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XI'S VISION | NATIONAL FITNESS

Fitness-for-all push reaps benefits

More embrace sports, foster a healthy lifestyle

By JI HAISHENG
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For Wang Lin, an avid soccer enthusiast, playing on the pitch of the Northeastern Super League feels like a childhood dream come true. The 39-year-old homestay owner in Shenyang, Liaoning province, now follows a disciplined fitness routine to stay in shape for the game.

“Since joining the tournament in May, training has become a key priority for me,” Wang said. “I dedicate about two hours each session, three times a week, to fitness workouts, running and soccer drills, which help me overcome the inactivity that often sets in during middle age.”

Months of intensive training have paid off. Wang has shed seven kilograms, with his beer belly giving way to a lean, toned midsection. “After watching the videos I posted, many people realize that even in their 30s or 40s, they can still step onto the pitch and keep their love for sports alive,” he added.

The ongoing league, China's first cross-provincial amateur soccer tournament, draws participants like Wang from the three northeastern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang, as well as the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Wang noted that the ordinary backgrounds of the players, who include college students and office workers, make the tournament highly relatable for audiences, giving it stronger public appeal than a professional match.

The event not only offers amateurs a stage to pursue their dreams, but also motivates many more people to develop a love for sports and build up their fitness level, he added.

Wang's passion for soccer mirrors the country's long-standing commitment to promoting fitness for all as a way to improve people's health.

As Saturday marks China's 18th National Fitness Day, an annual campaign aimed at ingraining the concept of national fitness in people's minds and promoting regular physical activity, years of persistent



Residents practice ribbon dragon dancing in Xishui, Hubei province, on Wednesday, as various fitness activities are being held across the country ahead of China's 18th National Fitness Day, which falls on Saturday. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Roller skaters exercise at a park in Zunhua, Hebei province, on Thursday. VIA XINHUA

nationwide fitness initiatives have borne fruit, with millions of ordinary citizens embracing sports as part of their daily routine.

From neighborhood soccer pitches to marathon starting lines and even skating rinks, the enthusiasm for fitness has become widespread, and President Xi Jinping is one of the keenest sports enthusiasts.

Xi developed a love for sports such as skating and soccer at an early age. “The exercise I did in my childhood laid the foundation for my good health today,” he once recalled.

Later, his love for sports went beyond personal growth. In 1984, as Party chief of Zhengding county in Hebei province, Xi spearheaded the county's first-ever mass sports games, attracting more than 1,300 participants.

At a time when local authorities

elsewhere were solely focused on economic development, Xi recognized that organizing the mass sports event carried profound significance for enhancing the people's happiness. “The people's wallets are to grow fuller, their minds richer, and their bodies healthier,” he said.

Xi has carried forward this commitment through every stage of his political career. In Fujian province, he helped put in place new trails and lampposts on a mountain popular with hikers. In Zhejiang province, he guided the wider opening of public sports facilities and school sports venues for the people. In Shanghai, he directed preparations for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, advancing the cause of sports for people with disabilities.

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Gaming sector posts solid growth in the first half of year

By WANG XIN in Shanghai
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China's gaming market generated 188.45 billion yuan (\$28 billion) in actual sales revenue in the first half of 2026, up 12.17 percent year-on-year, as the number of users expanded to 684 million during the same period, according to a recent report.

The China Game Industry Report for the first half of the year was presented at the 2026 China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference, also known as ChinaJoy, which concluded on Monday. The report was released by the Game Publishing Committee and the Expert Committee on Game Industry Research of the China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association.

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IN RURAL GUIZHOU, A SIMPLE SOUP TELLS STORY OF THE SEASON

Tender pumpkin, green beans and water are all it takes to evoke memory of generations

By LI YINGXUE
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In the courtyard of a rural farmhouse restaurant in Qiantao township of Guiyang, Guizhou province, a pot of clear soup is slowly cooling.

There is no oil floating on the surface and no elaborate seasoning. Tender pumpkin and green beans rest in the broth, releasing a subtle sweetness.

Yet the mild dish is rarely served without a condiment. At mealtime, the vegetables are served with roasted chili dipping sauce — a combination that for many Guizhou people is the taste of summer.

The humble dish is *suguadou tang*, a simple seasonal vegetable soup. For generations of Guizhou families, it has been the preferred way to savor the freshness of the season.

