

# CHINA



**Left:** Residents of the Pengpu No 1 Village in Shanghai's Jing'an district receive keys to their new homes on Sunday. **Right:** Residents inspect their newly renovated home on Sunday. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQANG / CHINA DAILY

## Over 2,000 households benefit from urban renewal

By WANG XIN in Shanghai  
wangxin2@chinanews.com.cn

Zhao Qiming could hardly wait to move back into his newly refurbished home when he received the key on Sunday, nearly four years after leaving to make way for renovations.

The 72-year-old's household is among about 2,110 preparing to move into apartment buildings in Pengpu No 1 Village, part of Pengpu New Village, one of Shanghai's earliest residential compounds for workers.

Built in the 1950s in what is now Jing'an district, Pengpu New Village was once seen as a status symbol for residents there, housing only model and outstanding workers. But as families grew and infrastructure aged, the residents found shared kitchens and bathrooms increasingly inconvenient.

To improve living conditions, Jing'an authorities launched a revitalization project in 2005. Over two decades, Pengpu No 3, No 5 and No 7 villages have undergone renovations, with Pengpu No 1 Village the latest project to be finalized.

In total, 102 dilapidated buildings covering more than 180,000 square meters have been renovated in Pengpu New Village, benefiting 4,907 households, according to Ren Wei, Party secretary of the Pengpu New Village subdistrict.

Pengpu No 1 Village, where Zhao has lived for six decades, was the most challenging to renovate due to its large population and complex family situations. Demolition and reconstruction also posed difficulties.

Ren said it took the design team about a year to develop a renovation plan that residents could agree on, consolidating the original 282 room

types into 94. More than a quarter of the residents were considered difficult to relocate, including seniors over age 80, patients with severe illnesses and low-income families, while others faced internal family challenges that complicated consensus on the project.

Despite the hurdles, renovations that began in May 2019 were completed on Sunday, providing residents with refurbished homes.

The newly built 17 high-rise residential buildings with elevators offer apartments that are at least 2 square meters larger than the original units, each equipped with an independent kitchen, bathroom and balcony. An underground two-story parking garage with more than 1,600 spaces has been built, along with a six-story nursing home with 172 beds. The living complex now also features roof gardens, fitness trails and a cultural

and sports complex.

Historical landmarks, including a font for the battle for the liberation of Shanghai, have been preserved within the community.

Zhao, who often climbed a nearby overpass to check on the progress of renovations, said he was eager to return to his renovated home.

"The renovation not only changes our living environment but also allows us to continue living with neighbors we have known for decades. We are like family, and we can continue to support each other," Zhao said. "This is a huge asset for me."

He expressed gratitude for the government efforts and said he plans to continue volunteering in the community after settling into his home. Shanghai has stepped up its urban renewal efforts in recent years, aiming to complete the renovation of workers' housing without independent kitchens and bathrooms by the end of 2032.

"Having a place to live in peace is essential for people's well-being and social development," said Wang Yan-feng, deputy director of the Jing'an district housing administration. "Renovating old buildings is vital for the city's sustainable development and for ensuring a happy and comfortable life for residents."

## 4 pandas born in Japan arrive in Sichuan

CHENGDU — Four Japan-born giant pandas arrived in the Chengde, Sichuan province, on Saturday evening.

The four pandas — 24-year-old Rauhui and her three daughters, 8-year-old Wuhui, 6-year-old Suihui and 4-year-old Fuhui — were sent to the Chengde Research Base of Giant Pandas Breeding for quarantine.

To ensure their safe and smooth arrival, Japan customized special transportation facilities and Chinese experts traveled to Japan before the pandas' departure to learn about their habits and breeding conditions. Both teams accompanied the pandas to China.

The Chengde base has arranged quarantine equipment, food and personnel to ensure the pandas adapt to their new surroundings quickly and complete the quarantine period smoothly.

In 1994, China began cooperation on giant panda conservation with Japan. World amusement park, located in the coastal town of Shirahama in Japan's Wakayama prefecture. The two countries have bred 17 cubs together and established the largest overseas artificial breeding population of giant pandas, known as the "Jin Family."

Over the years, China and Japan have developed a solid partnership and achieved remarkable progress in panda conservation and breeding, cub care and disease treatment, scientific exchange and public education.

# Night market breathes life into old town

### Surge in popularity fuels explosive development in ancient Zhengding

By ZHANG YU in Shijiazhuang  
zhangyu@chinanews.com.cn

As dusk falls on Zhengding county, an ancient town in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, a daytime parking lot swiftly transforms into a bustling culinary hub.

