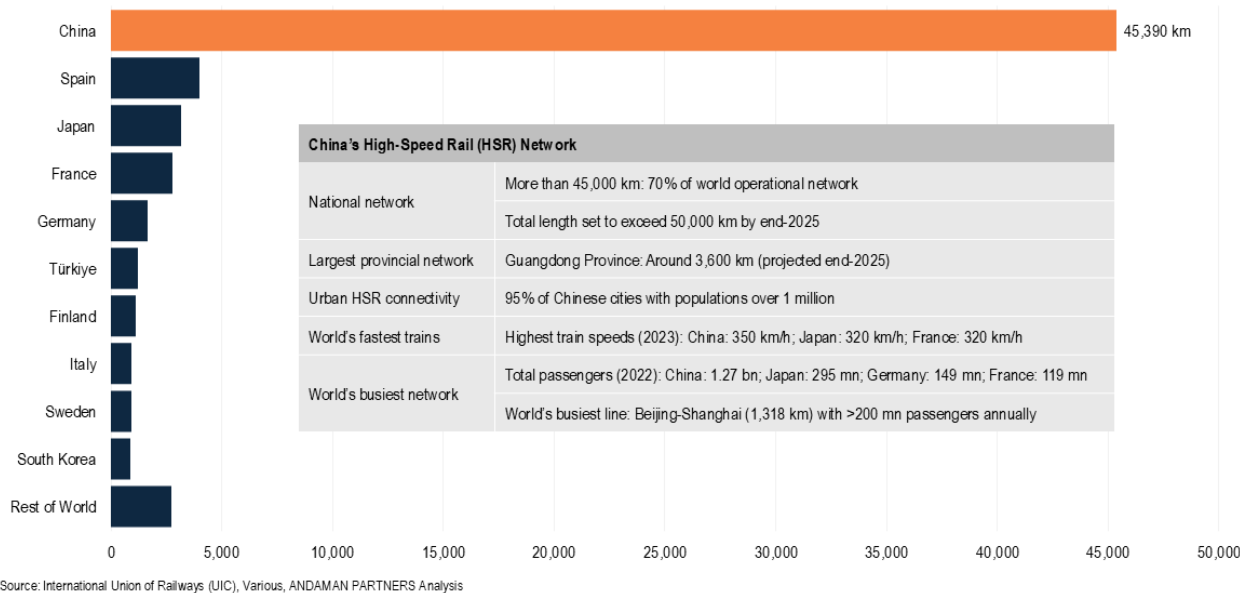


China: The High-Speed Rail Superpower

China accounts for 70% of the world's operational high-speed rail, with a network that connects every major city and carries more than a billion passengers annually.

Length of High-Speed Rail Network in Commercial Operation by Country, km (2024)



No other country comes even remotely close to China in high-speed rail. China operates the world's largest high-speed rail (HSR) network, with more than 45,000 km of lines in commercial service, accounting for 70% of the global total. The closest competitors are Spain (3,993 km) and Japan (3,147 km).

The country is still expanding rapidly. By the end of 2025, the total network length is projected to exceed 50,000 km. Guangdong Province alone is expected to have around 3,600 km of HSR lines by late 2025, making it the single largest provincial network in the country.

China's HSR is designed for mass urban connectivity. Today, 95% of all Chinese cities with populations of more than 1 million are linked to the system, effectively shrinking travel times between economic hubs and creating a dense, fast-moving passenger economy. Trains regularly operate at 350 km/h—the highest commercial speed in the world—ahead of Japan and France (both around 320 km/h).

This scale translates into extraordinary passenger volumes. In 2022, China's HSR carried 1.27 billion passengers, far surpassing Japan (295 million), Germany (149 million) and France (119 million). The Beijing-Shanghai line alone, a 1,318 km corridor linking the country's two largest cities, is the busiest high-speed rail line in the world, moving more than 200 million passengers per year.

Beyond speed and capacity, China's HSR network has become a critical economic backbone, reshaping domestic travel patterns, reducing reliance on air transport and enhancing connectivity between regional city clusters.

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