

Guangzhou to replace all buses with 'new energy' vehicles

Guangzhou's petrol-powered buses will soon be a thing of the past. Starting this year, the southern Chinese city will begin replacing the thousands of public buses with greener, more energy-efficient vehicles.

According to the new plan, all buses that use petrol and diesel will be replaced with pure electric buses by 2020, meaning Guangzhou will have about 30,000 new energy public vehicles including buses and taxis by 2020.

To attract individual consumers of electric cars, Guangzhou also plans to lower electric vehicles prices, reduce maintenance costs and build more charging stations. More than 120,000 individual electric cars are expected to be on the streets in the city by 2020.

According to the new measures, the number of parking spaces with electric car chargers is no less than 30 percent of the total parking seats in new office buildings, shopping malls and restaurants. The city plans 100,000 charging piles by 2020.

Guangzhou is now seeking public opinions on the plan.

China finds widespread violations of environment rules

The latest round of air pollution inspections in China have uncovered many violations of environmental rules among companies.

Some 23 inspection teams examined 319 businesses on Sunday and discovered that 251 companies, or 79 percent of the total, violated environmental standards in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and other nearby areas.

Excessive emissions, insufficient pollution-control equipment or failure to install pollution-control equipment were among the most common problems for the inspected businesses, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said Monday in a statement.

The ministry has asked local authorities to shut down businesses or halt production at companies that failed to meet the standards.

The ministry issued punishments in nearly 5,000 cases related to violations of environmental protection regulations and laws in Q1, up around 200 percent

year on year.

Enterprise for everyone

Time was when your late or cancelled train, your high energy bill, your rationed water or your delayed phone line was the direct result of nationalised industries. Privatisation especially when it involved competition offered more choice, better quality and lower prices. After privatisation electricity and gas prices fell in the early years of the policy. Water was available all summer without hosepipe bans. The long post war decline in rail travel ended and passenger numbers and journeys started to increase. Competition in phones meant instead access to telephony for those who wanted it, rather than a long delay for the state company to put a line in or requiring you to have a line shared with the neighbours.

Today when things go wrong or prices go up in several of these areas it is the result of actions by privatised companies as the public see it. This is not always true. The bulk of rail assets are nationalised, with public ownership of all track, signals and stations. So one if there is a delay or cancellation it is owing to signal failures, overhead track power systems, or physical problems with track and points. It is true Southern Rail has let commuters down and that it is a private company. The granting of near monopoly rights for train services is not ideal, but the franchise can be taken back, or the operator may lose it for poor performance when it comes up for rebidding. Energy prices may also be the result of EU renewables and energy policy, not the result of a company trying to up its margins.

Today people have issues with some large private sector companies. The popular enthusiasm for new social media, new mobile phones and modern computing is obvious from the fast growth rates of these businesses. There is also some disquiet about the power and governance of some large corporations. Large banks have been hauled before courts and Regulators for misdeeds. Various companies have been accused of paying too little tax in various countries. Some companies have not been sufficiently customer friendly, have been too keen to push up prices or keep out competitors.

The new challenge is to provide a legal and regulatory framework for more enterprise, more choice and more competition. There is also the problem of some international and EU governmental interventions in policy which make energy dearer or prevent banks lending, or impede new transport investment. Going back to nationalisation which added monopoly to a lack of innovation is not the answer. Today we need more enterprise for all, to take advantage of the fast moving technologies for growth and improvement.

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Chinese father to drive daughter to school in US



Huang Haitao and his daughter Xinyi at Southeast University in Nanjing, East China's Jiangsu province, May 25, 2017. It's their first stop on an epic road trip to the US. [Photo/Chinanews.com]

It's not uncommon for parents of freshmen college students to drive their children to their new school as a way to say their last goodbyes as their children set off on their adult lives.

But one father in China is taking that 'goodbye' to a whole new level. Huang Haitao has managed to convince his daughter, Huang Xinyi, to allow him to drive her to her new school, in Seattle, Washington!

He says he decided to make his "crazy" decision after Xinyi was accepted at Seattle University.

While most young people might balk at the idea of spending so much time together with one of their parents in a vehicle, the experience will not be a new one for Huang Xinyi and her father.

The two have travelled over 120,000 kilometers together already in vehicles to promote the Youth Olympic Games, which took place in Nanjing in 2014.

Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu province, is also going to be the

starting point for their latest journey.

Huang Haitao and his daughter say they plan to travel across 52 countries as part of a 9-month journey to finally get her into class in Seattle. They both say their main goal is to help promote Chinese culture among the countries they visit along the way.

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.