

Defects found on 12 rail lines

By TAN ZONGYANG
and XIN DINGDING

The Ministry of Railways has found quality defects on 12 rail lines that may endanger railroad safety, according to a document recently obtained by the media.

Seven of the 12 lines have been put into service, including high-speed passenger railways between Wuhan and Guangzhou and between Zhengzhou and Xi'an, according to the document.

The problems were discovered during routine inspections. The construction defects on the seven lines included cracks and leaks on tunnel arches, tilted communications towers and poorly arranged electronic cables, the Chinese news portal eo.com.cn reported on Tuesday.

Other problems were found on five lines currently under construction, including one linking Lhasa and Xigaze in the Tibet autonomous region, which is an extension of the Qinghai-Tibet railway.

The ministry severely criticized some contractors for building with low-quality materials and not using enough iron bars in reinforced concrete.

Media reports quoted anonymous experts as saying the defects might threaten railway safety.

Cracks on the railway tunnel's arch could cause concrete chunks to break off when a high-speed train passes, destroying the train's power supply equipment, they said.

A ministry official who spoke to China Daily on the condition of anonymity confirmed the authenticity of the document, saying it was meant to be circulated inside the ministry and to relevant parties.

He said the ministry is paying great attention to quality



A bullet train runs on the Donghuan high-speed railway, which links Haikou, capital of the island province of Hainan, and Sanya, a tropical resort in the province. The rail line has been exposed as having some problems with the quality of its infrastructure.

SHI YAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Although no accidents have occurred on the line, I hope authorities can make sure that there are no hidden risks."

SUN PENGWEI
REGULAR TRAIN COMMUTER
IN FUZHOU, FUJIAN PROVINCE

issues, and has organized regular inspections on railway construction and operations.

"It is just another regular checkup to guarantee railway safety," he said.

According to the document, the ministry has already taken measures to punish those responsible for the quality defects.

It suspended several construction and construction supervision companies from tendering and bidding on railway projects for a month, and required them to rectify the problems as soon as possible.

Wang Mengshu, an expert on railway tunnel construction at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said he has not seen the document, but knew that holes had been found in the arches of the railway tunnels on the Wuhan-Guangzhou passenger line and the Zhengzhou-Xi'an line.

A cavity in the tunnel arch could cause it to collapse.

"These problems will not affect the operation of the entire line but need to be fixed," he said.

"People around me are expressing worries over taking high-speed trains after reading the news," said Sun Pengwei, a resident of Fuzhou, Fujian province, who travels twice a month on the Fuzhou-Xiamen high-speed line — one of the defective railways.

"Although no accidents have occurred on the line, I hope authorities can make sure that there are no hidden risks."

The public has the right to know any safety threats in the railway system, and authorities should make such information more transparent, he said.

Zhao Jian, a professor at Beijing Jiaotong University, said

some major railway contractors tend to subcontract minor projects to smaller companies to save money and meet tight deadlines.

In February, Sheng Guangzu, minister of railways, said railway construction was a field that needs stringent supervision on quality, work safety and officials' behavior.

The ministry recently announced details of disciplinary violations of former minister Liu Zhijun, who made huge illegal profits by helping others bid for several railway projects, including high-speed railways, Chinese media reported.

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Swimmers told to avoid jellyfish after tragedy

Woman who was stung died after serious allergic reaction

By ZHENG JINRAN
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Ocean swimmers have been urged to avoid jellyfish following the death of a woman who was stung by one last month.

On July 26, the 47-year-old woman traveled to Beidaihe resort in North China's Hebei province to celebrate her daughter's graduation from a university. The next day, the woman and a friend were stung on the beach.

"She was fine just after being stung. Friends used white alum to treat her and then rushed her to a local hospital," Liaoshen Evening News quoted one of the woman's friends as saying. "But her condition suddenly deteriorated and she died in the hospital on July 28."

The newspaper did not give the woman's name.

The hospital confirmed that acute lung edema and serious allergic reaction caused her death.

An employee surnamed Sun from the Dongshan Hotel in Beidaihe, where the woman stayed, said the hotel would compensate the deceased's family and her friend, who was also stung. Sun said the compensation

sum will be determined by a court.

"It's quite common to see jellyfish sting tourists, especially in July and August, which is the breeding season for the fish," said Wen Ming, an official from the local authority in charge of public beaches.

A total of 33 signs are erected on the public and private beaches in Beidaihe, warning people not to touch jellyfish.

"We also send people to hunt the jellyfish in the morning, because they appear near the beach when the weather is cool," Wen said.

Doctors warned people against touching jellyfish.

"If you are stung by jellyfish, do not rinse with fresh water. You can use alkaline lotion, such as seawater, alcohol and soapy water, to flush or apply to the wound," said Cheng Yanfeng, a dermatologist at Shengjing Hospital of China Medical University.

"If there is a severe allergic reaction, such as chest problems and dizziness, go to the hospital as soon as possible," he said.

"Besides jellyfish, people may also be bitten by sea anemone, but this is very rare," he said.

Jellyfish are usually seen along China's coastal waters, including the Yellow and Bohai seas as well as the northern part of the East China Sea.

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