

SPOTLIGHT

Ningbo's Five-Year Transformation,
as Seen by its Residents

By Jin Yuhan

As China's 14th Five-Year Plan period approaches its conclusion, Ningbo's progress can be seen not only in data and policy milestones, but also in the everyday stories of its residents.

Over the past five years, ordinary citizens have experienced moments of change, opportunity, and connection — small but vivid stories that capture the city's steady advance and mirror its broader economic and social transformation.

A Life-Changing New Road

Hu Jiansong, Founder of Ninghai Dasong Agricultural Development Co., Ltd.

For me, the most tangible change in Ninghai over the past five years has been the six-kilometer stretch of road, part of the X420 Dongming Line, outside my factory.

Before 2020, traveling from my citrus and peach factory in Dongyuan Village to the Yongguan Expressway took more than half an hour. The road was narrow and large trucks rarely dared to use it.

After upgrades in 2020, the Dongming Line became a six-meter-wide, two-lane asphalt road, and surrounding rural roads were also improved. The road now connects National Highway G527 to the Yongguan Expressway and links the key fruit-growing townships of Liyang, Changjie, Chayuan, and Huchen.

The improved road has transformed my business. Two years ago, I relocated the factory near the highway service station along the Dongming Line. Today, it takes just 90 seconds to reach the expressway toll gate.

The factory has grown from just over 1,000 square



The improved Dongming Line encourages entrepreneurs and farmers to expand citrus business. [Photo by Jin Lu]

meters to more than 6,000. Annual citrus sales have tripled, reaching more than 1.5 million kilograms through e-commerce alone.

Local farmers have benefited as well. Ninghai's transport department helped secure reduced shipping rates for agricultural products — down from 12 yuan per parcel under 3 kilograms to just 6 yuan. With around 1,000 boxes shipped daily, we save roughly 5,000 yuan on freight, passing the savings on to farmers with purchase prices about 10% above market rates.

This incentive has encouraged farmers to expand citrus cultivation from 1,000 ha to 1,467 ha and shift from low-value varieties to popular types like Chunxiang Golden pomelo.

Over the past five years of the 14th Five-Year Plan,

this six-kilometer road has turned local entrepreneurial dreams into reality, boosted farmers' incomes, and opened new opportunities for rural revitalization.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Sun Jining, Longtime Resident of Henghe Street

For me, Henghe Street, Guangren Street, and Xiushui Street are more than old lanes — they're the backdrop of my entire life. When I walk through them with my camera, it feels like I'm tracing the contours of my own memories.

I grew up in a five-story dormitory of the Ningbo Education College on Henghe Street, where both of my parents worked. Even after we relocated in 2009, my mother refused to move far and bought

a second-hand apartment nearby. I now live close as well. After visiting her, or whenever I have free time, I find myself back in these lanes, camera in hand, capturing the familiar corners that shaped my childhood.

Over the years, the neighborhood has been changing. After a few TV dramas were filmed here, the lanes suddenly drew wider attention, and renovation work accelerated. Old trees were preserved, facades were repaired, and key alleyways were restored to maintain their historical look.

Whenever I come by, I hear familiar voices:

"I'm checking how the renovation of my 'home' is going."

"I hope they don't make it too new — we want to keep our memories."

We all feel the same way. Xiushui Street is one of

Ningbo's eight major historical and cultural blocks, and it still follows its traditional Qing-era layout. In March, the latest round of comprehensive renovation officially began, with plans to reopen before the end of the year.

Through all this change, one constant remains: Chun Fei, the barbershop that sat in our old lane. When the original alley was demolished, the shop moved only a few meters away and kept going. Many of us still return there — some traveling from Gaoqiao or Jiangbei, others like me coming from just down the road.

We don't just go for haircuts. We go for the conversations, the familiarity, and the feeling of coming back to where we belong.

When the renovated Xiushui Street reopens, the plane trees will still be standing. I'm looking forward to seeing old neighbors gather under them again.

Ningbo Company Marks 24 Years Supporting National Games Venues

By Zhao Yu

The 15th National Games were underway across Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, with Ningbo-based Dafeng Industry Co., Ltd. providing critical venue facility solutions to ensure the smooth running of the events.

Dafeng's involvement with Guangdong sports venues dates back to 2001, during the 9th National Games, when the company supplied core facility support for the Guangzhou Gymnasium and the Tianhe Sports Center. According to Gan Lihong, a general manager at Dafeng, the company's role expanded further during the 2010 Asian Games, which featured multi-purpose venues such as the Guangzhou International Sports Arena — capable of hosting NBA-standard basketball games, ice hockey matches, and large-scale concerts. Dafeng's seating and retractable bleacher systems enabled seamless transitions between these varied events.

For the 15th National Games, Dafeng contributed to the core equipment construction of multiple venues, including the Tianhe Sports Center Stadium, the Guangzhou University Town Sports Center Stadium, and the Zhuhai Hengqin Tennis Center. At the Guangzhou Gymnasium — originally built for the 9th National Games — Dafeng handled seating configurations as well as the acoustic and LED display solutions (including wraparound screens and center-hung displays), enhancing venue functionality.

Gan highlighted the company's pioneering role in sports venue seating, evolving from a maker of hollow seats in its early days to a provider of mainstream injection-molded designs. Many venues require flexible configurations to accommodate different event types, from sports competitions to large concerts. Dafeng's modular seating and bleacher systems are engineered for precision and stability, allowing quick adjustments to audience capacity and layout.

Renovating older venues also presents challenges. Gan noted that some sites, built more than 20 years ago, had narrow tiers that limited comfort improvements. "We used gas-assisted injection-molded seats to reduce structural thickness and maximize available space, meeting modern comfort standards without altering the original building structure," she said.

As a global provider of integrated solutions for cultural, sports, and tourism industries, Dafeng has delivered services for international events including the Olympic Games, Asian Games, World Cup, and F1, underscoring its long-standing expertise in sports venue innovation.

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Ningbo Innovation Center Unveils NAVIAI-I3 Humanoid Robot

By Jin Lu

The Zhejiang Humanoid Robot Innovation Center in Ningbo unveiled its latest product on Nov. 12 — the NAVIAI-I3, a humanoid robot built for security applications.

Standing 1.8 meters tall and weighing 80 kilograms, the NAVIAI-I3 is engineered with strengthened lower-limb mechanics. Its higher

torque enables longer strides, improved stability, and greater load-bearing capacity.

Unlike many bipedal robots, it can walk at a brisk pace and run at speeds of up to 9 km/h, maintaining balance on uneven surfaces such as gravel and sloped terrain. The robot can also bend and squat, broadening its potential use cases.

The NAVIAI-I3 can be used for patrols, security

work, and police inspections. The center said potential clients have already expressed interest, and its teams are working overtime to speed up production.

The center plans to launch another model — the NAVIAI-WA2 — by the end of this year or early next. Featuring wheel-based mobility, it will be geared toward commercial and household tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and elder care.



The NAVIAI-I3. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]