As the solar term *li qiu*, or Start of Autumn, falls on Friday, summer heat still lingers across much of southern China. In Guizhou, where pumpkins and beans are still being

harvested, the seasonal soup holds its place on dining tables.

“I've been eating this ever since I was a child. It is truly local,” said He Juanjuan, a Guiyang native who runs a farmhouse restaurant in Qiantao.

Her restaurant serves traditional rural dishes, many made with homegrown produce. During summer, *suguadou tang* is rarely off the menu.

“On hot days, it is especially refreshing,” she said. “The soup is naturally sweet and not greasy.”

Freshness is key. Pumpkins are harvested young, while their flesh is still tender. “We harvest them early,” He said. “If they grow too mature, they are no longer as sweet.”

Her family also grows peppers, eggplants, cowpeas, green beans, leafy vegetables, scallions and garlic. When certain ingredients are in short supply, they get them from nearby markets.

The preparation follows a tradition passed down through generations. Rather than slicing them with a knife, pumpkins are



A bowl of *suguadou tang* — a soup of pumpkin and green beans — sits on a table in Guiyang, Guizhou province, in July. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

snapped by hand into rough chunks, and beans are broken into shorter lengths.

“Pumpkins taste better when broken apart before cooking,” He said. Beans are put into the pot first, as

they take longer to cook, followed by the pumpkin chunks. No oil or seasoning is added, allowing the natural flavors of the ingredients to come through.

“You don't need to add any seasoning,” she said. “All you taste is the natural sweetness of the ingredients.”

The traditional dipping sauce is made with *hu la jiao* — dried chili peppers roasted until slightly charred and fragrant, then crushed into flakes or powder.

Garlic, scallions, soy sauce and salt go into the mix. Depending on personal preference, coriander or *zhe'ergen*, also known as fish mint, can be added. A spoonful of the vegetable broth can bring the flavors all together.

When the dish is served, the sweet vegetables are dipped into the smoky, spicy sauce, and the clear broth is sipped from the bowl.

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National self-driving safety rules released

By CHENG YU
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China has announced its first mandatory national safety standard for Level 3 and Level 4 autonomous vehicles, tightening safety requirements for self-driving cars in the world's largest automotive market.

The safety requirements for automated driving systems of intelligent connected vehicles, which will take effect on July 1, 2027, have been approved by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the National Standardization Administration. The rules were introduced on the website of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology on Tuesday.

Unlike previous driver assistance technologies, the L3 automated driving system enables vehicles to take over certain driving tasks under specific conditions, while still requiring human intervention. The L4 system can perform driving tasks without human input in designated environments.

Standard in place

According to the new requirements, automated driving systems must achieve an equivalent safety level to that of a qualified and attentive human driver performing the same dynamic driving tasks while avoiding unnecessary risks to passengers and other road users.

The standard introduces clearer requirements for human-machine interaction, which has become an increasingly important issue as drivers shift between automated and manual control.

For L3 vehicles, manufacturers must equip their systems with driver takeover monitoring to ensure that motorists are able to resume control when requested. Vehicles must also provide clear information regarding when automated driving is ready, activated or disengaged. If a human driver fails to respond to a takeover request, the vehicle must automatically execute a minimum-risk maneuver, which is a predefined sequence designed to bring the vehicle to the safest possible state.

Rao Qing, chief architect for global solutions at the autonomous driving company Momena, said, “The release of the mandatory national standard marks the beginning of a new phase for China's autonomous driving industry, where large-scale commercialization is built on safety and clear regulatory benchmarks.”

Since the beginning of the year, regulators have introduced standards relating to simulation testing, vehicle communications and Level 2 driver-assistance systems, as well as mandatory safety requirements for higher levels of automation, resulting in one of the most comprehensive regulatory frameworks for self-driving vehicles in the country.

Last year, China granted conditional approval to its first L3 autonomous passenger vehicles and positioned intelligent driving as a key area of development.

Jiang Han, a senior researcher at the think tank Pangao, said: “The new mandatory national standard marks a fundamental shift in China's regulation of autonomous driving — from giving emerging technologies room to develop, to imposing hard requirements to ensure safety. It will also promote the healthy development of China's autonomous driving market, as it continues to develop at a rapid speed.”