

CHINA



Wei Taohua (left), a Shui ethnic woman from Guizhou province, displays horsetail embroidery items at an exhibition in Beijing to show Guizhou's poverty relief efforts on Friday. The embroidery is a special art form of the Shui ethnic group and a national intangible cultural heritage. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Bridges offer farmers way out of poverty in Guizhou

Southwest province's stress on role of infrastructure leads to economic growth

By LI LEI
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High bridges are landmarks and architectural wonders worldwide, but in the mountainous region in Southwest China, some of the world's highest bridges have taken on an unusual role — combating poverty.

Sun Zhigang, Party secretary of Guizhou province, said on Friday that the province, after decadeslong efforts to boost infrastructure, is now home to 47 of the world's highest 100 bridges, earning the title "global center of bridges".

The bridges among the mountains and hills — which account for more than 90 percent of Guizhou's

landmass — are helping turn the once isolated province into a gateway in Southwest China, boosting tourism and investment, and helping lift local farmers out of poverty, he said at a news conference held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing.

Figures provided by the Guizhou provincial government show that its highway mileage topped 6,453 kilometers last year, the seventh longest nationwide.

Its 11 airports handled more than 20 million passengers last year, and it is also emerging as a regional hub for high-speed trains as its mileage reached almost 1,300 kilometers last year, official data show.

"The progress has contributed

greatly to Guizhou's economic growth, and lifted its strategic status in regional economic cooperation," he said.

Sun said the improvements have led to a surge in the flows of people, goods and information, and contributed to the growth of investments and tourism.

Guizhou brought in 7,317 programs from outside the province last year, with an actual investment of more than 1 trillion yuan (\$141 billion). It also saw 567 million visits by individual travelers on driving tours, year-on-year growth of 21.6 percent, he said.

The province was one of the country's most underdeveloped regions when China ramped up targeted relief efforts in 2012 to eradicate absolute poverty before 2020.

Nearly 7.7 million farmers shook off poverty between 2013 and last year in Guizhou, with the poverty

rate dropping from 26.8 percent to 4.3 percent, thanks to a slew of measures to boost local industry.

During the same period, the government in Guizhou also launched a massive campaign that saw 1.88 million poor farmers relocated out of mountainous regions unfit for living, with vocational training and jobs available.

As the deadline for the zero-poverty goal draws close, local authorities plan to prioritize building rural infrastructure to lay the foundation for sustainable growth and to help prevent farmers from slipping back into poverty, according to Sun.

"We have paved nearly 80,000 kilometers of rural road and made traveling easier for 12 million farmers," he said, adding that authorities will continue to invest in the roadways connecting counties and towns and let them facilitate poverty relief.

Tea cultivation lures villagers back home

By YANG JUN
and ZHANG XIAOMIN

Tian Hongjun used to work in a brick factory 700 kilometers from his hometown in Tujia autonomous county, Yanhe of Guizhou province.

"It was hard. My wife was left at home to take care of own four children and our 40 mu (2.7 hectares) of land went to waste without farming," the 37-year-old recalled.

Tian's life has been changed by a poverty alleviation project supported by tea farmers from Anji county of Zhejiang province, a famous source of white tea.

Last year, Huangdu village of Anji donated 3.6 million Baiye Yihao tea seedlings to Dazhai, Zhiqiang and Sanhuixi villages of Zhongzhai township, Yanhe county.

Eighty hectares of land was contracted to plant white tea.

There are 5,849 people in the

three villages, more than one-fourth of whom are living in poverty.

Like Tian, they used to work outside the village. Those remaining at home made a living from planting rice, corn or sweet potato.

In April 2018, 20 members of the Communist Party of China from Huangdu village, who became rich by growing white tea, wrote a letter to President Xi Jinping proposing to donate 15 million white tea seedlings to help people in poor areas, an idea fully recognized by Xi.

The Baiye Yihao, or White Leaf No 1 project, brings hope to the villagers in Zhongzhai township.

In Dazhai village, Tian and three other villagers set up the cooperative to grow white tea covering 43 hectares of land contracted from themselves and some other villagers.

With support from local government institutions and experts, the tea has grown very well, said Tian.

"The first batch of white tea will be ready for picking in March," he said.

Tian said next year they will transfer another 27 hectares of land from the villagers to plant white tea.

"Villagers who become shareholders will have higher dividends," said Tian.

He said that villagers can also work in the tea garden to earn more money.

According to Huang Yaqin, an official with the tea industry development office of Yanhe county, Yanhe has a long history of tea cultivation, as its high mountains and rich water make it a suitable place for planting good quality tea.

"The survival rate of 'Baiye Yihao' tea seedlings here is as high as 95 percent.

"The main problem we are facing at present is the difference in topography and climate between Yanhe

and Anji. We need to improve the technologies in accordance with our local environment," she said.

With the Baiye Yihao project, Zhongzhai township has become a demonstration base for poverty alleviation as well as for cooperation between the east and west regions of China, said Yang Chenggang, deputy head of Yanhe county.

"Together with Guizhou University, we will make a development plan for the tea industry of Zhongzhai township.

"In addition to planting tea, we will build an integrated tea and tourism park, relying on existing tourism resources and promote the development of the tea industry," said Yang.

Chen Weiwei contributed to this story.

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Boy remains lost after one week in glacier park

By HUANG ZHILING in Chengdu
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An eight-year-old boy remained missing for the seventh day at a scenic spot in Sichuan province on Friday despite local rescue efforts.

Some 500 rescuers had tried in vain to locate Wen Jingyao after repeatedly searching parts of the Hailuoguo National Glacier Forest Park in Luding county.

His parents said they would make their own efforts to look for their son as well.

Two relatives from his home city of Shiyuan as well as Wuhan in Hubei

province had arrived in Hailuoguo to join them in their own search.

Wen's mother, surnamed Li, said on Friday that she and her son were at a scenic area in Hailuoguo with a friend of hers on Aug 2. The son was walking more than 10 meters in front of his mother and disappeared on a curved road where vision was blocked by trees, Li said.

When the mother passed the trees, she saw a small shallow river in front of her that had to be crossed by stepping on stones, and her son was nowhere to be found.

Before her son was missing, he donned a jacket, dark blue jeans and



rain boots, carrying no water, food or communication tools, Li said.

Soon after Li reported the case to the management committee of the park, the committee gathered more than 200 people to search parts of

the park where the boy might be. But no traces of his whereabouts were found.

"My family has also sought help from three rescue teams in Ya'an (Sichuan province). Each has searched parts of the park for one day and failed to find my son," Li said.

Only an underground river below a glacier is yet to be searched. The family is considering buying an underground detector to search the river, she said.

Li said her family was grateful to all the rescuers who had tried their best.

Shanghai zoo opens for nighttime visitors

By HE QI in Shanghai
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Tottering cub lions, sleeping tigers and Hamadryas Baboons hanging on the trees wowed visitors during the trial nighttime operation of Shanghai Wild Animal Park on Thursday.

Until Oct 15, the zoo has pushed back its closing time from 5 pm to 9 pm. Nighttime ticket sales start at 3 pm. More than 100 species and nearly 5,000 animals can be seen at night.

Located in Pudong New Area, the Shanghai Wild Animal Park features more than 200 rare animal species from around the world. Two main sections — the pedestrian zone and water adventure facility — are available for night visitors while the drive-through area will be closed for safety reasons.

"Night zoos have operated in Singapore and Thailand, but this is the first one in our country. It helps to boost Shanghai's nighttime economy and provides an alternative for visitors at night," said Zhong Yi, deputy general manager of Shanghai Wild Animal Park.

Since some animals sleep during the day and forage at night, the night zoo allows visitors to have a comprehensive understanding of the wild animals and to enhance the awareness of animal protection, according to Li Qingwen, representative of the China Wildlife Conservation Association.

Ensuring that the living habits of animals are not being interrupted is the top concern for park management.

According to park authorities, experts and professionals evaluated the night zoo project and believed that the current operation could guarantee the health and safety of animals. The park also selected suitable animals for display. For example, they only picked seven out of nine species from the monkey section as they are more active during night. Also, the giant panda exhibition area will not open at night.

"We have adjusted the light system for the night zoo, with brighter lighting on the roads, water areas, and toilets to secure visitors' safety

while using diffuse lights to simulate a natural moonlight effect in the animals' living areas," Zhong added.

"I came to the night zoo because of curiosity about the animals' behavior during the nighttime," said Liu Yufei, a 20-year-old student who visited the night zoo on opening day.

"Since I have class in the daytime, the night zoo provides me a new way to spend the night. There are also fewer tourists at night, and the summer weather is comfortable," Liu said.

"But the transportation is an issue," she added.

The night zoo opened six animal-themed exhibition areas, three featured performances, animal-themed restaurants, and souvenirs stores.

It also launched the "Night Animal Tour" and animal shows at Sea Lion Theater and International Circus Theater.

Zhang Caiyun, another tourist who brought her 6-year-old son to the zoo, said: "The colorful lights and the animal tour are more attractive than the daytime activities and I don't have to worry about my son getting sunburned at night."

"The closing of the drive-through area is the only regret. It will be a unique experience to visit rare animals through the dark by tour bus," Zhang said.

Having prepared for about three years for the night project, the park will evaluate its operation to adjust the layout of the animals, types of exhibitions, and the night facilities after operating for a while, according to park authorities.

On the same day that the zoo opened, the city also issued a list of cultural and tourist sites that are opening at night. More than 100 spots were listed, according to Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism.

It included major tourist attractions, art galleries, museums, amusement parks, and traditional scenic spots that cover 16 districts of the city.



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Visitors enjoy a night view of animals and shows at Shanghai Wild Animal Park, which began opening at night, in Shanghai on Aug 5. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Murder suspect nabbed with facial recognition

CHONGQING — With the help of facial recognition technology, police in southwest China's Chongqing municipality have caught a murder suspect who has been on the run for 17 years, local authorities said on Friday.

On July 31, a police officer from Chongqing's Jiulongpo district received an alert from a facial recognition system installed at a local square. The system reported there was a high likelihood that the man captured by the cameras was the suspect of a robbery and murder case in 2002.

The system used by the police can compare images of people on the streets with suspects in the police database and immediately notify police once a match rate crosses a set threshold.

"It was hard to tell whether the man was the suspect because he had been on the run for 17 years and his appearance had changed," said the officer, Qiu Rui. "But I believed then that the facial recognition system is usually more reliable than human eyes, as it makes

conclusions according to a person's facial details such as eye and face shapes."

A police investigation found the man had made frequent phone calls to the suspect's sister. On Aug 2, the police captured the man, who admitted on the spot that he was the suspect.

Local police said the suspect, surnamed Dong, along with three other people, robbed and killed a person on July 1, 2002. While Dong's accomplices were arrested soon afterward, Dong went on the run.

In recent years, monitoring cameras with facial recognition technology have increasingly become the method of choice used by the Chongqing police to deter and solve crimes.

In Jiulongpo district alone, facial recognition systems have helped local police crack more than 200 cases involving fugitives or missing persons and identified over 1,000 traffic violations this year.