-

tronic vouchers and providing discounts to residents.

Kwan Mei-fung took her granddaughter to Tsim Sha Tsui on Tuesday afternoon, hoping to get a better view of the annual National Day fireworks display over Victoria Harbour.

Also immersed in the holiday vibe was Xue Lung-yi, a student at Lai Chack Middle School. Xue joined her classmates in singing a song to mark the day at a celebratory event featuring a run, exhibitions and performances in the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Extending her wishes for the country to prosper, Xue expressed hopes for Hong Kong to progress as well, with the nation's support. The city also welcomed the many

tourists from the Chinese mainland who hoped to experience the holiday festivities. Among them was Shen Qun, a tourist from Guangzhou, who brought her son and elderly members of the family.

Praising Hong Kong's strong mood of festivity, Shen said her family looked forward to the fireworks display on Tuesday night. She also noted the closer bond between the mainland and Hong Kong and expressed optimism in the city's future, adding that her family would visit Macao next.

Fang Xue and Yang Zirui contributed to this story.

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Envoy: Fortify 'mansion' of China-US ties

Ambassador Xie Feng tells National Day event that China has contributed to global stability

By YIFAN XU in Washington
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"The mansion of China-US relations has been built by generations of people brick by brick. We need to bolster it, not dismantle it."

Those were the words of Xie Feng, China's ambassador to the United States, at a National Day reception at the Chinese embassy on Monday to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink and National Security Council Senior Director Sarah Beran attended, as did more than 700 Chinese and American guests.

Xie said that over the past 75 years under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese people have created "a miracle" that has amazed the world and embarked on an epic journey toward modernization.

"Today, we are advancing confidently toward building China into a modern socialist country on all fronts," he said.

Xie underscored that in a turbulent world, a China committed to open development will continue to be a major engine for global economic growth; a China committed to innovation-driven development will continue to be a boost to global technological advances; a China committed to green development will continue to be a doer in global climate governance; a China committed to peaceful development will continue to be an anchor of stability in a volatile world.

Xie said that in this 45th anniversary year of the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations, the relationship is at a new starting point, and "the key is that we should follow the trend of the times, draw inspirations and lessons from the past, and advance China-US relations along the right track."

Xie said that President Xi Jinping has laid out three principles for the relationship: mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

"Mutual respect means we need to be partners, not rivals. Peaceful coexistence means we need to hold on to the baselines and avoid backpedaling.

Win-win cooperation means we need to seek mutual benefit and reject a zero-sum game," Xie said.

"Forty-five years ago, our two peoples reached out to each other, thus breaking the ice of the Cold War and enabling China-US relations to set sail. Today, we have even more reason to take action to ensure the relationship will break waves and navigate steadily forward," Xie said at the close of his remarks.

He then proposed a toast to "the continued prosperity of the People's Republic of China" ... the evergreen friendship between the peoples of China and the United States ... the stable development of China-US relations (and) the health and happiness of all friends here and your loved ones."

In an interview with the media at the event, Xie said that while the global landscape remains uncertain, with ongoing geopolitical conflicts, a sluggish economic recovery, rising protectionism, and the lingering shadow of the Cold War, the Chinese people, under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, are facing the challenges head-on.

"We are diligently fulfilling our responsibilities and contributing to global stability through China's own stability," he said. "Through high-level opening up and high-quality development, we are striving to contribute to the recovery of the world economy. By pursuing Chinese-style modernization, we aim to provide inspiration and new options for the modernization of other countries."

Xie said that in stark contrast, "some countries," instead of earnestly addressing their own internal issues, resort to blame-shifting and spreading rumors and slander, labeling China as a threat.

"However, people around the world are increasingly recognizing that China is, in fact, a rare force for peace, development, cooperation, openness and progress in the world," he said.

Xie said that since late September, the Chinese government has introduced measures to revitalize the economy, with remarkable results.

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San Francisco joins China's National Day event

By CHANG JUN in San Francisco
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China's top diplomat in Northern California, joined by US elected officials and community representatives, pledged on Tuesday to continue building a strong, dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship between China and San Francisco.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, San Francisco held a China national flag-raising ceremony at City Hall.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed declared Oct 1 as Chinese American Friendship and Heritage Day.

Zhang Jianmin, China's consul general in San Francisco, said that this year marked the third time he has attended a flag-raising event to celebrate China's National Day.

"The more I do it, the more I love it, because the more I am here (in City Hall), the more I appreciate the value of friendship," said Zhang.

"Today is a momentous day; it's a day of joy and pride for every Chinese," said Zhang. "We are proud because of the profound changes taking place in China during (the past) 75 years."

"We have built China from a weak and poor country into the world's second-largest economy," he said. "A total of 800 million people have been lifted out of poverty. The entire nation of 1.4 billion now enjoys a life



Zhang Jianmin, China's consul general in San Francisco, receives a proclamation certificate from San Francisco Mayor London Breed on Tuesday at City Hall. The city held a China national flag-raising ceremony and proclaimed Oct 1 Chinese American Friendship and Heritage Day to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown (right), chief protocol officer Maryam Muduroglu (second from left) and Zheng Xin (left), wife of Zhang, look on. CHANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

of modern prosperity."

More importantly, "we are still working very hard. We will further our efforts to deepen reform," Zhang added.

Saying the ceremony captured the "essence of San Francisco as an open, inclusive and welcoming city," Zhang said the moment also reflected a strong commitment by San Francisco to building a "strong and enduring friendship and collaboration with China."

The mayor, who visited China in April on a multi-city agenda, said

her delegation has struck significant deals for tourism and economic growth opportunities with some of China's most economically vibrant cities, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Moreover, she has signed a memorandum of understanding with China detailing panda conservation collaboration programs.

"Panda is not only the little cute cuddly bear, it's mainly about friendship, about our deep ties," Breed said, adding that the city is excited to host China's pandas next year. China and San Francisco enjoy an

enduring friendship, said the mayor adding that this year also marked the 45th anniversary of the establishment of sister-city relations with Shanghai.

In 1979, then-San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein visited Shanghai and agreed with municipal officials on the cultivation of "this long-lasting friendship."

Willie Brown, former mayor of San Francisco, is a staunch advocate for China-US friendship. He said the relationship has benefited both sides, and there is great potential. "I only hope it gets better and better and better," he said.

To carry on and elevate the existing friendship, the young generation needs to carry the torch. In summer, high school students from across San Francisco flew to China to explore the nation, to foster cross-cultural understanding between China and the US, and to bring back fond memories, said Zhang.

Daphne Fang, chair of the San Francisco Sister City Committee, helped orchestrate a people-to-people exchanges program that sent 10 high school students in San Francisco to Shanghai.

"The participation of San Francisco high school youth in friendship summer camps in Shanghai will enhance cultural understanding and friendship, echoing across borders and generations," she said.

Scientist honored for deep-Earth exploration efforts

By YAN DONGJIE in Beijing
and HAN JUNHONG in Changchun

During the seven years he spent in China after returning from the United Kingdom, the late distinguished strategic scientist and geophysicist Huang Danian led over 1,000 scientists in creating numerous "firsts" in China, transforming the nation into one of the world's leaders in developing deep-Earth exploration equipment.

Dubbed the "Mad Professor", Huang, who returned to China in 2009, died due to illness in early 2017 at age 58. He was posthumously awarded the national honorary title of People's Educator ahead of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.



"Professor Huang helped scientists overcome difficulties and urged them to work day and night to meet the country's needs for deep-Earth exploration," said Ma Guoqing, professor at the School of Earth Exploration Science and Technology at Jilin University. "His efforts rapidly narrowed the gap with foreign countries and led to the development of deep-Earth exploration equipment and technology with independent intellectual property rights."

The technology, which has been employed by nations worldwide, is used not only to detect under-

ground resources on land, but also to scan areas deep beneath the sea.

Born in 1958, Huang became a teacher after graduating from what was then known as the Changchun

Institute of Geology in Jilin province. In 1992, he received a scholarship to study for his doctorate at the University of Leeds in the UK.

Upon earning his doctorate, Huang joined renowned geophysics company ARKeX in Cambridge at age 38, leading a team of scientists to make breakthroughs in key Earth exploration technology. Huang quickly made

a name for himself in the industry.

In 2008, Huang received an invitation from Liu Cai, then dean of the School of Geosciences at Jilin University, to come back to China to work. Though it was hard to leave his colleagues in the UK, he decided to sell his house and property in Cambridge, and he and his wife returned to their homeland.

In December 2009, Huang returned to Changchun, where he became a professor and doctoral supervisor at the School of Earth Exploration Science and Technology at Jilin University. Ma said that Huang had been working tirelessly upon his return to China.

In the winter of 2014, the results of one of his projects exceeded the assessment criteria as it was nearing

completion, but Huang looked pensive as he perused them.

"I asked him why he was furrowing his brow when the project was about to end, thinking it should be a happy moment," Ma recalled. "He said he was pondering two questions: how to better present everyone's achievements and how we could plan the next steps around the actual needs of the country."

During Huang's seven years at Jilin University, he also served as president of the university's European and American Alumni Association, often organizing exchange activities for Chinese scientists returning from overseas.

At the 100th anniversary celebration of the European and American Alumni Association in 2013, tears welled in Huang's eyes as he and his wife listened to patriotic songs such as *I Love You, China* and *Motherland, My Kind Mother*.

"Please understand, overseas experts like us who spend years abroad have a deep, deep love for the motherland. Our country needs us, and I must return no matter what," he said then.

As the chief scientist of the national deep exploration equipment research and development program, he undertook nine major projects, making significant contributions to the scientific progress of China.

After Huang's death, he was awarded numerous honors, including Role Model of the Times and the National May 1 Labor Medal. In 2017, President Xi Jinping asked society to learn from Huang, who devoted his life to national prosperity and the well-being of the people.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

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COVER

CPPCC: Advisers' roles pivotal in development

From page 1

Yu Chunshui, vice-president of Tianjin Medical University, became a member of the CPPCC National Committee last year. His proposals have included strengthening the provision of home-care nursing staff, enhancing the training of talent in the high-end medical technology field, and promoting the high-quality development of the silver economy.

One of his proposals has been adopted by government departments. Another has been designated as a key proposal for this year, and is under deliberation by the relevant departments. "This gives me a deep sense of achievement in political consultation work," he said.

His participation in consultative democracy started in 2007 when he joined the Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party. He later became a member of the Tianjin Municipal Committee of the CPPCC in 2018.

His party was among the eight non-CPC parties that expressed their support for the CPC's call to launch the New China and then became a participating group in the CPPCC.

The Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party primarily consists of members with expertise in the healthcare, human resources, natural resources and ecological protection sectors.

"All democratic parties are participatory parties of socialism with Chinese characteristics and should be good advisers, assistants, and colleagues of the CPC," Yu said.

He recalled proposing a solution to challenges a university faced in disposing of outdated equipment. Officials from Tianjin's finance and education departments visited the university, discussed the issue, and quickly came up with a solution to the long-standing problem.

"The experience made me understand the significance of consultative democracy," he added.

Sharing experiences

Alvis Lo Iek-long, a member of the National Committee of the CPPCC from Macao, said his understanding of whole-process people's democracy comes from his experiences in Henan, a province located over 1,500 kilometers away from the special administrative region.

Macao and Hong Kong do not have their own CPPCC committees. Outstanding representatives from the two special administrative regions can be assigned to different mainland provinces and cities.

"In Macao, we are offered opportunities to participate in different provincial and municipal CPPCC activities, depending on our work performance and capabilities," Lo said.

He benefited from this experience and served on the CPPCC Henan Provincial Committee. Lo later brought some young people from Macao to Henan to explore the Central Plains culture and integrate with the local people.

"From a historical and cultural perspective, we aimed to help our young people understand our country better," said Lo, who also serves as vice-chairman of the All-China Youth Federation.

"This can enable Macao to better integrate into the overall development of our nation. It provides youth in Macao with opportunities to engage with our national political system."



Members of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference head for the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 4, as the top political advisory body convenes. LI XIN / XINHUA



Pan Yuping, a national political adviser based in Sichuan province, is a member of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, one of the eight non-Communist political parties. TAIWAN COMPATRIOTS ALSO HAVE THE CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN WHOLE-PROCESS PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE POLITICAL ADVISORY BODY, PAN SAID.



Clarence Ling Chun-kit, a CPPCC National Committee member from Hong Kong, said his understanding of democracy is reflected in something as simple as a train ticket.



From top: Yang Junjie (left) a CPPCC member in Chongqing's Shapingba district, offers free medical consultations on June 1. SUN KAIFANG / FOR CHINA DAILY A CPPCC member gives out brochures on combating drugs to people in Rongshui, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, in April. LONG TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY CPPCC members and primary school students learn about meteorology during an education event in Chongzuo, Guangxi, in March. LU WENFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Pan Yuping, a national political adviser based in Sichuan province, is a member of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, one of the eight non-Communist political parties. Taiwan compatriots also have the chance to participate in whole-process people's democracy through the political advisory body, Pan said.

During Sichuan Provincial CPPCC meetings, Taiwan youth are invited to participate. They also take part in research tours to better understand the development of the mainland, and increase their understanding of the political system and democratic procedures.

"This ensures they gain a thorough understanding of our whole-process people's democracy," Pan said. "And, they find life here is very fulfilling, so they are keen to share their positive experiences with their friends and family back in Taiwan."

Clarence Ling Chun-kit, a CPPCC National Committee member from Hong Kong, said his understanding of democracy is reflected in something as simple as a train ticket.

The youth entrepreneurship base in Nansha district in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, is close to Hong Kong and draws young people from Hong Kong to embark on entrepreneurial journeys in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

However, transportation had long hampered the process, as train tickets between the cities are in high demand and often sold out. Last year, Ling submitted a proposal to increase the frequency of trains between Nansha and Hong Kong to foster greater regional integration.

"About three to four months later, the Guangdong Development and Reform Commission called me. I was surprised, because I didn't expect them to contact me. Then we had a long chat," Ling recalled.

The number of high-speed train services, which used to be only four round trips per day, has since been increased. "I submitted proposals and different government departments took them very seriously," he said.

Future role

At a meeting celebrating the 75th

founding anniversary of the CPPCC held in Beijing on Sept 20, President Xi Jinping called for further giving full play to the salient political advantage of the political advisory body in developing whole-process people's democracy.

It has been proven through practice over the past 75 years that the CPPCC is an innovative political system involving political parties, prominent individuals without party affiliation, people's organizations, and people from all walks of life and all ethnic groups under the leadership of the CPC, said Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

The CPPCC should leverage its strength in pooling talent and wisdom to focus on addressing major, difficult and hot spot issues in areas such as the advancement of Chinese modernization, and enhance consultation and deliberation, he said.

Xi stressed the importance of improving the mechanism that ensures thorough consultation and interactions, where diverse opinions are expressed fully and broad consensus is reached, as well as the construction of the mechanism reflecting social conditions and public opinion, and engaging with and serving the people.

Wang Xiaohong, a professor at the Central Institute of Socialism, said that the CPPCC has embarked on a remarkable 75-year journey, evolving through refinement and development, and playing a pivotal role across various historical epochs.

The CPPCC epitomizes substantial inclusivity in the realm of politics, Wang said.

"It adapts to the evolving core tasks and shifting societal landscapes throughout China's history, and adeptly adjusts its composition to foster the broadest possible unity among individuals from diverse classes, strata, beliefs, and interests," she said.

A defining characteristic and strength of the political advisory body is its emphasis on consultation, which serves to cultivate widespread

Timeline of CPPCC's growth

1948
The Communist Party of China Central Committee proposes convening a new political consultative conference to set up a government. The call immediately gets a positive response from various democratic parties, people's organizations, nonaffiliated democrats and overseas Chinese. All later participate in the preparation of the new political consultative conference.

1949
The first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is held from Sept 21 to 30 in Beijing. Representatives decide the location of the capital city, the national flag, the national anthem, and the calendar to be used by the People's Republic of China. They also elect the administrative council members of the Central People's Government of the PRC.

1956
Chairman Mao Zedong writes the principle of "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" to define the relationship between the CPC and the country's non-CPC parties.

1983
All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots was added as a participating group and a group was also launched for compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao.

1991
The China Association for Science and Technology, an organization of scientists and engineers, is reintroduced as a constituent group of the CPPCC as the country promotes the development of science and technology.

1993
An economics group is set up within the CPPCC National Committee as the country looks to strengthen its focus on development.

2023
A new group is launched to focus on the environment and natural resources as China gears up efforts to build a green nation.

ZHANG YI

unity, propel multiparty cooperation, and uphold the principles of people's democracy, Wang said.

CPPCC members hailing from the grassroots, actively convey the voices and aspirations of the populace to the Party and government, and engage in democratic deliberations to forge consensus on critical matters, she said.

"Simultaneously, they engage with the public, disseminating and elucidating the policy stances of the Party and government to foster consensus-building within society," Wang added.

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Online Watch the video by scanning the code.

Collaboration creates symphony of progress

Any person who enters the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference building will be impressed by a magnificent painting adorning the auditorium wall.

The grand work of art portrays a historic gathering from the early days of the New China in 1949, showcasing the leadership of the Communist Party of China with leaders from various other political parties.

establishment and development.

The spirit of collaboration and unity among these leaders extends beyond the canvas and permeates the very design of the CPPCC auditorium. Symbolism abounds in the intricate details, such as the eight-petal peony-shaped ceiling lamp and the eight columns flanking the meeting room. These elements serve as visual reminders of the collective efforts of non-Communist parties working hand in hand toward shared national aspirations.

The enduring closeness and unity between the CPC and other political parties persist to this day. An annual tea party is held in the hall before New Year's Day each year, where CPC leaders and representatives from diverse backgrounds gather to reflect on the past year and usher in the new one.



The system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC is a basic element of China's political framework. Within this framework, the CPC and other political parties operate as harmonious partners, sharing a common vision of revitalizing the Chinese nation.

This collaborative dynamic is like an orchestra performance, with the CPC leadership the conductor guiding the diverse talents of non-Communist parties to create a symphony of progress and development.

Since the 18th National Congress of

the CPC in 2012, the CPC leadership has issued regulations to improve the channels and procedures for the non-Communist parties to better exercise political consultations.

Leaders from non-Communist parties have a direct channel to express their opinions and recommendations on significant matters. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process, fostering a culture of dialogue and mutual respect.

With members from various fields and backgrounds, the non-Communist parties bring a wealth of expertise and insights to the table. Through regular consultations and streamlined communication channels, these parties play a vital role in offering feedback, raising concerns, and contributing to

the governance process.

Since 2016, the eight political parties have been entrusted by the CPC to supervise difficult poverty eradication work in eight provincial regions. Starting from 2021, the eight parties started a supervision program of the environmental protection work along the Yangtze River.

In the context of China's political landscape, political parties are like co-drivers seated alongside the CPC, which assumes the role of the primary driver. This arrangement fosters a collaborative environment where parties work together to anticipate and address potential challenges and pitfalls on the journey ahead. The overarching objective is to ensure the vehicle is steered effectively, emphasizing collective success over considerations of replacing the driver.

This model of cooperation represents a departure from the dynamics typically seen in two-party systems, where opposition parties often prioritize critiquing the ruling party rather than aiding in achieving shared objectives, the multiparty cooperation in China emphasizes mutual assistance and progress.

Such a partnership overcomes the lack of supervision in a one-party system, as well as the instability in a two-party system caused by the vicious competition among the parties and interest groups.

Just as President Xi Jinping has stressed, "Democracy is not an ornament to be put on display, but an instrument for addressing the issues that concern the people."

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WORLD

Ishiba elected Japanese PM by parliament

New leader unveils cabinet lineup as he eyes regaining voters' trust for LDP

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo
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Shigeru Ishiba, leader of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, was elected prime minister by both the lower and upper houses on Tuesday amid low public confidence in the political system of Japan.

Ishiba is expected to face a tough start to his tenure as he works to regain voters' trust in the slush fund scandal-plagued LDP. He aims to form a stable government while healing divisions within the party. To this end, he has appointed two influential former prime ministers, Taro Aso and Yoshihide Suga, as supreme adviser and vice-president of the LDP, respectively.

In the newly formed cabinet, former defense minister Takeshi Iwaya was appointed minister of foreign affairs, and Gen Nakatani, another former defense chief, took the post of minister of defense.

Several of Ishiba's rivals from the LDP leadership race also secured key cabinet or party leadership positions. Yoshimasa Hayashi retained his position as chief cabinet secretary.

Additionally, former chief cabinet secretary Katsunobu Kato was named minister of finance, and former environment minister Shinjiro Koizumi was put in charge of the LDP's election task force.

At his first news conference after taking office on Tuesday, Ishiba announced that he would dissolve the House of Representatives on Oct 9, with the general election campaign set to begin on Oct 15 and voting scheduled for Oct 27.

In the upcoming general election, key issues will include measures to combat inflation and the expansion of social security systems, according to Kazuyuki Hamada, an expert in international political economy and former parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs.

Ishiba has championed regional revitalization, aiming to make local economic stimulation the cornerstone of his growth strategy. Strengthening primary industries in rural areas will be a focal point of his economic policy, Hamada added.

Currently, many small and medi-

um-sized businesses in Japan are facing difficulties. As full-time employment declines and part-time work becomes the norm, marriage and child-rearing have become more challenging, further contributing to population decline and stagnation in the domestic market.

Revitalizing economy

When it comes to the economy, raising wages, which have been stagnant for over a decade, and boosting domestic demand are the most pressing concerns for the public, said Kumiko Haba, professor emerita at Aoyama Gakuin University. "We need to change the current situation where large corporations are profiting while the public grows poorer," she said.

Ishiba has proposed addressing these challenges by raising the national average minimum wage to 1,500 yen (\$10.38) per hour and prioritizing support for small businesses and ordinary citizens. Haba expressed hope that the new leader will keep his promises.

Politically, although Ishiba may be less extreme than the far-right-leaning Sanae Takaichi, he remains fundamentally part of the right-wing, pro-military faction within the LDP, having previously served as minister of defense, Haba noted.

Ishiba's China policy aims to strike a balance between strengthening deterrence through bolstered defense capabilities and deepening economic and trade ties through mutual dependence. However, his push for the creation of an "Asian NATO" which aligns with US policy, is unlikely to be well-received by Asian nations with strong economic links to China, according to Hamada. Hamada stressed that reducing Japan's current overreliance on the United States should be a priority for the new prime minister.

Noriyuki Kawamura, emeritus professor at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, said: "It is evident that US global influence and overall power are on the decline, and we are witnessing a once-in-a-century paradigm shift from Pax Americana to Pax Asiana. In this context, it is crucial for Japan to establish an independent and peaceful foreign policy."



Israeli members of the military stand next to armored vehicles in northern Israel on Monday amid cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. JIM URQUHART / REUTERS

Israel claims ground raids in Lebanon

BEIRUT — Israel said its troops had launched raids inside Lebanon on Tuesday, starting its ground operations after two weeks of devastating airstrikes against Hezbollah's command structure and weapons sites.

The Israeli military said the operations in Lebanon began on Monday night and involved paratroops and commandos from the 98th Division, which was deployed to the northern front two weeks ago from Gaza where they had been fighting for months.

It said its air force and artillery supported ground troops engaged in "limited, localized, and targeted ground raids" against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon villages that posed "an immediate threat to Israeli communities in northern Israel".

In the past 24 hours, at least 95 people have been killed and 172 wounded in Israeli strikes on Lebanon's southern regions, the eastern Bekaa Valley, and Beirut, Lebanon's health ministry said early on Tuesday.

However, Hezbollah denied that Israeli troops have entered Lebanon but says its fighters are ready for a "direct confrontation" if they cross the border.

In a statement, Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif said reports that Israeli forces had entered Lebanon were "false claims".

Earlier on Tuesday, Hezbollah said it had targeted Israeli troops across the border in Metula town twice with artillery and rocket fire.

In central Israel, air raid sirens sounded on Tuesday and an AFP journalist heard explosions in the city of Tel Aviv, with the military saying projectiles had been fired from Lebanon.

Police said one projectile hit a road near the central town of Kafr Qasim, wounding a man who was struck by shrapnel and treated by emergency services.

The Israeli military on Tuesday announced tighter restrictions on public gatherings across the country, limiting the number of people that can gather outside ahead of the Jewish new year.

The operation into Lebanon represents an escalation of the conflict in the Middle East.

Intensified attacks

In Syria, three civilians were killed and nine others injured in an Israeli airstrike on the capital Damascus, Syrian state media said on Tuesday citing a military source. Israel's military said it does not comment on foreign media reports.

Israel's claim of ground invasion into Lebanon follows its deadly detonation of booby-trapped Hezbollah pagers, two weeks of airstrikes, and its killing on Friday of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, which dealt the group one of the heaviest blows in decades.

The intensive airstrikes have eliminated several Hezbollah commanders but also killed about 1,000 civilians and forced 1 million to flee their homes, according

to the Lebanese government.

The White House and the US State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Israel's ground operations in Lebanon. Meanwhile, the office of Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Gallant had briefed about the operations to his US counterpart Lloyd Austin.

Israel last week rejected a proposal by the US and France, calling for a 21-day cease-fire on the Lebanon border to give time for a diplomatic settlement.

Some countries have decided to evacuate their citizens from Lebanon due to considerations of the deteriorating situation.

Britain said on Monday it had chartered a commercial flight for its nationals wishing to evacuate Lebanon.

Germany on Monday flew out its Beirut embassy's nonessential staff members, their dependents and some of its citizens in Lebanon with medical conditions, officials said.

Canada also announced that it has reserved 800 seats on commercial flights to evacuate its citizens from Lebanon.

Sixty-nine Chinese citizens and 11 foreign family members in Lebanon safely arrived in Cyprus on Tuesday, according to the Department of Consular Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Their safe exit was organized by the Chinese government.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

In US ports strike, a key jobs issue is automation

By HENG WEILI in New York
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Some 45,000 dockworkers on the US East Coast and Gulf Coast began their first major strike in nearly 50 years on Tuesday, halting the flow of about half the country's ocean shipping as they voiced concerns over pay and the effect of automation on union jobs.

President Joe Biden's administration has indicated it will not use federal powers to end the strike and pushed dockworker employers to increase their contract offer.

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) union had been negotiating with the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) for a six-year contract ahead of a midnight Monday deadline.

The ILA said in a statement it shut down all ports from Maine to Texas at 12:01 am ET after rejecting USMX's final proposal, saying that the offer fell "far short of the demands of its members to ratify a new contract".

ILA leader Harold Daggett has said employers have not offered appropriate pay increases or agreed to demands to stop port automation projects.

"We are prepared to fight as long as necessary, to stay out on strike for whatever period of time it takes, to get the wages and protections against automation our ILA members deserve," he said.

"Everything that comes in this country comes from the containers off these ships that my men work," he said. "Don't come after us saying we're greedy. Go after those greedy bastards that own these companies in Europe."

USMX said: "Our current offer of a nearly 50 percent wage increase exceeds every other recent union settlement, while addressing inflation and recognizing the ILA's hard work to keep the global economy running."

USMX offered 50 percent raises over the life of the contract. Comments from the union's leadership had briefly suggested a move to 61.5 percent, but the union has since signaled that it's staying with its initial demand for a 77 percent increase over six years.

The National Retail Federation called on the White House to use its authority to halt the strike.

White House officials have said the Democratic president will not do so. The presidential election is just over a month away, and union votes are at stake.

"Shippers have made record profits since the pandemic, and in some cases, have seen profits grow in excess of 800 percent," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Tuesday.

Many retailers rushed to bring in Halloween and Christmas merchandise — much of which comes from China — incurring extra costs to ship and store goods.

"We have become hypersensitive to anything that will affect global trade and importation of our products," Jay Foreman, the CEO of toy manufacturer Basic Fun told the New York Post. "We knew this day was coming."

Foreman, whose company ships its goods from a warehouse in China, said that he had his containers redirected to the West Coast six months ago.

The dockworkers' bargaining stance is likely bolstered by the nation's supply chain of goods coming under pressure in the aftermath of the devastating Hurricane Helene in the US Southeast.

In New Orleans, Henry Glover Jr, a fourth-generation dockworker who is president of the union local, said, "Automation could be good, but they're using it to kill jobs."

Several netizens posted on X comparing the port situation in the US with that in China.

"FactsChaser" posted with accompanying video to his 15,000 followers, "Meanwhile at the Chinese port in Guangzhou, remote workers unload ships, while autonomous AI powered vehicles load containers on trucks."

Agencies contributed to this story.

Envoy: People 'filled with hope' for China

From page 2

China's stock markets have surged, investors are queuing up to open accounts, and foreign capital is pouring in.

"The Chinese people are filled with hope for the future of China's development," he said.

"Recently, those who predicted China's collapse have themselves been experiencing setbacks, and those who claimed that the Chinese economy had peaked are now facing their own plateau," Xie said.

One of the guests, Ralph Winnie

Jr, director of the Eurasia Center's China Program, told China Daily that people-to-people exchanges are important to establish mutual respect and trust.

"When you're developing the personal relationship, (it) will lead to the professional and the business relationship, which takes time and understanding," he said.

At the reception, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra performed famous Chinese and international pieces such as *My Motherland and I* and *Nessun Dorma*, eliciting applause.

Hurricane Helene's death toll tops 130

VALDOSTA, Georgia — The death toll from a devastating storm that battered the southeastern United States climbed to at least 130 on Monday, as the disaster became a hot topic in the presidential election campaign.

A crisis was unfolding in western North Carolina, where residents stranded by washed-out roads and by a lack of power and cellular service lined up for fresh water and a chance to message loved ones days after the storm that they were alive.

At least 133 deaths in six southeastern states have been attributed to the storm that inflicted damage from Florida's Gulf Coast to the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia.

The toll steadily rose as emergency workers reached areas isolated by collapsed roads, failing infrastructure and widespread flooding. During a briefing on Monday, White House Homeland Security Adviser Liz Sherwood-Randall suggested as many as 600 people hadn't been accounted for as of Monday afternoon, saying some might be dead.

The destruction and desperation were overwhelming. A flattened cargo container sat atop a bridge crossing a river with muddy brown water.



A boy holds a picture from his grandparents' house while he and his family work to salvage belongings in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene on Thursday in Old Fort, North Carolina. RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

A mass of debris, including overturned pontoon boats and splintered wooden docks and tree trunks covered the surface of Lake Lure, a picturesque spot tucked between the mountains outside Asheville.

The North Carolina death toll included one horrific story after another of people who were trapped by floodwaters in their homes and vehicles or were killed by falling trees. A courthouse security officer died after being submerged inside his truck. A couple and a 6-year-old boy waiting to be rescued on a rooftop drowned when part of their home collapsed.

Former president Donald Trump criticized President Joe Biden administration's response to the devastation.

The Republican nominee claimed upon landing in Valdosta that Biden was "sleeping" and not responding to Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, who he said was "calling the presi-

dent and hasn't been able to get him". He repeated the claim at an event with reporters after being told Kemp said he had spoken to Biden.

"He's lying," Biden told reporters in the Oval Office, adding that he had spoken to North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper "and he told him he's lying. I don't know why he does it ... that's simply not true, and it's irresponsible."

On Monday, Vice-President Kamala Harris, who is running against Trump in the presidential election, visited the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters in Washington.

She called the devastation "heart-breaking" and vowed that she and Biden will make sure the impacted communities "get what they need to recover," adding: "The true character of the nation is revealed in moments of hardship".

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

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PEOPLE



Guo Yong, 53, from the First Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University, was the first female leader from the 34th batch of the medical team sent from Shaanxi province to Sudan in 2018.

For Yu Yongliang, chief physician at Xi'an Central Hospital in Shaanxi province, Sudan is his second home with a total of eight years' stay in the country in the course of five medical assistance missions.

"Nearly a third of my career has been spent in Sudan. The recognition of Chinese doctors by the people of Sudan has left me with deep impressions and beautiful memories," Yu, 57, says.

He still remembers his first mission to Sudan in 2007. After landing at the airport, he was immediately whisked off in a car to a hospital 140 kilometers away where he performed 14 surgeries on his first day.

During his stay in Sudan, Yu treated more than 8,000 outpatient cases and performed over 6,000 surgical procedures. Lots of patients, some facing serious conditions and high volume of surgeries are his impression about Sudan, which has been echoed by his family. His father, his wife and his wife's uncle and brother, who are all medical workers, collectively carried out 11 missions of medical assistance in Sudan over the past 20 years.

His family is a microcosm of Shaanxi's medical aid work in Africa. After the first Chinese medical team was dispatched to Sudan in April 1971, batches of doctors and nurses from Shaanxi have embarked on the health-assistance journey, treating the African people with compassion and deft medical skills.

Though countries have borders, medical practitioners transcend them. Over the past 53 years, Shaanxi has dispatched 48 batches totaling 1,298 medical personnel to Sudan and Malawi, carrying out various short-term assistance projects and launching hospital cooperation mechanisms. As of July, its medical teams treated 8.47 million outpatient cases, and performed 253,400 surgeries in the two countries.

During the ongoing 11th mission to Malawi, Wang Yonggang, head of the medical team, recorded many "firsts" since their arrival in January in his WeChat moments.

With their help, Malawi's first specialized cardiovascular outpatient clinic has been established at Mzuzu Central Hospital, a tertiary

referral hospital in Mzuzu city, Malawi. Furthermore, Chinese doctors successfully conducted open liver resection surgery at Kamuzu Central Hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi.

By the end of July, Wang's team had attended to 3,757 emergency outpatient cases, treated 8,293 inpatients, and successfully completed 498 surgeries, filling critical gaps in anesthesia administration and management during gynecological laparoscopic surgeries.

Healing journey

In August 2013, Liu Qiang, an orthopedic surgeon from Xianyang Central Hospital in Shaanxi, arrived in the war-torn capital of Khartoum as a member of the 31st batch of the Chinese medical team sent to Sudan. Amid ongoing conflicts and rampant diseases in the region, the team was faced with daunting challenges upon their arrival.

"Seeing the dire conditions of the assisted hospital at that time, every team member was determined to do their utmost, utilizing all resources and conditions available to overcome obstacles and provide the best care to local patients," the 46-year-old says.

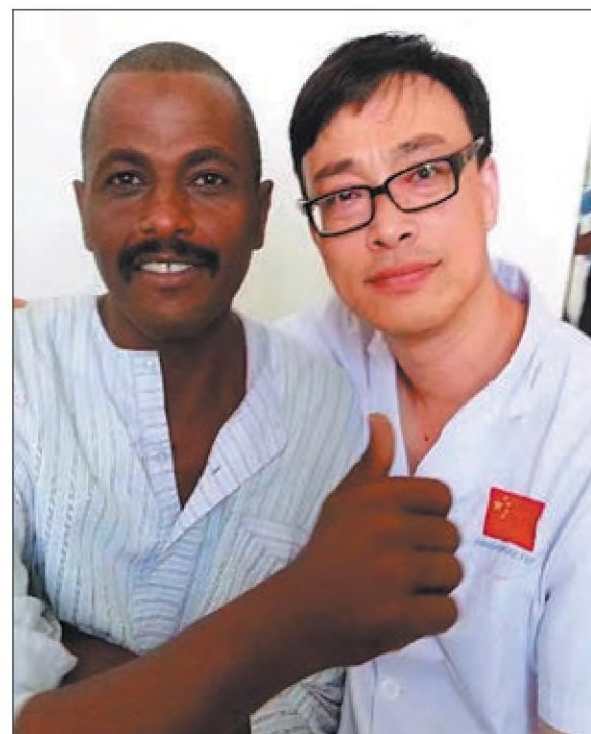
During his mission, he encountered a critical emergency case, when a patient had extensive skin wounds on the lower limbs, with X-rays revealing five fractures in the foot, posing a life-threatening situation.

With only two steel needles available in the hospital, Liu led his team in administering fluids and blood transfusions to stabilize the patient's vital organs. Resourceful in the face of shortage of medical supplies, he divided the two needles into multiple segments to successfully secure the five fractures, stabilized the lower leg fracture with an external fixator, and properly treated the skin wounds.

"Each one of us foreign aid team members does our best, utilizing all available resources and conditions, using every means to overcome various difficulties in order to meet the medical and disease treatment needs of the local residents. I feel that everything we do is so meaningful," Liu says.

Caring for health, beyond boundaries

Batches of Chinese medical teams have been treating critical cases in African countries for over five decades, **Wang Qian** and **Qin Feng** report in Xi'an.



Liu Qiang, orthopedic surgeon from Xianyang Central Hospital in Shaanxi, and his patient during the 31st mission of the Chinese medical team sent to Sudan in 2013.



Each one of us foreign aid team members does our best, ... using every means to overcome various difficulties in order to meet the medical and disease treatment needs of the local residents."

Liu Qiang, orthopedic surgeon

Following the surgery, the patient's limbs were saved, a result that brought surprise and relief to local doctors and the patient's family, who praised the Chinese medical team, exclaiming, "Chinese doctors are amazing!"

Over the span of two years on the medical mission, Liu has demonstrated exceptional medical skills. During the turmoil in Sudan, he treated 76 gunshot victims, disregarding personal safety for the urgent care of those in need.

He was later honored with various awards, hailed as one of the most outstanding doctors in Shaanxi and a role model in the field of foreign medical aid.

"I hope to set foot on Sudanese soil again, contributing more to the local people and fulfilling the duties of a doctor," Liu says.

As the first female head of a

medical team sent from Shaanxi to Sudan, Guo Yong, 53, hopes her firsthand experiences would serve as a powerful motivator for more of her colleagues to take part in medical-assistance missions.

Leading the 34th batch of the medical team in 2018, Guo from the First Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University, initiated a restoring vision project, providing free surgeries to impoverished cataract patients in Sudan. About 159 impoverished cataract patients benefited from the project, regaining their sight.

Sharing knowledge

Given the challenging health-care conditions, helping build the local medical talent pool is also on the agenda of the Chinese medical teams to Africa, just as the old Chinese proverb — Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a



Yu Yongliang, 57, chief physician at the Xi'an Central Hospital in Shaanxi, spent a total of eight years attending medical aid missions in Sudan.

day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

From 2013 to 2015, Lu Jian, a neurosurgeon from the Second Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University, joined the 31st batch of the Shaanxi medical aid team to Sudan.