The Zhengding International Commodities Night Market comes alive nightly with more than 600 steam-filled stalls offering regional specialties from across China, drawing crowds with its vibrant atmosphere and affordable street food.

"After dinner, we often ride our electric trixycle here. My sons love the super-long fries and durian cheese pies, while my husband and I enjoy grilled squid," said Wang Li, 42, a middle-aged Chinese teacher and mother of two, describing her family's weekly ritual.

"Right after parking near the entrance, we spot the durian pie stall. The aroma pulls us in immediately," Wang said.

They ordered one, thinking it resembled pizza, but the first bite surprised them — a crisp crust gave way to oozing durian pulp and stretchy cheese.

"Pure contentment!" He circled the fork in his hand, adding that she is amazed by the chance to taste specialties from across China in her hometown.

Wang said the market has operated for years, but the past two summers have brought explosive growth, giving locals more diverse and affordable options.

"Seeing our county's humble market trend nationally feels incredible. It proves just how expansive and delicious our offerings are," she said proudly.

Covering around 10,000 square meters near Zhengding Railway Station, the market has evolved significantly since its establishment in 2019.

"We started small, focusing on 'small stalls driving big livelihoods,'" said Liu Guanghui, chairman of the Zhengding Small Commodities City Group, which manages the market and a nearby wholesale-retail complex.

The area was originally an urban-rural fringe zone, Liu said. As rural residents returned home from city jobs, dense pedestrian flows created strong demand, drawing a growing number of vendors. To meet demand, the market installed streetlights, extended business hours and waived stall fees to attract vendors.

That development paid off. In April last year, the market went viral on social media, drawing more than 100,000 daily visitors at its peak. The number of visitors reached 3 million last year, creating 2,000 jobs.

The group spent 12 years studying markets nationwide, upgrading facilities such as underground wiring and supporting vendors, she said, but the viral boom from a single social media post still came as a surprise.

Seeing our county's humble market trend nationally feels incredible. It proves just how expansive and delicious our offerings are."

Wang Li, middle school teacher in Zhengding county in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province

"The explosive growth was both expected and unexpected," Liu said.

Zhang Lei, who sells durian pie at the market, said durian drives the growth. "We use only fresh durian flesh and good cheese — no shortcuts. Families trust us," he said.

"It's impressively large and lively, with affordable food from across China, though I'd like to see more distinctive Zhengding snacks among the offerings," said Zhang Long, a Beijing resident who traveled to the town after seeing the market online.

The rapid increase in popularity brought challenges, including road traffic, mounting garbage and spotty mobile signals that hindered online payments and social media sharing.

"We immediately sought solutions, and the government provided strong support," Liu said.

Network providers upgraded nearby base stations, deploying 5G micro-stations to improve streaming and payments. The market added 50 cleaners and a 6-metric-ton mobile garbage compactor to maintain cleanliness until midnight, along with smart portable toilets.

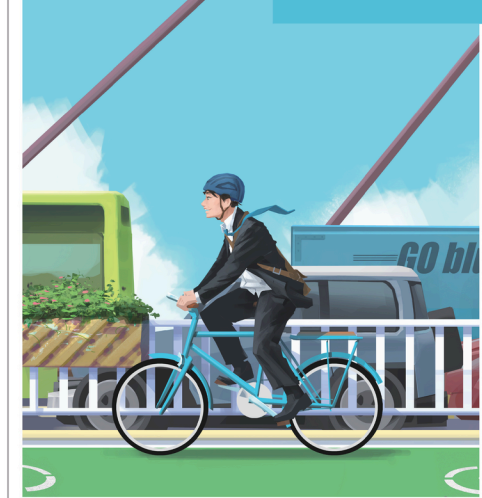
A food traceability system, safety ledgers and rapid testing help ensure food quality. Mobile police stations and coordinated parking with traffic management help ease congestion.

The county is also leveraging its cultural heritage to promote nighttime tourism, integrating the market with scenic views of the ancient town's temples, architecture, light shows over the Huttoo River, and flower-viewing in Rongjue Park, a major scenic site. Free public parking and drinking water at key attractions aim to boost visitor satisfaction.

The Zhengding night market has become a case study on how local character, attentive service and cultural depth can turn a local market into a sustainable tourism magnet, according to a comment on social media platform Sina Weibo.

"In the future, the night market will continue to explore the integration of commerce, culture and tourism, injecting new vitality into the county's economic development," Liu said.

Relive the joy of riding home from school when you cycle home from work.



Try your commute on a bike.  
Feel the joy of green transport.

blue WILDAID

AD



An aerial view captures the bustling Zhengding International Commodities Night Market in Zhengding county, Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, teeming with visitors. WU ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY