

CHINA

Tourism soars sky-high over grand bridge

Guizhou village anticipates landmark opening to welcome waves of visitors

By YANG JUN and LIU BOQIAN in Guiyang

Villagers near the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge in Guizhou province are anticipating a tourism boom as the world's highest bridge prepares to open.

In about a month, the bridge, with a height of 625 meters from deck to water, will open as part of the local expressway system and cut travel time between the two banks from about one hour to just 90 seconds.

Huajiang village in Zhenfeng county sits about 1 kilometer from the span. The village, listed among China's traditional villages, has seen the promise of improved access quickly turn into preparations for incoming tourists.

"We are the village closest to the bridge, and we have the best view," said 35-year-old resident Lin Guoquan. Three years ago, when he learned the massive project would be built on his doorstep, Lin — who had worked in the tourism sector in Yunnan province — returned home and launched a homestay business.

In May 2024 Lin began converting old village houses into guest rooms decorated in Bouyei ethnic style. The homestay opened in October the same year and now offers 27 rooms.

"You can see the bridge directly from your bed," Lin said.

As the opening date approaches, Lin's homestay has become popular. Occupancy rates are high and the rooms often sell out.

"With the bridge opening in September, rooms are filling up fast," he said.

Lin also posts videos of the bridge, the gorge and the surrounding sea of clouds on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok. Several of his accounts tied to the project have attracted more than 1 million followers.

Some villagers are recording daily construction progress on their phones as the structure rises. One blogger who documents the work almost every day on Douyin has drawn more than 240,000 followers, attracting more visitors from nearby areas.



Huajiang village, Guizhou province, lies near the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



Not a day can be wasted and nothing can be sloppy. We are now completing final painting and other finishing work."

Wang Songyu, deputy project manager for the contract section of Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge

At present, Huajiang village has only Lin's homestay and two or three farm restaurants, but more renovations are already underway. Official plans released in July incorporate the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge and roughly 50 square kilometers around it into a coordinated tourism development scheme designed to turn distant check-ins into immersive, zero-distance experiences.

"The bridge's opening is an important milestone," Lin said. "Via ferrata, paragliding and other outdoor attractions are expected to arrive here. The focus will not be limited to the bridge itself; it will drive development across the surrounding area and help retain visitors."

In July the bridge's viewing corridor, high-speed racing track and viewing platforms were completed.

Visitors can test their driving skills on a 1,411-meter-long race-track situated about 600 meters above the ground. Earlier plans also call for glass sightseeing elevators and a cafe.

"Not a day can be wasted and nothing can be sloppy. We are now completing the final painting and other finishing work," said Wang Songyu, deputy project manager for the contract section. He added that overall progress has surpassed 99 percent, and the bridge is expected to open to traffic by the end of September.

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Autumn abundance

Villagers in Chengkan ancient village in Huangshan, Anhui province, display colorful autumn crops during the annual Shaiqiu festival on Monday, blending harvest bounty with historic Huizhou architecture.

SHI YALEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Decades of progress boost Nagchu living standards

By PALDEN NYIMA and DAQIONG in Lhasa

Nagchu city in the northern part of the Xizang autonomous region has made major gains in infrastructure, education, health and living standards over the past few decades, local officials said on Tuesday.

According to figures released at a news conference in Lhasa, the regional capital, the city's GDP rose from 295 million yuan (\$41 million) in 1990 to more than 24.6 billion yuan in 2024. During the same period, the per capita disposable income of urban residents grew from 1,755 yuan to 55,499 yuan, while the figure for rural residents climbed from 411 yuan to 20,099 yuan.

Li Meng, vice-mayor of Nagchu, said the city has made great progress in infrastructure over the past 60 years. A "heavenly corridor" consisting of five vital lines — highways, railways, oil and gas pipelines, fiber-optic cables and power lines — runs through the city.

The industrial structure of the city has been optimized and upgraded.

"We have achieved a significant transformation from a single nomadic industry to diverse development that includes clean energy, specialty agriculture and animal husbandry, and cultural tourism," he said.

Li emphasized that livelihoods for citizens have improved significantly



Students in a primary school in Sernyi district of Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region, attend a Tibetan language class. PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

over the past 60 years.

"The general populace, including officials and citizens, all enjoy equal chances of receiving better childcare, education, employment, healthcare, elderly care, housing and support for the vulnerable," he said.

The retention rate for compulsory education and the enrollment rate for children with disabilities have reached 98 percent and 100 percent, respectively. Medical and health institutions now provide full coverage at the county, township and village levels, Li said.

The participation rates for basic medical insurance and basic pension insurance have remained stable at more than 99 percent and 98 percent, respectively, he added.

Phuntsok, director of the city's development and reform commission, said authorities have prioritized education. With increasing investment each year, the number of schools at all levels has reached 462.

"We have been continuously enhancing the capacity and level of primary healthcare services, build-

24.6 billion yuan

the GDP of Nagchu city in 2024

ing on the comprehensive implementation of basic medical insurance policies for urban and rural residents. They offer free treatment for diseases such as cataracts, Kashin-Beck disease, hip and knee joint replacement, and congenital heart disease," Phuntsok said.

Local residents say they have seen the changes firsthand.

Tsering Karma, a 70-year-old villager in Machu township in Amdo county of Nagchu, said dramatic transformations have taken place in his hometown in terms of telecommunication, transportation, electricity and drinking water.

"Thanks to our country's overall development in recent decades, my hometown has been prospering as well, with people's livelihoods largely improved and ecological protection work further enhanced in the new era," he said.

"The quality of living, housing and education has improved dramatically. The government provides 15-year free education to all the children from preschool to high school, so everybody has the chance to receive better education," he added.

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Extradition highlights China-Thailand judicial ties

By WANG QINGYUN wangqingyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Thailand has extradited to China a man suspected of illegally absorbing public deposits, marking the latest step in cooperation between the two countries' law enforcement and judicial agencies, Chinese authorities said on Tuesday.

With help from the Chinese embassy in Thailand and Thai law enforcement, Chinese police escorted the suspect, identified only by his surname Li, back to China on Friday, the Ministry of Public Security said in a statement.

Li, who was not qualified to accept public deposits, made false claims that his company was financially strong, earning strong returns and preparing to list on the stock market.

He said his business would expand and persuaded more than 800 people to invest over 300 million yuan (\$41.79 million) with the promise of high interest rates.

After authorities uncovered the scheme, Li fled overseas. Police continued pursuing him and working to recover illicit proceeds. A procuratorate in Shangqiu, Henan province, approved his arrest in

September 2023. Interpol issued a Red Notice for Li in October 2024.

Thai authorities arrested him in June this year and ruled that he should be extradited back to China.

The ministry said Li's extradition reflects deepened law enforcement and judicial cooperation between China and Thailand, as well as strengthened mutual trust. It also demonstrates Chinese police's determination to protect the public's assets and sets an example for future international cooperation, the ministry said.

The case comes less than a month after China announced that Zhou

Jinghua, ranked 26th on its list of 100 most-wanted Interpol Red Notice fugitives, was extradited from Thailand.

In February, Thailand repatriated 40 Chinese nationals who had entered the country illegally.

Chinese police in recent years have increased cooperation with Thailand and other countries to combat rampant telecommunications and online fraud targeting Chinese citizens.

Since Feb 20, Myanmar has repatriated 2,876 Chinese fraud suspects, who were escorted back to China through Thailand, the ministry said in March.

Chinese rocket carries innovative Mexican satellites into orbit

By ZHAO LEI zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

CAS Space, a Beijing-based commercial rocket maker, launched the eighth rocket in its Kinetica 1 series on Tuesday afternoon, transporting seven satellites, including a pair built in Mexico, into space.

The rocket lifted off at 3:33 pm from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China's Gobi Desert and then placed the payloads — a synthetic aperture radar satellite, an Earth-observation satellite and five experimental satellites — into their preset orbit, the company said in a statement.

Among the hardware launched are the mini ThumbSat-1 and ThumbSat-2 satellites. Weighing about 100 grams each, they were designed and built by private Mexi-

can company ThumbSat and have very simple tasks, the company said.

"ThumbSat-1 carries a selfie payload, aiming to capture its own mirror-selfie in orbit. ThumbSat-2 carries an artistic payload, merging science and creativity, reminding us that exploration is not only about data but also about expression," it said on its website.

It added that the mission was made possible through close collaboration between CAS Space and ThumbSat, as their engineers together designed a specialized satellite deployer.

In addition, ThumbSat stated that it will set up ground-receiving stations across Mexico to enable students and space fans to use antennas and software for free to "track signals from orbit and take part in a mission that crosses bor-

ders and disciplines".

In its statement, CAS Space said that, "As a groundbreaking cooperation between China and Mexico in the field of satellite development and service, this project marks a milestone breakthrough for China's space industry in the North American commercial space market."

The Chinese company said the project's success will strengthen the bond of Sino-Mexican scientific and technological cooperation and will make important contributions to "building a fair, open and inclusive system for international space cooperation".

Hu Xiaowei, project manager of the Kinetica 1 model, said that Tuesday's launch has once again highlighted the rocket's reliability.

"By now, CAS Space has used our Kinetica 1 rockets to help clients

deploy 70 satellites with a combined weight of more than 7 (metric) tons. We are No 1 in terms of business share in China's commercial launch market, and the Kinetica 1 still holds the domestic record of most satellites launched by a commercial rocket," he said, stating that Kinetica 1 is the "most suitable choice" for launching small and mid-size satellites.

Tuesday's launch was not the first time Kinetica 1 carried satellites for foreign clients.

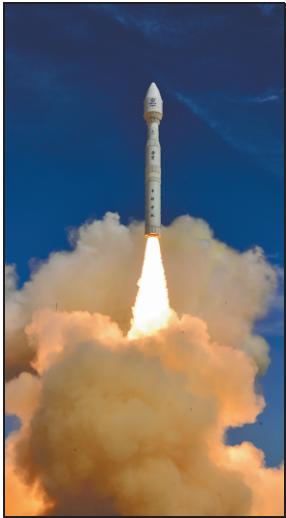
In its fifth flight in November last year, the rocket placed 15 satellites into their preset orbit, including the IRSS-1 that was designed and built by the China Academy of Space Technology for the Omani space industry startup Oman Lens.

It marked the first time that a Chinese commercial space company

had launched any satellite for a foreign client, and also the first time that an Omani satellite had been successfully put into orbit.

"We can arrange a launch mission in a flexible and rapid manner, and that means we are able to efficiently respond to clients' urgent orders. Besides, compared with similar rocket models on the international market, ours features an attractive price and a very high accuracy of orbital deployment," said Meng Xiangfu, deputy manager of the Kinetica 1 project.

Formerly known as ZK 1A, the Kinetica 1 model has a length of 30 meters, a diameter of 2.65 meters, and a liftoff weight of 135 tons. It is capable of deploying satellites with a combined weight of 1.5 tons to a typical sun-synchronous orbit about 500 kilometers above Earth.



Kinetica 1 rocket launches seven satellites into orbit on Tuesday. WANG JIANGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY