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A Mechanically-Robust and Spectrally-Selective Convection Shield for Daytime Sub-Ambient Radiative Cooling

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A Mechanically-Robust and Spectrally-Selective Convection Shield for Daytime Sub-Ambient Radiative Cooling

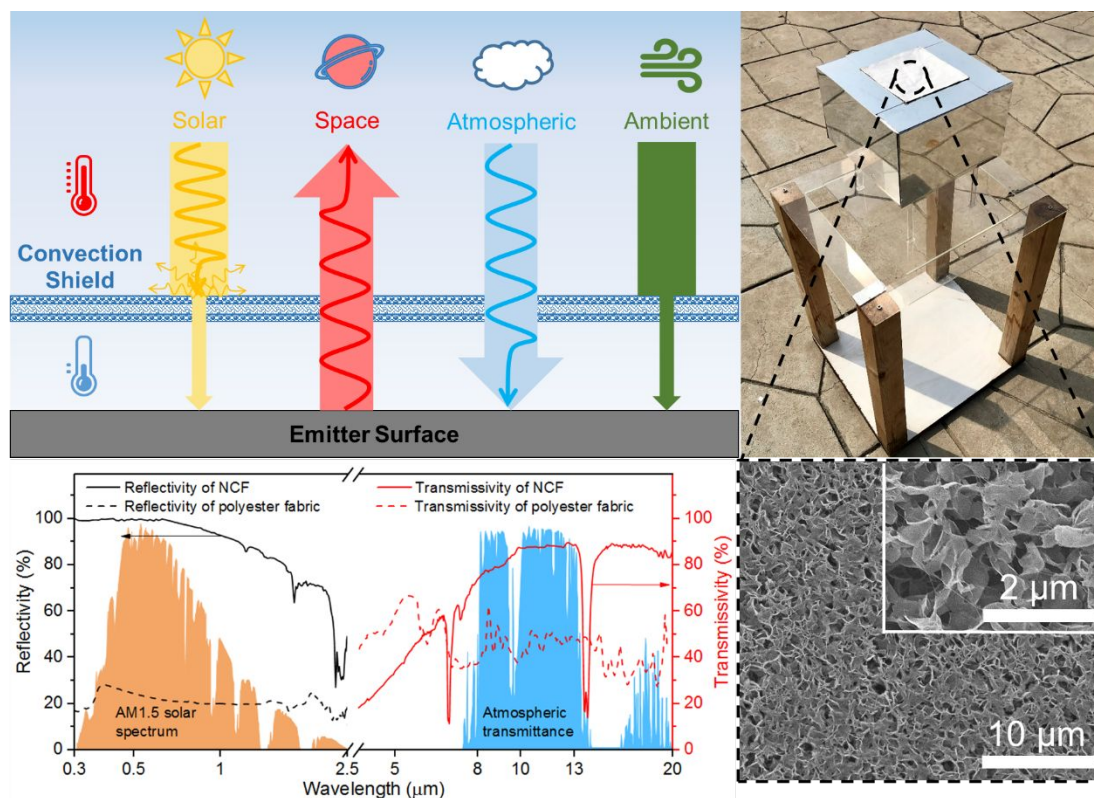
ABSTRACT

As a passive cooling strategy, radiative cooling becomes an appealing approach to dissipate heat from terrestrial emitters to outer space. However, current achieved cooling performance still underperforms due to considerable solar radiation absorbed by the emitter and non-radiative heat transferred from the surroundings. Here, we proposed a mechanically-robust and spectrally-selective convection shield composed of nanoporous composite fabric (NCF) to achieve daytime sub-ambient radiative cooling. By selectively reflecting $\sim 95\%$ solar radiation, transmitting $\sim 84\%$ thermal radiation, and suppressing the non-radiation heat transferred from warmer surroundings, the NCF-based radiative cooler demonstrated an average daytime temperature reduction of ~ 4.9 °C below the ambient, resulting in an average net radiative cooling power of ~ 48 W/m² over the 24-hour measurement. In addition, we also modeled the potential cooling capacity of the NCF-based radiative cooler and demonstrated that it can cover cooling demand of energy-efficient residential buildings in most regions of China. Excellent spectral selectivity, mechanical strength, and weatherability of the NCF cover enable a much broader selection for the emitters, which is promising in real-world deployment of direct daytime sub-ambient radiative cooling.

KEYWORDS

Radiative cooling, convection shield, composite film, mechanically-robust, spectrally-selective

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INTRODUCTION

Radiative cooling is a passive cooling strategy to emit thermal infrared (IR) radiation into the deep universe through the atmospheric transparent window (ATW) of 8-13 μm ,¹ without consuming extra energy or producing environmental pollution.² Remarkable developments have been made in the last decade, particularly with the breakthrough of daytime radiative cooling. Theoretically, an ultra-large temperature reduction of 60 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ below ambient, and a net cooling power of more than 100 W/m^2 is achievable at ambient temperature.³ However, experimentally demonstrated temperature reduction still underperforms.⁴ The principal reason behind this phenomenon is the considerable absorption of solar radiation and the undesirable non-radiative heat transferred from warmer surroundings.

Above all, intense solar irradiance ($\sim 1000 \text{W}/\text{m}^2$) is a tough handicap for daytime radiative cooling,⁵ due to the lower energy flux of outward thermal radiation (100 – 150 W/m^2 depending on surface temperature).⁶ It has been proved that even a 1% increase in solar absorption of the emitter will decrease its cooling power by $\sim 10\%$.⁷ Therefore, minimizing solar absorption is significant for daytime radiative cooling applications. Recently, various engineered cooling materials have been proposed to

1 reflect solar radiation. These strategies can be divided into two main categories as self-
2 reflecting emitters and reflective covers.

3 Self-reflecting emitters (see Figure 1A) barely absorb solar radiation due to high
4 solar reflectivity, but they generally require heat conduction between the emitter and
5 the object to be cooled.⁸ The solar reflectivity of the emitters can be obtained by either
6 combining the emitter with a back metal reflector (silver or aluminum)^{9,10} or
7 employing Mie scattering to reduce solar absorption, including particle-based
8 coatings^{11,12} and porous materials.^{13,14} Despite abundant sub-ambient radiative
9 cooling experiments that have been demonstrated,¹⁵ the deposition process and
10 oxidation problem of reflective layers limit the practical applications. Besides, some
11 white particles are effective ultraviolet (UV) absorbers,¹⁶ which degrades the solar
12 reflection.¹⁷

13 In contrast, reflective covers (see Figure 1B) reflect solar radiation and are
14 transparent for IR radiation at the same time, allowing the object beneath to emit heat
15 to outer space.¹⁸ Thus, it can be referred to as a direct radiative cooling approach,
16 spatially decoupling the demand of solar reflection from the thermal emitter. Reflective
17 covers are generally made of low IR-absorptivity materials with high porosity,¹⁹ which
18 have been used as personal thermal management textiles.²⁰ Porous structures in
19 reported materials were either prepared by electrospinning²¹ or extraction of a
20 sacrificial phase.²² Kim et al. prepared electrospun polyacrylonitrile nanofibers
21 (NanoPAN) with a solar reflectivity of 95% and an IR transmissivity of 70%. However,
22 achieving precise control over the morphology of nanofibers remains challenging.²³
23 Torgerson et al. fabricated the polymer filter (STATIC) by extracting sacrificial
24 particles of ZnO in the composite of polyethylene resin, which may bring
25 inconvenience and incomplete treatment.²⁴ Similarly, a 6-mm-thick polyethylene
26 aerogel (PEA) with a solar reflectivity of 92.2% and an atmospheric window
27 transmissivity of 79.9% was developed via thermally induced phase separation (TIPS)
28 of paraffin oil.²⁵ Although the above materials have achieved daytime sub-ambient
29 radiative cooling, the mechanical strength needs to be further improved to meet the
30 demands for practical applications.

31 In addition to solar absorption, non-radiative heat transferred between the
32 surroundings and the emitter surface is another important factor that limiting the
33 cooling performance in sub-ambient scenarios. Studies have shown that the non-
34 radiation heat transfer coefficient (h_c) can reach up to 40 W/m²·K when wind speed

1 reaches 12 m/s,²⁶ indicating that it is difficult to realize sub-ambient temperature
2 reduction if the non-radiation heat transferred cannot be effectively suppressed.²⁷ To
3 combat this, convection shields that isolate emitters from the surroundings are required
4 for sub-ambient radiative cooling.²⁸ To date, few materials have been proposed as
5 desirable convection shields. For instance, ZnSe,³ ZnS,²⁹ or CdS³⁰ cannot be used
6 under direct sunlight during the daytime. Thin polyethylene (PE) films^{31,32} lack
7 durability and mechanical strength for outdoor applications. The cooling capacity of
8 special-shaped configurations of PE, e.g. multilayer films,³³ corrugated structures,³⁴
9 and meshes³⁵ are undesired.

10 In this context, we proposed a mechanically-robust and spectrally-selective
11 convection shield for daytime sub-ambient radiative cooling. The convection shield is
12 composed of nanoporous composite fabric (NCF) using affordable materials via a
13 scalable fabricating process. The NCF can not only suppress non-radiative heat
14 transferred from warmer surroundings but also reduce absorbed solar radiation of the
15 emitter surface, while maintaining high IR transparency to thermal radiation from the
16 emitter simultaneously.

17 We first obtained the NCF endowed with a solar reflectivity of ~95% and an IR
18 transmissivity of ~84% by optimizing the pore size using Mie theory. During outdoor
19 cooling experiments for a NCF-based radiative cooler, we reported an average daytime
20 sub-ambient temperature reduction of ~4.9 °C, and an average net radiative cooling
21 power of ~48 W/m² over 24-hour period. We then demonstrated the durability
22 performance of the NCF with desired mechanical strength, hydrophilicity,
23 thermostability, and UV-resistance. Further simulation suggested that a temperature
24 reduction as high as ~10 °C, and a considerable net radiative cooling power up to ~100
25 W/m² can be reached by equipping the NCF atop solar-reflecting emitters. Additionally,
26 modeling results indicated that the NCF-based radiative cooler can cover cooling
27 demand of energy-efficient residential buildings in most regions of China. This
28 convection shield can be easily applied and removed on various substrates repeatedly,
29 not only improving the cooling performance but also protecting the beneath objects
30 from harsh weather. More compelling, the NCF mitigates the demanding spectral
31 selectivity of the emitter, enabling more emitter materials with unfavorable solar
32 reflectivity but good thermal emissivity to achieve direct sub-ambient daytime radiative
33 cooling.

1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2 **Radiative Properties of the NCF.** For daytime radiative cooling, the spectrally-
3 selective convection shield should be designed as a solar-reflecting and IR-transparent
4 shield. Thus, the PE is selected as the raw material for its intrinsically low IR
5 absorptivity.³⁶ The optical properties of the PE (refractive index and extinction
6 coefficient)³⁷ are represented in Figure S1. The absorptivity and transmissivity of a
7 100- μm -thick PE were modeled by the generalized transfer matrix method³⁸ as shown
8 in Figure S2. The results show the existence of small absorption peaks around 3.5, 7,
9 and 14 μm , corresponding to the stretching vibration of C–H and C–C bonds.³⁶ Despite
10 that, the absorptivity is very low in the whole waveband, resulting in high transmissivity
11 in the IR spectra.

