

BUSINESS

Two sessions



Visitors check out online tax services during an exhibition in Guian New Area in Guiyang, capital of Guizhou province, in this file photo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Guiyang to build Guian New Area into global big data hub

Provincial capital a top destination for high-tech firms as city ramps up new infrastructure

By CHENG YU in Beijing and YANG JUN in Guiyang

Guian New Area, a national-level new urban area in Southwest China's Guizhou province, plans to build itself into one of the largest big data clusters globally over the next few years as part of its broad push to develop new infrastructure to stoke a fresh growth engine for the region, a local official said.

Chen Yan, a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, told China Daily during the ongoing two sessions meeting that the new area plans to "hub 12 mega data centers and 4 million servers with a fixed-asset investment of over 40 billion yuan (\$5.6 billion) by 2025".

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Chen Yan, mayor of Guiyang

said Chen, who is also the mayor of Guiyang and director of the Working Committee of Guian New Area.

"This year, a string of data centers, including that of Apple's iCloud and tech giant Huawei Technologies' Co, will be completed in the new area," he said.

The move is part of Guiyang's bigger plan to speed up the development of new infrastructure, so as

to spur a new wave of growth in the face of the global novel coronavirus outbreak.

"Data centers, as the basic infrastructure of cloud computing, are an indispensable part of the big data industry chain. It is also a new infrastructure that is supported by the country currently," Chen added.

China has called for accelerated efforts to develop new infrastructure. Differing from traditional infrastructure like railways, highways and airports, the new type of infrastructure projects include infrastructure for digital transformation, intelligent upgrades and innovative development.

To embrace new industrial opportunities, Chen pointed out the area will leverage new infrastructure to promote deeper digital transformation and high-quality economic development.

"A string of new infrastructure projects will speed up construction in Guiyang and the new area and a total of 23 billion yuan of investment on new infrastructure is expected to embark within the year," Chen added.

"The new area will also accelerate its steps in gathering companies from emerging sectors

including cloud computing, big data, the internet of things and artificial intelligence. This will support new consumption formats such as telecommuting, intelligent medical care, online education, and fresh food e-commerce," he said.

Nestled in a mountainous region, Guiyang and the Guian New Area provide a major engine of growth for the region. It has been transformed in the past few years into an innovation hub as major global companies such as Apple, Huawei and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd flocked to the area.

"Guizhou has already become an important part of the big data industry in China and even the world. The company will strengthen cooperation with Guizhou in a string of areas including cloud computing and digital governance," Huawei Vice-President Lu Yong said.

Last year, over 100 big data projects valued at a total of 21.6 billion yuan were introduced in Guiyang. The city's software and information technology revenue exceeded 16 billion yuan, having increased by 14.3 percent year-on-year.

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E-commerce revitalizes Liupanshui businesses

By ZHU WENQIAN in Beijing and YANG JUN in Guiyang

Liupanshui, a city in mountainous Guizhou province in Southwest China, used to rely on coal power, raw materials and traditional industries for development.

It has successfully revitalized its economy through e-commerce retailing and a bit of innovative thinking.

In the first quarter, Liupanshui achieved sales revenue of 2.16 million yuan (\$300,000) by promoting goods through livestreaming sales. During the period, total online sales by the city reached 76.5 million yuan, up 18.43 percent year-on-year, the local government said.

The city has a large concentration of impoverished families. All of the needy counties have built up their e-commerce service centers. Local retailers have opened more than 1,500 stores on major e-commerce platforms such as JD and Tmall.

Behind the city's transformation is a multibillion-dollar livestreaming market in China, which is forecast to grow fast as the coronavirus epidemic further pushed consumers into online shopping.

"Liupanshui has seized the business opportunities of new retail and developed various e-commerce forms such as selling products through livestreaming sessions by online celebrities and short video posts," said Liupanshui city Mayor Li Gang, an NPC deputy from Guizhou.

By leveraging the local advantages of a subtropical climate, clean air and fertile soil, the city hopes to become a top commercial center for kiwi fruit.

There are 14 wild-growing varieties of kiwi fruit locally. The kiwi fruits there have red pulps, a sweeter taste and usually mature 30 days ahead of other varieties from other areas, whose prices are three times more expensive.

The Liupanshui Agricultural Investment and Development Co Ltd is a key player located in a well-established fruit-growing area. It sold more than 3,000 metric tons of kiwi fruit last year. It has grown by 50 percent year-on-year and its sales revenue reached 80 million yuan last year.

