China part of transcontinental expressway opens

THE Chinese section of a transcontinental expressway project set to link western China with Western Europe has opened to traffic.

A key part of the project, a 10-km section of road in the border city of Horgos in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which connects a quarantine area with the Lianyungang traffic, came into use Saturday, marking the across-the-board opening of the expressway in China.

The project, with a total length of 6.445 km, links Lianyungang City in East China’s Jiangsu Province to St. Petersburg in Russia. China and Kazakhstan in 2006 jointly proposed building a Western Europe-Western China transport corridor. Construction of the expressway began in 2008.

Li Zhinong, deputy head of the regional transport department, said the opening of the Horgos section of the expressway will help further open up China to the West and facilitate the economic and social development of countries and regions along the Belt and Road.

Wang Haijiang, deputy mayor of Horgos, said the annual freight volume exported through the Horgos port will increase to 3.5 million tons with the opening of the section. He said the quarantine area on the expressway is now under construction. Cargo sent from Lianyungang to Europe will have its journey shortened from 45 days to 10 days when road transport replaces sea freight.

According to the World Bank, the expressway project will help increase the road freight volume between China and Western Europe by 2.5 times. New companies and supporting facilities along the roads will benefit local people by offering more jobs.

Huxin Co., Ltd., a transport company in Horgos, has been daily using Chinese products for daily use and machinery to Kazakhstan by truck.

Kazakhstan has seen the project in poor condition. The 370-km trip from Horgos to Almaty usually takes a whole day,” company official Wang Yong said, stressing that the new expressway would help the company save time and lower costs.

At a Glance

Projects worth US$10b
CHINA’s top economic planner approved 16 fixed-asset investment projects with total investment reaching 66.6 billion yuan (US$10 billion) in October. The projects were mainly in the energy, transportation and high-tech industries, according to Meng Wei, spokesperson for the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

They included a high-efficiency, low-carbon gas turbine testing apparatus project, Meng said.

The project will play a significant role in supporting the country’s independent development of the aviation, electricity and shipping sectors, he added.

Fixed-asset investment is an important driver of economic growth for China, though the country is trying to shift to momentum that relies more on consumption.

Rail transit

AS of the end of June, 31 cities on the Chinese mainland had urban rail transit in operation, with a total length of 5,066 km, according to the China Association of Metros.

Another 53 cities have planned urban rail transit projects, with a planned construction length of over 90,000 km, Meng said.

“The urban rail transit on the Chinese mainland has seen rapid development for over 10 consecutive years,” said Zhou Xiaojin, executive vice president of the association.

Workers poisoned

SEVERAL staff members of a metal smelting company in Northwest China’s Gansu Province have developed fever, dizziness, vomiting and other symptoms of poisoning, authorities said Saturday.

Four employees of Gansu Zhongda Huayi Metal Smelting Co. were sent to the Lanzhou University Second Hospital on Monday after they were suspected of suffering from arsenic poisoning. The patients showed symptoms of numbness in the arms and legs, nausea, vomiting, and abnormally colored urine.

The company has suspended operations at the factory and launched an investigation into the incident. The local government on Monday launched an emergency response mechanism.

R&D center for crude rubber set up in Hainan

A GLOBAL research and development center for natural rubber has been established in South China’s Hainan Province.

The center, set up Saturday by China Rubber Inc. and global organizations in Hainan’s Boao, aims to develop a new market for China’s crude rubber industry and push for international cooperation in the industry.

“We are pursuing international cooperation on a deeper level in the natural rubber industry,” said Yang Yi of the Ministry of Agriculture at the 7th International Forum on the Natural Rubber Industry in Hainan.

China is the biggest consumer and importer of natural rubber in the world. The country needed about 4.9 million tons of crude rubber in 2016, accounting for about 40 percent of global consumption, Yang said.

Hainan’s Vice Governor Li Guoliang said that the island province is a major production area for crude rubber and Hainan will continue to push for the development of the industry.

“We support Hainan companies’ cooperation with foreign companies in the planting, processing, storage, logistics and trade of crude rubber,” Li said.

Earthquake hits Tibet

THREE people sustained minor injuries following a 6.0-magnitude earthquake that hit Nyingchi in Southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region at 6:34 p.m. St. Saturday.

The quake caused power failures and cracks in houses in a number of localities in Nyingchi City, according to the regional seismological bureau.

The epicenter was detected at 29.75 degrees north latitude and 95.02 degrees east longitude, according to the China Earthquake Networks Center.

The quake struck at a depth of about 10 km. The quake was felt strongly in several counties in Nyingchi.

As of 6 p.m., 227 aftershocks had been detected, including one with a magnitude of 5 or higher.

Basang Cering, Party chief in Zhaxigang Village of Lunang Township, told Xinhua that they could not stand still if hit house when the quake struck.

Six houses in this village were damaged by the earthquake.

Sources with the regional power grid said the power grids of both Tibet and Nyingchi are operating normally, though they had launched an emergency response mechanism.

The Fire Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region has set up a three-degree emergency response mechanism, and held a teleconference to monitor an investigation into the situation. A team of 32 experts has been sent to the quake zone.

The tremors triggered falling rocks, blocking a highway linking Nyingchi’s city proper with the nearby town of Tangmai, one of the quake-hit townships. Armed police transport troops are clearing the road.

The Fire Department of the Ministry of Public Security said fire fighters from Nyingchi are in flight to the scene. Another team of rescuers will take a helicopter to Gyala Village in the epicenter and then send the road to the village was blocked by rocks.

Earthquake

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