

## **New railway links major Silk Road towns in Xinjiang**

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Passengers wait before a train leaves for Urumqi in Hotan, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, June 28, 2011. Passenger trains started to run on the 488.27-kilometer railway linking Hotan, Urumqi and Kaxgar on Tuesday, which offers local people in Xinjiang a convenient way of travelling. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenyaoyao)

A passenger train began its maiden run Tuesday along the newly-opened railway linking Kashgar and Hotan, two major Silk Road towns in northwest Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Passenger train 5828 travels daily from Hotan in southern Xinjiang to Kashgar in the far west before steering to a link to the regional capital Urumqi, the Urumqi Railways Bureau said at a press release.

The 2,073-km train trip between Hotan and Urumqi takes about 34-37 hours, according to railway officials.

The Hotan-Kashgar section of the railway, with a cost of about 5 billion yuan (772.5 million U.S. dollars), runs 488 km through the southern part of Xinjiang, an important section of the ancient Silk Road, they said.

Construction of the railway began in December 2008 and took two years. Cargo transport began at the end of last year.

The Hotan-Kashgar railway is expected to transport 15 million tonnes of cargo annually and carry 10 passenger trains a day, a railway document said.

Railway authorities said the new railway will bolster Xinjiang's mining industry, tourism and agriculture.

The Ministry of Railways estimates Xinjiang's rail network will be extended to 12,000 km by 2020, with more than 8,000 km of new railways to be built in the coming decade, an investment of 310 billion yuan.

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"Source: Xinhua"

Weekly review