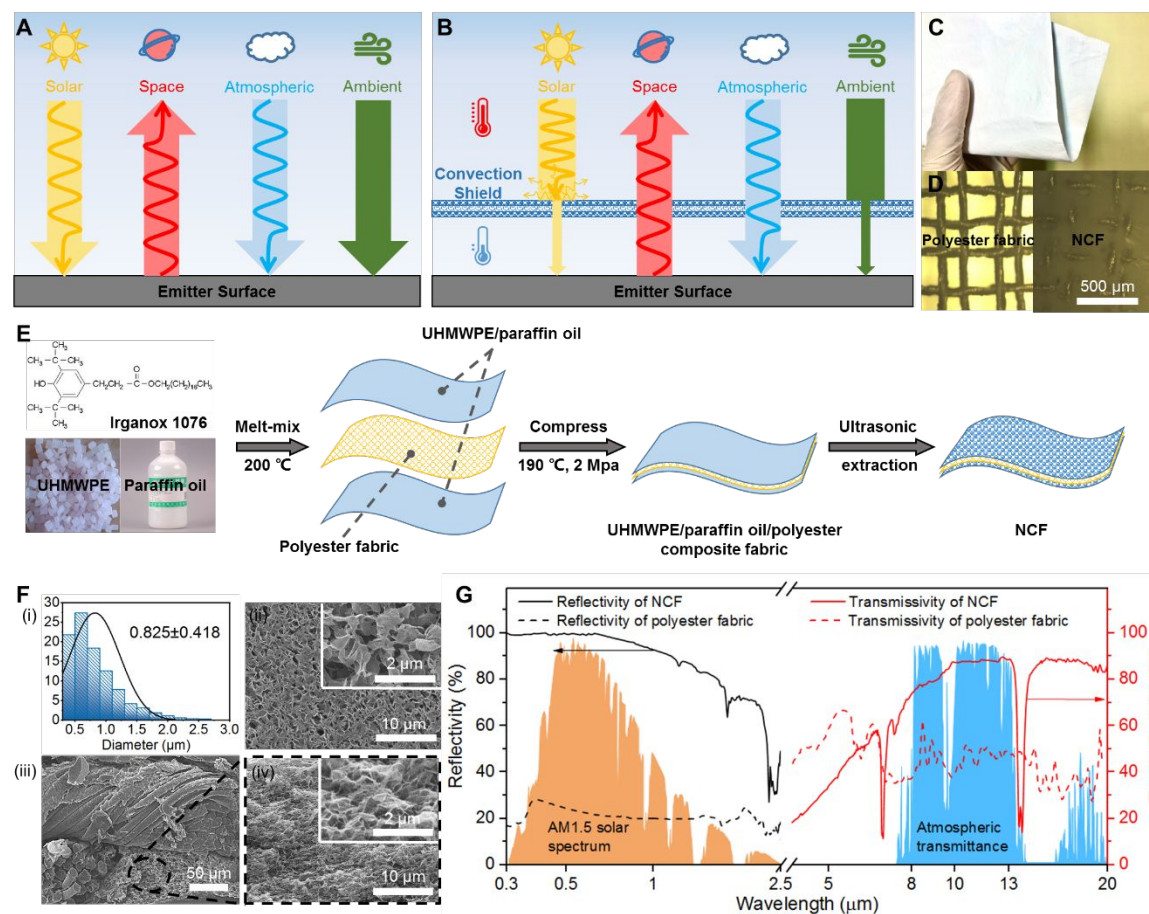
12 Meanwhile, Mie scattering takes place in situations where the object size is
13 comparable to the wavelength of the incident light.³⁹ Therefore, it is practicable to
14 exploit scattering by size-controlled air pores to maximize solar reflectivity while
15 maintaining high IR transmissivity.⁴⁰ By solving Maxwell's equations, the calculated
16 scattering efficiency factor Q_{sca} is shown in Note S1. The Q_{sca} for air pores of specified
17 radius are compared in Figure S3. Results show that the pore size is a critical parameter
18 for scattering efficiency. With increasing the pore size, the scattering efficiency
19 improves and tends to be stable with larger radiuses. However, the pore with a radius
20 less than 0.2 μm scarcely interferes with IR radiation, guaranteeing the high
21 transmissivity of PE. To obtain spectral selectivity with high solar reflectivity and high
22 IR transmissivity, the Q_{sca} should be high enough in the solar spectrum and as low as
23 possible in the ATW. To quantitatively optimize the pore size, we determined a
24 comparative factor (η) as the ratio of the weighted average scattering efficiency in the
25 solar spectrum to that in the ATW (see Note S2). As shown in Figure S4, the Q_{sca} in the
26 solar spectrum plateaus when pore radius exceeds 0.5 μm , while that in the ATW keeps
27 on upgrading. η drops sharply as the radius increases, which is acceptable with a value
28 over hundreds,²⁴ meaning a striking contrast between the scattering efficiencies in the
29 solar spectrum and the ATW. Accordingly, pores of radius between 0.2 and 0.5 μm are
30 structurally designed in the NCF. The combination of intrinsic mid-IR transparent
31 material and nanopores changes spectral response of the NCF to electromagnetic waves,
32 thereby achieving selectively spectral control.

33 We then fabricated the NCF with paraffin oil as the diluent of ultrahigh molecular
34 weight polyethylene (UHMWPE) via TIPS method⁴¹ (see Figure 1E). Polyester woven

1 fabrics were used as the composite medium to provide mechanical strength. A
2 photograph of the fabricated NCF sample with a thickness of $\sim 200 \mu\text{m}$ is shown in
3 Figure 1C. The resultant NCF is flexible and has a balanced white color, which can
4 effectively scatter incident light in a hemispherical solid angle, avoiding discomfort
5 glare caused by strong specular reflection.⁴² The pre- and post-treatment of the
6 polyester fabric are compared with the optical microscopy images shown in Figure 1D.
7 It can be observed that there are many large irregular holes between adjacent warp and
8 weft yarns in the polyester fabric. After compositing, the polyester mesh is wrapped
9 with the UHMWPE phase, without being destroyed under hot-compressing temperature.

10 Moreover, Figure 1F shows the typical internal porous structures of the surface
11 and cross-section view of the NCF. The pore size distribution shown in Figure 1F-(i)
12 indicates that the average diameter of the pores is about $0.825 \pm 0.418 \mu\text{m}$. The existent
13 of inter-connected nanopores can be clearly observed in the surface (see Figure 1F-(ii))
14 and cross-section view (see Figure 1F-(iii) and (iv)) SEM images. Comparatively, the
15 pores in the cross-section view are denser and more flat than those in the surface view
16 due to the preparation process of hot-compress. The polyester fabric is adequately
17 wrapped in the surrounding UHMWPE phase, as shown in Figure 1F-(iii). The
18 nanoporous structure eventually yields a high porosity of 84%, and a low bulk density
19 of 0.21 g/cm^3 , enabling the NCF to be more flexible for practical applications.

20 Thanks to the nanostructure and natural characteristics of the PE, the NCF exhibits
21 a near-ideal spectral selectivity: strong solar reflectivity and high IR transmissivity (see
22 Figure 1G). The weighted average solar reflectivity of the NCF is $\sim 95\%$ due to strongly
23 scattering at short wavelengths (0.3 to $2.5 \mu\text{m}$), while that of polyester fabric is only
24 $\sim 22\%$. Besides, the IR transmissivity of the NCF reaches $\sim 84\%$, which is comparable
25 to that of most available nanoporous materials,⁴³ while that of polyester fabric is only
26 $\sim 44.6\%$. The increased IR transmissivity of the NCF is attributed to two main reasons.
27 First, the nanoporous UHMWPE around the polyester fibers decreases the reflected IR
28 waves and helps to increase IR transmissivity.⁴⁴ Second, the internal structure of
29 materials is crucial to transmissivity.^{45,46} Many UHMWPE phase nanopores are formed
30 in the gaps of fabric after compositing, which diminishes the distance between the
31 adjacent fibers in the polyester mesh and thus help to increase IR transmissivity. These
32 optical properties are necessary for spectrally-selective convection shields to reflect
33 solar radiation but transmit IR radiation. Cooling capacity of the NCF-based radiative
34 cooler with different solar reflectivity and IR transmissivity is illustrated in Figure S5.



