

0 SPOTLIGHT

Ningbo Makes Its Mark at CIIE: Innovation on Display

By Zhao Yu

The 8th China International Import Expo (CIIE) opened in Shanghai on November 5, drawing exhibitors and buyers from all over the world.

Ningbo made a strong showing: more than 2,000 companies and over 7,000 buyers from the city registered to participate this year. The Ningbo delegation came ready to "shop globally" — signing deals, exploring new partnerships, and filling their "shopping carts" with the latest in global innovation.

Cracking the Durian Code

At the Ningbo Shiboshi Group booth, durians were getting CT scans. A quick scan of a QR code brought up a full report for a Musang King durian — 1.54 kilograms, five pods, 30.64% flesh yield — along with a 10-second video showing the fruit's scan. This demo was powered by Shiboshi's "Durian Detective" Non-Invasive Intelligent Inspection System, which made its debut at this year's expo.

"We apply CT imaging technology to durians, then use AI algorithms to analyze 13 key indicators, including weight, pod count, and seed size," said Wang Lin, Product Director of Ningbo Shiboshi Group. "It allows for precise grading and non-invasive inspection, with 98% accuracy."

For years, the durian trade has been plagued by uncertainty — buyers could only guess what was inside the tough husk, leading to high spoilage rates and customer complaints. The new system changes that by giving importers and retailers a transparent way to assess quality before purchase.

The technology also



The 8th China International Import Expo (CIIE) . [Photo by Sun Yuzhuo]

has broader potential. Shiboshi plans to extend it to other tropical fruits such as jackfruit and coconut, paving the way for standardized cross-border quality inspection across Southeast Asia. In October, Shiboshi rolled out the "Durian Detective" at the Ningbo Cold Chain Distribution Center — a move that capitalizes on Ningbo's logistical strengths. "Durians shipped from Malaysia can reach the Ningbo Cold Chain Distribution Center within 40 minutes of arriving at port," said Wang. "It's only 20 minutes from Ningbo Lishe Airport to our Smart Durian Center."

Looking ahead, the Ningbo Cold Chain Distribution Center plans to expand its operations across fresh durian, semi-processed durian, and ready-to-eat du-

rian products, driving new growth in China's tropical fruit market.

Wellness, With a Charge

Electronic versions of caffeine and motion sickness medicine may sound futuristic, but they are tangible realities at this year's CIIE.

In the Innovation Incubation zone, WAT Medical Technology Co., Ltd. has been on display an anti-motion sickness bracelet. It is worn on the inner forearm, about two to three finger widths from the wrist crease. Once on, it delivers a faint electrical pulse, producing a tingling, numbing sensation.

"The electrical pulses stimulate the median nerve, which then signals the vagus nerve to inhibit the neural re-

sponses that trigger nausea and vomiting," explained Ji Hualei, founder of WAT Medical, as he demonstrated proper use. "This product has obtained multiple international certifications, including FDA, ISO, and CE."

The company's caffeine replacement bracelet and headache patch (applied to the forehead) both rely on the same technology. "The underlying principle is gentle nerve stimulation through electrical pulses," Ji said. "The caffeine replacement bracelet can relieve fatigue and improve focus, making it suitable for people sensitive to caffeine."

While WAT Medical's products have been sold in more than 30 countries, the Chinese market remained largely untapped — until three years ago, when the company made its CIIE debut. Back then, WAT Medical occupied a

tiny 1.5-square-meter booth, barely large enough for a single table.

"Unexpectedly, we drew major attention from both mainstream and social media on the first day," Ji recalled. By the second day, their modest e-commerce inventory sold out in 24 hours, prompting six staff members to rush to the warehouse overnight to pack and ship orders.

Though the company was founded in Canada, it established a presence in Ningbo 11 years ago, when a Ningbo investment promotion team visited Silicon Valley to present the city's industrial environment and policies. "We pitched our business and the collaboration came together quickly," Ji said. The company later established operations in Ningbo, where it expanded rapidly and scaled up production of all three wearable devices.

Ningbo's Intangible Heritage Draws Global Attention



The Yong's Gourmet booth at the 2025 Super Terminal Expo. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

Ningbo's traditional crafts and culinary heritage are increasingly capturing international interest.

The 2025 Super Terminal Expo (STE) concluded in Hong Kong on Nov. 6, where Ningbo brand Yong's Gourmet showcased Chinese intangible cultural heritage to a global audience for the first time.

The displays included intricately embroidered tiger-head shoes and handcrafted metal-thread pouches. Tradi-

tionally worn by children, the shoes symbolize good fortune and protection, while each pouch reflects the painstaking craftsmanship of Ningbo's master artisans. Several other long-established Ningbo brands also presented traditional foods, offering international attendees an authentic taste of Chinese culinary heritage.

Among the visitors were airline executives and officials from Singapore Changi Airport and the Hong Kong Airport Authority, who praised the

exhibits and expressed the intent for future collaboration.

Zhang Shaohua, Brand Director of Yong's Gourmet, said cultural elements play a central role in product design and international partnerships for Ningbo companies. He added that the successful showcase at STE represents a key step in promoting Chinese intangible cultural heritage globally and reaffirmed the company's commitment to spreading Chinese culture through traditional crafts and cuisine.

China Extends Visa-Free Entry for Over 40 Countries

By Lu Xinyan

China will extend its unilateral visa-exemption policy for more than 40 countries through Dec. 31, 2026, Xinhua News Agency reported on Nov. 3. Ordinary passport holders from nations including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland, and Hungary can enter China without a visa for business, tourism, family visits, or transit stays of up to 30 days.

At Ningbo Lishe International Airport, travelers welcomed the move. "It was a great surprise. I come to China often for business, and visa-free entry means I can just book a ticket and go," said József from Hungary. He recalled that obtaining a visa previously involved extensive paperwork and multiple embassy visits. "Since the visa-free policy began last year, my trips have been much easier," he added.

Catrin Rowlands from the United Kingdom said the extension could influence her future travel plans. "If the UK is included, it would make a big difference. With a long layover, I could visit more Chinese cities," she said. This is her second trip to China, and she hopes the UK will eventually join the 30-day visa-free list.

Airport authorities said the benefits of China's transit and visa-free measures have become increasingly evident this year. Ningbo Airport's border inspection checkpoint processed roughly 974,000 inbound and outbound passengers, including 33,000 inbound foreign travelers. Of these, 19,000 entered visa-free, accounting for 57.6 percent. The number of foreign visitors arriving for short-term tourism and business negotiations has risen sharply.

"Extending visa-free entry adds new momentum to China's inbound tourism," said Li Huamin, executive dean of the Ningbo Institute for All-Region Tourism and professor at NingboTech University. He noted that the policy will attract more international business travelers and further raise Ningbo's global profile.



Ningbo Lishe International Airport. [Photo by Wang Jiabin]

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