

Railway rush to get there and back

A total of 44.6 million rail trips are expected to be made during this year's Dragon Boat Festival holiday, which started on Saturday, according to China Railway Corp, the national rail operator. This would represent a 10.5 percent growth on the figure last year, the company said.

On Saturday, the first day of the holiday rush, 10.35 million journeys were made, an increase of 6.4 percent over last year.

On Sunday, 12.1 million trips were made, and China Railway Corp expects this to be the peak during this year's four-day break. It predicted more than 9 million rail trips would be made on Monday.

Stations in Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an and Qingdao were among the most crowded this year, based on ticket sales, according to the company.

Nearly half of the trips have been on tracks managed by the railway bureaus in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Liu Sufang is a native of Hebei province and lives in Beijing. Liu, along with her 5-year-old son, took the bullet train from Beijing to Shijiazhuang, to visit her parents in Hebei on Saturday.

"I usually do not buy train tickets ahead of my trip when I visit my parents on a regular weekend, as there are always some tickets available. But during the holiday, I bought tickets a month earlier to secure seats in advance," she said, adding that tickets are hard to get during the holidays, even to Hebei province, which neighbors Beijing.

A man from Beijing, who was heading to Tianjin with his wife for a day trip on Sunday, said they planned to leave early in the morning and buy tickets at the train station.

"But all the tickets before noon were already gone," Zhang said. "We had to go to a shopping center near the station to kill time and then catch a train to Tianjin around noon."

The bullet train takes about half an hour from Beijing to Tianjin and there are trains less than 10 minutes apart. "I did not expect such a high demand for tickets," he said.

Local railway authorities added 447 additional trains on Sunday to cope with the high demand nationwide. For example, Shenyang railway bureau added special tourist trains between Dandong city and Changbai Mountain.

Boost set for privacy on internet

Starting on Thursday, sale of users' personal information to be banned

A fundamental new cybersecurity law, which will take effect on Thursday and is intended to safeguard sovereignty in cyberspace, national security and the rights of citizens, bans online service providers from inappropriately collecting and selling users' personal information.

China has more than 730 million internet users—more than the population of the European Union—and nearly 700 million mobile phone users, according to government statistics.

President Xi Jinping called in April for better use of the internet to benefit the people and the country. Industry insiders interpreted this as indicating an integrated development of the internet and the economy.

According to a State Council five-year informatization plan, China will expand e-commerce transactions to more than 38 trillion yuan (\$5.5 trillion) by 2020, up by 16 trillion yuan over 2015.

However, internet-related scams and data theft began to abound as internet use made economic headway in China.

The new law, which was passed by the country's top legislature in November, makes it clear that no one can use the internet to conduct fraud or sell prohibited goods.

Those who violate the provisions and infringe on personal information will face hefty fines, it stipulates.

To protect individuals' privacy, internet service providers are forbidden by the new law from collecting user information that is irrelevant to the services provided, and they should handle the information they do collect in line with laws and agreements.

Moreover, users will have the right to ask service providers to delete their personal information if such information is abused, according to the law.

Additionally, the new law says, cybersecurity management staff members must also protect information that is obtained and are banned from leaking or selling the information, including privacy and commercial secrets, it said.

Shen Yi, deputy director of the Cyberspace Governance Study Center at Fudan University, said that the people's sense of benefit should be the evaluation criteria for cybersecurity and informatization, rather than simply technical indexes.

Last year, China conducted several internet-clearing campaigns that included checks on websites, search engines and mobile apps, previous reports said. Some live-broadcast websites were shut down after they were found to be

hosting or streaming illegal content, such as pornography.

In March, China issued its first international strategy for cyberspace cooperation to improve such cooperation worldwide.

Several other regulations will also take effect on Thursday. A regulation on online news requires government permission before releasing news on instant messaging apps or social websites. Additionally, civilian drones weighing more than 250 grams must be registered under real names to improve civil aviation safety, and the use of highly toxic pesticides on edible agricultural products is banned.

Festival puts pressure on Chinese railways

The Dragon Boat Festival holiday from Sunday to Tuesday is putting pressure on China's railway system, as more and more people choose to travel by train.

Some 12.1 million passenger trips were made Sunday, up 8.8 percent year on year, China Railway, a state-owned company, said Monday.

The company will add 253 trains Monday, when about 9.1 million passenger trips are expected.

It forecast that total railway passenger trips would reach 44.6 million between Saturday and Tuesday, up 10.5 percent year on year.

The Dragon Boat Festival, also called the Duanwu Festival, is traditionally celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month on Chinese lunar calendar. It falls on Tuesday this year.

The festival commemorates ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan. Chinese people eat zongzi, a type of rice dumpling, and race dragon boats during the festival.

China mulls Belt and Road green fund

Efforts will also be made to set up special funds for resource exploitation and environmental protection, said the plan for environmental cooperation on the Belt and Road released by the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

These funds should be used to support environmental infrastructure, capacity

building and green industry development in Belt and Road countries, according to the plan.

It set the goals of working to achieve the environmental goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and enhancing environmental cooperation in an all-round manner by 2030.

To realize these goals, China will strengthen policy communication with the Belt and Road countries, share its green development concept and practices, build an environmental cooperation platform, and promote exchanges between think tanks and environmental organizations.

A big data service platform on environmental protection and an environmental monitoring system will be established, according to the plan.

Space telescope to observe 'big eaters' in universe

China's new space telescope to be launched soon will probe many mysteries of the universe, including the belching "big eaters" – active galactic nuclei at the most remote edges of the universe.

Scientists have discovered that almost every galaxy has a supermassive black hole with a mass several million to several billion times that of the Sun at its center. With their mighty gravitational attraction, the supermassive black holes engulf the surrounding gas and dust.

When a black hole swallows too much, the excess matter is converted into two jet-flows perpendicular to the accretion disk of the black hole, which is like a glutton with a bloated belly belching.

The jet-flows and accretion disk of the supermassive black hole generate X-ray radiation strong enough to travel billions of light years. These galaxies have very bright nuclei – so bright the central region can be more luminous than the remaining galaxy. Scientists call them active galactic nuclei.

The Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT), developed by Chinese scientists, will observe some active galactic nuclei. "Since the active galactic nuclei are very far from the Earth, our telescope can only detect the brightest ones," says Zhang Shuangnan, lead scientist of HXMT and director of the Key Laboratory of Particle Astrophysics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The big eaters are full of mysteries. Scientists have found the double jet phenomenon is very common in galaxies with active galactic nuclei, but they don't understand why supermassive black holes cannot engulf all the matter falling into them.

Supermassive black holes are very different from black holes of stellar mass, which are formed when very massive stars collapse at the end of their life cycles. Scientists are still not clear how supermassive black holes are formed and grow, which is a key to understanding the evolution of galaxies.

HXMT's observation is expected to help scientists see the core region close to the event horizon of supermassive black holes at the center of active galaxies and gather information about the extremely strong gravitational fields, Zhang says.