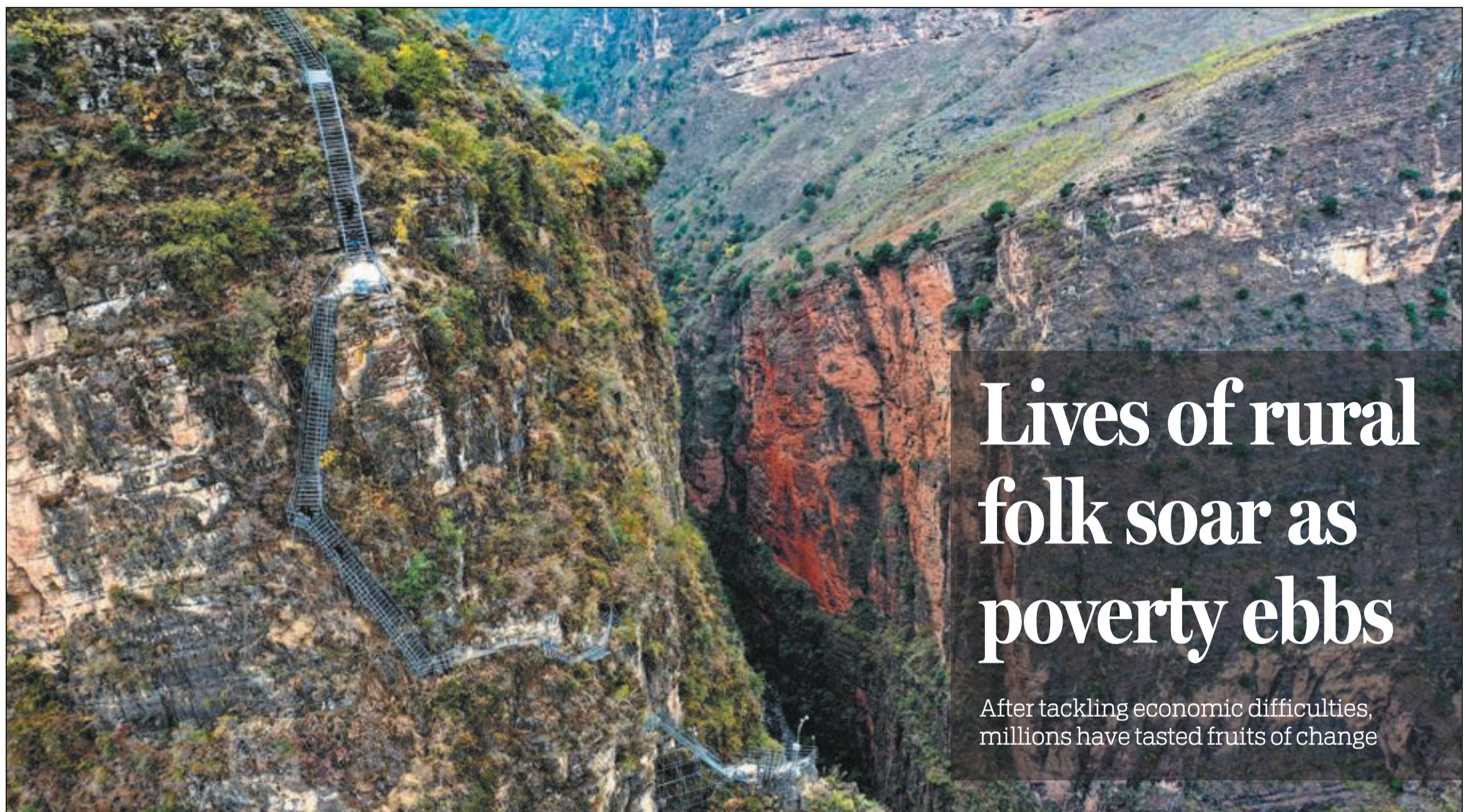


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## Lives of rural folk soar as poverty ebbs

After tackling economic difficulties, millions have tasted fruits of change

The steel ladders on the cliffs of Atulieer village in Zhaojue county, Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture of Sichuan province, were built in 2017 to give safer access to and from the village. JIANG HONGJING / XINHUA



Miao ethnic group women in Huawu village, Guizhou province, make clothes in a workshop as part of a jobs program. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



A technician teaches a woman of the Yi ethnic group the skills of planting and picking in Zhaojue county, Sichuan province. SHEN BOHAN / XINHUA



A villager rides across a newly built bridge in a mountainous area of Weining county, Guizhou province, in February. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

By CHINA DAILY

For decades, people living in the Wumeng Mountain area, covering parts of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces, were isolated from the outside world because of poor infrastructure, including transport. With a lack of water, crops, housing, information and industries, its more than 1 million people were living in poverty.

Visiting the area now it is hard to imagine those difficult days. Last month China announced that it had managed to eradicate poverty, and the Wumeng Mountain area is just one of many places to have enjoyed tremendous change as a result.

Atulieer village in Zhaojue county, Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture of Sichuan, known as "cliff village", is at an altitude of 1,600 meters, and a rattan ladder used to be the only way for locals to gain access to it. That involved children and others risking their lives climbing down and up the ladder to get to and from school.

In 2017 steel ladders were built with support of the local govern-

ment to make going to and leaving the village safer. Then, communication base stations, power networks and optical cable became available. Some villagers moved to modern communities away from the mountain thanks to the government's relocation policy, and others chose to stay to join the livestreaming and tourism business.

Zhaotong city of Yunnan province in the Wumeng Mountain area relocated 360,000 residents to more than 370 communities. In their previous village, agricultural and forest resources are now better utilized to promote industries, increasing farmers' incomes. In the places they moved to, jobs were created in factories or communities.

Relocation, industrial development and labor migration have all contributed to improvement of people's lives. However, that is just the first step. Locals in the Wumeng Mountain area are working for rural revitalization by upgrading infrastructure, industries and grassroots governance.

Xinhua contributed to this story.



A villager descends from Atulieer village to pick up tourists in November 2019. JIANG HONGJING / XINHUA



In Jing'an new area of Zhaotong, Yunnan province, new homes have been built for about 40,000 people from poor areas. JIANG WENYAO / XINHUA



A villager from Huawu village, Guizhou province, shows photos of her previously run-down wooden house and her new home in a modern community. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA