

New roads drawing Tibet cities closer

Construction can help protect region's environment, transport official says

By HOU LIQIANG
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Gyaca county is only about 300 kilometers from Lhasa, Tibet. But a journey between them once took more than a day. The mud road studded with rocks was a big headache — not to mention the road winding around Kamba La Mountain, with cliffs above and below at an altitude of around 5,000 meters.

"It wasn't unusual to see accidents when crossing the mountain. In my worst experience, I spent 13 hours there. Even though I hadn't eaten, I didn't feel hungry at all because I had to concentrate on driving to avoid danger," said Tashi, 39, a Lhasa resident who has been driving for a living since 2005.

With paved roads, the journey now takes about six hours and is much safer and more comfortable, Tashi said.

Improvements to the road from Lhasa to Gyaca mirror the change in the traffic conditions in almost all of the Tibet autonomous region, and more changes are coming with increasing financial support from the central government.

More than 4,200 kilometers of highways have been built each year since 2012, increasing the current total mileage of highways in Tibet to more than 82,000 kilometers, according to Chen Chao, deputy head of



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Chen Chao, deputy head of Tibet's transport authority

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The investment in transportation in Tibet has increased by more than 40 percent each year from 2012 and reached more than 40 billion yuan (\$6.1 billion) in 2016. The number is expected to reach 56 billion yuan this year, Chen said.

The highway in Medog county, the last Chinese coun-

ty to be connected with highways, opened to traffic in 2013. All townships in Tibet are expected to be accessible by car before the end of this year.

There is less traffic in Tibet than in many other provincial regions in China. So, rather than build expressways, Tibet developed many high-grade highways — which are similar to expressways but much cheaper and with narrower emergency lanes. The total length of high-grade highways increased six-fold to 304 kilometers between 2012 and 2016, Chen said.

The huge investment and the improved traffic flow have contributed a lot to the economic growth of Tibet. In the past five years, the region's GDP grew by an average 11 percent. It also outperformed all other provincial regions in the first half of this year with year-on-year growth of 10.8 percent.

By 2020, Tibet's highways will reach 110,000 kilometers. It will take less than three hours for people to travel from Lhasa to four other major cities, Chen said.

"Once transport barriers are removed, there will be more commercial activities like logistics and tourism, thus improving local people's livelihoods."

Highways were not built at the expense of the environment. In many areas in Tibet, the construction of highways may actually help protect, rather than damage, the environment, he said.

Without highways, drivers often choose to drive on the smoothest places they can find — even on grassland, which damages it, he said.

I want to be a fireman



A young visitor meets a firefighter from the United States at the 17th International Fire Protection Equipment Technology Conference and Exposition in Beijing on Wednesday. The expo, which runs from Tuesday to Friday, has attracted more than 600 manufacturers from about 30 countries and regions. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

120 children poisoned; bad cakes blamed

By WANG JIAN in Nanchang
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Tainted food sickened 120 children in three kindergartens in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, on Tuesday, and the cause — which some believe was cake — is under investigation, the city's education authority said on Wednesday.

As of 11:30 pm Tuesday, 120 children had been diagnosed with food poisoning at Jiangxi Provincial Children's Hospital. Of those, 36 were hospitalized, 62 were held for observation and 22 who had mild symptoms were sent home after treatment.

Symptoms included vomiting, dizziness and abdominal pain, but no fever.

Feng Shengzhe, a 3-year-old

boy, was among the sick children. His father, who declined to give his name, said the boy ate a cake on Tuesday afternoon at the kindergarten and started vomiting at around 5 pm before dinner.

"More than 40 children in my son's kindergarten ate the cake, and 10 began vomiting," the father said.

Lian Qinchen, another hospitalized 3-year-old boy, who came from another kindergarten, also started vomiting at around 5 pm on Tuesday after eating a cake at the kindergarten, his mother said.

By 4 pm Tuesday, no new cases had showed up, but 32 children remained hospitalized for treatment, according to a statement released by the provincial health authorities.



Medical personnel at Jiangxi Provincial Children's Hospital in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, treat a boy for food poisoning on Wednesday.

WANG JIAN / CHINA DAILY

The city's health and education departments said they are working with the police as

well as local food and drug authorities to investigate the incident. Parents suspected the problem was tainted cakes from the same producer.

"The kindergarten has been buying cakes from a shop which they think are very good," Feng Shengzhe's father said. "I really worry about it, and I will take my son out of the kindergarten when he recovers."

He added that the family will seek compensation from the kindergarten, including medical fees and his loss of income incurred by missing work.

Lian's mother said the kindergarten should increase its awareness of food safety.

Zhang Yi contributed to this story.

Ecological investment soars on plateau's highway project

By HOU LIQIANG

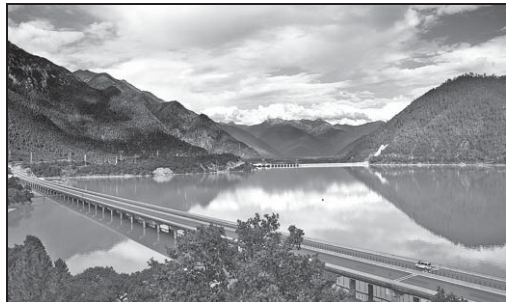
Investment in ecological restoration and protection along a 96-kilometer stretch of the Lhasa-Nyingchi highway has hit 440 million yuan (\$67.2 million), almost nine times the originally planned amount, an official said.

While the construction company invested 170 million yuan, the majority of the work was outsourced to special environmental protection companies, according to Song Xiancai, head of the planning and contract section of Nyingchi prefecture in the Tibet autonomous region.

The highway section, along with another 63 kilometers near Lhasa, opened to traffic in September 2015 after 28 months of construction.

All 15 camps for construction workers, as well as all ground disturbed by stockpiles of construction materials, along the Nyingchi section have been restored and planted with grass and trees, Song said.

Nyingchi, which sits at an altitude of about 3,000 meters in southwestern Tibet, is the first stop for many tourists to the region. Many consider it a perfect transfer station where



A 1,086-meter bridge near Nyingchi — part of the Lhasa-Nyingchi highway — has been open to traffic since September 2015.

HOU LIQIANG / CHINA DAILY

they can adapt to the altitude before heading to Lhasa's even thinner air.

More than 28 local varieties of trees, covering 194 hectares, have been planted along the highway, so that tourists can enjoy diverse plant species, said Zhao Qing, a Nyingchi forestry official.

Among the trees planted were *Paeonia ludlowii* — literally translated as big yellow-flowered peony — and Tibetan cypress, both of which are State-protected plants, he added.

"We also took local people's interests into consideration and planted a lot of fruit trees. They will be able to pick the

fruit when it's ready," Zhao said.

The government encouraged local people to work on the project, or to supply construction materials such as sand or stone.

The total length of the four-lane Lhasa-Nyingchi highway is 409 kilometers. Its total cost is estimated at 32.9 billion yuan. In addition to two tunnels, all the other sections of the toll-free highway were completed in June.

The finished project, which is expected to open to traffic in April, will shorten the journey between Nyingchi and Lhasa to five hours from the current eight.

Acting governor appointed in Guizhou

By CHINA DAILY

Shen Yiqin, former deputy Party chief of Guizhou province, was appointed vice-governor and acting governor of the southwestern province on Wednesday.

The decision was announced during a meeting of the 12th Standing Committee of the Guizhou provincial People's Congress in Guiyang. The meeting also accepted the resignation of former governor Sun Zhigang.

Sun was appointed as the province's Party chief in July. His predecessor, Chen Miner,

was moved to Chongqing as Party chief.

Shen, 57, was born in Zhijin county, Guizhou province. She graduated from Guizhou University in 1982. She majored in history.

A member of the Bai ethnic group, Shen had spent most of her career in Guizhou.

In December 2001, she was named deputy Party chief of Qiannan prefecture in Guizhou, and in 2003 became dep-



Shen Yiqin

uty Party chief of Tongren city.

In 2007, she was named publicity chief of Guizhou and a member of the Standing Committee of the Guizhou Committee of the CPC. She was named vice-governor in 2012 and deputy Party chief in 2015. Guizhou, one of the least-developed provinces in China, has been developing quickly in the last three years. GDP reached 1 trillion yuan (\$153 billion) in 2015 and has kept growing since.

Shen is expected to be appointed governor by the plenary session provincial People's Congress.



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