NBC's *Today*
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8:01:24 a.m. [TEASE]
13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Sci-Fi City]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: And sci-fi city. We go inside one of the world's most modern metropolises. How this city in China that was nothing but farmland a few decades ago is now leading a tech revolution.

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8:04:46 a.m.
3 minutes and 28 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; A Closer Look at "China's Silicon Valley"]

GUTHRIE: We wanna look closer at Shenzhen, China, the city that is hosting this historic trilateral meeting. It was once a quiet farming and fishing village, and now it is one of the world's most powerful technology hubs. It's frequently referred to as China's Silicon Valley. NBC's Janice Mackey Fair joins us now with that closer look. Janice, good morning.

JANIS MACKEY FRAYER: Savannah, good morning. It's no coincidence that President Trump and other APEC leaders are gathering here in Shenzhen. The skyline alone tells you this is center stage. For the country's tech ambitions, in a place known as China's instant city. Under the skyscrapers, flyovers, and urban sprawl, Shenzhen is wired to move at a different speed—a sci-fi metropolis of 18 million people, where your takeout takes off, robots are part of the scenery, and getting a taxi doesn't always mean getting a driver. This is the face of modern China. A showcase of technological ambition, with AI at the center. Much of it being developed here in labs packed with young engineers.

LIN JIAWEI: We would like our robots to act like humans to understand the environments.

MACKEY FRAYER: That means robot brains at Dexforce are learning how to move, see, and behave. All it takes is a little bit of data from a human to teach a robot skills like sorting packages that can be used in real life. Yet for all the tech wizardry, it wasn't so long ago that much of this was farmland until the 1980s, when China opened up to foreign business igniting opportunity —

UNIDENTIFIED NBC NEWS REPORTER: 150,000 construction workers have been brought in from all over the country

MACKEY FRAYER: — remaking a backwater on Hong Kong's doorstep into one of China's wealthiest cities. Tech giants like BYD, Tencent, and Huawei helping put Shenzhen on the map,

but beneath the shiny surface, there are cracks in the economy, fewer secure jobs, and a technology standoff with the U.S. over the advanced chips powering the AI race. What China does control is a huge manufacturing base and the supply chains that go with it. The Huachengbei mega market alone is a maze of stalls stocked with everything from sensors to circuit boards, shortening the distance between an idea and full-scale production, access to that pipeline is what Joey Gutral (sp?) is chasing.

GUTRAL (SP?): It's immensely cost-efficient and time-efficient, both.

MACKEY FRAYER: His San Francisco-based startup Voyage is making a brain-reading device and splits its time between Silicon Valley and China's version of it.

GUTRAL (SP?): There's more silicon here than there is in San Francisco, if I'm being honest. Like actual silicon, it's everywhere.

MACKEY FRAYER: It's what people call Shenzhen speed, in a city that helped define China's rise, and now finds itself in a different sort of race. There is Shenzhen speed, but with world leaders now in town, it has slowed to apex speed, with traffic, road closures, and not a single protest here, as well as a temporary ban on those drone deliveries and robo taxis until the summit wraps up, Savannah.

GUTHRIE: All right, Janice Mackey Frayer in China's Silicon Valley. Cool. Thank you very