

Back from the brink

Strong conservation efforts drive rebound in Yangtze finless porpoise population READ, PAGE 7



Princess treatment

Wangfujing a dream factory for fans of Qing Dynasty fashion

IMAGE, PAGE 8

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Cultural, sports events boost holiday spending

By **WANG ZHUOQIONG**
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn



China's Wang Chuqin celebrates after defeating Felix Lebrun of France 4-0 to claim the men's singles title at the World Table Tennis China Smash in Beijing on Sunday. LIU PING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Shopping malls, restaurants and sports venues in Beijing have remained packed with visitors during the ongoing National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival holiday, representing a microcosm of the strong consumer demand nationwide.

The Chinese capital's reputation as a major sports hub is playing a pivotal role in stimulating consumption in the city.

Since its Sept 25 opening, the World Table Tennis China Smash, which concluded on Sunday, sold more than 85,000 tickets, generating 87 million yuan ($12 million) in revenue, up 52.6 percent year-on-year.

During the first three days of the holiday, cultural and sports-related consumption in Beijing's Shijingshan district reached nearly 200 million yuan. Shougang Park, which is located in the district and is home to the WTT events, drew 130,000 visitors on average daily, nearly double compared with last year, while sales of event-related cultural products surged 127 percent to 2.7 million yuan.

Meanwhile, the 2025 China Open tennis tournament hit new records between Sept 22 and Sunday. The number of visitors to the tournament's National Tennis Center venue in Chaoyang district totaled 360,000, up 20 percent year-on-year. It included 180,000 visitors from outside Beijing and nearly 10,000 from outside China.

The revenue from China Open ticket sales hit 88 million yuan, a year-on-year increase of 10 percent, while broader consumption — from food and beverage to merchandise — exceeded 36 million yuan, up 44 percent.

Licensed product sales topped 12.5 million yuan, with more than 80,000 yuan worth of a co-branded toy series — Wakuku — selling within the first hour of launch.

Christina Wang, a Beijing resident, said she paid 1,160 yuan for two night-session tickets at the Diamond Court for China Open. "This is my third year in a row watching the tournament in Beijing," she added.

Zhang Qing, founder of Beijing-based sports marketing consultancy Key-Solution, said, "China is accelerating efforts to foster domestic demand and a consumption-driven economy, and the sports industry is becoming an increasingly important part of that picture."

Both the WTT China Smash and the China Open delivered double-digit growth compared with last year, with ticket sales remaining especially strong, he said.

"When spectators come to watch these events, they also spend on hotels, dining, transportation, sightseeing, shopping and entertainment," Zhang said.

"The timing during the National Day holiday, or Golden Week, gave people more reasons to travel. In this sense, spectator sports add real weight to building tourism destinations — they make the idea of 'traveling with events' a reality," he said, adding that sports will continue to play a greater role in China's consumption growth.

According to the Beijing Municipal Commerce Bureau, from Wednesday to Saturday, sales revenue at enterprises in key monitored sectors, including department stores, supermarkets, speciality stores, catering and e-commerce, rose 0.4 percent year-on-year.

Meanwhile, more than 500 consumption promotion activities have been launched in the city, integrating culture, tourism, commerce and sports. Beijing Daily reported that foot traffic across 60 major business areas increased 14.3 percent from Wednesday to Saturday compared with the same period last year.

The catering sector has emerged as a bright spot, with sales at time-honored restaurants and fast-food chains increasing 4.8 percent year-on-year. The Beijing Cuisine Association partnered with delivery platform Meituan to launch check-in activities around traditional Beijing food culture.

The holiday period is also seeing a sharp rise in cultural spending. The city is hosting 364 commercial performances with 2,102 shows, attracting strong demand. As of Saturday noon, box-office receipts reached 30 million yuan, according to movie data tracker Beacon.

Beijing's tourism spending has highlighted broader travel dynamics across the country.

Data from Tongcheng Travel and Baidu Maps showed that self-driving trips surged on Wednesday, with congestion levels climbing on highways in several provinces.

In addition to Beijing, other popular tourist destinations during the first three days of the holiday included Shanghai, Chengdu in Sichuan province, Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province, and Xi'an in Shaanxi province.

Beijing, Dhaka to accelerate cooperation

Xi, Bangladeshi counterpart exchange greetings on 50th anniversary of ties

President Xi Jinping and Bangladeshi President Mohammed Shahabuddin exchanged congratulatory messages on Saturday to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In his message, Xi noted that China and Bangladesh are traditional friendly neighbors with a long history of exchanges.

Over the past 50 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties, regardless of changes in international and regional landscapes, China and Bangladesh have always fostered friendly relations on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, setting an example of mutual respect, equality and win-win cooperation, he said.

In recent years, China and Bangladesh have continued to consolidate political mutual trust, expand high-quality Belt and Road cooperation as well as practical cooperation in various fields, and further deepen their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, he said.

Xi emphasized that he attaches great importance to China's relations with Bangladesh and stands ready to work with Shahabuddin to take the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to carry forward the traditional friendship, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and promote common development, in order to better benefit the two peoples and make greater contributions to world peace and progress.

For his part, Shahabuddin said that over the past 50 years, Bangladesh and China have forged a deep friendship based on mutual respect and trust, as well as enduring cooperation, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples.

He noted that Bangladesh highly appreciates China's important role in promoting regional peace, stability and common prosperity, and expressed gratitude for China's long-term valuable support for Bangladesh's sustainable development.

He expressed the belief that with the joint efforts of the leaders and peoples of the two countries, bilateral cooperation will yield even greater results.

Also on Saturday, Premier Li Qiang and Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's interim government Muhammad Yunus exchanged congratulatory messages.

Li said that China highly values the development of China-Bangladesh relations, and stands ready to work with Bangladesh to take the 50th anniversary as an opportunity to accelerate high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, as well as collaboration across various fields, and promote the continued growth of the China-Bangladesh comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Yunus said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations 50 years ago, the friendship between the two peoples has grown stronger, bilateral ties have developed steadily and cooperation has yielded fruitful results, which is worth celebrating.

Bangladesh is committed to promoting new achievements in the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries, he added.

XINHUA

Diplomatic window for peace in Gaza reopens

By **CUI HAIPEI** in Dubai, UAE
cuihaipei@chinadaily.com.cn

A diplomatic window for ending the conflict in the Gaza Strip reemerged as negotiators converged in Cairo, Egypt, for talks scheduled on Monday after both Israel and Hamas signaled support for a new United States peace plan to stop the war and ensure release of all remaining hostages.

The opportunity for peace, however fragile, has galvanized a chorus of optimistic statements from the international community, while mediators face the daunting task of bridging Israel's security demands, Hamas' bid for survival and the overwhelming humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

US President Donald Trump's 20-point peace plan aimed at ending the war in Gaza includes immediate ceasefire, phased withdrawal of Israeli troops, freeing of all hostages within 72 hours, international oversight of humanitarian aid and rebuilding the devastated territory under international supervision.

See ***Peace plan*** *page 2*

Japan braces for shift to conservatism

By **HOU JUNJIE** in Tokyo
houjunjie@chinadaily.com.cn



Sanae Takaichi

The election of Sanae Takaichi as the first female president of Japan's long-governing Liberal Democratic Party and the possibility of her becoming the country's first female prime minister indicate a shift toward greater conservatism in Japan's sociopolitical atmosphere, according to experts.

Takaichi, 64, a former economic security minister and an ultra-conservative lawmaker, defeated Shinjiro Koizumi, 44, agriculture minister and son of former prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, in an LDP vote runoff on Saturday.

Responding to foreign media queries regarding the LDP final vote outcome, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said, "We have noted the election result, which is Japan's internal affairs."

The spokesperson added, "We hope the Japanese side will abide by the principles and consensus set out in the four political documents between China and Japan, honor its political commitments on major issues such as history and the Taiwan question, follow a positive and rational policy toward China, and put into practice the positioning of comprehensively advancing the strategic relationship of mutual benefit."

On Saturday, none of the three other candidates in the fray — Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi, its former economic security minister Takayuki Kobayashi and former LDP secretary-general Toshimitsu Motegi — achieved majority in the first-round vote.

In the runoff, Takaichi won 185 votes, against Koizumi's 156, drawing on a broad base of support among local party members and affiliates. With her replacing Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba as the LDP leader, the conservative party hopes to regain public support and stay in power despite major election debacles in the National Diet, Japan's parliament.

Hiroshi Shiratori, a professor of political science at Hosei University in Tokyo, noted that Takaichi led by a wide margin in party member and supporter votes in the first round, which represent voices of the party grassroots and are considered to reflect public support.

During her election campaign, Takaichi promised a tougher stance on foreigners in Japan. In fact, all LDP candidates raised the matter of "foreign policy" to reclaim conservative votes lost over the issue.

Shiratori explained that these votes originally came from LDP supporters, but shifted to parties such as the far-right Sanseito and the center-right Democratic Party for the People in the upper house election due to their active advocacy on the matter. That gave the LDP race a distinct "social media leadership election" character, he said.

Ukeru Magosaki, director of the East Asian Community Institute and a former senior official at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that many Western countries are facing economic stagnation and widening inequity, making life difficult for many of their citizens, who blame foreigners for their hardships.

Japan is experiencing a "similar trend", as economic hardships and xenophobia are becoming increasingly intertwined with politics, he added.

The LDP leadership race took place amid growing political woes after the coalition with the Komeito Party lost its majority in both houses of parliament — the first such situation since the LDP was founded in 1955.

See ***Japan vote,*** *page 2*

Dragon dance delight



The annual Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance, recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011, parades through the streets of Tai Hang, Hong Kong, on Sunday, drawing large crowds. The 67-meter-long fire dragon, crafted from over 10,000 incense sticks and carried by 300 performers, symbolizes the warding off of disease and the bringing of good fortune to the community. As a highlight of the Mid-Autumn Festival, the festivities will continue through Tuesday evening. ADAM LAM / CHINA DAILY

CAPTURING THE MOST CANDID MOMENTS

Photographers go a natural direction, as travel memorabilia trends

By **YANG FEIYUE**
yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

The sun beat down on the ancient stones of Beijing's Beihai Park, but Ma Zhixue barely noticed the heat.

For nearly 12 hours a day during summer, he framed through his lens not only the city's iconic landscapes but also the fleeting, authentic moments of travelers to the capital city from around the world.

"At the peak of the summer tourism season, I served up to 25 clients a day," the full-time travel photographer says.

Ma's journey into travel photography began nearly five years ago when he noticed a rising demand for such photography experience.

"More clients are requesting shoots during their travels, featuring *hanfu* (traditional Chinese attire), imperial-era costumes and atmospheric ancient architecture," he notes.

Locations like Beijing's Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, and Beihai Park remain perennially popular for their ability to evoke China's historical grandeur, he explains.

While traditional photography tends to rely more on controlled poses and studio lighting, and landscape photographers must chase specific natural lighting, Ma pays more attention to capturing people candidly within historical settings.

"My clients range from the very young to the elderly. My goal is always the same: to create images that are genuine, spontaneous and deeply personal," he emphasizes.

A typical shoot begins well before the camera is lifted. Ma consults with clients about their preferences, suggests locations and styles, and often flips through sample albums to align each other's expectations.

During photography sessions, he avoids rigid directions and instead encourages natural interactions and movement. After a shoot, he reviews the images on-site with the clients and reshoots if necessary, ensuring everyone leaves happy.

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