

FEATURES: A NEW CHAPTER FOR CHINA'S GRANARY P.34 | FEATURES: HAILING A ROBOTAXI P.40

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from quantity to quality



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EDITOR'S DESK

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Future Frontiers

Industries of the future have become a cornerstone of China's long-term strategic vision. In the first half of 2026, they emerged as powerful engines of investment growth and innovation-driven development.

But what exactly are these industries? The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology defines them as "forward-looking, cutting-edge sectors currently in the incubation or early industrialization stages." They are characterized by strategic importance, leadership potential, disruptiveness and inherent uncertainty. This year's government work report, which was released in early March and outlines the government's priorities, identifies six areas for development: future energy, quantum technology, biomanufacturing, embodied AI, brain-computer interfaces and 6G technology. To accelerate progress, the Central Government has committed to establishing funding mechanisms and risk-sharing frameworks tailored to these high-stakes fields.

Industry is the foundation of economic development and future industries are the battleground for global technology supremacy. As the world enters a new round of technological revolution, marked by breakthroughs and cross-disciplinary integration, China's proactive

planning is not merely a domestic necessity. It is a strategic move to reshape the global industrial competitive landscape and unlock sustained long-term growth.

The core value of these industries lies in their ability to open up entirely new development horizons through disruptive innovation. By zeroing in on them, China is systematically breaking down technological barriers, accumulating intellectual property (IP) and injecting vitality into its broader industrial transformation.

The country continues to strengthen its national strategic science and technology capabilities, leveraging universities, research institutes and leading enterprises to form collaborative innovation consortia that tackle bottlenecks in core technologies.

Local governments, too, are playing a major role, tailoring their strategies to regional strengths. One example is Anhui Province, a globally recognized source of original technologies in fields like quantum technology, which is rapidly converting its educational and scientific resources into industrial competitive advantages.

As policy dividends continue to be released and the innovation ecosystem matures, China's future industries are advancing on all fronts. **BR**



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A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

An exhibitor gives a demonstration using an assistive robot at the 2026 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) on September 9. Held on September 9-13 at Beijing's Shougang Park, a former industrial site and venue for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, the fair attracted participants from 90 countries, regions and international organizations, with over 1,800 companies exhibiting on-site.

Themed "Global Services, Shared Prosperity," this year's CIFTIS hosted a Global Trade in Services Summit, co-hosted for the first time by the World Intellectual Property Organization. The event's core exhibition area also debuted over 140 innovation cases across 12 services trade categories, including AI, large language models and intelligent agents, offering a glimpse into the evolution of China's services sector.



Rescue and Restoration

Workers load stones to reinforce roads in the heart of the mudslide-affected area at Gyirong Port in Xizang Autonomous Region on September 5. More rescue forces arrived at the site that same day.

New Occupations

China on September 9 recognized 11 new occupations and 23 new specialties under existing occupations, reflecting evolving labor demand driven by technological advances, industrial upgrading and changing consumer needs.

The new occupations, released by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and other government departments, include shore-based ship management engineering technicians, embodied intelligence robot technicians and sports data analysts.

Some of the new occupations focus on business development and industrial upgrading, including corporate sustainability planners, airport obstacle-clearance inspectors, and AI agent developers. Others respond more directly to people's demand for higher-quality services, including incense-making artisans, smart furniture assembly and commissioning workers, and

fresh-cut flower processing workers.

New specialties under existing occupations include community workers, low-altitude logistics operators and age-friendly renovation designers. Low-altitude logistics refers to operations conducted below 1,000 meters.

Since 2019, China has released eight batches of 121 new occupations.

Organized Crime Crackdown

China is stepping up its fight against organized crime, with a particular focus on emerging offenses involving online platforms and non-violent forms of coercion, as part of broader efforts to maintain public security and build a safer society.

In July, a one-year nationwide campaign was launched to crack down on emerging forms of organized crime, including those involving online platforms and less visible forms of coercion.

As part of the campaign, the Supreme People's Procuratorate said on September 8 that procuratorial authorities have targeted offenses that range from online predatory lending and coercive debt collection to extortion through online public opinion, forced consumption and sex-related blackmail. They also target "soft violence" such as stalking, harassment and intimidation.

Procuratorial agencies are also investigating officials suspected of facilitating or shielding organized crime. Prosecutors will sustain pressure on organized crime while strictly applying legal standards, neither over-classifying ordinary offenses as organized crime nor downgrading cases that meet the legal threshold, according to the statement.

