

## Expanding links

Xinjiang accelerates construction, coverage of its 5G network [CHINA, PAGE 7](#)

Manchester United stunned by Swiss team [SPORTS, PAGE 19](#)

## Sign of demand

Higher silicon prices squeeze profits of photovoltaic firms [BUSINESS, PAGE 14](#)



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## NATION'S SPACE INDUSTRY SPREADS ITS WINGS

Blockbuster TV series part of efforts to  
broaden public's knowledge

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Inputting "space engineer" on Chinese search engines usually leads to webpages and posts that recruit such professionals, discuss their incomes and career paths, or tell of their achievements.

However, such searches this summer produced different results — turning up countless media reports and micro blogs featuring the streamed television series *You Are My Glory*.

Based on a novel by Gu Man, the 32-episode blockbuster starring actor Yang Yang and Uyghur superstar Dilraba Dilmurat tells the love story of a rising actress and her high school classmate who now works as an engineer at a State-owned space conglomerate.

Created by internet giant Tencent's production companies, the series premiered on the company's streaming platforms in late July and has generated more than 3.6 billion views, despite only being accessible to subscribers.

One of the country's biggest entertainment hits this year, it has become the most-viewed series on



Tencent's streaming website and mobile device apps.

Although there have been many TV series about workers in the nation's space industry in recent years, *You Are My Glory* is widely believed by observers to be the most successful and recognized. According to leading market research company CData, more than 30 percent of frequent online viewers streaming content from late July to late last month had watched the series. On Sina Weibo, nearly 1.5 billion posts mentioned the blockbuster.

Many viewers — a considerable number of them spouses of employees in China's space sector — said the series realistically depicts the work and lives of these employees, adding that they like the show because it helps them learn more about their loved ones' jobs.

[See Space, page 2](#)



## PAGE TWO



Students from a primary school in Fuyang, Anhui province, experience space rendezvous and docking techniques at the city's science and technology center. WANG BIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## From page 1

Liang Sixuan, an office worker in Tianjin and wife of a space engineer at China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, the country's leading space contractor, said, "I'm not joking, but I really don't know exactly what my husband does at his institute."

"When we first met five years ago, he told me he was working on some big projects closely related to the national interest, but he refused to tell me more about them, only saying that the nature of his job is classified."

"Since then, we have never discussed the details of his work, not only because they are secret, but also because as far as I know, his work relates to carrier rockets — and that is all about science, technology and engineering, which I don't understand," Liang said.

She added that she had always wanted to know more about China's space programs and the people behind them.

Then, in July, she read reports about *You Are My Glory* and quickly discovered the series.

"The series interests me, as it shows what it is like for the scientists, designers and engineers such as my husband who work for our nation's space programs," Liang said. "I made my husband watch two episodes that featured a lot of content about spacecraft research, and he told me some scenes were very like situations he has experienced."

Liang added that she and other wives often complain about their husbands' excessive overtime and insufficient attention to their families, but they have gradually come to understand more about the engineers' choices and career hopes.

"I'm not saying that we won't grumble anymore because of the series, but we truly want to thank the show's screenwriter, director and actors. Their work shows people the struggles, pursuits, sacrifices and happiness of those striving for our nation's space cause, and also helps bring their greater understanding and respect from the public, including family members such as myself," Liang added.

Zhang Jingyi, a freelance Beijing photographer specializing in work involving night sky and space missions and wife of a senior designer at China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, said the TV series shows the real conditions of many space industry professionals, instead of reinforcing stereotypes about typical space engineers.

She added that the show has educated many young viewers about the country's space efforts.

## Engineers' help

A group of engineers from the Shanghai

Academy of Spaceflight Technology was involved in making *You Are My Glory*, and their participation laid a foundation for the show's success, according to Gu Man, whose book was dramatized for the series.

The academy, one of China's leading spacecraft and carrier rocket manufacturers, is part of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

In a post on Sina Weibo, Gu said she is grateful to the many space industry experts who helped with the book's dramatization.

"They arranged tours to Xi'an (Shaanxi province) and Hainan province for us to meet people working at space facilities and to watch rocket launches. They also fact-checked and proofread sections of my script concerning space industry operations and taught actors how to portray real space engineers," Gu posted.

"Without their help, I would not have been able to complete parts of the script about space programs and it would have been harder for the production team to film certain episodes."

Wei Ran, a project manager at the Shanghai Institute of Aerospace System Engineering, a subsidiary of the Shanghai academy, said he and dozens of other engineers at the institute were invited to advise Gu and members of the production crew for the series.

"After receiving permission from the academy, we organized a guided tour of our institute for the production crew to learn some basic facts about a State-owned space research entity, such as the code of conduct and confidentiality rules. For instance, we showed them how an engineer should put his or her phone inside a specially designed signal-blocking locker before entering the office, and how employees are reminded of confidentiality requirements by their computer's screen saver."

"We also demonstrated some basic examples of being a space engineer, such as putting on an electrostatic discharge garment and using the air shower antechamber before entering a highly purified production facility," he said.

"To enable the production crew members to familiarize themselves with the way in which engineers meet and discuss research issues, Wei and his colleagues arranged a meeting attended by spacecraft professionals."

"We couldn't take them to a real business meeting because of secrecy rules, so we organized a mock one and asked engineers to discuss the feasibility of a fictional deep-space exploration project," he said. "However, the procedures at the meeting were the same as



Creative items produced by the 208th Institute of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp Second Academy. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“My team's mission is to use creative and flexible ways to communicate the engineers' spirit and contributions to the public.”