Upon arrival at the China-Sudan Omdurman Friendship Hospital in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, Lu conducted a detailed survey of the hospital's neurosurgery-related work conditions, including personnel, equipment, wards, operating rooms and other facilities.

After a thorough study, Lu found that the hospital's infrastructure fell short of the requirements for neurosurgery. After multiple discussions and exchanges with local doctors, he tailored a work plan primarily focused on outpatient services and training course for medics.

"There are about 40 neurosurgeons in Sudan. In outpatient clinics and wards, I focused on sharing basic theories, principles and methods of modern neurosurgery concerning common and prevalent diseases in the area with local colleagues," Lu says.

He organized lectures, introducing local neurosurgeons to the latest knowledge and innovative technologies in modern neurosurgery. He helped local doctors save critically ill patients. In the face of extremely challenging environment and limited conditions, he successfully translated the second and third volumes of the book, *Neurosurgery Practice Manual — Discourses of the Masters*.

After the foreign medical aid work, a Sudanese neurosurgeon influenced by him came to Xi'an Jiaotong University to pursue a master's degree in medicine.

Bridge of friendship

In May 2022, after a rigorous selection and more than six months of training, An Peng from the Department of Traditional Chinese Medicine at the Second Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University joined the 37th batch of the Chinese (Shaanxi) medical aid team to Sudan.

"As an acupuncture doctor in foreign aid, I hope to help patients

through acupuncture, introduce China to the world through acupuncture, and tell our story to the world through acupuncture," An says.

Upon arriving in Sudan, An faced a series of daunting challenges. With poor healthcare conditions, high prevalence of infectious diseases, and the raging COVID-19 pandemic at the time, the medical team members were constantly exposed to infection risks. Moreover, Sudan's perennial high temperatures, frequent water stoppages and social security concerns added to the challenges. Despite these obstacles, An did not flinch, swiftly adjusting his mindset and immersing himself in the intense medical aid work.

During the aid mission, An primarily worked in the acupuncture clinic at the China-Sudan Omdurman Friendship Hospital and a Chinese clinic inside the presidential palace in Khartoum, which was set up two decades ago and has been operating with the help of the consecutive teams of Chinese doctors.

As the head of the TCM group in the foreign aid medical team, An fully leveraged the unique value of traditional Chinese medicine, bringing health and hope to the local people. He utilized the advantages of "simple and cost-effective" traditional Chinese medicine to provide efficient and economical treatment solutions for local patients.

One patient who left a deep impression on An was a chef working at the presidential palace in Khartoum. He suffered from frozen shoulder, making it difficult for him to lift his arm and move freely. After several sessions of acupuncture treatment, the patient's frozen shoulder significantly improved, giving him much comfort and relief.

"If there is a need, I am always ready to participate in foreign medical aid project with full spirit and abundant work enthusiasm," An says.

Pan Minyue and Feng Qian contributed to the story.

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Left: Zhong Hongping from Yan'an University Affiliated Hospital takes care of a newborn at a local hospital in Malawi. Right: In May 2022, An Peng from the Department of Traditional Chinese Medicine at the Second Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University joined the 37th batch of the Chinese (Shaanxi) medical aid team to Sudan. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



READ



Left: Chen Zhuo (left) directs senior citizens during shooting at the Chunxuanmao retirement home in Tianjin. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Middle:** The senior citizens prepare to have a meal in the retirement home's dining hall in Tianjin on Oct 21. ZHAO ZISHUO / XINHUA **Right:** The elderly residents starring in the video clip watch footage after the shoot. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A digital way to age gracefully

By LI LEI
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Video series on a lifestyle app shows how senior citizens should embrace old age and the internet and learn to live life to the fullest despite all constraints

The young might be restless but trends show that there will always be something they can learn from senior citizens. This is apparent from the popularity of a series of video clips starring elderly residents at a retirement home in Tianjin that is trending on lifestyle app Xiaohongshu under the theme "Human sobriety".

"Will remaining single mean being solitary in old age?" Yu Youfang, a gray-haired internet influencer and retirement home resident, who is better known as "Teacher Yu", asks in one of the video clips. Her fellow resident quickly reassures her, "But marriage doesn't ensure a longer life," offering solace to young Chinese individuals who are often under societal pressure to get married amid falling marriage rates.

In another similar exchange, an octogenarian puts forward the argument that without hard work in youth, people cannot sustain themselves in old age. But his fellow resident promptly counters him saying, "If you work too hard, you might not even have the chance to contemplate old age," highlighting the premature deaths linked to excessive workloads.

The video clip is one of 170 such short clips posted on a Xiaohongshu account called Spring in Chunxuanmao, which is the brainchild of an employee of the retirement home chain Chunxuanmao. It has amassed nearly 100,000 likes and attracted over 2,300 comments. The videos are gaining traction among young urbanites who are grappling with stress stemming from various issues, such as relationships and work-life balance.

The videos apart, its comments section is becoming like a go-to place for the young to seek guidance on various issues concerning their lives, such as relationships — a subject they avoid discussing with their parents.

In a world where the pursuit of success and material wealth is so commonplace, Yu and her fellow residents stand out as beacons of wisdom and serenity.

Leading this project is Chen Zhuo, the current director of Chunxuanmao, who is driven by a profound passion for senior care and a strong interest in bridging generational gaps through impactful storytelling. His team consists of eight members born in the 1990s, who work behind the scenes. Growing under the care of his grandparents, Chen Zhuo developed a deep connection with the elderly.

Recognizing the urgent need of his employer Chunxuanmao to get some publicity in the competitive eldercare market, Chen Zhuo sought to elevate the brand by creating viral video content. "That's where my strength lies," he said.

Through casual on-camera conversations, these seniors in Tianjin have showcased the joys of several senior citizens leading retired lives, countering the stereotype of old age being lonely and monotonous.

They are also different from their peers in that they have embraced the internet to impart valuable life lessons to a younger audience grappling with anxiety and societal pressures. One individual who ven-



Yu Youfang (left), Chen Jiawei (second from left) and other senior citizens in the home discuss the video shoot. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Left: A photo of Yu Youfang. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Middle:** Chen Zhuo shoots a video at the retirement home on Oct 20. ZHAO ZISHUO / XINHUA **Right:** A photo of Chen Jiawei. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tured into this uncharted territory is Geng Fengru, known by the nickname "Grandma Alice" in multiple clips.

After her superannuation, this former rubber factory worker got a managerial position at a retirement home.

As she grew accustomed to the private retirement home's working, Geng rose to become its director before finally retiring last year to become a resident of Chunxuanmao.

Unlike many Chinese seniors who opt to spend their twilight years close to family, the 73-year-old Geng stands as a steadfast proponent of institutional care services.

She firmly champions the belief that the communal activities, healthcare support and entertainment offerings found in retirement homes play a pivotal role in enhancing the overall well-being of elderly individuals.

China has in recent years worked to shore up the supply of eldercare services as the nation rapidly ages. Figures from the National Health Commission show that the number of Chinese people aged 60 and above will surpass 300 million by next year — accounting

for 20 percent of the population. Around 2035, the age group is projected to exceed 400 million, comprising over 30 percent of the population.

The demographic change, intertwined with a higher percentage of single-child families, has made traditional reliance on the family for eldercare unsustainable and created a huge demand for caregivers.

On multiple occasions, officials have stressed that caregiving, which is often stigmatized due to its labor-intensive nature, is a respectable profession that can relieve the worries of society and families.

Camera shyness

Thanks to Spring in Chunxuanmao, Geng has garnered a huge fan following, particularly among younger generations. She was initially apprehensive about participating in the video shoots. She now takes pleasure in perusing the positive feedback from young viewers and acknowledges the role their content has played in alleviating the stress faced by young Chinese people.

"At first, I was nervous speaking in front of the camera," Geng said.

She credits director Chen Zhuo for offering invaluable guidance by elucidating the purpose behind each episode to the senior performers and even providing practical demonstrations to aid their performance.

Geng and her fellow actors even delve into discussions on such taboo topics as death. "In communities with a large elderly population, 'death' is often a sensitive topic. However, in our video clips, we address it openly, even finding humor in it," she explained.

Geng shared how her personal experiences, including heart surgeries, have deeply ingrained in her a sense of gratitude for health and happiness. "Just sitting in a room with a furrowed brow won't solve any problems," she said. "It's normal to face health issues as we age; take the necessary medications and move on."

Recognizing the intense pressures of modern society, she advocates for a balanced approach to life and encourages young individuals to confront challenges with the resilience and optimism.

She said every generation faces its own unique challenges. "During our time, jobs were assigned by the

State," she said, subtly alluding to job-related anxieties such as unemployment, layoffs and grueling work schedules that one often finds in tech companies these days. But life was never easy for her generation, either, as they were often grappling with multiple children. "I hope that by watching these videos, younger audiences can approach obstacles with greater determination and positivity."

Known as "Grandpa Carl" in many video clips, Chen Jiawei, 81, almost died in his 50s. Diagnosed with the rare Guillain-Barré syndrome at 55, a condition that typically gave patients only a few months to live, he defied the odds and survived, albeit with a severe walking disability.

After retirement, Grandpa Carl became a self-taught singer, drawing inspiration from opera greats such as Pavarotti and Chinese singer Dai Yuqiang. His exceptional singing talent, combined with his remarkable battle against a life-threatening illness, led to him getting a special invite to perform in a grand choir event in Beijing attended by national leaders.

Initially drawn to the video shoots for the social aspect, he soon discovered his knack for it. "I wasn't nervous facing the camera. It felt like a natural expression of genuine emotions, reflecting society's realities. With that approach, the end result couldn't have been anything but good," he said.

Creating short videos has become a daily ritual for him and his friends, who gather for half an hour, almost daily, to make videos.

Despite having become a local celebrity whom people approach on the streets with a request to pose for photographs with them, Chen Jiawei humbly declines many offers of free services from restaurants and barbershops.

Like many of his peers, Chen Jiawei was initially not keen to move into a retirement home. However, with the changing dynamics of single-child families and demands of changing times, many elders, including Chen Jiawei, eventually agreed to live in a retirement home to reduce the load on his children.

Their videos, showcasing joyful interactions among elderly peers, are slowly unraveling stereotypes about aging apart from family. When speaking to younger audiences, Chen Jiawei emphasizes that life is a journey rather than a relentless pursuit of meaning.

"Kids these days have huge dreams," he said. "Back in our day, our goals were pretty humble. Just hitting a small milestone or making a tiny dream come true would make us feel like we'd won a lottery." But, he added, "I don't want to come across as an educator, I just want to share my life's experience with the young people."

Xiaohongshu's digital realm Spring in Chunxuanmao stands out for its content featuring elderly individuals in their 70s and 80s sharing invaluable life lessons and insights.

Chen Zhuo, the program's director, said that while the videos feature elderly individuals, their primary audience is the younger generation. "We want people to draw inspiration from our content and live life to the fullest."

The newfound popularity of the elderly participants as online personalities underscores Chen Zhuo's belief in democratizing the benefits of media and technology for everyone, irrespective of age.

A recent report by QuestMobile on China's mobile internet landscape showed that as of September 2022, the country had 1.19 billion active mobile internet users monthly. The report highlights a notable trend: the continued expansion of usage among older people. In September 2022, individuals aged 46 and above constituted more than one-third of the user base, emerging as a key driver of user growth.

Chen Zhuo envisions a future where seniors can leverage the internet to explore new opportunities and embrace digital connectivity.

To reach that goal, he has asked caregivers at the retirement home to assist senior residents in keeping up with technological advancements such as using smartphones and staying engaged in the ever-evolving digital landscape. "Seniors should never be left out," Chen Zhuo said.

Wang Qiaozhi contributed to this story.

IMAGE



Tourists visit the Hedong Lake Salt Museum in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, on July 19, 2024. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY



A little girl is attracted by the exhibits at the Hedong Lake Salt Museum on July 19, 2024. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY



Visitors experience making sculptures out of salt at the Hedong Lake Salt Museum on July 19, 2024. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY



The Yuncheng Salt Lake, a wetland area in the Yellow River Basin, in Shanxi province, becomes colorful in warm temperatures because of algae growth. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Yuncheng Salt Lake offers up natural marvels

Region's ecosystem and cultural heritage boosting tourism

Located in North China's Shanxi province, the Yuncheng Salt Lake has long been the focal point of the city's culture and economy. It is estimated that locals have consciously harvested salt from the lake for more than 4,600 years.

But now, it has completed the transformation from a salt production pond and an industrial zone to a tourist park and an ecological protection area.

Yuncheng Salt Lake, known as Hedong Salt Pond in ancient times, with a total area of 132 square kilometers, is the largest lake in Shanxi province.

In the past, Yuncheng thrived because of its abundant salt resources. Yuncheng salt was traditionally harvested for culinary use, through a five-step process that the Shanxi province has officially recognized as a piece of the region's intangible cultural heritage.

Since the 1980s, producers have abandoned this process and pivoted toward industrial harvesting.

But now, it faces challenges due to overexploitation and pollu-

tion. In September 2020, Yuncheng municipal government completely stopped its industrial production activities at the salt lake.

Today, most travelers come to marvel at the landscape's surreal charm. Yuncheng Salt Lake is filled with sulfates, which support a lush ecosystem. In the summer, algae blooms turn the water technicolor thanks to *Dunaliella salina*, an algae species that changes color when it reacts with salt. In winter, when the temperature dips below -5 C, the salt forms crystals of mirabilite, transforming the landscape into a twinkling winter fantasy.

Now, Yuncheng makes every effort to promote the development mode of "culture+tourism+ecology" to fully show the unique charm of the salt lake.

Locals hope that the influx of visitors interested in marveling at the salt lake can also help inspire the preservation of local salt harvesting traditions, and of the rich ecosystem that has given rise to an extraordinary natural beauty.



Whooper swans at the salt lake on Jan 6, 2024. YAN XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Chefs make local food — gourmet donuts — at a market in Yuncheng on July 20, 2024. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY



New couples take wedding photos along the bank of the salt lake on June 5, 2024. YAN XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Workers display the five-step salt production process, which Shanxi province has officially recognized as a piece of the region's intangible cultural heritage, at the salt lake on June 17, 2019. XUE JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

TREND

By MINGMEI LI in New York
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Asian fashion designers have ushered neo-Chinese attire onto international catwalks, marking the dawn of a new era in Eastern aesthetics.

Young Generation Z fashion designers, inspired by Chinese culture and with a global outlook, are unveiling their brands worldwide, opening a dialogue of dual heritage across cultures, bridging the new with the authentic, the rural with the urban, and the conservative with the avant-garde.

Fashion designers in New York are integrating their identities and backgrounds into their creations, enriched by their experiences of studying abroad and showcasing diverse interpretations and concepts of womanhood.

"I feel that as an international student and a fashion designer, my mission is to use my design language to express my experiences and my cultural value," Charlotte Shao, the founder of the fashion brand SISIO, told China Daily.

The logo for the brand, which was created in 2018, is rooted in traditional Chinese culture, incorporating elements of Buddhism and Taoism. "SIS" stands for "sister" and combines the design philosophy of yin and yang. The two "i" characters in SISIO represent the positive and negative aspects of the Chinese Bagua map.

"Every coin has two sides. In fashion, I find it very interesting that many contrasting ideas actually keep good balances, like scheming and true feeling, elegance and vulgarity, virtuality and reality, bright and dark," she said. Just like Chinese yin and yang, Shao said that such traditional philosophy is reflected in her design concepts.

"I compare fashion to the concept of yin and yang because the fashion industry is inherently quite vain. I believe that desire and vanity are inseparable truths of life, while beauty and dreams represent the other side of the same coin," she said.

"New York Fashion Week is the most commercial of the four major fashion weeks. Every year, the most fashionable people from all over the US come together for it. I want to use this chance to show everyone the Oriental aesthetics in my designs," Shao said.

Shao has showcased her brand on numerous catwalks in New York, Paris and Tokyo. She launched her spring-summer 2023 and SS24 collections at New York Fashion Week. Shao unveiled her fall-winter 2024 collection at Tokyo Fashion Week with a show titled *Glacial Requiem*, inspired by Iceland.

The new season focuses on environmental issues such as melting glaciers, rising sea levels and coastal submergence, blending nature and fashion.

Asian elements

Through her catwalk shows and lookbooks, there is a significant presence of Asian cultural elements.

"In my designs, I did incorporate a lot of traditional Chinese calligraphy elements, for example, the calligraphy text is from the *Heart Sutra*, as I have been influenced by my family's religious culture since childhood, and I have a strong belief in Buddhism," she said.

"Few people use handwritten calligraphy as prints on clothing anymore, while most choose machine printing for cost-saving. However, I want to preserve the traditional craftsmanship spirit of ancient China."

But Shao's works aren't solely based on Chinese elements; they also incorporate Western classical aesthetics, creating a visually pioneering cultural collision. For example, she combines the design of European corsets, which exude a regal, courtly style, with Japanese cultural elements, some of which were influenced by Chinese culture historically.

"My personal experiences and study-abroad background are invaluable treasures to me," she said. "Every stage of my life that I went through, I will document in an artistic form."

Having studied abroad since the age of 14, Shao graduated from prestigious art institutions, including Central Saint Martins in London and Parsons School of Design in New York.

"At that time, I realized that most Americans had very little understanding of Chinese or even Asian culture as a whole. Their knowledge of Chinese culture was relatively superficial," she said. That's why she incorporates Chinese cultural elements and philosophy into her work, hoping to gain more



Left: Designer Su Hanwei brings her brand Maison De Hoe's new season to Paris Fashion Week. The brand combines traditional Chinese rural culture with modern design. Right: The JOYA MA collection shows specially crafted celebratory designs for the Year of the Dragon. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Neo-Chinese fashion shines on international catwalks

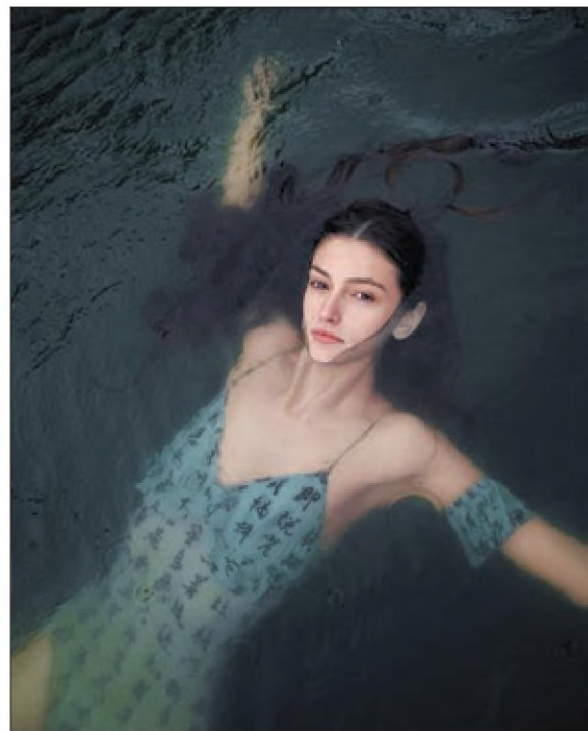
Designers pay homage to their roots by drawing upon traditional culture and countryside



Above: Designer Charlotte Shao incorporates elements of glaciers and oceans into the 2024 fall-winter collection presented at Tokyo Fashion Week. Right: Shao integrates Chinese calligraphy from the *Heart Sutra* into her designs in this dress. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Left: Designer Su Hanwei's brand, Maison De Hoe, incorporates elements of the Chinese countryside and the metropolis of New York City. She features a cutout window on the back of the clothes, resonating with audiences worldwide by evoking rural culture. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



presence on the global stage.

Both Chinese and international artists have appreciated Shao's recent designs. Chinese singer Hua Chenyu wore SISIO at his concert, and US singer Cyndi Lauper also purchased one of her pieces.

"If I can keep going, eventually more people will notice my brand and the ideas I convey," she said.

Joya Ma, designer and founder of her eponymous brand, explained her approach to fashion design to China Daily.

"I want to bring Chinese culture,

my Chinese heritage and the culture of the Asian minority community to the world. I hope that everyone can enjoy and appreciate the beauty, and I wish for all women to be able to wear it," she said.

Ma's brand, JOYA MA, was founded in New York, a hub for fashion and different cultures. "It's a place where I can truly be myself," she said.

She was born in Los Angeles but has spent her life in New York, Shenzhen, Hong Kong, Arizona and traveling, which has informed her work.

"Empowering women to express themselves boldly and fearlessly" is one of her main messages, and is aimed especially at Chinese women.

Ma also aspires to promote her brand as a luxury label that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with big names in the industry.

"Many major luxury brands incorporate elements of Chinese New Year in their designs," she said. Influential celebrities and bloggers often choose to wear clothing with Chinese elements during traditional festivals, on

stage, or the red carpet.

"With Asian American culture gaining more influence internationally, people who share my Chinese heritage find a deeper connection in my work, which is why they choose my designs," she said.

Ma's brand has been featured at multiple Asian American charity galas. Her latest collection, *Dragoness*, presented at Beijing Fashion Week, celebrates Chinese New Year with bold designs that include elements such as the traditional *qipao*, cutouts and lace.

Ma's work also integrates many Western elements. She said that her interest in abstract art has led her to use bold, vibrant colors in her designs, challenging perceptions of "Chinese style".

"Chinese elements can be combined with modern aspects to create many breakthroughs. Even though my designs are inspired by Chinese style, I want to innovate further so that the clothing can better align with the international market," she said.

"Chinese elements take on different characteristics when mixed with local cultures around the world," she said. "As I've traveled and lived in different places, I've noticed that people's perceptions of Chinese culture can be quite different. The challenge in designing clothes is figuring out how to create pieces that resonate with people everywhere, and that's something I'm always working on."

Also, as a Chinese American, she wanted to not only showcase her clothes but also share the stories behind each Chinese element she incorporates. She explains the history and significance of these elements to her audience.

Reflecting heritage

Su Hanwei, founder and chief designer of Maison De Hoe, told China Daily that she wants her brand to reflect her heritage.

"Living abroad, I'm naturally seen as a Chinese designer. So, I really want to promote and embrace my Chinese DNA and culture, and also, being a woman, is another identity of me," she told China Daily. "Creating this brand took a lot of time and (much) reflection for me. As a designer, I had to think about which topics would remain constant and important to me."

In addition to the neo-Chinese approach that draws from Chinese history and philosophy and new methods of reimagining Chinese traditional clothing, Su's brand, Maison De Hoe, incorporates elements of the Chinese countryside and the metropolis of New York City.

"A vibrant part of modern Chinese culture comes from the time of our grandparents, (which is) deeply rooted in rural farming traditions," she said.

Some of her design inspirations come from Northeast China square dancing, along with the lace covers people used to protect their furniture from dust, and also enamel bowls, cups and basins with intricate designs that were popular in China in the 1980s and 1990s.

"These seemingly rural elements are nostalgic items for Chinese seniors and are often featured in videos that young people watch today. People of all ages have different interpretations of 'rustic culture'," she said. "This artistic expression reflects a kind of ideological resonance among contemporary Chinese youth. It conveys this in a humorous way."

"In recent years, Chinese fashion has started to gain international recognition. When people talk about new Chinese style, they often refer to *qipao* frog buttons and *hanfu*. But the current culture is sometimes overlooked, and they are the fashion elements that are most innovative, everyday and widely used in modern society and short-video platforms," she said.

The brand has also been featured on catwalks in New York and Paris, featuring music by the Chinese rock band Second Hand Rose. The band blends traditional Chinese elements, such as *suona*, a woodwind instrument, and drums, with Western rock music, creating a unique fusion that complements her clothing.

Su's designs also feature a cutout window on the back of the outfit, resonating with audiences worldwide by evoking rural culture.

"I was born in the countryside and when I was left alone at home, my connection to the outside world was through the window. I'd watch from the living room, stare outside, or watch TV and now we look at our phones to see what everyone else is up to," she said.

"So, I hope this window design becomes a gateway for cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world, allowing our clothing and Chinese culture to reach a wider audience."

"The rural culture of China countryside can be fashionable," she said. "This allows foreigners who may not be familiar with China to better understand Chinese farmers and agricultural culture, as well as the more grounded fashion culture that Chinese youth are starting to embrace."

BIZ LIFE

Black Myth: Wukong has global gamers abuzz

China's action role play pursuit puts nation, culture on map

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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In a year marked by innovation, the Chinese video game *Black Myth: Wukong* has become a sensation, captivating gamers worldwide.

Just three days post-launch, it sold over 10 million copies, propelling it to the forefront of 2024's gaming landscape. With projections estimating total sales could reach 20 million and revenue soaring past 6 billion yuan (\$854 million), the game is not just a hit — it's a cultural phenomenon.

One of the most enthusiastic voices in this wave of excitement is popular gaming YouTuber AfroSenju XL, who has gained over two million subscribers on the platform.

"Have you heard the story of a monkey born from a rock on a mountain? What about the story of the Monkey King who journeyed to find a means to beat death? We're going to learn everything about whoever this is in *Black Myth: Wukong*. I waited four years for a game that we weren't even supposed to get," he said in the very first video of his *Black Myth: Wukong* playlist on YouTube.

Known for his energetic gameplay and engaging commentary, AfroSenju dove into the new game with palpable excitement. In his latest videos, he shares his breathtaking experiences as he navigates the game's lush landscapes, battles fierce foes and unravels the narrative deeply rooted in Chinese folklore.

"This gaming is amazing, I love everything so far about it," AfroSenju exclaimed, his face lit up by the screen's glow. "Everything in *Black Myth: Wukong* has been legendary... the bosses, the story..."

As he embarks on quests and encounters legendary characters from the classic Chinese tale *Journey to the West*, he highlights how the game modernizes this beloved traditional Chinese story and turns it into a fantasy game for global players.

The game's success signifies a pivotal moment for the Chinese gaming industry, illustrating its growing influence on the global stage. In fact, *Black Myth: Wukong* represents a shift in gaming narratives, merging high-quality production with cultural storytelling, showing the world that China isn't just catching up, it's leading the way.

As AfroSenju's gaming acumen garners views and sparks discussions among his followers, it is becoming increasingly clear that *Black Myth: Wukong* is more than just a game — it's an invitation to explore a world where ancient myths meet modern innovation. With the gaming community abuzz, this title is poised to redefine cultural exchanges in the gaming sphere, promising even greater adventures ahead.

Collin Jin, deputy president of CPA Australia's East and Central China Committee, said *Black Myth: Wukong* is not the first Chinese gaming product to achieve explosive success worldwide.



A view of Chinese video game *Black Myth: Wukong*'s booth during the China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing in September. YAN XIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Game players experience *Black Myth: Wukong* in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in September. GUAN YUNAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

"Chinese games have already accounted for a significant share of global app rankings," Jin said.

In August, 34 Chinese game publishers entered their names into the ranks of the global top 100 mobile game publishers by revenue, according to data from mobile app data analytics company Sensor Tower.

The 34 publishers generated a combined revenue of \$2.09 billion, accounting for 37.3 percent of the top 100. Tencent, NetEase and Century Games ranked among the top

three Chinese mobile game publishers in terms of global revenue in August.

"Compared to the paths taken by Western companies in the past, the phenomenon of *Black Myth: Wukong* exploding in popularity reveals that many Chinese companies now possess strong comparative advantages in digitalization and intelligence applications," Jin said.

"In fields like artificial intelligence, e-commerce and electronic payments, we are relatively leading on a global scale. Given these advantageous areas and the relative homogenization of consumer preferences, Chinese companies have a solid foundation for going global in these sectors," he added.

"Since the beginning of 2023, nearly all Chinese companies around us regarded going global as a very important strategic decision. In fact, we often say within the industry that going global has become a mandatory choice, rather than an optional one. Due to China's massive production capacity, the domestic market may face consumption bottlenecks in many niche sectors. Thus a rising number of Chinese companies choose to leverage their strong production and service capabilities to explore

broader markets."

Over the past few years, many clients Jin has served have placed significant emphasis on going global. Reflecting on how large enterprises and multinational corporations in Europe and North America have developed globally over the past decades, Jin said he believes Chinese companies are entering their own Age of Discovery in the 21st century.

"From the perspective of future development opportunities, Chinese companies particularly need to focus on overseas markets, especially key destinations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries, the Middle East, and Central and South America," he added. "Countries worldwide are making huge investments in technological innovation and infrastructure improvements, and we should seize these opportunities."

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A report released by app analytics company Adjust showed that Chinese developers are not only thriving on the international stage, but also helping reshape the global app landscape.

"In contrast to the more familiar approach globally, where app performance is initially measured by success in the home market and international expansion is a later consideration, Chinese developers often set their sights on global audiences from the start," the report said.

Chris Rupp, regional VP of sales for China at Adjust, said the strategic expansion of Chinese apps into emerging, tech-savvy markets such as Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Brazil and Turkey showcases their adeptness in tapping into new consumer bases eager for innovation.

"Dominating download charts and excelling in revenue generation,

Chinese-developed apps have mastered the art of delivering personalized experiences, harnessing data insights and aligning with local consumer needs. Their success is setting new global app trends and opening doors for expansive cross-cultural and technological exchanges," Rupp said.

Based on all Chinese-developed apps in Adjust's sample, the report showed the US stands out as the leading market with a significant 67 percent availability rate, underscoring the successful penetration of Chinese apps in one of the world's largest and most competitive app landscapes. India follows with an availability rate of 50 percent, eclipsing the India and Southeast Asia region's average 28 percent availability.

Brazil, at 40 percent, showcases a strong presence, as does Mexico at 29 percent, highlighting the appeal of Chinese apps in Latin America. Meanwhile, Indonesia and the Philippines, both at 37 percent, further reflect the sustained potential of Southeast Asia as a region of focus for Chinese app developers, the report said.

According to the report, Chinese gaming apps are a driving force in the INSEA market, while India holds a substantial share of Chinese social and e-commerce app installs and South Asian nations embrace Chinese fintech and utilities apps.

Paulina Klimentko, chief growth officer at PubMatic, a US-based advertising tech firm, said she is bullish on the rapidly growing China market, given the prominence of Chinese publishers in the global market.

"The China market is very promising and provides a huge opportunity," she said. "We will continue working with Chinese publishers going overseas, helping them monetize their ad inventory and enhance their advertising revenue."

For PubMatic, China is one of its fastest-growing markets in Asia Pacific, and remains one of the largest outside of the US. "We have high expectations in this market in the future," she said.

Klimentko said the successful global expansion of a rising number of Chinese companies is coupled with the continued recovery of the world's second-largest economy.

"China has been a growth engine of the global economy for many years, and now it is on track for recovery in 2024 and probably in the years beyond," she said. "I'm very bullish about China's prospects. We see a continued investment in innovation and infrastructure among Chinese companies and specifically tech companies."

Klimentko said she believes the digital economy is the most resilient part of the Chinese economy. "The advancement in mobile payments, online purchases and delivery services that Chinese companies are offering will continue to provide a strong impetus to economic growth in the future."

Looking forward, she expects to see more Chinese companies seeking global expansion, saying PubMatic will continue working with Chinese companies in fields including e-commerce and gaming sectors.

US-based Moloco riding Chinese firms' energetic overseas expansion

By OUYANG SHIJIA

As the global landscape evolves, an increasing number of Chinese companies are pursuing markets overseas, driven by new opportunities in emerging fields and markets.

Moloco Inc, a United States-based company that offers machine learning-based advertising solutions, is optimistic about this trend, particularly regarding the rapidly growing Chinese market and the rising global prominence and foreign expansion of Chinese firms.

Bruce Li, head of new business for Moloco Greater China region, noted a significant shift since the latter half of last year, with small and medium-sized enterprises taking the lead in the global expansion efforts of Chinese firms.

"Traditionally, Moloco focused on larger clients, particularly in the gaming sector. However, we are now seeing a resurgence in international endeavors, with SMEs demonstrating remarkable strategic acumen,"

Li said. "Many are choosing to enter less competitive markets, such as Brazil and Southeast Asia, targeting social media and casual gaming products. This strategic avoidance of saturated markets has enabled these companies to carve out niches often overlooked by larger competitors."

In addition to SMEs, traditional Chinese companies from sectors like education are also venturing abroad.

Li emphasized that advancements in AI and machine learning are crucial to this transformation. Enterprises that once focused exclusively on the domestic market are now embracing global expansion, particularly in areas like Q&A services. Notably, two of the leading companies in this field in the US are Chinese firms that have partnered closely with Moloco since their inception, he said.

Another significant trend is the evolving needs of Chinese clients in the international arena. Unlike their



Visitors gather at Moloco Inc's booth during a digital entertainment expo in Shanghai in July 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

overseas counterparts, Chinese companies are increasingly seeking exclusive advertising opportunities, Moloco data showed.

For instance, the strategic partnership between Moloco and Kaka-

oTalk, a popular messaging app in South Korea, allows Moloco to offer unique traffic and advertising placements to Chinese clients, meeting their specific needs in this key market.

This year, nearly half of Moloco's new clients are from non-gaming sectors, including social media, artificial intelligence, fintech and lifestyles, Li said.

Founded in 2013, Moloco now has over 10 offices in countries including the United Kingdom, South Korea, China, Japan and Singapore, with more than 600 employees globally. The company enables its clients to analyze their big data to customize ads for various customers and monetize those ads with Moloco's machine-learning technology.

Looking ahead, Li said the company will continue to remain committed to supporting Chinese enterprises in their quest for global expansion. With SMEs leading the charge and companies in traditional sectors broadening their horizons, the future looks promising for Chinese businesses venturing beyond their borders.

Data from mobile app data analytics company Sensor Tower showed that in 2022, the top three

globally grossing apps were all Chinese-developed. Social media platform TikTok led with \$2.05 billion, followed by gaming app *Honor of Kings* at \$1.65 billion, and *Genshin Impact* at \$1.25 billion, highlighting the global reach and appeal of Chinese apps.

"Chinese app developers have not just entered the global arena of entertainment, e-commerce, fintech and gaming — they've taken center stage," said Tom Cui, chief operating officer of Sensor Tower. "The consistent prevalence of Chinese apps atop the download charts in these industries is a testament to their remarkable adaptability and their ability to deliver what global audiences want."

"It signifies that Chinese marketers have decoded the secret of not just entering, but captivating international markets. Their success is an embodiment of relentless innovation, localization excellence and a deep understanding of user preferences worldwide," Cui said.

TRAVEL



Visitors tour Xidi village in Yixian county, Anhui province, in July. The village boasts the iconic architectural style of Huizhou culture. SHI YALEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Tourists relax on the grassland outside Zhagana village in Gannan, Gansu province, in August. CHEN YONGGANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Artisan Zheng Chunsheng makes souvenirs in Xidi village last month. CHENG SI / CHINA DAILY

The development of the tourism industry and a steady inflow of young entrepreneurs have injected new life into ancient rural villages in China, where travelers can visit well-preserved historical architecture, cultural and natural assets, and the residents upholding traditions. China's experience in reinvigorating ancient villages also provides references for other countries in their attempts at historical preservation and restoration.

International recognition

Rooted in the farming culture, China has over 600,000 administrative villages with diverse customs, eating habits and cultural vibes, among whom, eight villages are recognized as the "Best Tourism Village" by the World Tourism Organization, a United Nations agency, in recent years.

The UNWTO Best Tourism Villages initiative, launched in 2021, utilizes an all-around evaluation of villages "with accredited cultural and natural assets, a commitment to preserving community-based values, and a clear commitment to innovation and sustainability across economic, social and environmental dimensions".

Zhagana village in the Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture, in China's northwestern Gansu province, won UNWTO's recognition in October last year because of its spectacular natural scenery of valleys, rivers, primeval forests and glaciers and also the distinctive Tibetan-style houses, culture and slow-paced lifestyle of the residents.

Zhagana, meaning "stone box" in the Tibetan language, is located at an altitude of around 3,500 meters with the highest peak reaching 4,500 m. The steep mountains, forests, lakes and grasslands and the skillful stone walls shape the village into a "stone palace".

China's other seven villages achieving the honor are Yucun village in Zhejiang; Xidi village in Anhui; Dazhai village in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region; Jingzhu village in Chongqing; Huangling village in Jiangxi; Zhujiawan village in Shaanxi; and Xiajiang village in Zhejiang.

Xidi gets an upgrade

The Xidi village of Yixian in Huangshan, in the eastern province of Anhui, is another Best Tourism Village, mainly for its harmonious blend of natural views, activities and well-preserved ancient buildings. It was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000.

The village, with a history of 970 years, was shaped back in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and embraced its heyday in the early Qing Dynasty (1616-1911). Its strong vibes of Huizhou culture, highlighted through an iconic memorial archway and ancestral temples, wows tourists from home and abroad, especially young entrepreneurs.

"The village was in poverty with residents mainly living on agricultural activities like farming, planting tea and raising silkworms. Things began to change after they developed tourism in 1986, taking advantage of the village's historical architecture and Huizhou culture," said Zhang Sheli, general manager of Yixian Huihuang Xidi Tourism Development Co.

He said that the tourism business was first operated by the villagers but transferred to the company in 2013. "The village's tourism is managed trilaterally by the local government, the company and the village, aiming at fairer and scientific management for common prosperity."

He said that developing tourism in the ancient village of Xidi has not only raised the incomes of residents, who gained jobs from restaurants,



Tourists gather around a pond in Xidi village in Yixian, Anhui province. FANG LONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Honored rural areas receive boost in visitors

Eight cultural sites receive recognition from UN agency, serving as testament to traditional life, **Cheng Si** reports.

Factbox: Chinese locations named "Best Tourism Village" by the UNWTO

Xidi village

Located in Huangshan in the eastern province of Anhui, Xidi is an ancient village dating back 970 years. It was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000 and is famous for its historical architecture including a memorial archway and ancestral temples and its Huizhou culture.

Yucun village

Yucun sits in Anji in the eastern province of Zhejiang, which has transformed from a polluted village into a tourism destination surrounded by clear water and green mountains thanks to the local authorities and residents' great efforts.

Huangling village

Located in Wuyuan, Jiangxi province, Huangling is an ancient village built on a hillside at an altitude of about 1,260 meters. The village has a history dating back 600 years and is known for the tradition of air-drying agricultural products with bamboo-woven trays.

Zhagana village

Zhagana, meaning "stone box" in the Tibetan language, sits at an altitude of 3,500 meters in the Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Gansu province. With steep moun-

tains, forests, lakes and grasslands, there are also stone walls that shape the village into a "stone palace".

Zhujiawan village

Situated in Zhashui county, Shaanxi province, the village boasts rich animal and plant resources and cultural assets. It has 25 intangible cultural treasures and 17 tangible cultural assets like the ancient Qinling Mountain homes.

Xiajiang village

This village lies in a mountainous area in Chun'an county, Zhejiang province, with a history dating back about 800 years.

Jingzhu village

Located in Chongqing, Jingzhu is rich in natural resources including forests, grasslands and valleys. The strong cultural vibes and folk activities, such as shadow puppets, wax printing and bamboo weaving, make the village a popular tourist destination.

Dazhai village

Dazhai is located in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, which is famous for its beautiful rice terraces.

CHENG SI



Applying for and achieving the world-level honor will stimulate other provinces or villages to optimize their tourism services and residents' lives, benefiting the rural economy."

Song Ziqian, dean of the Policy and Science & Education Institute of the China Tourism Academy

around 2014 and now runs homestays and a cafe in the village.

"The village is my hometown with rich tourism resources that had yet to be fully tapped. It was a chance to start my own business," he said. His business earned him a good income before the pandemic, with annual revenue totaling roughly 400,000 yuan. He redecorated the homestays and cafe during the outbreak.

"I remember more young people came to the village to start businesses, like coffee shops, grocery stores and homestays around 2019. The village has about 25 cafes and 70 to 80 homestays now," he said, adding that more foreign travelers are coming to his cafe and homestay mainly from Asian and European countries such as Japan and France.

Unlike Hong with his clear life objectives, 29-year-old Zhang Yong from Anhui's Chizhou city takes the village as an out-of-this-world site. He said he first came to the village when he was in college and decided to open his business around 2016.

"The main reason I made this decision is for the slow-paced life with less workload. The village was a good place to escape from job pressures. I felt lost as I just graduated from college," he said, adding that he invested in a tiny bar selling beer and beverages and a small bookshop on a small budget for living.

However, he closed the two shops due to poor management in 2018 and 2020 and landed a new media-related job in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in 2020. "I returned to the village in 2021 and opened a new coffee shop. Everything here is good for me and I think I will stay until I figure out my next career plan."

Pan Chenli and his wife settled in the village about five years ago, lured by the "hustle and bustle" and otherworldly life of the village, where they now run a homestay.

"Xidi has very strict requirements for renovating these historical buildings with the main structure and exterior walls not allowed to change to protect the 'soul' of the building. It

cost us nearly 2 million yuan in renovations and decorating for the six rooms of our homestay. We waited almost one and a half years for the local authorities to review the restoration and decoration plans," said the 36-year-old, who is from Shexian, a county neighboring Xidi.

He said that he and his wife worked at the travel portal Trip.com Group and that experience gives them advantages in running and promoting the homestay online. "Peak season is usually from March to November when the booking rate remains around 85 percent."

He added that many customers, including foreign travelers, became their friends after spending several nights. "I remember in July, there were two guests from Russia living in my homestay for two days. They didn't speak Mandarin so we helped them to arrange an itinerary."

Future development

The development of villages' economy, tourism and good reputations has epitomized China's economic and social advancement, as well as the effective measures the nation has released to vitalize rural areas and narrow the urban-rural gaps.

"China has eight villages on the Best Tourism Villages list by the UNWTO, which is a recognition of the country's rural tourism progress. Applying for and achieving the world-level honor will stimulate other provinces or villages to optimize their tourism services and residents' lives, benefiting the rural economy," said Song Ziqian, dean of the Policy and Science & Education Institute of the China Tourism Academy.

He said that China has channeled great resources into improving infrastructure and transportation in rural areas, laying a good foundation for developing village tourism. Chinese people's desire for a quiet, leisurely holiday in rural villages because of the farming culture and high pressures of urban life will drive the continuous and sustainable development of rural tourism.

"However, to harmoniously balance and combine the development of rural tourism and rural economy remains a challenge. The original ecology of a village is the key element that differentiates rural tourism from other types of tourism, but we can't ignore villagers' livelihoods in the name of 'keeping the ecology intact. It's another problem to inherit the village's cultural assets in the process of digging into its tourism potential," he added.

Wang Yuan, from Kexiang Tourism Group headquartered in Shanghai, agrees that China's success in raising villages' reputations to the world will help attract more talent and financial investment to the countryside to use the villages' resources of assets and lands in more efficient and scientific ways.

"Talent shortage is the core issue hampering village development. More young people, or those with better educations or skills, will return to rural areas thanks to their increasing identity with rural development and the villages' growing world reputation.

"From my perspective, it's a trend to improve the existing infrastructure in rural areas into higher quality with more humanitarian value and economic benefits," he said.

He added that it is also necessary to deepen the integration of rural industries with village tourism and culture to produce some distinctive intellectual property, mainly referring to popular online products with potential economic values, to reach the sustainable development of rural tourism.

Ma Jingna in Lanzhou contributed to this story.

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SPORTS

Yang Qiuxia in action at the 2024 Paris Paralympics. XINHUA



By LI YINGXUE
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Badminton is a relative newcomer to the Paralympic stage, having made its debut just three years ago at the Tokyo Games. This year, at the Paris Paralympics, the sport has expanded to 16 events. Yet, China's para badminton team has long been prepared for the challenge.

At just 15, Yang Qiuxia declared her ambition to top the Olympic podium and see China's flag raised high.

Now 26, she has delivered on that promise in both Tokyo and Paris. Meanwhile, Qu Zimo, who has spent a decade honing his badminton skills, has collected four gold medals over two Paralympics. At just 22, he remains at the height of his career.

In Paris, the Chinese team not only defended all five of its gold medals from Tokyo, but also asserted its dominance in the discipline, winning nine golds, two silvers, and a bronze across 14 events.

The athletes' remarkable success is built on scientific training, the close, family-like care of their coaches, and years of collaboration that have fostered deep bonds throughout the team. In the end, it wasn't just strategy that secured their victories — it was teamwork and a shared sense of purpose.

Dong Jiong, the team's head coach said that the whole team's preparation for the Paris Games over the past three years involved intense effort. "Our players have surpassed their own limits in Paris, showcasing extraordinary strength and willpower. Every swing of the racket and every drop of sweat has fueled our team's ongoing motivation," he said.

Brotherly bond

At 22, Qu Zimo is the team's light-hearted spirit, and despite his youth, he's already the most decorated Paralympic gold medalist in China's para badminton squad. At the Tokyo Paralympics, he secured gold in men's singles WH1 and, alongside teammate Mai Jianpeng, clinched gold in men's doubles WH1-WH2. In Paris, he successfully defended both

titles. "I'm not one to make bold statements, so I didn't mention my goals in pre-event interviews," Qu said. "But now I can proudly tell the world — I was determined to win both golds again, a goal I set right after Tokyo."

Qu attributes much of his development to his 35-year-old teammate Mai, who has been with him every step of the way.

A decade ago, when Qu joined the team with no prior experience in badminton, he shared a dorm with Mai.

"Mai was the best in the wheelchair category when I first joined, and I set him as my benchmark," Qu recalls.

As Qu improved, the two became doubles partners. They frequently watched match replays together, analyzing both their own performances and that of their opponents, gradually building a seamless partnership.

"He's taught me so much — not just about badminton, but about life," Qu said. "Mai's calm demeanor balances my impulsive nature. During matches, he's always reminding me to stay grounded. Overexcitement can scatter your focus, and in competition, that's something you can't afford."

Beyond the support from his teammates, Qu highlighted the immense dedication of the coaching staff throughout this Paralympic cycle, crediting their detailed preparation and tailored training plans for the team's success.

"Our coaches handle multiple athletes, and while we might have just one match and can rest afterward, they're working tirelessly from 8 am

PARALYMPICS

Blood, sweat and cheers

Badminton success is driven by the dedication of both the coaches and athletes

to 10 pm every day," Qu said.

He also praised the coaches as "all-round experts", not only guiding athletes in training, but also addressing their personal challenges and helping them stay focused and emotionally balanced.

Deeply moved

In Paris, Yang Qiuxia celebrated her successful defense of the women's singles SU5 title by rushing into the arms of her coach, Zhang Xianming, with both shedding tears of joy and relief. The emotions behind the tears were complex — a blend of triumph and release after years of relentless effort.

Zhang reflected on their journey, noting that Yang had cried several times throughout their years together. From her Tokyo triumph to this Paris victory, Yang's achievements have come at the cost of immense perseverance and sacrifice, Zhang said.

At 48, Zhang has devoted half her life to coaching para badminton, beginning her journey in 2001.

"My initial intention was to offer these children happiness through sports. To see them reach the highest podium through their own hard work is the greatest reward," Zhang said.

In para sports, preventing secondary injuries and avoiding further disability are paramount. Zhang explained that while the training regimen for the para badminton team mirrors that of professional teams, it is tailored to meet the specific needs of each classification and athlete. The focus is on meticulously managing exercise loads and maximizing the quality of training sessions.

Despite her long tenure, Zhang remains deeply moved by the athletes' indomitable spirit. "Often, they only pause for rest under my 'mandatory' guidance," she said.

Zhang revealed that her time with the athletes has significantly surpassed the time spent with her own family since entering the para sports arena. She views the athletes as her own children, and they, in turn, regard her and her coaching team as their closest confidants.

"We consider our badminton team a big family," Zhang said with a smile. "The female coaches are like 'moms', and the male coaches are like 'dads'."

Coaching experience

At the Tokyo Paralympics, China's Liu Yutong and Yin Menglu fell to Japan's Sarina Satomi and Yuma Yamazaki in the women's doubles WH1-WH2 final.

However, at the Paris Paralympics, as the top-seeded duo, Liu and Yin faced their old rivals in the final again — and this time, they secured the victory and the gold medal.

Their coach, Qu Fuchun, leaped onto the court, pumping his fists and spinning his jubilant players around as they basked in the crowd's cheers.

"Our players have made immense sacrifices over these years. Their hands are covered in blisters and calluses from constantly maneuvering their wheelchairs," Qu Fuchun said.

"Once the match ended, all the emotions we had been holding back came pouring out," he added.

Qu Fuchun has spent more than a decade alongside his athletes, living and training with them. A former para badminton player himself, he retired in 2011 and transitioned to coaching, bringing invaluable first-hand experience to the role.

"Wheelchair badminton started relatively late in China, and we didn't have any established training methods to follow. We had to figure it all out on our own," Qu Fuchun explained.



Yang Qiuxia prepares to receive the 2024 Paris Paralympics women's singles S15 badminton gold medal. XINHUA

Drawing on his own experience as a para athlete, Qu Fuchun pays special attention to injury prevention during training.

Before each match, he leads them through a warm-up routine he personally developed to fully activate their bodies and stretch their fascia, helping to prevent injuries during training and in competition.

Watching his athletes grow from novices to Paralympic champions has given him a profound sense of fulfillment.

Now 62, Qu Fuchun hopes to continue nurturing new talent for China's para badminton team, strengthening the squad's development, and building a pipeline for future champions.



Chinese pair Mai Jianpeng and Qu Zimo in action during the 2024 Paris Paralympics men's doubles WH1-WH2 gold-medal match. XINHUA

China's 'flying fish' delivers a breathless performance

By LI YINGXUE

Guo Jincheng cuts a striking figure in the pool. Swimming without arms, each time he finishes a race, he makes contact with the wall in the most extraordinary way — using his head to strike the timing board.

It's a procedure that has left many viewers watching on their TVs or phones visibly shocked.

"There's a cushion in the middle of the timing board. When you hit it, it pushes you back slightly. You feel it, but it's not really painful," Guo said, offering a calming explanation for something that to onlookers might seem jarring.

The 23-year-old Guo has someone take a razor to his head before every race, aiming to shave fractions off his time by reducing his drag in the water. It obviously works. His Paralympic debut in Paris was nothing short of remarkable. The swimmer,

often referred to as a "flying fish" — his swimming motion resembles that of a dolphin — surpassed his own limits, shattering four world records and walking away with four gold medals and two silvers.

His coach, Liu Zhenzhai, said Guo's Paralympic performance mirrored the best of his training. These results, Liu added, are the hard-won fruits of Guo's relentless discipline, forged through years of intense daily practice.