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Figure 1. Optical property and morphology of the NCF. Schematic of (A) traditional radiative module and (B) spectrally coupled radiative module with a convection shield. (C) Photograph of an NCF sample. (D) Optical microscopy images of the polyester fabric (left) and the NCF (right). (E) Schematic outlining for fabricating the NCF. (F) Microstructure of the NCF. (i) Pore size distribution, SEM images of (ii) the surface view, (iii) cross-section view, and (iv) enlarged cross-section view. (G) Solar reflectivity and IR transmissivity of the NCF. Normalized AM1.5 solar spectrum⁴⁷ and atmospheric transmittance are shown for reference.

1 **Cooling Performance Measurements.** We measured the radiative cooling
2 performance using the NCF with a black emitter during both day and night over a
3 continuous 24-hour period in Tianjin, China (39.13°N, 117.2°E; 3.5-m altitude). We
4 firstly compared the stagnation temperatures of the bare cooling device (see Figure 2A)
5 and the NCF-based radiative cooling device (see Figure 2B). The two devices were
6 placed side by side and supported by 1000-mm-height wooden timbering to minimize
7 the conductive heat transferred from the ground. The schematic of the apparatus is
8 shown in Figure 2C. Polystyrene foam was used as the heat insulator, with the external
9 surfaces covered by reflecting aluminum mirrors to prevent heating from incident
10 sunlight. The custom-fabricated NCF was fixed atop the thermal emitter with a small
11 air gap, serving as a solar reflector and convection shield.⁴⁸

12 The temperature difference of the two devices are compared with the thermal
13 images captured in the midday, as shown in Figure 2D. The NCF protected the black
14 emitter from overheating caused by absorption of solar radiation. For instance,
15 temperature of the bare emitter was 45.0 °C under direct sunlight, while that of the
16 NCF-based emitter was only 33.1 °C. Details can be found in Figure S6.

17 During the 24-hour measurement (see Figure 2E), the real-time relative humidity
18 and wind speed are plotted in Figure 2E-(i), while the stagnation temperature of two
19 emitter surfaces and ambient are plotted in Figure 2E-(ii), along with the
20 coinstantaneous solar irradiance. The solar irradiance fluctuated greatly due to the cloud
21 cover, which slightly deteriorated the radiative cooling effects⁸. The average daytime
22 solar irradiance was ~396 W/m². Moreover, the ambient temperature (grey curve)
23 increased with the solar irradiance, which was higher in the daytime with an average of
24 32.8 °C, and dropped to 27.3 °C at night.

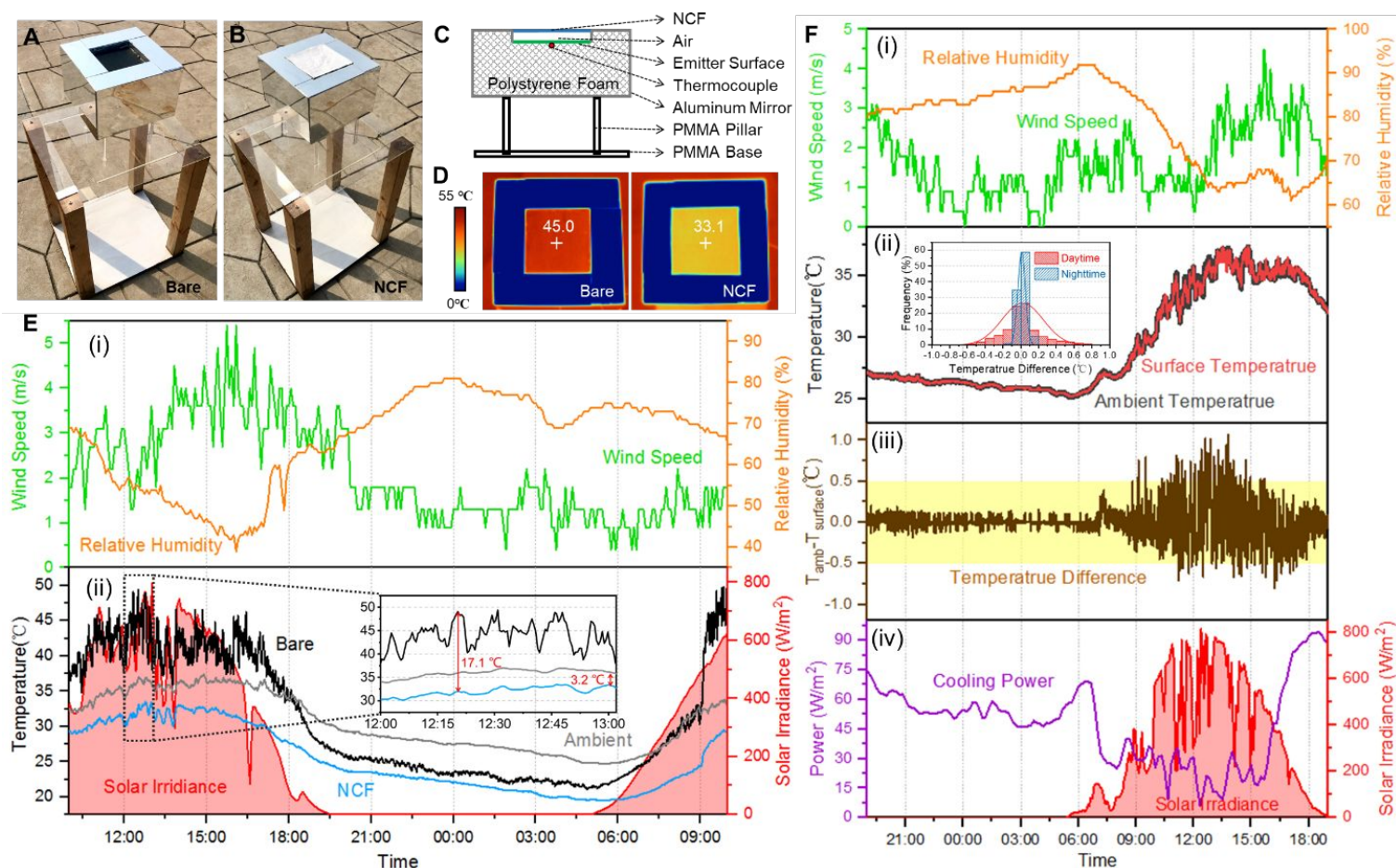
25 We observed that the temperature of the bare cooling device (black curve) closely
26 followed the solar irradiance with distinct fluctuation during the daytime, which could
27 soar up to 49.8 °C at noon. The temperature of the bare case in the daytime was much
28 higher than that of the ambient, while that in the nighttime was more stable and ~4 °C
29 below the ambient. In contrast, the NCF-based radiative cooler (blue curve) constantly
30 maintained a lower temperature than the ambient during the test, with an average
31 daytime temperature reduction of ~4.9 °C. The NCF, with favorable spectral selectivity,
32 helps to minimize solar absorption and transmit thermal radiation from the emitter, as
33 well as to suppress non-radiative heat transferred. As shown in the inset of Figure 2E-
34 (ii), a remarkable stagnation-temperature reduction of ~17.1 °C was contributed by the