Tang Wen, head of creative operations at the 208th Institute of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp Second Academy in Beijing

for real ones, which helped the production staff better understand operations at a space institute," Wei said.

Moreover, some scenes were shot inside the institute's facilities, he added.

"It was difficult or impractical for the crew to build some facilities, such as those with large, sophisticated testing equipment or a huge ground control center, so we decided to let them use some of our infrastructure on condition that no secrets were leaked," Wei said.

"Interestingly, scenes of engineers having dinner were filmed in our dining hall. Most of those appearing in these scenes are researchers at the institute, while the food eaten by the actors was typical of the dishes served to institute workers that day."

*You Are My Glory* is popular with Chinese viewers because it uses an enchanting storyline involving two attractive protagonists, features stylish modern city scenes, and portrays many aspects of the lives and jobs of space industry workers, Wei added.

## Opportunity seized

The institute's participation in the

series was a successful "toe-dipping" experience with the TV industry, Wei said.

"We also want to use the increased interest in space exploration to market a set of interlocking plastic brick toys that we are designing to enable young people, especially students, to develop their knowledge and affection for space exploration," he said.

He added that a subsidiary of the institute — Shanghai ASES Spaceflight Technology — uses the institute's resources to popularize space industry knowledge and culture.

Fans said products such as commemorative pins for each space voyage undertaken by the Shanghai academy are highly collectible items.

Wei's institute is not the only one at the Shanghai academy looking to tap the burgeoning space culture market. The academy's 808th Institute is cooperating with Shanghai Education TV to produce a series of programs for students about the science and technology involved in space exploration, according to Wang Shiyang, a video production manager at the institute.

Wang Ya'nan, editor-in-chief of *Aerospace Knowledge* magazine, said that along with the successes of China's space programs, more people, especially the younger generation, have become interested in the country's space missions. They have started to follow developments in the industry, and they are generating considerable increased demand for products related to the space program.

"Many young people watched TV news about China's robotic landings on the lunar and Martian surfaces, missions by astronauts to build a massive space station, and construction of a global navigation network. Magnificent scenes of giant rockets blasting off, astronauts walking in space, and a probe touching down on Mars are deeply rooted in their memories."

"It is only natural for them to want to learn more about China's space endeavors and to own something connected with space programs, such as books, pins and toys," he said.

## Educational efforts

At the 208th Institute of the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp Second Academy in Beijing, designers have been turning cutting-edge space and defense technologies into affordable consumer goods for the past two years.

Tang Wen, head of the institute's creative operations, said her team members have designed a host of interlocking plastic brick models, stuffed toys and knick-knacks based on space and weapons

systems developed by the academy. The aim is to use interesting, attractive approaches to popularize knowledge about the country's space and defense technologies among young people.

"Many accomplishments by Chinese space engineers can't be publicized because of their classified nature. My team's mission is to use creative and flexible ways to communicate the engineers' spirit and contributions to the public," she said.

A group of the nation's astronauts is involved with one of the 208th Institute's educational efforts.

Guo Lijuan, a senior editor in the institute's publication section, said several astronauts, including Yang Lwei, China's first space traveler, and renowned space experts have been invited to meet and address students from primary and middle schools during the institute's annual "Space Class" educational activities, which have been held across the nation since 2014.

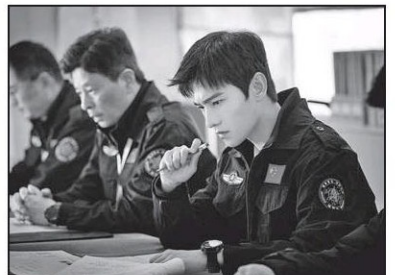
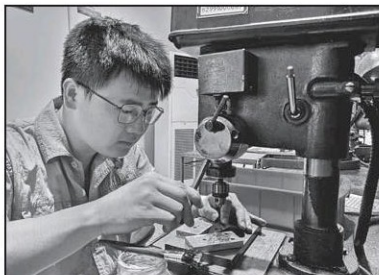
"The Astronaut Center of China is very supportive of the activities and allows the astronauts to take part as long as they have time. The astronauts share their training and spaceflight experiences with students and encourage them to study hard and realize their dreams," Guo said, adding that each session with the astronauts attracts large numbers of students and teachers.

The institute also regularly organizes visits by space experts and science publicity researchers to schools nationwide, especially those in underdeveloped central and western regions, to help teachers design courses about spaceflight science and technology, according to Guo, whose job includes planning and implementing educational activities.

"Wang, from *Aerospace Knowledge*, said such activities will inspire a generation of young people to explore those "vast, magnificent unknown parts of our solar system, the galaxy and the entire universe," and will encourage them to engage with China's space endeavors.

Ma Qian, a project manager at the 208th Institute who supervises Tang and Guo, said State-owned space conglomerates such as China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp have started to realize the importance of popularizing space culture and related businesses.

"The company's executives know that the more people we get to understand and love our space programs, the more support we will receive from the public," Ma said, adding that the company's institutes have been urged to allocate part of their budget to educational and publicity work.



Left: A technician works on a component at a Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology workshop. XINHUA PHOTO Center: Primary school students in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, make space models on a special course. ZHOU HONGFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY Right: A scene from the *You Are My Glory* TV series, which depicts the lives and roles of space industry workers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY