

CCTV bungee jump ends in tragedy

By Tom Fearon

The first-ever bungee jump off the China Central Television (CCTV) Tower ended in tragedy on Sunday, when an engaged couple perished in each other's arms after plunging more than 230 meters to their deaths.

Real estate mogul Li Lei, 28, and auto show promo model Han Meimei, 25, were killed instantly after snap-hooks at the jumping-off point broke shortly after the couple leapt from the tower. Li had proposed to Han only moments before the jump, with a CCTV camera crew capturing the romantic moment that aimed to commemorate the grand reopening of the troubled building.

Management at CCTV had hoped the building's inaugural bungee jump would bury memories of a huge blaze that engulfed a luxury hotel next to the tower in 2009. Sunday's incident reignited claims that the building might be cursed.

"It was meant to be a new beginning, a fresh start. I'm not sure I still want to work in the tower in light of all the setbacks we've experienced," said a CCTV news producer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Li made headlines in August last year after a project spearheaded by his company, FED Property

Group, sparked controversy over forced evictions of residents from a compound ironically located just north of the CCTV Tower. Han was also no stranger to the public spotlight, catapulting to fame during the 2012 Guizhou Auto Show when she wore a live python around her neck – and little else.

Police are examining a video of the fatal jump, shot using a CCTV helmet cam, which has since gone viral on Chinese video-sharing websites.