1 NCF. When the solar irradiance peaked at $\sim 800 \text{ W/m}^2$, the emitter surface reached a
2 temperature of $\sim 3.2 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ below the ambient. Detailed experimental data for the
3 stagnation temperature test are provided in Table S1.

4 To further explore the cooling capacity of the NCF, we then conducted additional
5 thermal measurements using a feedback-controlled electric heating system¹⁰ (see
6 Figure S7). We eliminated the effect of non-radiative heat transferred between the
7 emitter surface and ambient by keeping them at the same temperature. Under this
8 circumstance, the electric heating power generated by the heater offset the radiative
9 cooling power of the emitter surface because all other heat fluxes were ruled out due to
10 the zero-temperature difference, and thus the net radiative cooling power of the NCF-
11 based radiative cooler was obtained. Detailed results are shown in Figure 2F, with
12 environmental parameters in Figure 2F-(i), temperatures of the emitter surface and
13 ambient in Figure 2F-(ii), surface-ambient temperature differences in Figure 2F-(iii),
14 and net radiative cooling powers along with recorded solar irradiance in Figure 2F-(iv).

15 It can be seen that the surface temperature tightly tracked ambient temperature
16 with the assistance of the heater. The temperature was stable at $\sim 26 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ in the nighttime
17 but fluctuated greatly in the daytime affected by local wind speed and solar radiation.
18 The frequent fluctuations in the daytime caused the momentary oscillations in the
19 feedback-controlled loop, resulting in greater temperature differences between the
20 surface and ambient. However, the mismatch between the two temperatures is
21 constantly less than $1 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ during the test, as shown in Figure 2F-(iii). We further
22 compared the histogram of the surface-ambient temperature difference during the
23 daytime and nighttime in the inset of Figure 2F-(ii). The temperature difference was
24 more stable in the nighttime and less than $\pm 0.1 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$, while that in the daytime mainly
25 distributed between 0 and $\pm 0.5 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$.

26 As shown in Figure 2F-(iv), the NCF-based radiative cooler achieved an average
27 net radiative cooling power of 48 W/m^2 throughout the testing period, with the value
28 being 41 W/m^2 during the daytime (5:30-19:00) and increasing to 55 W/m^2 during the
29 nighttime (19:00-5:30⁺¹). Parasitic solar absorption deteriorated the cooling
30 performance of the emitter. In particular, the net radiative cooling power around noon
31 was only $\sim 20 \text{ W/m}^2$ when exposed to intense solar irradiance of $\sim 800 \text{ W/m}^2$. Detailed
32 experimental data for the net radiative cooling power test are provided in Table S2.



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2 **Figure 2.** Radiative cooling performance of the NCF-based radiative cooler. Photos of the outdoor experimental devices (A) Bare cooling device and (B) NCF-based
 3 radiative cooling device. (C) Schematic of the NCF-based radiative cooler. (D) Thermal images of the bare and NCF-based radiative cooling devices. (E) Temperature

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5 1 test for the NCF-based radiative cooler. (i) Wind speed and relative humidity during the test, and (ii) Sub-ambient temperature drops with recorded solar irradiance,
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7 2 inset shows the temperature of ambient and the two devices during the midday (12:00-13:00). (F) Thermal measurement for the NCF-based radiative cooler. (i) Wind
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9 3 speed and relative humidity during the test, (ii) Temperatures of the emitter surface and ambient, inset shows the distribution of surface-ambient temperature differences,
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11 4 (iii) Surface-ambient temperature differences, and (iv) Net radiative cooling powers of the NCF-based radiative cooler, along with recorded solar irradiance.
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1 **Durability performance Measurements.** Apart from the above radiative
2 properties, it is necessary to evaluate the durability performance of the NCF for long-
3 term outdoor applications. Firstly, considering the reliability of outdoor exposure and
4 UV aging, the UHMWPE was selected as the raw material for the NCF, which only has
5 the simplest methylene structure without polar bonds, resulting in superior chemical
6 resistance.⁴⁹ It has been demonstrated that the composite fabric hardly absorbs UV,⁴⁴
7 and there is no significant effect on the FTIR spectra for the UHMWPE aged at 80 °C
8 and 120 days.⁵⁰ Moreover, we performed several tests on the proposed NCF, including
9 hydrophilicity, mechanical strength, and thermostability.

10 As shown in Figure 3A, the contact angle slightly decreased along with the
11 reacting time, from the initial contact angle of $\sim 140.7^\circ$ to $\sim 109^\circ$ after 20 min, suggesting
12 that the NCF is hydrophobic and has a good waterproofing capacity that can resist
13 potential rain and condensation problems. This is attributed to the aliphatic C–C and
14 C–H bonds of the UHMWPE as well as the nanoporous structure. The contact angle
15 images with different reacting times are supplied in Figure S8.

16 According to Figure 3B, the NCF can withstand a tensile strength of 23.23 MPa,
17 which is twice as much as that of the PE film. It is satisfactory to withstand extreme
18 weather conditions, such as strong winds and even hail in outdoor environments.
19 Meanwhile, the destroyed strain is $\sim 65\%$, indicating better toughness with higher
20 elongation compared to the conventional convection shield, i.e., thin PE film.⁵¹ The
21 excellent mechanical performance of the NCF is owing to the composite medium of
22 polyester fabric. Additionally, the porous UHMWPE mostly exists in the warp and weft
23 yarn gaps of the fabric (as shown in Figure 1D), therefore, the tensile or compressive
24 stress will mainly concentrate on the non-deformable fabric rather than on the
25 UHMWPE part. That is, the porous structure of the UHMWPE phase will not deform
26 conspicuously when the composite film is stressed.