At six, Guo lost both arms in a freak electrocution accident. By 12, he had been recruited to the Hebei provincial para swimming team. "I liked it right away," he said. "I tend to feel hot and sweat a lot, so I loved the cool, refreshing feeling of being in the water."

Without arms, Guo's early training involved gripping a kickboard with his chin, while core strength became crucial for maintaining bal-

ance underwater. His rigorous training sessions sometimes push him to swim more than 10,000 meters a day.

By 17, Guo had begun making a name for himself, earning three silvers and a bronze at the national para swimming championships in 2018. A year later, he followed up with two silvers and a bronze at the national para games.

Guo's main event is the 50m freestyle, a formidable challenge for any S5-class para athlete. For years, breaking the 30-second barrier seemed nearly impossible, but for Guo, it was an obsession.

"I always saw it as my goal," he said. "But, in 2021, I had almost given up. Sometimes, I didn't even want to get in the water. I'd stand there on the deck for what felt like forever, trying to convince myself to dive in."

Determined to break through,

Guo began analyzing videos of top swimmers, studying their legwork. He noticed that some athletes breathed frequently, while others swam more steadily by limiting their breaths. Guo knew he was in the latter group. He began focusing on holding his breath for longer.

"I timed myself, forcing myself to hold it a little longer each time — waiting until I felt like I was going to pass out before taking a breath," he recalled.

Over time, he went from holding his breath for one minute to almost two, but that wasn't enough. High-intensity races needed more endurance, so he pushed himself to swim the 50m with just one breath.

In August 2023, at the World Para Swimming Championships in Manchester, England, his perseverance paid off. Guo won four gold medals,

one silver and one bronze. In the S5 50m freestyle final, he shattered the 30-second barrier for the first time, finishing in 29.78 seconds and setting a new world record.

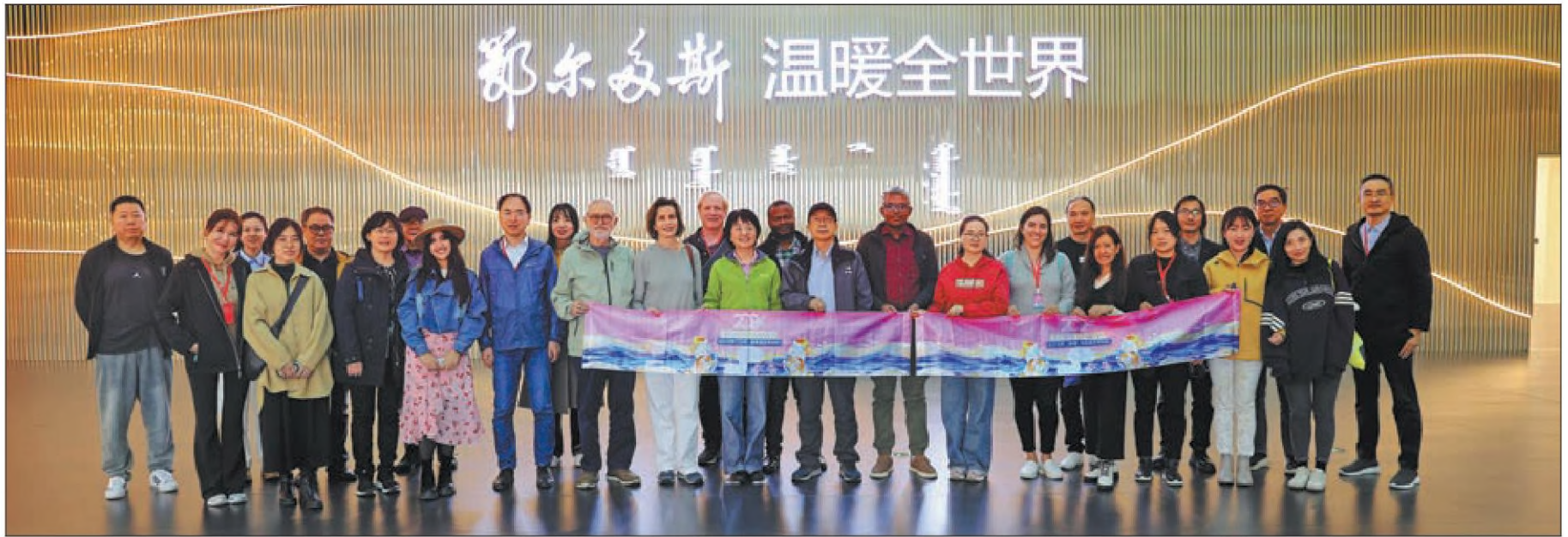
"That race gave me a lot of confidence," he said. "For an athlete, a lack of confidence leads to hesitation. I used to get nervous when I saw someone faster, but after beating them once, that feeling disappeared."

In Paris, Guo pushed even further, winning the men's 50m freestyle S5 final with a time of 29.33 seconds, setting another world record. Standing alongside two Team China compatriots, he proudly watched as three Chinese flags were raised at the Paris La Defense Arena.

"Competition is like life," he said. "Victories and defeats happen in a moment, but only by pushing yourself can you achieve something great."



Guo Jincheng jumps into the pool during a warm-up session at the 2024 Paris Paralympics in September. AP



A group photo of a media tour in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, taking place on Sept 27-28. LIU YANAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Ordos a leader in desertification efforts

Inner Mongolia city setting new standards in green empowerment

By **LIANG KAIYAN**
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Ordos, one of the 12 major subdivisions of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, has wowed international visitors with its advanced efforts in green practices for fighting desertification, along with other achievements in modern development.

Diplomats, think tank scholars and journalists from China and abroad got a first-hand sense of the city's charm and its progress in socioeconomic and green development during a Sept 27-28 media tour themed "Green Empowerment and Creating a Future Together: Practices of Chinese Modernization in Ordos".

"It's the first time we have come to Inner Mongolia. I didn't expect to see such a beautiful, open and modern city," said Salvador Moncada, ambassador of Honduras to China.

The Dalad Photovoltaic Power Base in the middle of the Kubuqi Desert in Dalad Banner was a highlight of the tour.

"After spending several hours there, I realized that Ordos is a city with enormous potential in terms of



Left: Foreign journalists and officials feel a piece of cashmere in Erdos Group's factory during a tour in Ordos. LIU YANAN / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Children play at the Xiangshawan Desert in Ordos, which is a tourist resort in Dalad Banner. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



green energy, protecting ecosystems, fighting desertification, and so on. It has enormous potential for helping to shape the future in China," Moncada said.

The base, which is a sand control and wind-solar photovoltaic integrated engineering project, has a construction scale of 1 million kilowatts and is only 15 kilometers north of the Yellow River. It serves as a national demonstration base for photovoltaic power generation and incentives, as well as a strategic breakthrough for Dalad Banner to promote long-term ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River basin.

"It is remarkable to see the scale and energy output of the photovoltaic base, as well as the significant strides made in combating desertifi-

cation and promoting sustainable agriculture in the region," noted Moncada, adding: "The eco-management in all those regions is very impressive, which is a lesson to the world."

As one of the developments in the Kubuqi Desert "Photovoltaic Great Wall" project that Ordos is currently planning and constructing, the photovoltaic base was completed in two phases, with full grid connection and power generation achieved through-out. It generates up to 2 billion kilowatt hours of green electricity each year, and saves 680,000 metric tons of standard coal annually.

The project goes beyond its original model by integrating photovoltaic power, ecological management, organic farming and forestry, and desert tourism. It also includes the

development of desert research and study tours, photovoltaic pastoral scenery, and ecological animal husbandry. The project has restored 1,400 hectares of land and planted 1,267 hectares of economic crops, and has planned a 40-hectare ecological landscape area.

"I think this kind of infrastructure can really help fight desertification and improve the fight against climate change and improve the ecosystem of the globe, especially for arid regions," said Akinwale Ogunrinde, associate researcher at the Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. "I believe the neighboring cities are also benefiting from these projects. Other arid regions in the world need to come and learn about the technologies

and infrastructures here in Ordos to improve their environment and go on the path of sustainability."

Hailed as the "cashmere capital", the Erdos Modern Cashmere Industrial Park led by local cashmere manufacturer Erdos Group stands as an iconic landmark. Founded in 1980, Erdos Group, a giant in the deep processing of cashmere, has grown from a local production and processing enterprise to an industry leader, with over 70 billion yuan (\$9.98 billion) in total assets over the past four decades.

The company has more than 40,000 employees, and its annual production and sales capacity exceeds 10 million pieces, accounting for 40 percent of the Chinese market and 30 percent of the global market.

The cashmere industrial park features a 400-hectare scenic area with functions such as an integrated cashmere production system, a national cashmere engineering and technology research and development center, administrative offices, product exhibition and sales, employee living quarters and cultural entertainment, among other facilities. Equipped with advanced technology focused on environmental protection, this new type of industrial park has become a demonstration site for industrial tourism in the city and the region.

"This is my first time visiting Ordos, and the warm reception from local people has deeply touched me," said Maria dos Ramos, minister counselor and deputy head of mission of the Embassy of Venezuela.

"The cashmere factory is unparalleled in the world. All the products are of top quality and the cashmere fabric is very comfortable to the touch.

"The factory has more than 40,000 employees, which means that Ordos has made great contributions to pushing forward China's development and promoting China to become a modern, socialist and advanced country by leading its enterprises, employees and factories," Ramos said.

The media tour also visited the Ulan Mulun Lake in Kangbashi district, witnessing the magnificent musical fountain in Ordos.



From left: The verdant scenery of Kangbashi district of Ordos. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY An aerial view of the Dalad Photovoltaic Power Base in Dalad Banner. LIU YANAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

International artists honored for spotlighting environmental issues

By **LIANG KAIYAN**

Six top winners were announced at Sunday's awards ceremony for the International Cartoon and Illustration Exhibition on a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind 2024, held in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

One gold, two silver and three bronze prize winners were chosen based on artwork focusing on global environmental issues and the protection of the planet, as well as the use of artistic skills to create unique and compelling messages.

The gold-winning work — titled *Plastic Invasion* — was created by Canadian cartoonist Diego Herrera. "It's a great honor to receive this award. I am happy to share my vision and art with people around the world," he said.

"Our planet deserves to be treated with care and respect. It gives us water, food, air, beauty and wisdom. Art, humor, poetry and solidarity are powerful tools to make changes, and each action counts."

The silver-award winning work *The Virtuoso*, created by Engin Selcuk from Turkey, shows unique vision. "In my cartoon, I wanted to draw



From left: Bill Gaspard, design director of China Daily and one of the judges, gives a speech at the awards ceremony for the International Cartoon and Illustration Exhibition on a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind 2024, held in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Sunday. Local school pupils visit the cartoon exhibition in Ordos Art Museum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

attention to how man destroys nature with his own hands because of greed," Selcuk said. "I have received awards in many countries around the world in my 35 years of art life. It's a great honor for me to receive an award in such a big competition in China."

With the theme of "One Earth", the exhibition was jointly organized by China Daily and the Publicity Department of the Ordos Committee of the Communist Party of China, calling for global cooperation to tackle environmental issues such as climate change,

pollution and biodiversity protection, and to contribute to the United Nations' 2030 sustainable development goals.

According to organizers, who launched the call for submissions in May, the exhibition received around 3,700 cartoon and illustration works from nearly 60 countries and regions, with more than 1,400 submissions from overseas.

Through initial evaluation, re-evaluation, review and final



assessment, the exhibition included 135 award-winning cartoon and illustration works, including the winners of gold, silver and bronze prizes, the Eco-Friendly Ordos Prize, the Prize of Excellence for AI-Assisted Works, and shortlisted awards.

Wu Yingga, a Chinese painter who received the Prize of Excellence for her work *Legacy of Love*, said: "I saw artists from all over the world use their brushes to depict their understanding and expectations of a community with

a shared future for mankind. The paintings that showcase the coexistence of humanity and nature on the same planet left me deeply moved. Winning an award in this exhibition is both an encouragement and a motivation for me."

Nine works were awarded the Eco-Friendly Ordos Prize, which is a specific award to recognize the remarkable achievements of Ordos in combating desertification, promoting ecological conservation, and advocating a green and

energy-efficient lifestyle.

"As a national model for green cities and an ecologically competitive city in China, and a national demonstration area for eco-civilization construction, we are committed to integrating the beauty of nature and the harmony of life into our urban development. Our goal is to promote sustainable development and a harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, and to share this concept with the world," said Zhang Wei, head of the publicity department of Ordos.

"This prize recognizes the power of art to raise awareness of environmental protection and desertification control, and to safeguard our shared home. This fully affirms the eco-civilization construction achievements of Ordos and is a new milestone in Ordos' international cultural exchanges and cooperation. The award also provides an important channel and platform to showcase the warm and welcoming city of Ordos."

The award-winning artworks, with most of the selected exceptional pieces, are being exhibited at the Ordos Art Museum, which will last until the end of October.

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