

Student opens 1st unwatched flower shop in Beijing

An unsupervised flower shop operated by a college student in Beijing is attracting many young customers, Chinese media reported.

Different from traditional shops in the capital, the young storekeeper surnamed Wang opened the first unsupervised flower shop where people can select flowers and pay via mobile payment systems including WeChat and Alipay.

Born after 1995 and a lover of fiction, the young man said he began the startup because it will not take up his time. "People go to flower shops at any time," he said. "I cannot focus on reading when I have to serve customers." So Wang opened the self-service flower shop after doing market research.

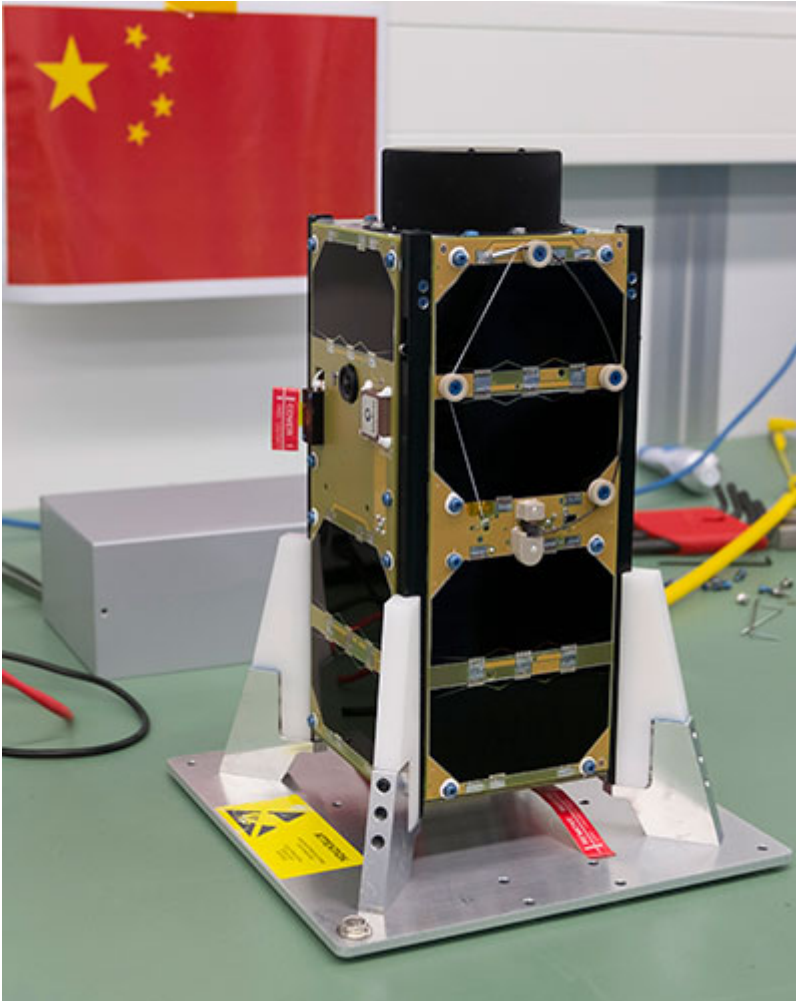
Most young customers like shopping in a free environment, and hate promotion from clerks, he explained, adding that customers can have their questions answered about categories and names of flowers through mobile apps.

Even though there is no shopkeeper, the operation has attracted many young customers and proved to be a success, at least for now.

Although he does not sell flowers in the shop in person, Wang said he would call at it at odd intervals everyday.

"It is a business with small investment, and it cannot cause a huge loss if a burglary occurs," he said, adding that he trusts people.

Harbin tech students send tiny satellite into orbit



LilacSat-1, a satellite developed by students at the Harbin Institute of Technology. [Photo/China Daily]

A nanosatellite made by students at the Harbin Institute of Technology was launched in the United States on Tuesday as part of a mission to the International Space Station.

The satellite, LilacSat-1, was on a Cygnus cargo spacecraft launched atop an Atlas 5 rocket from Cape Canaveral in Florida at 11:11 am, according to Wei Mingchuan, the 26-year-old team leader and a second-year PhD candidate in astronautics at the institute in Heilongjiang Province.

LilacSat-1 consists of two conjoined cube units, each with a side length of 10 centimeters. The 2-kilogram satellite will be deployed at a height of about 400 kilometers above the ground from the space station within three months of docking with the cargo craft. Docking is scheduled for Saturday.

In its three-month life span in orbit, the satellite will conduct investigations on Earth's mid-lower thermosphere, a section of the upper atmosphere about 200 to 400 kilometers above the ground.

"We will take measurements of the upper layers of the atmosphere using an ion-neutral mass spectrometer," Wei said. "In addition, we have a new type of radio repeater to provide two-way communication resources to amateur radio operators, as well as a CMOS camera to take photos from space."

Nanosatellites are small satellites that weigh between 1 and 10 kg, according to the team.

Lifted along with LilacSat-1 were 27 other nanosatellites of the QB50 project, a European Union-funded miniaturized satellite constellation created by students in more than 20 countries.

“This project is the very first international, real-time, coordinated study of thermosphere phenomena,” said Davide Masutti, QB50 project manager at the Von Karman Institute, a scientific organization based in Belgium.

Wei said the data retrieved by LilacSat-1 would be shared by the science community and amateurs, as the programs will be released as open-source and require no special tools.

Chinese scientist receives 2017 Vega Medal in Stockholm



Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf (L, front) poses with Chinese scientist Yao Tandong (R, front) after awarding 2017 Vega Medal to Yao at the Royal Palace of Stockholm, capital of Sweden, on April 19, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

Chinese scientist Yao Tandong received 2017 Vega Medal in Stockholm on Wednesday, recognizing his contributions to research on glaciers and the environment on the Tibetan Plateau.

Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf awarded 2017 Vega Medal to Prof. Yao at the Royal Palace of Stockholm on Wednesday afternoon, and congratulated him personally for his outstanding achievements.

Sten Hagberg, chairman of Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography (SSAG) said that Yao's "basic researches on 'the Third Pole', monsoon and glaciers" are crucial to the understanding of the process of climate change. "His researches also concerns more than two billion population, it is a global topic", Hagberg added.

Earlier, SSAG announced Professor Yao as 2017 Vega Medal laureate, for his outstanding contributions to glacier research and to the society at large.

His research focuses on glaciers and environment on the Tibetan Plateau, especially within the cryospheric research field.

Yao is internationally acknowledged as one of the most accomplished scientists in the field of cryospheric study. He has led several research programs – often together with American, French, German and Japanese scientists – in the last 20 years.

One of his later works shows that global warming, as causing the decline of glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau, interact with Indian monsoon winds and westerly winds. The research program Third Pole Environment (TPE) which is led by Professor Yao, has become internationally significant.

China gets tougher with officials' personal information declaration

China has published stricter regulations on officials' personal information declarations, requiring them to report to the Communist Party of China (CPC) their personal and family assets and investments, marital status and overseas travel, among others.

The rules, jointly issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, are a further attempt to curb corruption.

According to the revised regulation on leading cadres' personal information declarations, officials at deputy county level or above are required to report information, including their marital status, overseas travel, criminal records, wages and other earnings, family properties, stocks, funds, insurance and other investment.

The revised rule has specified verification of such reports, including the methods and the sampling rate for random checks. The rate for random

verification has been increased to one in 10.

Punishments have been stipulated for false declarations and deliberate concealment of personal information.

The report of personal information is an important assessment of loyalty to the Party and commitment to the CPC code of conduct. It should be linked to promotion by Party committees and departments, the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the CPC said in a statement.

More than 9,100 officials have been overlooked for promotion after they were found to have concealed personal information, while 124,800 have been punished for making false declarations.

Stipulating the consequences of false declarations and concealment is a clear warning to officials and is crucial for the mechanism, according to the statement.

It called on CPC committees at various levels to implement the rules strictly and treat it as an important political mission of strengthening Party self-governance.

In addition, it also urged leading officials to be loyal and honest, and put themselves under organizational supervision in accordance with the rules.

Winter weather conditions could lead to worsening smog



Heavy smog hits Beijing. [Photo/China.org.cn]

Winter weather conditions that prevent air pollutants from dispersing in Beijing could be affected by climate change and lead to longer and more frequent periods of smog, scientists have found.

Conducive weather conditions are a key contributor to severe haze, when PM2.5 – fine particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns or less in diameter – harms health and causes economic disruption, according to the Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology.

As global warming causes large-scale circulation changes, the frequency and duration of such weather will increase by 50 percent and 80 percent respectively between 2050 and 2099 compared with last century, a study has found.

The lab's findings were published online recently by Nature Climate Change, an international science journal.

"Although it is believed that haze is caused by pollutants from exhaust fumes and industrial emissions, the impact from weather conditions shouldn't be dismissed," said Cai Wenju, the lead author of the report.

Cai said the conducive weather conditions include weaker surface winds in the north and mid-troposphere winds in the northwest, and a stronger thermal stability in the lower atmosphere.

"These conditions are disadvantageous for driving away haze, and instead cause it to accumulate," Cai added.

The report states the predicted increase in frequency and duration is

consistent with atmospheric changes brought about by global warming, such as to Arctic winds, weaker East Asian winter monsoons and faster warming of the lower troposphere.

The Qingdao laboratory is also carrying out major scientific projects, including “Transparent Ocean”, in support of the accurate prediction of the marine environment and climate change.

“Haze management is a common responsibility of all countries worldwide,” said Pan Kehou, secretary-general of the lab’s academic committee. The lab “will take responsibility in leading and promoting international cooperation on energy saving and emissions reduction with scientific research institutions from other countries and regions, and in contributing to a better environment and development of ecological civilization”.

Last month, the United States-based journal Science Advances published a study on China’s haze.

The study said extreme haze in winter would likely occur at a higher frequency in China as a result of the changing boreal cryosphere, such as Arctic sea ice loss in the preceding autumn and extensive boreal snowfall in early winter, posing challenges for mitigating winter haze.