

Insights Unwrapped

The Iron Silk Road: China's Dramatic Rail Network Surge



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High Speed Railway Lines

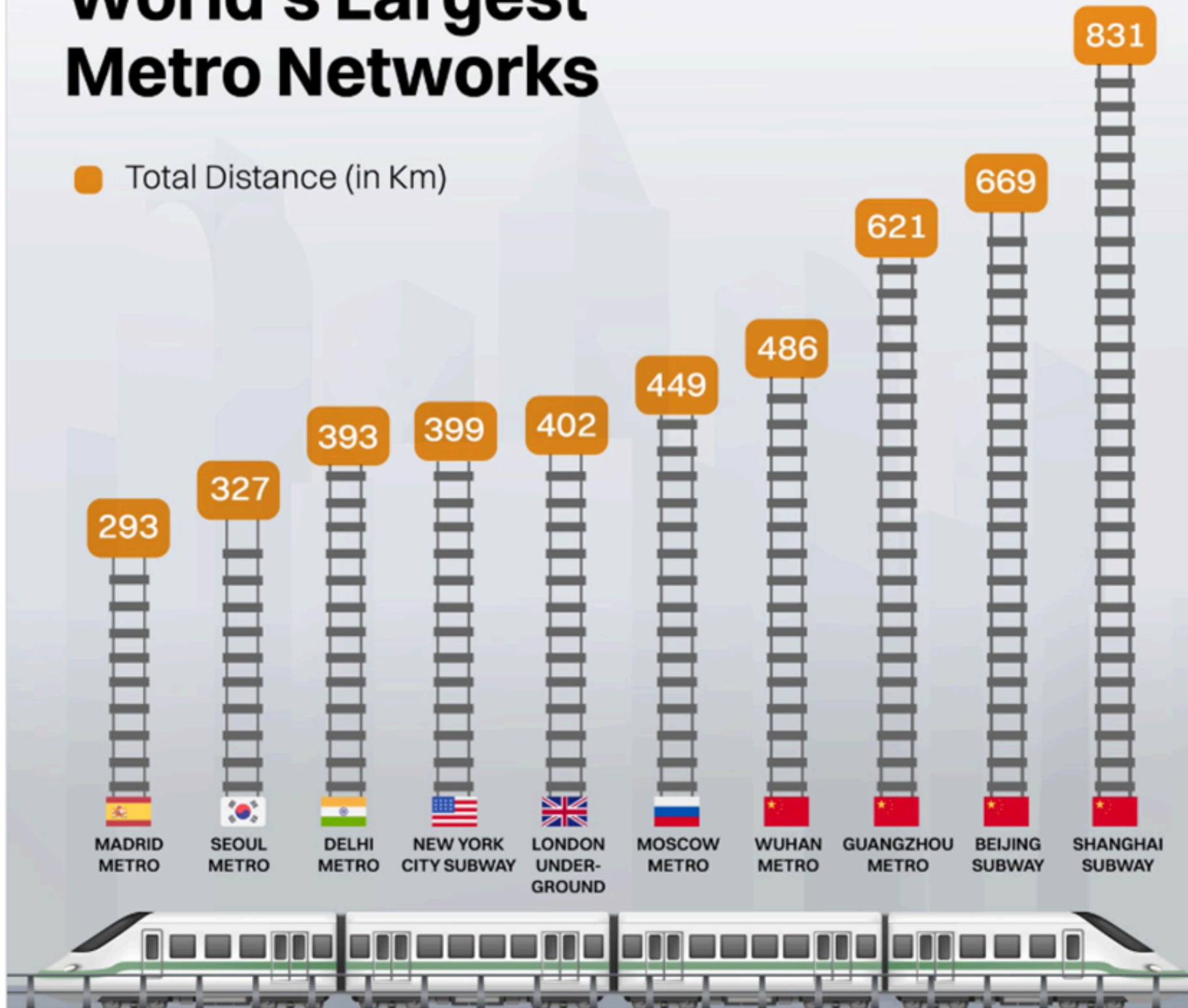


- China currently operates over 48,000 km of high-speed rail—more than the rest of the world combined
- In terms of future expansion, the countries with the largest planned high-speed rail networks are China (~11,240 km), India (~7,480 km), and the United States (~5,060 km). In India, of the total proposed network of approximately 7,987 km, about 7,480 km (94%) remains in the planning stage

(Source: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/ranked-countries-with-the-most-high-speed-rail-in-2025/>)

World's Largest Metro Networks

● Total Distance (in Km)



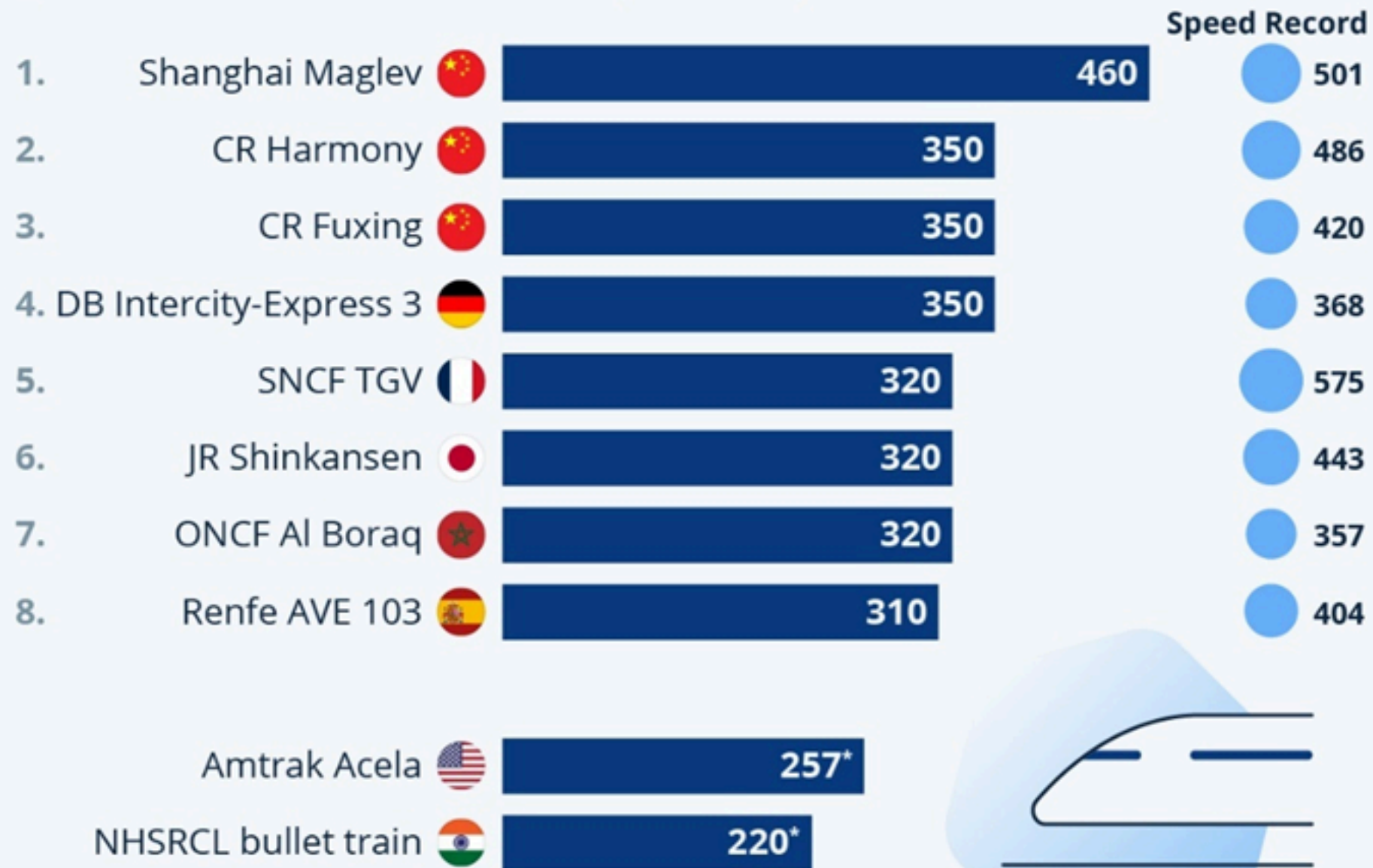
*Data as of 22nd Mar'24

Source: NDTV

China has the world's largest metro network, spanning over 11,000 Km—about 40% of the global total—and serving more than 50 cities. It is followed by the United States with approximately 1,500 Km across 15 cities, and India with around 1,013 Km across 23 cities

The World's Fastest Trains

Maximum operating speeds of the world's fastest trains (in km/h)



* Expected

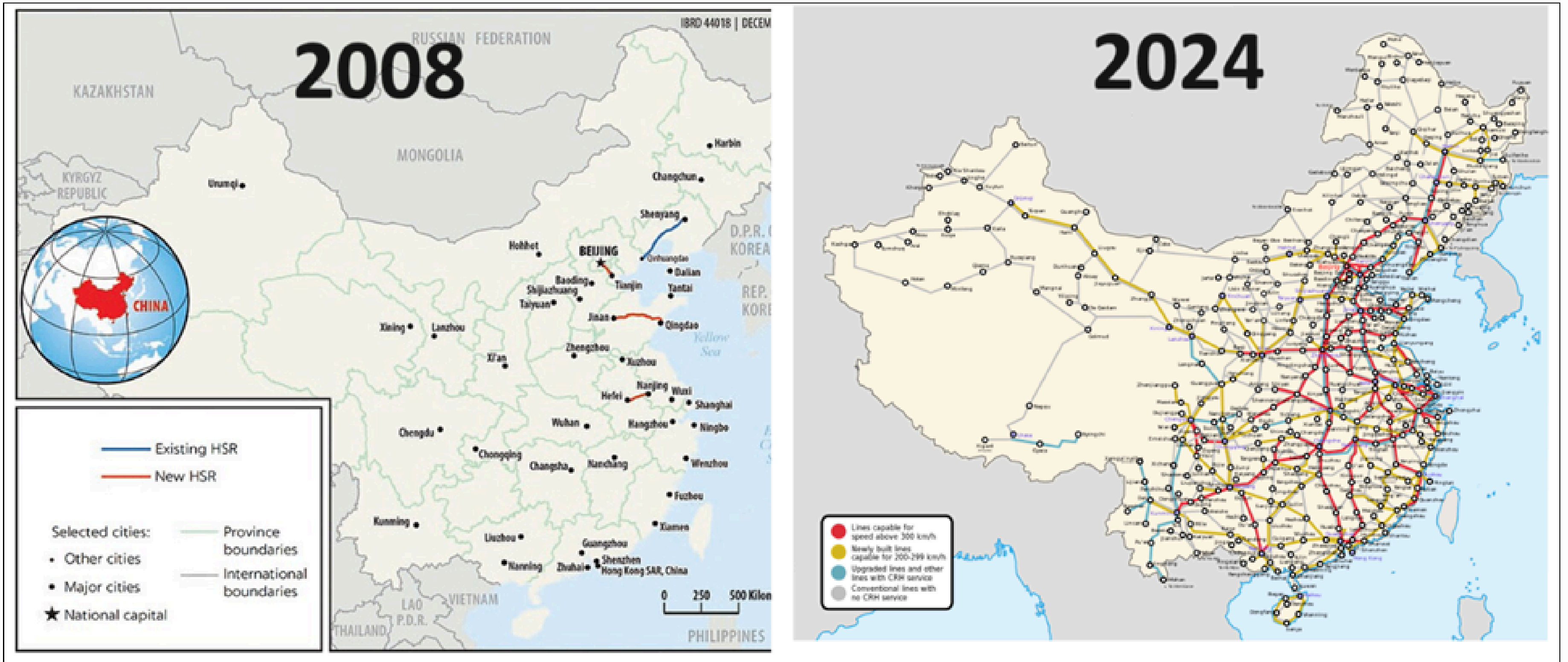
Sources: Railway Technology, Statista Research



Since the 1980s, countries across Europe and Asia have developed high-speed rail networks, led by Japan's Shinkansen and France's TGV. In the past decade, China has become the global leader, building a 48,000-kilometer system that reaches nearly every part of the country

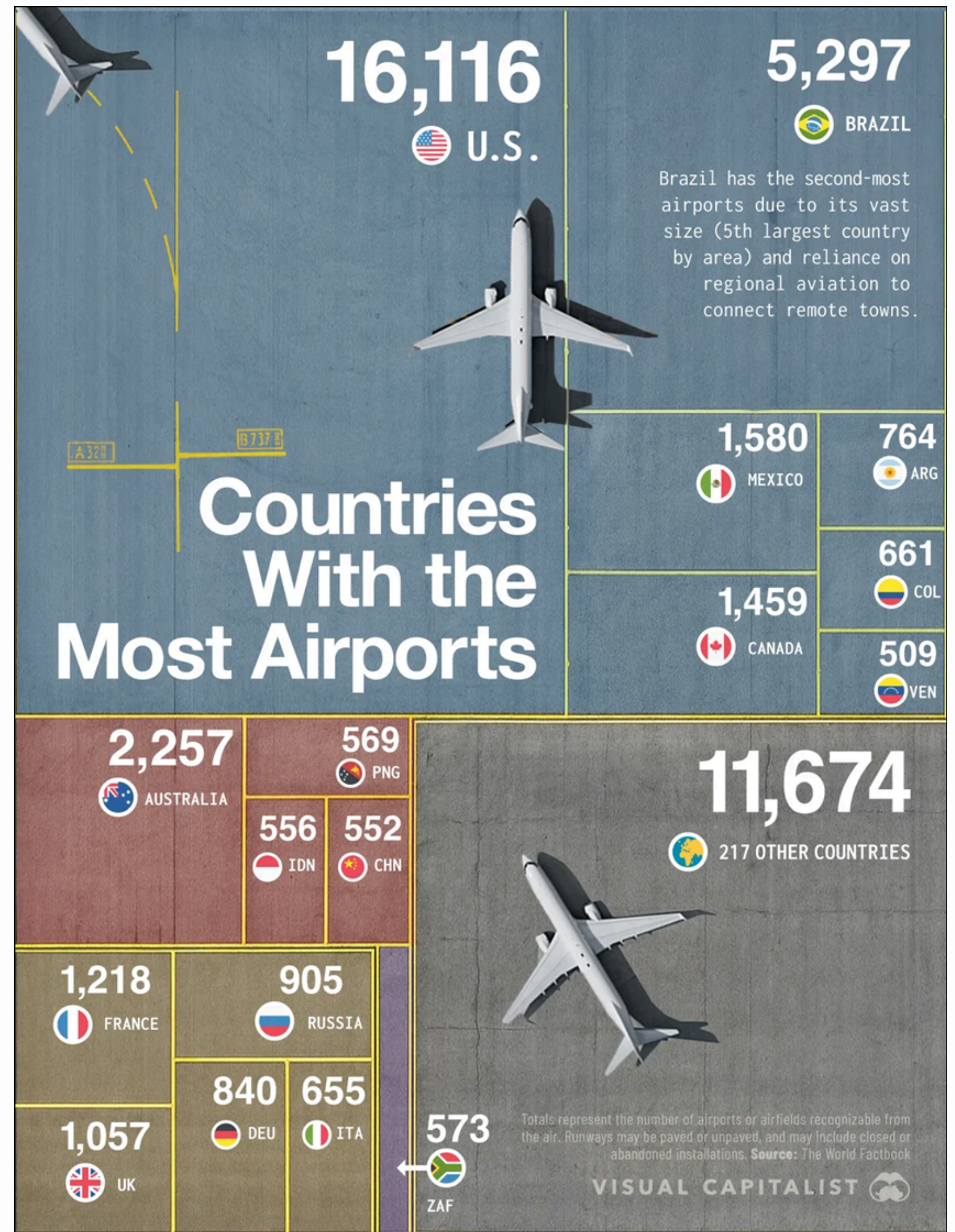
Explosive Growth of China's High-Speed Rail Network

China's High-Speed Rail (2008–2024): From 672 Km to 48,000 Km – World's Largest HSR Network



Most Airports Globally.

- **The U.S. Leads by a Wide Margin:** From small local airstrips to major international hubs, it has three times as many airports as second-place Brazil
- Despite China's vast population and land area, its airport count (552) remains surprisingly low—likely due to the country's heavy investment in high-speed rail, which spanned 48,000 km in 2024 (Source: SCMP)



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