27 The TGA result in Figure 3C shows the decomposition temperature of the NCF is
28 $\sim 400^\circ\text{C}$, which is much higher than the operating temperature. The derivative
29 thermogravimetric (DTG) curve peaks at 443.9°C with a weight loss rate of -
30 $39.65\%/min$. We only observed one step in the whole thermogravimetric test with a
31 total decomposition of $\sim 84\%$, illustrating that the decomposition temperature of the
32 UHMWPE and polyester fabric are very close.

33 In summary, the above results indicate that the NCF has good resistance against
34 rain, hail, strong wind, UV exposure, and thermal aging, proving long-term durability

1 for outdoor applications.

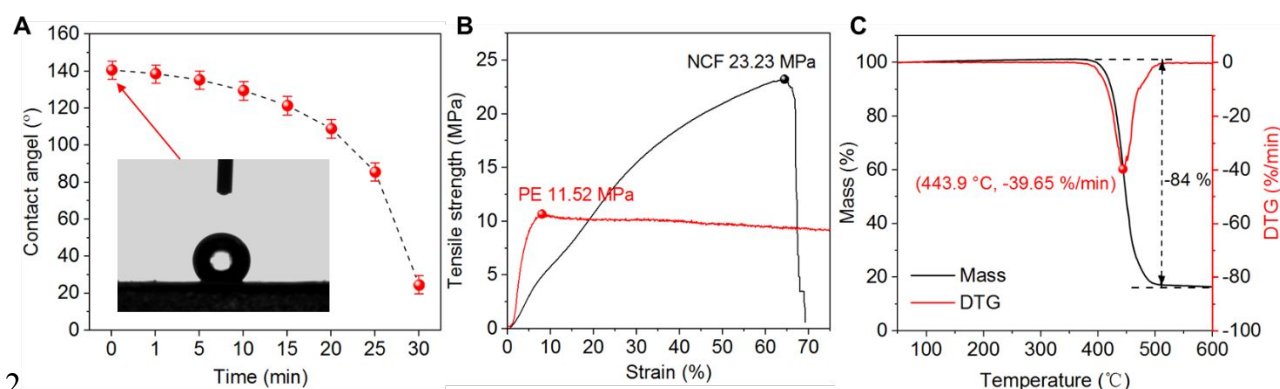


Figure 3. Durability measurements for the NCF. (A) Water contact angles with different reacting times (The error bars correspond to standard deviation caused by the statistical uncertainty in measurement). Inset is the initial water contact angle image at 0 min. (B) Tensile strength test. (C) TGA curves of the NCF.

Modeling Cooling Potential. The NCF is an attractive alternative to other complex, costly, and fragile radiative cooling materials. Despite the above measurements that carried out in a mid-latitude region with high relative humidity and abundant cloud cover, we further modeled the cooling potential of the NCF under various working conditions. To demonstrate the accuracy of the theoretical model presented in Note S3, the modeling results and the above experimental data in Figure 2E are compared in Figure S10.

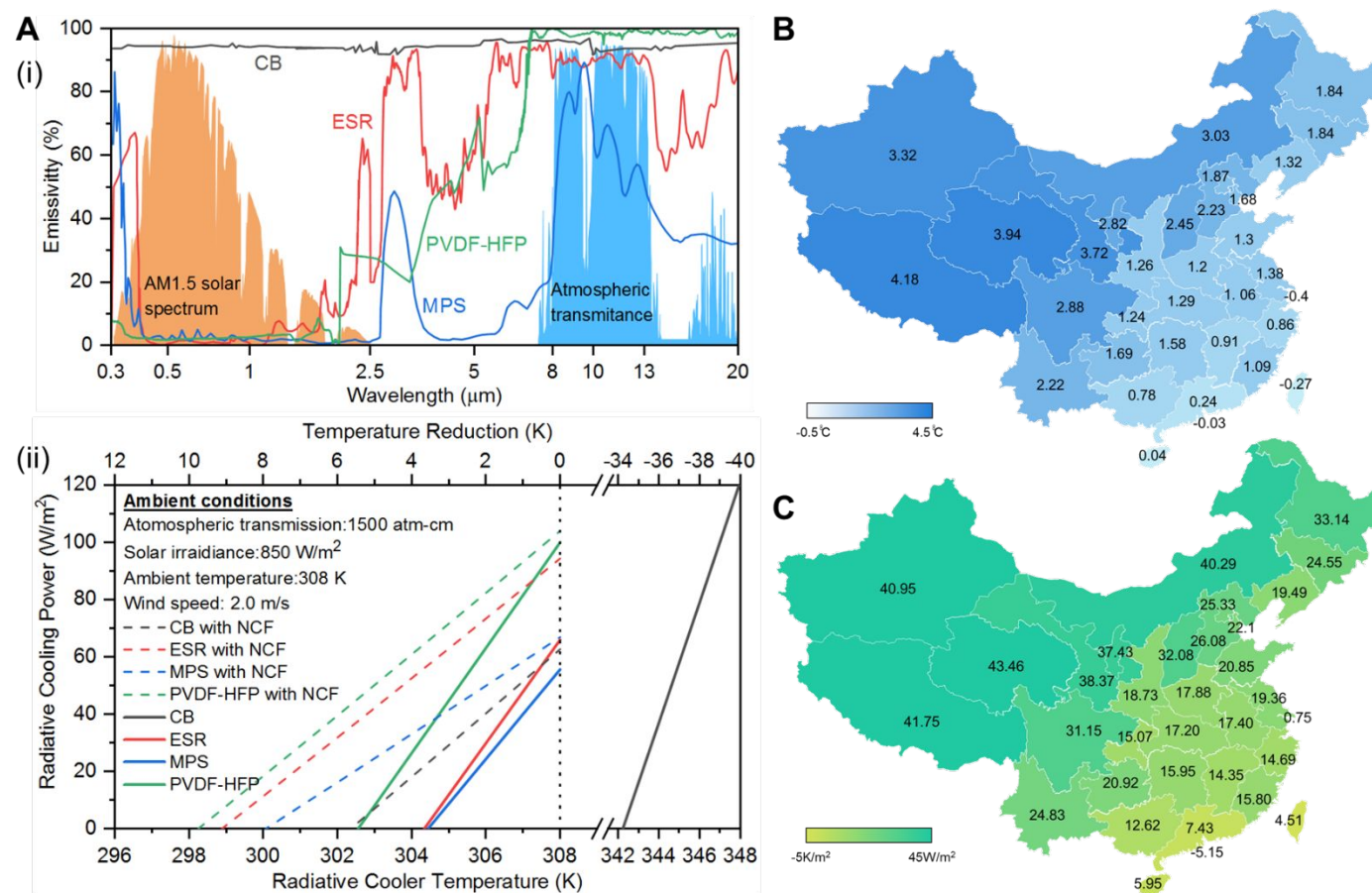
We selected four representative materials for emitters in the modeling: carbon black (CB),⁵² commercial 3M enhanced specular reflector (ESR) film,⁵³ poly(vinylidene fluoride-co-hexa-fluoropropene) (PVDF-HFP),⁵⁴ and multilayer photonic structure (MPS).⁴ The emissivity spectral properties of the four materials are shown in Figure 4A-(i). For instance, the CB has near-unit emissivity in the whole wavelengths, performing as a broadband black emitter. However, the rest materials have particularly low emissivity in the solar spectrum, indicating that tiny amounts of solar radiation can be absorbed by the emitters. The weighted average solar reflectivity of the ESR, PVDF-HFP, and MPS is 94.2%,⁵³ 95%,⁵⁴ and 97%,⁴ respectively. In the IR spectra, the ESR has broader emissivity, followed by the PVDF-HFP and MPS. Nevertheless, the MPS demonstrates the best selective emissivity in the ATW.

Similar to the above experimental results in Figure 2E-(ii), the bare CB case (black solid line in Figure 4A-(ii)) cannot achieve sub-ambient radiative cooling under direct sunlight. However, a temperature reduction of ~ 5.7 °C and a net radiative cooling

1 power of ~ 60 W/m² is achieved by the NCF-based case (black dashed line in Figure
2 4A-(ii)). Moreover, results show that the stagnation temperature of bare ESR and MPS
3 cases is ~ 3.5 °C below the ambient, and ~ 5.4 °C for bare PVDF-HFP case. These
4 modeling results are consistent with the practical demonstrations in the previous
5 studies.^{4,13,55} When covered by the NCF, the stagnation temperatures of the MPS, ESR,
6 and PVDF-HFP are much lower than those of the bare ones, with the temperature
7 reduction being 7.9 °C, 9.1 °C, and 9.8 °C, respectively. The further temperature
8 reduction is attributed by the NCF with strong solar reflection and non-radiative heat
9 flux suppression. In addition, a considerable cooling power of ~ 100 W/m² can be
10 achieved by the NCF-based PVDF-HFP case, against intense solar irradiance of 850
11 W/m². The employment of the NCF can effectively improve the cooling performance,
12 especially for emitters with undesired solar reflectivity. That means the NCF enables
13 the use of simpler emitters with unfavorable solar reflectivity but good thermal
14 emissivity, relieving the demand for high solar reflection of beneath thermal emitters.
15 Further comparative studies on the cooling performance of the NCF against other
16 potential convection shield materials can be found in Figure S11.

17 We also predicted the temperature reduction and net radiative cooling power of
18 the NCF-based radiative cooler in different regions of China based on meteorological
19 parameters in the typical year during the cooling season.⁵⁶ The average hourly
20 meteorological data during the daytime were obtained from the EnergyPlus,⁵⁷
21 including solar irradiance, ambient temperature, dew point temperature, wind speed,
22 and cloud cover, which are listed in Table S3. The cooling season of different regions
23 can be found in Table S4. Profiles of temperature reduction and net radiative cooling
24 power are highly correlated nationwide (see Figures 4B and 4C). The NCF-based
25 radiative cooler shows greater cooling potential in the Northwest than in the Southeast.
26 More specifically, the temperature reduction increases from -0.4 °C in Shanghai to 4.18
27 °C in Tibet, while the net radiative cooling power increases from 0.75 W/m² to 41.75
28 W/m². Some coastal regions in the Southeast cannot achieve daytime sub-ambient
29 radiative cooling, mainly due to the local humid atmosphere. The results are consistent
30 well with the experimental ones in Hong Kong⁵⁸ and Shanghai.²⁷ The maximum net
31 radiative cooling power occurs in Qinghai, with the value being 43.46 W/m², which is
32 attributed by low relative humidity and thin atmosphere in this region.⁵⁹ Considering
33 that the average cooling load of energy-efficient residential buildings in most regions
34 of China is less than 10 W/m² in the cooling season,⁶⁰ passive radiative cooling

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4 1 technology with the NCF can cover the cooling demand in most regions of China.
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 2 **Figure 4.** Modeling cooling potential by using the NCF. (A) Cooling potential with different emitters in arid regions. (i) Emissivity spectral profiles of four selected
 3 emitters, and (ii) theoretical daytime cooling power potential. Profiles of (B) temperature reduction and (C) net radiative cooling power of the NCF-based radiative
 4 cooler in China.

1 CONCLUSIONS

2 In summary, we fabricated a convection shield composed of nanoporous composite
3 fabric (NCF) using low-cost materials via a scalable fabrication process. The NCF
4 exhibits near-perfect spectral selectivity with a solar reflectivity of ~95% and an IR
5 transmissivity of ~84%, and favorable UV-resistance, mechanical strength,
6 hydrophilicity, and thermostability. We demonstrated a continuous sub-ambient
7 cooling performance with an average daytime temperature reduction of ~4.9 °C and an
8 average net radiative cooling power of 48 W/m² over the 24-hour period. Further
9 modeling results indicated that a temperature reduction of ~10 °C and a net radiative
10 cooling power exceeding 100 W/m² can be achieved under direct solar irradiance of
11 850 W/m². Moreover, radiative cooling technology with the NCF can cover cooling
12 demand of energy-efficient residential buildings in most regions of China. This
13 convection shield can be easily applied and removed on various substrates repeatedly,
14 not only improving the cooling performance but also protecting the beneath thermal
15 emitters from harsh weather. More compelling, the NCF enables the use of simpler
16 thermal emitters with unfavorable solar reflectivity but good thermal emissivity, which
17 can pave the way for wider deployment of direct daytime sub-ambient radiative cooling.
18 In addition to acting as the convection shield for radiative cooling modules, the NCF
19 also shows the potential of being personal radiative thermal management textiles.

20 EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

21 **Materials.** The UHMWPE powders with a viscosity average molecular weight of
22 1.6*10⁶ g/mol were provided by Shanghai Research Institute of Chemical Industry Co.,
23 Ltd., China. #70 paraffin oil, used as the diluent, was offered by Shanghai Shanyang
24 Lubrication Co., Ltd., China. Irganox 1076 (b-(3,5-bis-tertiary butyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)
25 purity >99.9%), used as the antioxidant, was supplied by Qingdao Usolf Chemical
26 Industry Co., Ltd., China. Dichloromethane was obtained from Shanghai Yunli
27 Economic and Trade Co., Ltd., China. Polyester fabrics (110-μm-thick) with loose
28 warp/weft weaves were commercial products, which were selected as the middle layer
29 of the composite to gain mechanical strength, and the linear density was 90 dtex.

