



## Opera makeover

Young performers breathe fresh life into centuries-old art form **CULTURE, PAGE 9**

## AI's integration into energy gathers speed

**BUSINESS, PAGE 5**



## Extreme weather

Potential super El Nino raises risks for SE Asia's food security **WORLD, PAGE 6**

# CHINA DAILY

香港版  
**HONG KONG**

**WEEKEND EDITION**

May 30-31, 2026

中國日報

[www.chinadailyhk.com](http://www.chinadailyhk.com)

HK \$12



Shenzhou XXI mission commander Senior Colonel Zhang Lu (center), spaceflight engineer Major Wu Fei (right) and payload specialist Zhang Hongzhang greet well-wishers on Friday after exiting the Shenzhou XXII spaceship's return capsule at the Dongfeng landing site in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. PHOTOS BY LI ZHENFENG / XINHUA

## Shenzhou XXI crew returns after seven months in space

By **ZHAO LEI**  
[zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn)

The Shenzhou XXI mission crew returned to Earth on Friday evening, concluding the longest single orbital journey ever made by Chinese astronauts.

A reentry capsule carrying mission commander Senior Colonel Zhang Lu, spaceflight engineer Major Wu Fei and payload specialist Zhang Hongzhang touched down at 8:11 pm at the Dongfeng landing site in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region after flying for more than five hours on its Earth-bound journey.

Following safety checks outside the capsule, ground recovery personnel from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center — the home port for China's manned spaceflights — opened the hatch of the bell-shaped capsule and conducted a preliminary check of the astronauts' health.

The Shenzhou XXI crew members were then helped out of the capsule and seated on chairs to share their experiences in a live program with a reporter from China Central Television before being taken to medical examination vehicles.

Zhang Lu said that he is thrilled to return to the motherland, and he

wishes to thank his family, colleagues, mission leaders and everyone else who supported the spaceflight.

He took out an apple from a small bag, recalling that on their launch day, the ground support team gave the crew members an apple to wish them a safe and successful journey.

"Tomorrow is May 30, National Science and Technology Workers Day. Before departing from the space station, we remembered to bring back an apple as a token of our appreciation for all science and technology workers. We salute them for their dedication and hard work. We wish China's space industry lasting

prosperity, and every upcoming mission safe and smooth completion," the mission commander said.

Zhang Hongzhang, the second Chinese civilian to reach outer space and also the first astronaut picked from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said it is the great motherland that enabled him to combine his pursuit of scientific truth with the dream of spaceflight.

The Shenzhou XXI crew, who represented China's 16th manned spaceflight and comprised the 10th group of residents aboard the Tiangong space station, arrived at the orbital outpost on Nov. 1. They stayed in space for a total of 210 days

and fulfilled three spacewalks, along with several scientific and technological assignments.

Zhang Lu and his teammates handed over control of the space station on Thursday morning to their successors from the Shenzhou XXIII mission, who entered the colossal orbital outpost on Monday.

Shenzhou XXI was Zhang Lu's second space mission and the maiden flight for his two crew members. With a total of seven spacewalks to his credit, Zhang Lu now holds the record among Chinese astronauts, replacing Senior Colonel Chen Dong, who made six through two space missions.