

# Kaifeng to restore historical image

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The local government in Kaifeng, an ancient city in Central China's Henan province, plans to restore the city's historical appearance of its downtown.

The city was the capital of seven dynasties, including the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), when China's economy boomed and society thrived.

To restore the city's historical outlook of its peak period in the Northern Song Dynasty, the government plans to reconstruct some ancient buildings in the downtown area. The project will require more than 34,000 families to move from their homes by the end of the year, Wang Xuejie, vice-mayor of Kaifeng, said in a report released on the city government's official website on Saturday.

The project aims to boost the ancient city's tourism industry and exhibit the prosperity of the Northern Song Dynasty, Qi Jinli, Party secretary of Kaifeng, said in early January, according to the government's website.

To make room for the development, the local government plans to demolish 5.8 million square meters of old buildings in the next four years, Qi told the Henan provincial radio station in a program on June 28.

The blueprint of the reconstruction project shows that the new buildings will be built in the style of the Northern Song Dynasty, and even road signs on the streets will "reflect the character of the Northern Song Dynasty", according to a report in China Business Journal.

A total of 80,000 families, making up nearly a third of the city's population, will have

to move out of the downtown region in the next four years, the report said.

The demolition and relocation will cost at least 100 billion yuan (\$15.7 billion). The city's financial revenue was just 5 billion yuan last year, according to the report.

Kong Xiangcheng, deputy chief of the Kaifeng bureau of housing and urban-rural development, said that the project was "very difficult" and the local government had "made preparations" for the upcoming difficulties, the report said.

The local government signed a contract on Thursday with the China Construction Bank Henan branch, in which the bank promised to provide a 15 billion yuan loan to the government within three to five years, according to the Kaifeng city government's official website.

Li Tao, a worker at Longting Park whose 133-square-meter house is slated to be demolished, claimed 600,000 yuan in compensation, but the local government insisted on paying him only 274,030 yuan, according to a provincial news media.

The local government required the park's administrator — the bureau of cultural heritage and parks — to persuade Li to accept the compensation deal, according to a notice published on the Kaifeng Daily on Tuesday.

The notice required seven bureaus and departments, including the public security bureau and the transport bureau to persuade some of their employees to accept the government's compensation deal for the demolition of their houses.

Vice-mayor Wang said on Friday that the government had

acquired more than 626,000 square meters of residents' houses for the construction projects by late July, according to the report on the government's website.

An official from the Kaifeng city government told People's Daily on Sunday that the cost of the project was an estimate, and the local government would try to attract both enterprises and individuals to invest in the project.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, denied China Business Journal's report that residents were forced to move out, saying that the project benefited local people, who could now move into better houses.

The project was met with fierce criticism by netizens on micro blogs on Sunday after it was reported by news media. Many people questioned whether the local government could afford the cost and whether local residents would benefit from the project.

Fan Lei, 35, an employee at the local taxation bureau, said he has embraced the government's ambitious project because it will make his hometown more beautiful. But he also worries the project might be discarded with half-completed buildings due to money problems.

"What I care for most is the housing issue — whether the compensation for demolished houses will meet residents' demand and whether the newly built houses would be comfortable to live in," he told China Daily on Sunday.

Liu Hua in Zhengzhou contributed to this story.



## RETURNING HEROES

PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese Olympic swimming champions, Sun Yang, second from the left, and Ye Shiwen, second from the right, during a welcoming ceremony in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday.

## Astronauts tell students about Shenzhou IX feat

By GUO JIAXUE in Hong Kong  
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Space technology fever heated up on Sunday as the Shenzhou IX astronauts disclosed more details of June's manned space docking to a group of university students.

Some 500 students from different colleges in the city filled an auditorium at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on Sunday afternoon for a face-to-face meeting with the three astronauts, Jing Haipeng, Liu Wang and Liu Yang.

The astronauts answered questions about complicated rendezvous, docking technologies and space life. In a surprise twist, students were also tested by the astronauts.

Veteran astronaut Jing Haipeng suddenly asked: "How did we bring fruit to space?"

A young man tried to answer but failed. Then Jing explained that all the fruit that is brought is sliced into pieces and dried using a special technique.

Zhou Jianping, chief designer of the China Manned Space Engineering Office, also told the students about the three phases of China's manned space program. He said that one more space laboratory, a manned spacecraft and cargo spacecraft will be launched. By 2020, China's first near-earth manned space station will be established and become operational.

Responding to a question raised by a student from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology about when China will send astronauts to the moon and maybe even Mars, Zhou answered that he believes it "won't take too long" to realize the Chinese

people's old dream of flying to the moon. He pointed out that reaching Mars still requires a series of technological breakthroughs.

Earlier, the three astronauts started the third day of their Hong Kong trip at the Peak in the morning to overlook the city's iconic harbor view. Subsequently, they attended the opening ceremony of an exhibition on China's first manned space docking mission at the Hong Kong Science Museum.

The 15-day exhibition presents a number of items to give visitors a better picture of the manned rendezvous and docking mission between Tiangong-1 space station and Shenzhou IX spacecraft that was successfully completed in June.

The exhibits include the re-entry capsule of Shenzhou IX,

which was used by the three astronauts to return to earth.

At the exhibition, visitors can get a real look at how the three astronauts lived. A four-minute video recorded the trio eating and drinking, conducting medical experiments, as well as exercising with a riding cycle ergometer and pulley machine.

A total of 100 photos will also be exhibited as well as the traditional Chinese knot made by Liu Yang and her spacesuit.

The trio arrived in Hong Kong on Friday for a four-day goodwill tour. On Saturday, they talked about their years of hard astronaut training experiences with 1,400 local primary and secondary students. The astronauts also revealed their versatility at a welcome gala show held by the Hong Kong government on Saturday afternoon.

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