

“Yiwu” Dazzling the World in the Year of the Horse



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On the stage of the CMG(China Media Group) 2026 Year of the Horse Spring Festival Gala, Yiwu made a stunning eight-minute appearance, showcasing the city's commercial vitality, inclusive spirit, and development miracle to a global audience. Though not its first time in the international spotlight, the performance once again ignited overseas fascination with this county-level Chinese city.

Across social media, Yiwu-related topics have remained highly visible, from the Milan Winter Olympics and the FIFA World Cup 2026 to the viral "KuKu Ma" (Crying Horse).

The most unexpected viral hit of early 2026 emerged from "Happy Sisters", a small shop in Yiwu International Trade Market District 1. Originally meant to smile, the plush horse accidentally ended up with an unhappy mouth due to a factory error. Dubbed "KuKu Ma" (Crying Horse), it quickly went viral for its aggrieved yet resilient expression. Netizens shared memes inspired by the toy, marveling at the famed "Yiwu speed": "Turning a mistake into a bestseller so quickly."

Supported by Yiwu's foreign trade network, "KuKu Ma" swiftly went global. A client from South Africa placed the first overseas order of over 1,000 pieces, followed by buyers from Russia, Romania, Mexico, Spain, Finland, the Middle East and South America. On cross-border e-commerce platforms, Walmart in the US has listed a 7.87-foot KuKu Ma, and the product is also available on eBay, AliExpress and Temu.

The Straits Times of Singapore analyzed the trend as evidence of Chinese manufacturing's keen understanding of consumer emotion, highlighting industrial upgrading. PR Newswire noted that "Made

in Yiwu" products continue to reach households worldwide.

Following the Yiwu sub-venue for the 2026 Spring Festival Gala broadcast, international interest surged. Viewers called Yiwu "Friendly," "Inspirational," and a "Dream Land," with many saying, "I want to visit this year." A foreign resident proudly called himself a "Yiwuise," inspiring others to follow suit.

Before the Spring Festival, Yiwu's promotional videos appeared on screens across 20 countries and five continents. From street markets to the "World Supermarket," images of the Global Digital Trade Center, new energy vehicle factories, and the China-Europe Railway Express showcased the city's transformation worldwide.

Media outlets including The Manila Times, Vientiane Times, Singapore's TNGlobal, and Germany's FinanzNachrichten carried the story.

"Yiwu represents the future," said Alex, a Finnish businessman who has worked in the city for over a decade "People once thought it was just about small commodities, but now its own brands are going global. This is a Yiwu full of creativity and momentum for the times."



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