

World's highest bridge opens to traffic in China

AFP | Beijing, China

The world's highest bridge opened to traffic in China on Sunday, state media said, capping an engineering feat three years in the making and snatching the record from another bridge in the same province.

The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge towers 625 metres (2,051 feet) above a river and vast gorge in the country's rugged southern province of Guizhou, also home to the 565-metre Beipanjiang Bridge that is now the world's second highest.

Live drone footage broadcast by state media on Sunday showed vehicles traversing the immense structure, its blue support towers partially engulfed in clouds.

Crowds of onlookers including project engineers and local officials gathered on the bridge for a ceremony to mark the occasion, several expressing their pride and excitement in live interviews to state media.

"The opening of the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge reduces travel time between the two sides from two hours to two minutes," Zhang Yin, head of the provincial transport depart-



The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge, the world's highest, is seen in China's southwest Guizhou province

ment, said at a press conference Wednesday.

Its opening makes "enormous

improvements to regional transportation conditions and (injects) new impetus into regional

economic and social development", she said.

China has invested heavily in

major infrastructure projects in recent decades, a period of rapid economic growth and urbanisa-

tion in the country.

The hilly province of Guizhou in particular is crisscrossed by thousands of bridges -- which now include the world's two highest. State news agency Xinhua said Wednesday that nearly half of the world's 100 highest bridges are located in the province.

The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge took more than three years to complete, Xinhua reported. Its 1,420-metre main span makes it the "world's largest-span bridge built in a mountainous area", it added.



Apart from the world's highest bridge, the tallest -- measured in terms of the height of its own structure, rather than the distance to the ground -- remains France's Millau viaduct at 343 metres.

India warns not to condone 'terrorist epicenter' Pakistan

AFP | United Nations, United States

India on Saturday warned countries against turning a blind eye to what it called support for terrorism from Pakistan, which has basked in closer relations with US President Donald Trump.

Addressing the UN General Assembly a day after Pakistan used the forum to appeal for talks, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar demanded "much deeper global cooperation" against terrorism.

"India has confronted this challenge since independence, having a neighbor that is an epicenter of global terrorism," Jaishankar said, without saying Pakistan's name.

"For decades now, major international terrorist attacks are traced back to that one country," he said.

"Those who condone nations that sponsor terror will find that it comes back to bite them," he said, also without naming countries.

India in May launched attacks on military sites in Pakistan after suspected Islamist gunmen massacred tourists on the Indian side of divided Kashmir.

Jaishankar said that India "exercised its right to defend its people against terrorism."

Pakistan denied responsibility. In his own UN address on Friday, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said In-



Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar addresses the United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City

dia showed "arrogance" and received a "bloody nose" with counterattacks.

Sharif before the UN summit traveled to Washington to meet alongside Pakistan's military chief with Trump, who has voiced hope of mediating between India and Pakistan.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has played down Trump's role in reaching a ceasefire in May and stuck to New Delhi's refusal of outside mediation on Kashmir.

Pakistan by contrast has heaped praise on Trump and

said he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize, rekindling Islamabad's relationship with Washington that had grown tense during the two-decade Afghanistan war.

Trump has ramped up tariffs on India, pointing to its purchases of oil from sanctioned Russia.

Jaishankar in his speech said that India will need to correct "overdependence on a particular market."

"We now see tariff volatility and uncertain market access. As a result, de-risking is a growing compulsion," he said.

Vietnam to evacuate 250,000 from coast ahead of Typhoon Bualoi



A man rides a motorcycle along a street in Quang Ninh province, as Vietnam braces to be possibly impacted by typhoon Ragasa

AFP | Hanoi, Vietnam

Vietnam plans to evacuate more than 250,000 residents from coastal areas on Sunday ahead of the arrival of Typhoon Bualoi, which is expected to lash the country's steel-producing central belt.

The storm -- the 10th to affect Vietnam this year -- is currently at sea generating winds of 130 kilometres per hour (80 miles per hour) and is expected to make landfall at 7:00 pm (1200 GMT), according to the meteorology agency.

Central Vietnam's largest city Danang plans evacuate more than 210,000 residents, state media reported, while more than 32,000 residents of Hue

living near coastal areas are also set to be moved to safer areas.

More than 15,000 residents in Ha Tinh -- known as a key steel production hub -- have been slated for evacuation to schools and medical centres converted into temporary shelters, authorities said.

Nearly 117,000 military personnel have been mobilised. Four domestic airports were shut and all fishing boats in the typhoon's path have been called back to harbour.

"I feel a bit anxious but still hopeful that everything will be fine in the aftermath. We were all safe after the recent typhoon Kajiki. I hope this one will be the same or less severe," Nguyen Cuong, 29, a resident of Ha Tinh City, told AFP.

The typhoon is expected to pack winds of around 133 kph as it makes landfall on Sunday evening, Vietnam's National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting said on its website.

"This is a fast-moving storm with very strong intensity and a wide area of impact, capable of causing a combination of various types of natural disasters such as strong winds, heavy rain, floods, landslides, and coastal inundation," state media quoted centre director Mai Van Kiem as saying.

Scientists warn that storms are becoming more powerful as the world warms due to the effects of human-driven climate change.