Innovation Cluster

China's Shenzhen-Hong Kong-

Guangzhou cluster remained the world's leading innovation cluster for the second consecutive year, according to a report released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on September 8.

China, with 25 of the world's top 100 innovation clusters, including Beijing in fifth place and the Shanghai-Suzhou cluster in sixth, maintained its position as the economy with the largest number of listed clusters for the fourth consecutive year, the report said.

The Global Innovation Index cluster initiative maps cities and regions that bring together universities, researchers, inventors, venture capital and research and development activities, helping policymakers and business leaders create conditions for innovation to flourish.

China and the United States, each with 20 clusters, together account for nearly half of the world's top 100 innovation clusters. Germany follows with seven, while India and the United Kingdom have four each.

"Chinese clusters now carry a large part of global innovation activity, and their trajectory matters for three reasons: scale, speed and direction," Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, head of the Composite Indicator Research Section of WIPO, told Xinhua News Agency.

Medical Insurance Coverage

China is moving to expand medical insurance coverage to more workers in flexible and new forms of employment as the country adapts its social security system to a changing labor market, the country's health authorities announced on September 8.

Over the next three years, China will seek to enroll more flexible workers, migrant workers and people in new forms of employ-

ment in the basic medical insurance system, according to a notice issued by seven government departments, including the National Healthcare Security Administration.

During the period, new enrollment and contribution models tailored to people in new forms of employment will be explored, while services for flexible workers will be improved to make enrollment easier, the notice stated.

AI Disputes

A familiar face on a video call may not be who it appears to be. AI can now replicate people's faces and voices with startling realism, creating new challenges for the law. China's top court on September 7 issued guidelines spelling out when such AI-generated content can lead to legal liability.

The guidelines, released by the Supreme People's Court, address a range of emerging disputes, including AI deepfakes and voice cloning, algorithmic price discrimination and AI-generated false information.

They make clear that people cannot use AI to create or distribute recognizable digital replicas of others without their consent, including cloned faces and voices. Such use can infringe individuals' rights, while using AI-generated faces or voices

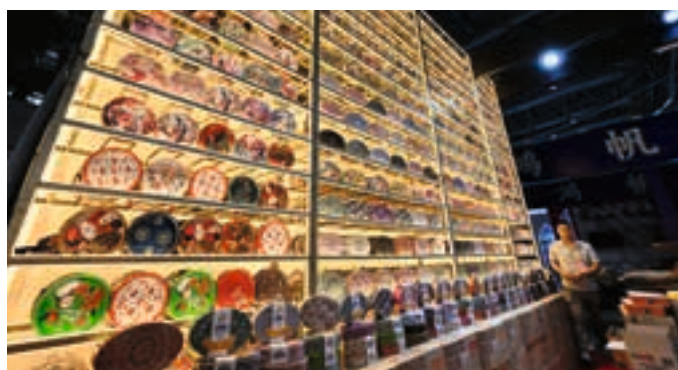
to spread false claims or damage someone's reputation can also result in legal liability.

The guidelines also address algorithmic discrimination against consumers. Businesses that use algorithms to offer different prices or other transaction terms for the same goods or services without reasonable justification may be held liable if the practice causes harm to consumers.

Another challenge is that generative AI systems can produce false or inaccurate information, commonly known as "AI hallucinations." AI service providers can be held liable if they are notified that their systems have generated content that infringes a person's rights but fail to take timely action. Users, too, can be held responsible for how they use AI. A person who deliberately uses prompts or other methods to induce an AI system to generate infringing content and causes harm to someone else can be held liable.

High-Speed Rail

With the departure of high-speed train G3998 from Ruijin Station in Jiangxi Province heading for Yan'an in Shaanxi Province on September 6, the two sacred revolutionary sites were directly linked by high-speed



Trade and Tech

Tins of cookies from Malaysia on display at the venue of the 26th China International Fair for Investment and Trade in Xiamen, Fujian Province, on September 7. Held on September 8-11, the fair attracted participants from 129 countries and regions and 30 international organizations, and featured cutting-edge scientific and technological innovations.

rail service for the first time.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the victory of the Central Red Army's Long March, the strategic redeployment by the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army between 1934 and 1936 to break through the encirclement by the repressive Kuomintang regime. Ruijin and Yan'an, serving as the starting point of the Long March and the revolutionary heartland of the Communist Party of China after the Long March, are located in east

and northwest China, respectively.

