

Launch prosperity

Wenchang develops space fans while helping local tourism [LIFE, PAGE 12](#)

Canadian pop star Kris Wu jailed for rape

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The heat is on

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LIFE



Accompanied by his wife and son, Luo Hongyang captures the launch of the Long March 7 Y6 carrier rocket from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province on Nov 12.

SHOOTING ROCKETS HELPS LAUNCH PROSPERITY

Photos by Yuan Chen | for China Daily

When the Long March 7 Y6 rocket, carrying the Tianzhou 5 cargo spacecraft, took off from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Longlou town, South China's Hainan province, earlier this month, the striking moment was captured by rocket enthusiasts.

Photographer Luo Hongyang's son, who is about 3 years old, was probably the youngest among them. It is the sixth time that the boy has seen a rocket soaring into the sky.

Getting up at 5 a.m., about five hours before launch, Luo's family left the hotel and drove half an hour to Qishui Bay, about 30 kilometers from the launch site, to set up their cameras.

To make sure of the perfect shot, the young father from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region positioned six cameras there.

According to Luo, every trip for a rocket launch not only documents the country's space program's development, but also records his son's growing up. The first time his son watched a rocket launch was on Dec 22, 2020, when the Long March 5 rocket made its maiden flight from the Wenchang site.

First used in June 2016, the Wenchang Space Launch Center is China's newest and only coastal launch facility. It is central to the nation's space exploration programs and manned spaceflights because it's the only such facility in China capable of launching the Long March 5 heavy-lift carrier rocket, an essential part of these programs.

Photographer Wang Yubo, who has been shooting rocket

launches for six years, has witnessed every mission at the center and also how local people have benefited.

According to the township government, the average per capita disposable income of its residents reached 19,171 yuan (\$2,680) last year, about three times that of 2009. On July 24, more than 500,000 tourists visited Longlou, a farming community with a population of about 26,000 in Wenchang city, to see the launch of the Wentian space lab module.

Seeing the opportunities brought by the space sector, Wang and his friend, Yan Zehua, started their own business to popularize space and rocket knowledge among the public. While preparing for launch shooting, they have been busy working with schools to educate students on space.

Aiming to become a commercial space hub, called Hainan Wenchang International Aerospace City, Wenchang wants to put in place infrastructure to allow regular commercial launches by 2024, according to Wang Guangzhi, deputy head of the hub's administration.

There are also plans to build space tourism theme parks and a museum, according to authorities.

"This year sees the completion of our country's construction phase of its space station and in the coming weeks, China will conduct its *Shenzhou XIV* manned spaceflight from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center," Wang says.

The Wenchang Space Launch Center plans to construct new testing and support facilities, as well as a launchpad for the powerful rocket.

For rocket enthusiasts like Wang Yubo, this could mean more shooting opportunities.



Clockwise from top: Chen Xuan places a launch photo on her hotel wall in Longlou town, the location of the Wenchang Space Launch Center. With space-themed paintings as a backdrop, diners tuck in at a restaurant in Longlou. Photographer Xie Mo adjusts a telescope on his balcony, a good spot to see the launch. Luo sets up his cameras as the sun rises at Qishui Bay, about 30 kilometers from the Wenchang launch site. *

From top: Lin Yumei (left) and her husband help their son construct a rocket model at their cafe in Longlou town. Student Zhang Anjian from Xi'an, Shaanxi province, checks his video material ahead of the rocket launch. Zhang Jingyi (right) points to her mother on the television who was on the TV show *Our Space*.