

Guizhou aims to become big data hub

Industry could attract businesses to province, raise people's incomes

By GAO YUAN
gaoyuan@chinadaily.com.cn

Southwest China's Guizhou province is eyeing big data industry to beef up its lagging economy, local officials said on Saturday.

They believe the cutting-edge technology would give a new driver to one of the least developed regions in the country.

"Big data industry is a big opportunity for us to add jobs, build new economic boosters and build a technology-strong Guizhou," said Chen Miner, governor of Guizhou.

The province's cool climate, sufficient power supply and transportation networks are advantages to lure data centers and cloud computing projects, he said.

"We hope the data analytical business will help lift people's personal income in the coming years," Chen said.

Guizhou is one of the lowest-ranked provincial regions, both in terms of gross domestic product and GDP per capita.

The province's individual disposable income in urban areas stood at 18,700 yuan (\$3,100) in 2012, well below the national average of 24,564 yuan, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

The mountain-locked province has recently announced plans to connect all its counties with highway networks by the end of next year.

However, government officials from Guizhou said the province plans to build the country's "top tier" cloud computing hub by 2020.

"Guizhou has no history of developing big data industry, and the infrastructures are lagging behind eastern provinces," said Wu Hequan, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

"Guizhou is betting on big data bringing the region more lower-stream businesses and services that are important for its development. It is possible for the region to leapfrog, economically taking advantage of big data industry," Wu said.

The nation's three leading telecommunication carriers are building cloud computing facilities in Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou, with accumulated investment of more than 15 billion yuan.

The city's government said it will set up a number of cloud-based services, including intelligent transportation, logistics, tourism, e-commerce and food security.

"Big data is becoming a new strategically important technology for China," said Minister of Industry and Information Technology Miao Wei.

"China is ready to further develop big data industry because of the quick implementation of cloud in the Internet market," Miao said. Because Guizhou's urbanization and industrialization processes are at a high time, Miao added, timing could be good for introducing big data projects to accelerate the province's growth.

Turnover of data analytics-related businesses in Guiyang is projected to hit 54 billion yuan by 2016, according to a local government estimate.

The amount represents about 30 percent of the total



Zhao Kezhi (second left), Party chief of Guizhou province, talks with Terry Gou, chairman of Foxconn Technology Group, at a promotional event focusing on the province's big data industry in Beijing on Saturday.

FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

output of the city's information technology industry.

About 200 big data companies will be located in the city because of lower taxes and electricity prices.

But according to Jack Ma, chairman of the world's largest e-commerce giant, Alibaba

Group Holding Ltd, the advantage of Guizhou is not cheap electricity.

"Future competition in the Internet sector is how far can you see rather than how cheap your energies are," said Ma.

"Data economy is the future of information technology.

As one of the first regions to develop cloud and big data businesses, Guizhou edges other regions in talent recruiting," he said.

Guiyang said it will lure more than 5,000 people into the big data sector over the next three years.

New rules to make low-cost airlines more competitive

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Guidelines to enhance the development of low-cost airlines have been unveiled, in a move expected to provide a boost to the nation's aviation sector.

The guidelines will adjust the cap on budget airline fleets, encourage more rapid expansion and make it easier to set up low-cost carriers, the Civil Aviation Administration of China said. They will also streamline approval procedures and cut airport charges in third- and fourth-tier cities.

Budget airlines will soon offer diversified services such as giving boarding priority or seat selection for passengers who are willing to pay for the convenience, according to the guidelines.

The aviation administration will encourage local governments to build new airports or modify existing ones for low-cost carriers, while continuing efforts to lower import tariffs for aircraft and aviation equipment.

In addition, the administration said it plans to deepen cooperation with financial institutions, especially in arranging lending facilities for budget carriers.

The move is the second within four months to boost the sector.

In November, the Civil Aviation Administration of China and National Development and Reform Commission abolished the lower ticket price limits, allowing airlines to set their own prices.

The moves will inject fresh momentum to low-cost airlines, enabling them to compete with large airlines, experts said.

"I expect there will be a surge in low-cost carriers because the number of trips made by Chinese people has been increasing. In addition, local governments are enthusiastic in linking remote, mountainous areas with affordable air transport," said Li Xiaojin, a professor of transportation economics at

Low-cost airlines can develop in a competitive environment. We welcome competition instead of fearing it."

ZHANG WU'AN
SPOKESMAN FOR BUDGET CARRIER SPRING AIRLINES

the Civil Aviation University of China.

"The new policies will encourage airlines to provide more low-price, limited-service flights and catalyze the birth of more low-cost carriers," he said. "Passengers will have more options."

Wang Ya'nian, deputy editor-in-chief at Aerospace Knowledge magazine, said the guidelines aim to prepare Chinese budget airlines for fierce competition from their foreign counterparts.

"Chinese companies must become strong, otherwise they will be squeezed once foreign carriers begin to grab low-cost routes from them."

Zhang Wu'an, spokesman for Shanghai-based budget carrier Spring Airlines, said low-cost carriers will benefit from the government's support.

"Low-cost airlines can develop in a competitive environment," he said. "We welcome competition instead of fearing it."

The country's air transportation sector has long been dominated by giant airlines such as Beijing-based Air China and Guangzhou-based China Southern Airlines, which control the most lucrative routes and the best takeoff and landing slots at airports.

Low-cost carriers account for less than 5 percent of China's aviation market by passenger volume, far lower than the 26 percent market share that budget carriers enjoy around the world, according to official statistics.



A girl cooks *guthuk* at the Gyalzur Tendol Orphanage in Doilungdeqen county, Lhasa, the Tibet autonomous region, on Friday.

PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

Lhasa orphans mark Tibetan New Year with noodle feast

By PALDEN NYIMA
and DAQIONG in Lhasa

Auspicious greetings, barley wine, prayer flags, fireworks, and laughter filled the air in Lhasa on Sunday as Tibetans dressed in their best clothes to embrace the Tibetan New Year, known locally as *Losar*.

According to the Tibetan calendar, this year is the year of the Male Wooden Horse, and it started on Friday, which was the 29th day of the 12th month on the Tibetan calendar.

In line with tradition, Tibetans celebrated on Friday evening by eating *guthuk* — ball-shaped noodles made from nine key ingredients, reflecting the number nine in the date.

While the noodles and the broth in which they are served are delicious enough, there is an added treat included in the meal. Enfolded into a few of the *guthuk* dough-balls are materials with a symbolic meaning, either good or bad.

Carefully cutting the balls open, diners may find a small ball of wool or a scrap of paper, which symbolizes some aspect of their character of their way of life. The balls are distributed randomly, making the process all the more mysterious.

The children of Gyalzur Tendol Orphanage in Lhasa's Doilungdeqen county were particularly excited by the festive occasion, especially the *guthuk*

feast and its associated game of symbols.

Most of the 61 children who have made the orphanage the home were present for the occasion, returning from their temporary lodgings at schools or colleges.

"I got wool in my bowl of *guthuk*, which means I am a good-tempered person," said Tseyang, a Tibetan girl who still thinks of the orphanage as home, despite having moved away to study at the Tibet Medical College.

Among those helping to make the meal is Tsamjo, one of the two nurses at the orphanage. She has been working there for 21 years.

"Traditionally, *guthuk* contains nine ingredients, such as yak meat, cheese, a wild sweet potato called *toma*, cabbage, wheat, barley, beans, water, and salt," she said.

"Anything you find in your *guthuk* has a symbolic meaning. For example, paper in one's dough-ball suggests that one likes wandering here and there, and cheese represents a pure heart," she said.

"A broken piece of the bowl itself means one is gluttonous and lazy; a sun and moon in the bowl means good luck; and charcoal means something bad."

The children follow the feast with additional activities to bring on good luck and wash away the bad. They dispel evil spirits with

the *guthuk* ritual, involving the anointment of their bodies with a paste made from roasted barley flour. Then they set off fireworks as a final signal that the New Year has really begun.

The festivities continued on Sunday morning, with the two nurses, Tsamjo and Tashi Lhamo, rising early to cook *changku* — cheese, brown sugar and roasted barley flour boiled in barley wine.

The children all got up at the crack of dawn and tucked into their *changku* breakfast, boosted by plates of *khapsay* — fried, sweet pastries.

Next, they made good-luck offerings to each other made from *chemar* — a mixture of roast barley flour and butter.

The various ceremonies represent both hopes for the future and thanks for the kindness of others.

An act of kindness

The orphanage was founded in 1993 by Gyalzur Tendol, a Tibetan woman who had moved to Europe and trained as a medical assistant. Over the past two decades, the orphanage has provided a home in Lhasa to 108 orphans and children with only one parent. Some of the children have gone on to study medicine, reflecting the altruistic aspirations of the founder.

"I was fostered when I was only 5 years old, and I stayed in the orphanage until I was 18.

I feel very pleased to be back for *Losar* celebrations," said Chimed Droma, 24.

"Best wishes to all our donors, Mrs Tsamjo and the nun Tashi Lhamo, and all our brothers and sisters in this big family — and may you all be happy and healthy in 2014," she said.

As the warm sunshine poured into the orphanage yard, the children gathered there for traditional circle dances, just one of many outdoor activities that Tibetans traditionally enjoy at this festive time.

"The Tibetan New Year festival traditionally lasts for 15 days, but nowadays it varies from three to seven days, and sometimes 15," Tsamjo said.

On the first day of *Losar*, most Tibetans in the Lhasa area make a pilgrimage to the Buddhist temples of Jokhang and Ramoche and to the Potala Palace.

In the coming two weeks, Tibetans will enjoy parties, exchange gifts and greetings, hold special Buddhist prayer sessions and racehorses on the grassy plains.

Tibetan historical records show that the tradition of *Losar* dates back to about 100 BC, the time of the ninth king of Tibet, Pude Gungyal.

Contact the writers at
palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn and daqiong@china-daily.com.cn

College punished over test scandal

By ZHAO XINYING
zhaoxinying@chinadaily.com.cn

The Ministry of Education said on Sunday that it had applied to the Academic Degree Commission under the State Council to cancel Harbin University of Science and Technology's qualifications for issuing master's degrees in business administration, because of a cheating scandal that occurred during the university's graduate candidate test in January.

On its website, the Ministry of Education said the university also will have to cut the number of graduate students it recruits from 2015, and it has been urged to reflect on and overhaul its recruiting process to ensure equity in exams and recruitment.

In January, 20 students were found to have cheated in entrance exams for the university's MBA course. The scandal caught the attention of people across the country.

Wang Haiyu, director of the MBA recruiting office at the university, and a total of 1.5 million yuan (\$244,050) were involved in the scandal.

After a month of investigations, in February, Wang and eight other people from Beijing and Harbin's graduate candidate test training schools, were detained in connection with the case. Additionally, equipment used for cheating in the exams was seized, according to education authorities in Heilongjiang province, where the university is located.

On Sunday, the Heilongjiang education authorities said that the exam results of the 20 students who cheated had been canceled, and these students had been suspended from taking any exams for three years.

Some authorities and staff members of the university who were involved were held accountable and punished. Some, including a vice-president, were given a demerit record, while others, such as vice-president of the university's Graduate School and president of the university's school of management, were dismissed from their posts.

The Ministry of Education said improper behavior during exams, such as cheating, will be strictly punished with zero tolerance, and all universities across China should learn from the case and ensure transparency and equity in recruiting graduate students.

The handling of the case was praised by education experts.

Xiong Bingqi, who is vice-president of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, praised the Ministry of Education for dealing with the case in a timely and transparent way.

"We can see that the Ministry of Education attaches great importance to the justice and equity of exams and leaves no space for improper behavior like cheating," he said.

"The handling of this case set a good example for dealing with similar cases in the future: Not only those who were directly involved in this case but also top leaders of the university were punished."