BUSINESS

Siemens Healthineers CEO sees opportunities in China's healthcare shift

By **LI JING** and **LIU ZHIHUA**

China's accelerated transition toward innovation-driven growth and a stronger focus on chronic disease management is opening up new opportunities for global med-tech companies, Siemens Healthineers CEO Bernd Montag said, as the company deepens investment in this key market.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily on the sidelines of the recent China Development Forum 2026, Montag said China is moving beyond a catch-up phase to become a driver of global healthcare innovation.

"China's innovation system is now fully up to date with the global frontier, and in some areas it is setting the pace," he said.

Montag identified artificial intelligence in healthcare, medical robotics and brain-computer interfaces as areas where China is emerging as a global forerunner.

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Still, he said the next phase will depend on whether technological breakthroughs can be translated into globally competitive, scalable businesses.

"There is a difference between innovation and building companies that can scale and finance their own growth," he said, noting many startups still face challenges in commercialization and integration.

He added that the long-term value of AI in healthcare will depend on deep integration into clinical workflows, rather than fragmented stand-alone applications.

China's healthcare transformation is being shaped by long-term policy priorities. The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) targets raising average life expectancy to 80 years, building on current levels of about 79.25 years.

That direction aligns with the Healthy China 2030 initiative, which emphasizes disease prevention, full-cycle health services and stronger primary care.

Montag said this marks a structural transition from acute, hospital-centered treatment toward the continuous management of chronic and age-related diseases, including cardiovascular conditions, cancer and neurodegenerative disorders.

"Better healthcare is not only about affordable products, but about changing how patient care is delivered," he said, pointing to earlier diagnosis, coordinated treatment pathways and long-term patient monitoring.

China's tiered hospital system and policy coordination could enable large-scale deployment of screening and chronic disease management programs efficiently, he added.

For Siemens Healthineers, the shift toward chronic disease management aligns directly with its portfolio, Montag said.

The company is focusing on expanding early detection, advancing precision treatment and using AI to scale healthcare delivery.

Applications such as faster imaging, minimally invasive interventions and AI-assisted diagnostics could improve outcomes while addressing workforce constraints, particularly as demand rises with an aging population.

"We need to use AI and digitalization in order to scale the delivery of healthcare," he said.

At the same time, the company has expanded its local footprint in China as part of a dual strategy of supply chain resilience and market proximity.

It employs about 8,000 people in China and is investing 1 billion yuan ($139 million) in a new research and manufacturing facility in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong province, which is expected to be operational by the end of 2027.

The facility will focus on the research and production of angiography equipment and core components for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) systems, serving both domestic and overseas markets.

Montag said China plays a dual role as both a major market and an increasingly important innovation and manufacturing hub within the company's global network.

Chinese companies have made rapid progress, particularly in imaging and AI-enabled diagnostics, intensifying competition in the domestic market, he said.

He described the sector as entering a phase of "innovation on a level playing field", reflecting the maturity of China's industrial and research ecosystem.

He also noted that the regulatory process has become more transparent and predictable, showing improved communication with authorities, though further efficiency could still be gained in approval timelines.

Montag said China's healthcare transition could have implications beyond its borders, particularly as countries grapple with aging populations and rising chronic disease burdens.

He described China as a potential test case for large-scale healthcare system reform, combining policy coordination, technological adoption and systemwide implementation.

For multinational companies, he said, the shift requires a reassessment of China's role.

"China is not just a market," Montag said. "It is a source of collaboration and inspiration."

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Track safety

Maintenance workers from China Railway Taiyuan Group's Hudong electric locomotive depot inspect high-voltage insulation equipment on a locomotive, part of a company-wide safety drive for heavy-haul trains on the Datong-Qinhuangdao Railway, which moves 350 million metric tons of coal annually. LIU BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

A massive crowd of music fans packs the venue of a music festival in Rizhao, East China's Shandong province, on Oct 6. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Live performance market catching fire

Concertgoers support sectors far beyond ticket sales, thanks to spillover effects

By **WANG KEJU**
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A growing number of Chinese localities are rolling out targeted policies designed to transform large-scale concerts and cultural events into fresh economic engines, as these events have emerged as catalysts that generate ripple effects across hospitality, dining, transportation and retail sectors, analysts said.

The recently released outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) has identified the expansion of culture, sports and tourism consumption as a key priority, calling for optimized approval processes for commercial performances and sporting events — a signal that China's multibillion yuan concert economy is entering a new phase of quality-driven growth.

Fans from other cities traveling for a show might spend on flights, hotels, meals, souvenirs and even extend their trips to explore local attractions, said Jiang Zhao, associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

"What begins as a single transaction becomes a cascade of economic activity," Jiang said.

According to a report released in January by the China Association of Performing Arts, large-scale performances generate an average multiplier effect of 1:6.85 for other forms of consumption.

This multiplier effect means that for every 1 yuan ($0.14) spent on a concert ticket, nearly 7 yuan of additional consumption is generated in surrounding spending scenarios.

In 2025 alone, major commercial events with audiences exceeding 5,000 people drove more than 220 billion yuan in ancillary spending — including on transportation, accommodation, dining, tourism and retail — beyond direct ticket revenue, as noted by the report.

In Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, when pop superstar Jay Chou took the stage for three nights there last April, he did more than entertain tens of thousands of fans.

The concerts attracted 141,800 ticketed attendees and about 28,000 fans who gathered outside the concert venue to revel in the atmosphere. Notably, 85 percent of attendees traveled from outside Nanning, said Nanning Weining Group, a State-owned enterprise that manages the city's cultural and tourism assets.

The three concerts generated 1.26 billion yuan in citywide consumer spending. The figure offered a vivid illustration of how major cultural events produce ripple effects across hotels, restaurants, retail and transportation — far outstripping ticket sales alone.

China's live performance market reached 96.9 billion yuan in 2025 and is projected to surpass 100 billion yuan this year, said consultancy iiMedia Research.

Generation Z has emerged as the driving force behind China's surging concert economy, with nearly 60 percent of young consumers willing to pay for emotional value — a trend that is reshaping consumption patterns, said Tian Lihui, dean of the institute of financial development at Nankai University.

Cities are increasingly structuring their policies to capture these spillovers. Zhejiang province, for example, has introduced tiered rewards this year for large-scale performances based on cumulative ticket sales, revenue scale, and — crucially — the percentage of attendees traveling from outside the province.

Events that choose Zhejiang as their sole China stop, or launch their national tours in the province, may qualify for even higher support tiers.

Guangdong province has taken steps beyond the event itself. Under new measures, the province encourages the integration of performance tickets with broader tourism experiences. A single ticket could now offer discounted or free entry to scenic areas, museums and cultural sites, while also unlocking savings at hotels, restaurants and retail outlets.

China's concert economy is rapidly emerging as a prime investment destination, with strong momentum in physical consumption drawing sustained capital deployment into the sector. Listed companies are accelerating their entry, providing powerful momentum for a comprehensive upgrade of the performing arts industry chain, according to industry data.

A report released in January by the Research Center for Culture and Creativity Finance at Tsinghua University's PBC School of Finance showed that financing activity in the cultural sector accelerated significantly in the first half of 2025. The number of financing deals increased 63.2 percent year-on-year, while total financing volume surged 88.9 percent.

Yantai accelerates new energy cluster with dual green industrial parks

By **ZHAO RUIXUE** in Jinan
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The inaugural phase of the green power industrial park built by Wanhua Chemical Group Co Ltd in Haiyang, a county-level city under Yantai, Shandong province, commenced operations on Saturday, alongside the groundbreaking ceremony for its second phase. The event marks a significant milestone in Yantai's pursuit of green and low-carbon development.

The first phase has an annual production capacity of 100,000 metric tons of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery materials. Strategic partnerships have been forged with leading domestic and international clients, said the company.

Spanning over 120 hectares with a total planned investment of 16.8 billion yuan ($2.4 billion), the Haiyang facility adopts cutting-edge LFP cathode material technology. Its products deliver high energy density, ultra-long cycle life and superior safety performance, catering to diverse demands from the power battery and energy storage markets.

"The new energy industry has become a core engine driving industrial transformation and economic growth. We are seizing this historic opportunity to cultivate battery materials as our second pillar business, striving to become a global industry leader in battery materials," said Liao Zengtai, chairman of Wanhua Chemical Group Co Ltd, which is based in Yantai.

The project is backed by a research team of more than 800 technicians at Wanhua's battery materials research and development center.

"The Haiyang facility serves as a key pivot in accelerating the company's strategic transition by integrating chemical and new energy sectors," said Liao.

By integrating wind, solar and storage systems, the park aims to become a model for the national dual-carbon goals — peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and ultimately reaching carbon neutrality before 2060.

Battery materials, as a critical link in the new energy industry chain, hold vast potential. On March 17, Wanhua started construction on a park in Laizhou, also a county-level city under Yantai. The Laizhou facility is set to house a 650,000-ton LFP materials project.

Both parks will adopt a green power system integrating wind, solar, storage and grid infrastructure to enable low-carbon operations throughout the industrial chain, meeting stringent global carbon footprint requirements.

The two green power industrial parks in Haiyang and Laizhou underscore Yantai's robust momentum in advancing green and low-carbon sectors, and in expanding its new energy industrial cluster, said Wang Songjie, director of Yantai Municipal Development and Reform Commission.

"Yantai has rolled out clean energy projects with a total investment of over 700 billion yuan, establishing a new energy system integrating nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen and liquefied natural gas. The city's installed capacity of clean energy has surpassed 20 million kilowatts," Wang said.

Energy construction SOEs boost green efforts

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China's State-owned energy construction companies are stepping up efforts to boost the green transition, after this year's Government Work Report proposed to accelerate green transformation in all areas of economic and social development, said senior executives of the enterprises.

Deep in the Qinling Mountains, a megaproject implemented by the China National Chemical Engineering Group stands as a testament to this green commitment. The project, which involves the systematic governance of mountains, rivers, forests and wetlands, has revitalized 5,285 hectares of land.

While attending this year's two sessions, Mo Dingge, chairman of CNCEC, said that China's chemical engineering industry has been evolving at a rapid pace. "The scope of chemical engineering is broad, and ecological protection is now a key part of our main responsibility," Mo said, adding that the company will continue maintaining the Qinling project to fulfill the mission of green development.

In the energy sector, the harmony between industry and nature offers surprising benefits. Lu Tiezhong, chairman of China National Nuclear Power, shared an intriguing detail on the sidelines of this year's two sessions — pearl mussels living near the warm drainage outlets of nuclear power plants are producing high-quality pearls due to the suitable water temperature.

"If you visit any of our nuclear power plants, you'll find they are just like well-tended gardens," Lu said. "We hold to the belief that there is no such thing as waste — only resources that have been misplaced. When utilized properly, everything can be a valuable resource."

For 2026, the Government Work Report outlines tasks to strengthen comprehensive ecological governance and vigorously develop a green, low-carbon economy.

This shift is influencing urban planning. Feng Yuan, chief engineer at China Southwest Architectural Design and Research Institute, emphasized that the construction sector — a major carbon emitter — must evolve. She envisioned future "good houses" that are not only structurally safe, but also built with green materials that can perceive and serve user needs.

Meanwhile, energy leaders are mapping out a "stereoscopic" future.

Jiang Yi, chairman of China Huadian Corp, called for the "New Energy Plus" integration. He stressed the need to cultivate the green hydrogen industry and explore new-generation nuclear power to ensure the safety of the new power system.

Similarly, Yang Changli, chairman of China General Nuclear Power Corp, depicted a fusion of industries. He highlighted "photovoltaics plus agriculture" models that turn barren lands into oases, and "marine ranching plus offshore wind power" projects that create "blue granaries" in the ocean.

These visions are already becoming reality on the ground. In Hotan, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, a massive project is using biological and photovoltaic technologies to control sand across 1,467 hectares, turning deserts into power stations. In Jilin province, new projects are achieving a full green cycle of wind-solar hydrogen production, opening new paths for industrial decarbonization, according to Yang.

According to the Government Work Report, energy consumption per unit of GDP dropped by 5.1 percent in 2025, signaling continuous improvement in ecological quality.