

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.