The new train service is the first direct high-speed rail link between the two cities, covering 1,857 km at a maximum operating speed of 300 km per hour, with the full journey taking about 11 hours. It serves as a vital artery connecting east China with the city clusters in the northwest, with a host of revolutionary (also referred to as "Red") landmarks and key cities on the route, including Ruijin, Yudu, Nanchang, Wuhan, Xi'an and Yan'an.



Prepped for Precision

A robot demonstrates its clothing-folding capabilities during the final of the 11th "Maker in China" Intelligent Bionic Robot Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Chongqing. The event, held on September 9-11, attracted the participation of around 100 teams from across the country.

Foreign Trade

China's foreign trade maintained swift growth in the first eight months of 2026, with both exports and imports posting solid gains, and import growth continuing to outpace exports, according to data released by the General Administration of Customs on September 8.

The country's total goods imports and exports rose 17.6 percent year on year to 34.78 trillion yuan (\$5 trillion) in the January-August period.

The growth rate was 0.3 percentage points faster than that recorded in the first seven months of the year.

Exports increased 14.6 percent year on year to 20.17 trillion yuan (\$3 trillion), while imports expanded by 22 percent to 14.61 trillion yuan (\$2 trillion).

In August alone, China's trade in goods totaled 4.65 trillion yuan (\$693 billion), up 19.8 percent from a year earlier and remaining above the 4-trillion-yuan

(\$596-billion) mark for a sixth consecutive month, the data revealed.

Exports grew 18.6 percent year on year in August, while imports rose by 21.7 percent.

Both exports and imports registered double-digit growth for a fourth straight month, and import growth exceeded that of exports for a sixth successive month.

Forex Reserves

China's foreign exchange (forex) reserves totaled \$3.4383 trillion by the end of August, up by \$19.5 billion, or 0.57 percent, compared to late July, official data showed on September 7.

The combined effects of currency translation and asset price changes led to the increase in China's forex reserves in August, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange said in a statement.

The statement also noted that China's economy has remained generally stable and made solid progress, with its resilience and vitality supporting the stability of the country's forex reserves.

Classical Industries

China on September 7 issued its first national guideline on boosting the high-quality development of time-honored industries such as silk, tea and porcelain, targeting 50 leading enterprises with annual revenues exceeding 10 billion yuan (\$1.49 billion) each by 2028.

The guideline, jointly issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) and five other government departments, also aims to shape 100 national consumer brands and build several industrial clusters with an annual output of over 100 billion yuan (\$14.9 billion) by 2030 as these industries move up the global value chain.

Developing established industries with profound Chinese features, which also cover traditional Chinese medicine, brewing, arts and crafts, and the "four treasures of the study"—the writing brush, ink stick, paper

and ink stone, is an effective way to expand domestic demand and boost consumption, as well as an important vehicle for passing on Chinese civilization and strengthening cultural confidence, according to the guideline.

Representative sectors of these traditional industries now boast about 25,000 enterprises above the designated size (each generating at least 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million) in annual main business revenue), employing nearly 3.5 million people and generating about 8 trillion yuan (\$1.2 trillion) in annual revenue, MIIT Vice Minister Xie Yuansheng told a media conference on September 7.

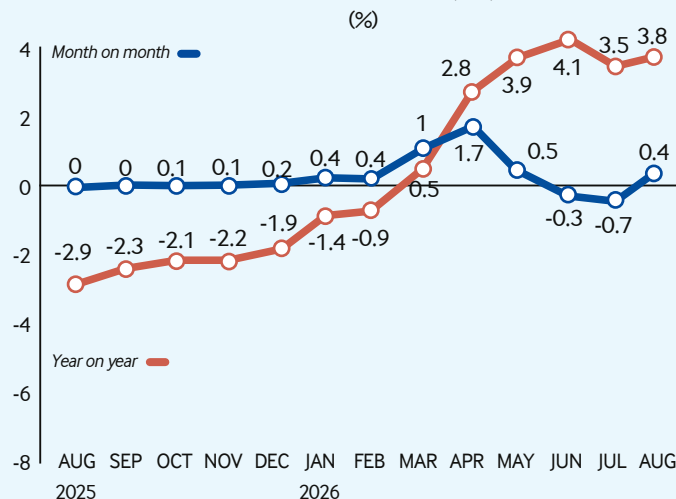
Industry Blueprint

The MIIT has issued a development plan for the information and communications industry during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) to promote the high-quality development of this sector.

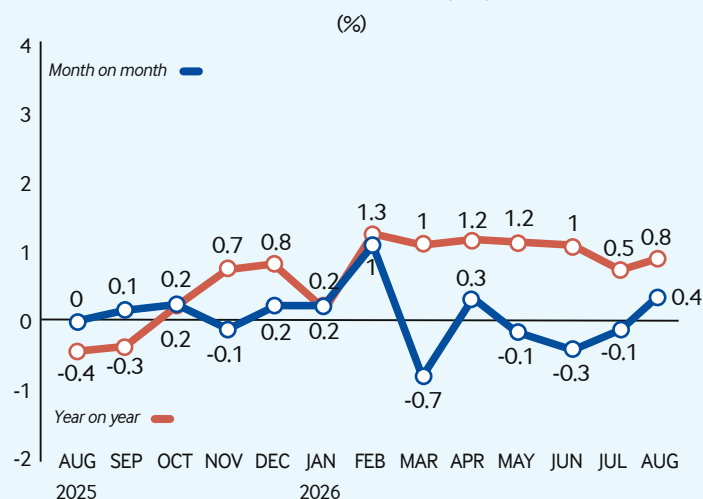
By 2030, a new-generation communications network with

NUMBERS

China's Producer Price Index (PPI) Growth



China's Consumer Price Index (CPI) Growth



comprehensive coverage and leading performance is expected to be fully established, according to the plan, while adding that efforts will be made to accelerate the development of a technologically advanced, secure and controllable information and communications industrial system.

Meanwhile, an agile and efficient governance system integrating technology and management is expected to be effectively established, and network and data security capabilities featuring all-domain coordination and practical application will be significantly enhanced, the plan said.

The industry's empowerment level and degree of globalization will be further improved, laying a solid foundation for basically achieving modernization of the information and communications sector by 2035, the plan added.

The plan also outlines 13 key indicators, including achieving information and communications industry revenue of 4.1 trillion yuan (\$605 billion) by 2030, cu-

mulative investment of 3.8 trillion yuan (\$566 billion) in information infrastructure, and an average annual growth rate of 7 percent in total telecommunications business volume.

By 2030, China will have 50 5G (including 5G-A) base stations per 10,000 people, intelligent computing power will reach 9,800 EFLOPS and the 5G user penetration rate will reach 95 percent, the ministry said.

EFLOPS, or ExaFLOPS, is a unit of computing performance, with each unit representing 1 quintillion (10^{18}) floating-point operations per second.

New Kirin Chip

Chinese tech giant Huawei on September 7 launched the Mate XT 2 tri-fold smartphone powered by the new Kirin 9050 Pro chip, the first high-performance processor to use logic folding technology.

The Kirin 9050 Pro stacks logic units in layers within a single chip, shortening signal transmission

paths, reducing latency and boosting overall performance, according to a launch event in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province.

The last time Huawei introduced a new Kirin chip at a flagship launch was at the global release of the Mate 40 smartphone series six years ago.

Retail Sector Innovation

The Ministry of Commerce, together with three other government departments, has jointly issued a notice announcing the second batch of 32 pilot cities for the national retail industry innovation and upgrade initiative, the ministry announced on September 3.

The 32 cities include Qinhuangdao and Baoding in Hebei Province, Wuxi and Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province, and Kaifeng and Xuchang in Henan Province.

The notice urges these pilot cities to conduct bold explorations in

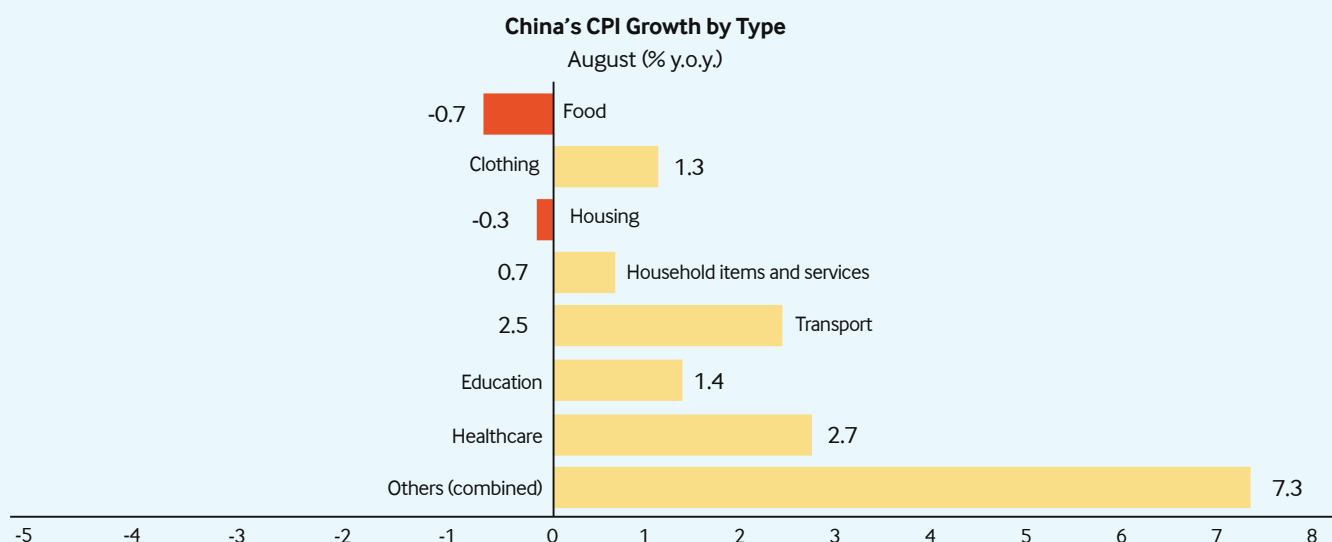
policy, management and business model innovation, with the goal of accelerating the establishment of a modern retail system that features abundant supply, balanced distribution, diversified channels, high-quality services, smart and convenient facilities, and green, low-carbon development.

China announced the first batch of 38 pilot cities in June 2025. The first batch includes Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

This latest move underscores China's commitment to expanding domestic demand and boosting consumption as key drivers of economic growth, analysts said.

In the first seven months of 2026, China's total retail sales of consumer goods reached 28.77 trillion yuan (\$4 trillion), up 1.2 percent year on year.

The country aims to raise its total retail sales of consumer goods to around 60 trillion yuan (\$8.9 trillion) by 2030, according to an implementation guideline released on September 7.



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



THE UNITED NATIONS

The 81st session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) at the UN headquarters in New York on September 8. The UNGA was declared open by its new president Khalilur Rahman



UKRAINE

Firefighters work to put out a fire in a building after Russian strikes on Kyiv on September 8. Seven people were killed as Russia struck Kyiv region with drones and missiles overnight



FRANCE

An exhibit at the International Space Summit inside the Grand Palais in Paris on September 9. The event opened on that day, bringing together heads of state and government, scientists, astronauts and industry representatives



EGYPT

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) aerobatic team Fursan Al Emarat performs during the El Alamein International Airshow at El Alamein International Airport in El Dabaa on September 9



UNITED STATES

John Ternus, Apple's new CEO, attends a launch event at Apple Park in Cupertino, California, on September 9. Apple unveiled its first foldable smartphone, the iPhone Duo, along with a series of other products



BRAZIL

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and First Lady Rosângela Lula da Silva take part in Independence Day celebrations in Brasília on September 7

THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ FORMER HKSAR CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIES AT 89

Tung Chee-hwa, former Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and former Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), died of illness at the age of 89 in Hong Kong on September 8.

A native of Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, Tung was born in Shanghai in 1937. He moved with his family to Hong Kong in 1947. After pursuing higher education in Britain, he returned to Hong Kong in 1969 to join his family's shipping business.

On July 1, 1997, the Chinese Government resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong and HKSAR was established. Tung was the first and second-term chief executive of the HKSAR. During his tenure from July 1997 to March 2005, he steered Hong Kong through its historic transition under the "one country, two systems" framework.

Tung served as vice chairman of the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th national committees of the CPPCC from 2005 to 2023.

He was awarded the Grand Bauhinia Medal, the highest award under the HKSAR Honors and Awards System, in 2006.



The Credit Card Cooldown

Economic Daily
September 8

People in China appear to be using credit cards less and less. According to the latest data from the People's Bank of China, the number of credit and debit-credit cards stood at 677 million by the end of the second quarter of 2026, down about 10 million from the previous quarter.

The decline reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior. As mobile payments

and digital credit become prevalent, physical credit cards have become less necessary and, for many, less convenient, in everyday transactions.

Stronger regulation has also helped deflate the credit card bubble. Since 2022, banks have been required to clean up dormant cards, curb excessive lending and rein in aggressive card issuance.

That, however, does not mean credit cards are dying. Instead, the sector is undergoing an overhaul, with banks shifting from mass issuance to more targeted offerings designed around the needs of specific customer groups.



Flower Power

Outlook Weekly
September 7

Sometimes called "the world's garden," Yunnan Province boasts a unique high-altitude, low-latitude climate that has turned it into a global hub for flower production. In 2025, the region produced 22.15 billion fresh-cut stems, driving the industry's total supply chain value past 140 billion yuan (\$20.8 billion). With exports nearing \$200 million, Yunnan has maintained its position as China's top floral exporter for seven consecutive years.

Behind this staggering volume is a

"At a time when geopolitical tensions and protectionism are creating uncertainty, greater cooperation in services can provide another channel through which economies remain connected."

Simphiwe Madikizela, a professor of economics at the University of South Africa, on the China International Fair for Trade in Services, held in Beijing on September 9-13

"As China's research and development capabilities continue to grow, innovations shaped by local consumer needs are gradually finding applications in markets beyond the country."

Matthias Metz, CEO and Chairman of the Board of BSH Home Appliances Group, one of the world's leading home appliance manufacturers, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

strategic shift from cultivation to innovation. Historically reliant on imported seeds, which left local growers vulnerable to foreign pricing and monopolies, Yunnan has poured much effort into developing homegrown varieties. The payoff arrived in early 2026, when three locally developed types of roses—Baohua, Wenxiu and Jiaolong—went viral across Chinese social media.

This botanical boom doubles as a powerful economic engine. Cultivation currently supports 190,000 farming households, yielding an average annual income of 36,000 yuan (\$5,368). Beyond creating 480,000 local jobs, the industry sustains a sprawling nationwide supply chain of 5.3 million floral workers.

A central pillar of this vast network is the Kunming International Flora Auction Trading Center, which hosts live auctions for more than 1,500 flower species. Widely considered the industry's price barometer, it embodies a modern auction system that connects local growers directly to buyers.

The floral industry is rapidly expanding its global footprint, reaching 64 countries with a strong focus on Russia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia, cementing Yunnan's position as a global floral powerhouse.

Pixels and Pathos

Southern Daily
September 2

On August 31, *Beyond Wukong*, China's first feature-length AI-generated drama, premiered on Hunan Satellite TV and its online platform Mango TV, receiving polarized reviews. Viewers marveled at its stunning visuals, but criticized its thin plot and underdeveloped characters.

The show highlights a broader paradox: While AI can effortlessly craft lavish landscapes and simulate dynamic camera movements, it cannot replicate the subtle micro-expressions of human performers or the visceral intensity of emotionally charged scenes.

An overreliance on training data also sparks controversy. Visually, *Beyond*

Wukong heavily resembles the globally acclaimed Chinese video game *Black Myth: Wukong*, raising uncomfortable questions about creative originality and copyright infringement.

There is still a long way to go for full-length AI-generated series. Cheap production costs have not guaranteed the profitability of the micro-drama industry, in which only a fraction of titles break even. Scaled-up long-form content will struggle further if it relies solely on cheap dopamine hits.

Obsessing over fully automated productions misses the mark entirely. The medium's future depends not on rendering humans obsolete, but on blending AI's visual mastery with the raw authenticity of human performance to tell a strong story.

NEW BADMINTON CHIEF

Zhang Xin, newly elected President of the Chinese Badminton Association, took office on September 8 as the association completed its mid-term leadership adjustment, with Li Lun elected vice president.

A seasoned sports administrator, Zhang holds a degree in physical education from Xi'an Physical Education University. He previously served as deputy director of the Shooting and Archery Administrative Center and later director of the Competitive Sports Department of the General Administration of Sport of China.



After assuming his new post, Zhang outlined his priorities, including advancing modern governance of badminton, centering work on Olympic preparation and fostering a competitive squad.

“By bridging disciplinary and sectoral divides, we hope to explore new models for heritage preservation and revitalization in the digital age, breathing new life into cultural heritage through digital empowerment and cross-cultural dialogue.”

He Yan, President of Tsinghua Heritage Institute for Digitalization, as the Eighth International Symposium on Cultural Heritage Conservation by Digitization kicked off in Beijing on September 9

“Licensing is not just a legal act. It is a catalyst for open innovation.”

Fan Zhiyong, Vice President and Chief IP Officer of Chinese tech giant Huawei, at the 15th China Intellectual Property Annual Conference in Beijing on September 8. The tech giant has accumulated over 160,000 granted patents, reportedly generating massive licensing revenue annually



A staff member gives a demonstration of a humanoid robot at the Anhui Innovation Museum in Hefei, Anhui Province, on August 3

COVER STORY

SEEDS OF THE FUTURE

China is cultivating a new generation of industries By Lu Yan