Besides selling products to Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, as well as Yunnan, Hubei and Taiwan provinces, it also exported kiwi fruit to Russia, Canada, Thailand and the

Middle East.

The city has also achieved growth in several other agricultural products, such as Guizhou's signature fruit, the Rosa roxburghii Tratt or thorn pears.



Li Gang, mayor of Liupanshui

The city has been recognized as a national quality and safety demonstration area for thorn pear exports.

Guizhou Hongcai Investment Group aims to build the largest thorn pear processing base nationwide. It has established eight production lines that produce thorn pear juice, beverages, preserved fruit, lozenge and refined powder.

The company has cooperated with 110 dealers, 17 e-commerce platforms, and a cross-border e-commerce platform under Alibaba Group that will be launched on June 1. From January to March, sales by the company reached 40 million yuan, having jumped 33.3 percent year-on-year.

On another front, an online celebrity of Liupanshui named "little cool girl" has publicized the sightseeing spots of her hometown and is being recognized by the public.

She cooperated with an e-commerce platform and has conducted more than 30 livestreaming sessions this year to promote local agricultural products. Their sales revenue has exceeded 100,000 yuan, which helped mitigate the impact of the epidemic on area farmers.

Li said in recent years, Liupanshui has actively developed big data and integrated the technology with the real economy. Three major Chinese telecom carriers have built labs there and made it one of the pilot places of a smart city.

"With the local advantages of electric power, we hope Liupanshui will become a comprehensive big data experimental area of Guizhou and the country. In addition, we hope it will be a demonstration city of the internet of things, 5G, and blockchain. The technologies will help promote high-quality economic growth, and back the upgrading of traditional industries," he said.

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A farmer harvests thorn pears at an orchard in Liupanshui, Guizhou province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Digital solutions to play key part in boosting culture and tourism sectors

By FAN FEIFEI in Beijing and SUN RUISENG in Taiyuan

The boom in big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence is expected to play a pivotal role in boosting Shanxi's culture and tourism industry which was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as propel the country's high-quality development, a national legislator said.

Wang Wenbao, a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, said the culture and tourism industry in Shanxi province has grown rapidly, with the average annual growth rate in total revenue at about 25 percent for five consecutive years.

"The culture and tourism industry has become an important engine for Shanxi's economic growth and a key to propel the transformation of the resource-based economy," said Wang, who is also chairman of the Shanxi Culture and Tourism Investment



Tourists admire views from a tower building in the ancient city of Pingyao in Jinzhong, Shanxi province, on May 5. LIANG SHENGREN / XINHUA

Holdings Group.

Wang said the novel coronavirus outbreak brought about unprece-

dent challenges to the local tourism industry, especially during the Spring Festival holiday.

47.56 billion yuan

tourism revenue during the five-day Labor Day holiday in China this year

That is usually the peak season for tourism in the country, and the province's 670 scenic spots were forced to shut down.

According to Wang, 216 A-level scenic areas in Shanxi, except for one that is under repair, have resumed normal operations now that the contagion is under increasing control across the nation.

Statistics from Culture and Tourism Department of Shanxi Province showed scenic spots in Shanxi received 11.28 million tourists during the past Labor Day holiday. Tourism income reached 5.231 billion yuan (\$733 million).

"The cutting-edge technologies,

including augmented reality, virtual reality, AI, big data and the internet of things, which have a profound impact on the tourism industry, will be adopted in cultural and tourism scenic spots in the future, so as to offer customers immersive experiences and convenience," Wang added.

Shanxi has been striving to strengthen its tourism development in recent years, especially its three major tourist brand names which include Wutai Mountain, the Yungang Grottoes and Pingyao ancient city, as well as three main attractive themes, centering on the Yellow River, the Great Wall and the Taihang Mountain.

Wang said the provincial smart tourism cloud platform has been launched, with tourist attractions, starred hotels, travel agencies having access to the platform. This would promote the integrated development of the local cultural and tourism industry.

The country's tourism market also saw a strong recovery during the

five-day Labor Day holiday. With regular epidemic control measures in place, the tourism market basically recovered to 50 percent of the level seen in the same period last year, said Wang Xiaofeng, an official with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Various destinations in China received 115 million domestic tourists during the holiday, generating revenue of 47.56 billion yuan, he said.

The COVID-19 outbreak is expected to have only a temporary impact on the tourism industry and the travel demand of people has not disappeared, said Peng Liang, chief researcher at Ctrip's big data laboratory. The pandemic may even accelerate the popularization of online tourism services, the researcher said.

"Domestic leisure tourism will usher in development opportunities as people's willingness to travel is strong," Peng noted.

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