30 **Fabrication.** The fabrication could be divided into three main processes as shown
31 in Figure 1E. First, 5 wt% UHMWPE/paraffin oil suspension was melt-mixed in a twin-
32 screw extruder (Thermo Scientific Process 11) at 200 °C with a rotor speed of 60 rpm.

1 To stabilize the products, 0.7 wt% Irganox 1076 was added into the blends. After that,
2 the homogeneous solution was compressed into a film. Second, one piece of polyester
3 fabric was sandwiched between two pieces of the self-made UHMWPE/paraffin oil
4 film, then those three pieces were put into a self-made mold (250*250*0.5 mm) which
5 was heated in a plate vulcanizing machine (YX-25, Shanghai Xima Rubber & Plastic
6 Equipment Co., Ltd., China) to 190 °C under the pressure of 2 MPa for 20 min to ensure
7 the UHMWPE/paraffin oil solution immersed into the woven fabric and wrap the fabric
8 yarns. Finally, the UHMWPE/paraffin oil/polyester composite fabric was immersed in
9 cold water to initiate the TIPS at room temperature, then the paraffin oil was removed
10 by ultrasonic extraction with dichloromethane for three times. After being dried, the
11 NCF was obtained.

12 **Characterizations.** The morphological features of the composite fabric were
13 observed by optical microscopy (BX51-P, OLYMPUS, Japan). The internal
14 microstructure of the NCF was observed by field emission scanning electron
15 microscopy (FE-SEM, S-4800, Hitachi, Japan) at 5.0 kV. The porosity measurement
16 was based on Archimedes' principle, while the density was calculated from its
17 measured volume and mass. The spectral reflectivity between 0.3 and 2.5 μm was
18 measured using an ultraviolet–visible–near-infrared (UV-Vis-NIR) spectrophotometer
19 (Lambda 950, Perkin Elmer) with integrating sphere accessory. The total IR
20 transmissivity was measured using a Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometer
21 (Spectrum BXII, Perkin Elmer) with a gold-coated integrating sphere accessory. The
22 tensile measurement of the NCF was performed with an Instron 4465 instrument at
23 room temperature with the relative humidity being ~50%, the initial gauge length and
24 width were 50 and 20 mm, respectively, the drawing speed was 40 mm/min. The
25 hydrophilicity of the film was measured using a contact angle goniometer
26 (OCA40Micro, Germany), the droplet volume used for static contact angle
27 measurements was 3 μL . The thermal stability of the film was determined by
28 thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) with a Perkin-Elmer TGA2050 instrument at the
29 heating rate of 20 °C/min from 30 to 600°C in a nitrogen atmosphere.

30 **Measurements.** The outdoor experiments were carried out on the rooftop of the
31 43rd academic building in Tianjin University (Tianjin, China), in July, 2020. Carbon
32 black plate, well thermal-insulated by polystyrene foam enclosure, were used as the
33 thermal emitter. External surfaces of the polystyrene foam were covered by reflecting
34 aluminum mirrors. The custom-fabricated NCF was fixed atop the thermal emitter with

1 a small air gap, serving as a solar reflector and convection shield. Poly(methyl
2 methacrylate) (PMMA) pillars were employed as the base of the devices (see Figure
3 2C). The two cooling devices were supported by 1000-mm-height wooden timbering
4 to minimize the conductive heat transferred from the ground. (see Figure 2A and 2B).
5 The temperatures of emitters and ambient were measured by K-type thermocouples (\pm
6 0.3°C inaccuracy), which had been calibrated prior to use. A data logger (RX 6032C)
7 was employed to record the sample temperatures every 30 s. The thermocouples that
8 measure emitter temperature were attached in the center below the emitter surface (see
9 Figure 2C). The thermocouples that measure ambient temperature were placed in the
10 thermometer screen next to the experimental devices (within a 1-meter distance), where
11 air can freely pass by but sunlight was blocked. Thermal images were taken by a thermal
12 camera (Ti10, FLUCK) in the outdoor environment. The weather data, including
13 ambient temperature, solar irradiance, relative humidity, and wind speed, were
14 collected by a digital high precision weather station (TRM-ZS2) installed at the same
15 height as the experimental devices (see Figure S12). The uncertainties of these
16 parameters are shown in Table S5. The thermocouple-measured ambient temperature
17 was also compared with the weather station-measured ambient temperature to
18 demonstrate the accuracy of measurement (see Figure S13). In addition, the net
19 radiative cooling power was measured by a feedback-controlled electric heating system,
20 see Figure S7 for details.

21 **ASSOCIATED CONTENT**

22 **Supporting Information**

23 Figure S1, Refractive index and extinction coefficient of polyethylene; Figure S2,
24 Modeling absorptivity and transmissivity of 100- μm -thick polyethylene; Note S1,
25 Calculated scattering efficiency factor via Mie theory; Figure S3, Scattering
26 efficiency versus wavelength for air pores of specified radius in the NCF; Note S2,
27 Comparative factor of the scattering efficiency in the solar spectrum and the ATW;
28 Figure S4, Weighted average scattering efficiency in solar and the ATW; Figure S5,
29 Radiative cooling power of the NCF-based radiative cooler with different solar
30 reflectivity and IR transmissivity; Figure S6, Thermal images of the bare and the
31 NCF-based device; Table S1, Detailed experimental data for the stagnation
32 temperature test; Figure S7, Schematic of the heating system used to measure the net
33 radiative cooling power; Table S2, Detailed experimental data for the net radiative

1 cooling power test; Figure S8, Water contact angle images with different reacting
2 times; Note S3, Energy balance for emitter surface; Figure S9, Influence of non-
3 radiative heat transfer coefficient on the cooling power; Figure S10, Modeling and
4 experimental surface temperature results of the NCF-based radiative cooler; Figure
5 S11, Cooling capacity of the NCF comparing with other potential convection shield
6 materials; Table S3, Typical annual average daytime meteorological parameters in
7 China; Table S4, Cooling season of different regions in China; Figure S12, Photo of
8 the weather station; Table S5, Measuring range and uncertainty of the measuring
9 instruments; Figure S13, Comparison of ambient temperature measured using a
10 thermocouple with the data from a weather station.

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19 **Notes**

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