



At Mohan Port, Yunnan, Song Mai, a Thai driver is ready to return to Thailand with a lorry load of peppers from Yunnan via Kunming-Bangkok Highway.

Photo by Tang Lina

China-Laos border trade on "fast track"

Recently, 20 businessmen from Oudomxay Province, Laos visited the Mohan Economic Development Zone in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan. They went to Xinnong Vegetable Cooperative, tasted tomatoes and talk about cooperation on chilli peppers newly cultivated there.

This visit epitomizes the cross-border cooperation in various areas between China and Laos. After Kunming-Bangkok Highway opened to traffic several years ago, Mohan Management Committee and Laos Oudomxay Provincial government have worked together to strengthen bilateral

cooperation between the two sides.

In recent years, with the Huay Xai Bridge on Kunming-Bangkok Highway open to traffic, governmental and non-governmental cultural, logistics, business and tourism exchanges and cooperation between China, Laos and Thailand continue to increase.

On December 3, the ground-breaking ceremony was held for the China-Laos Railway. This good news enhanced the confidence of various investors, who are ready to take advantages of the Railway and the Kunming-Bangkok Highway to expand international cooperation.

At Xishuangbanna Vocational and Technical College Dai Pottery Experimental Base located in Mohan, reporters saw various tea cans, lampshades, vases, bowls and other Dai pottery products, which seem to be simple but reflect the aesthetic taste of the Dai people. "In the future, we're going to open a shop in Chiang Mai, Thailand," said Qiu Yisheng, the main pottery maker of the Base.

In recent years, Qiu Yisheng and his team have combined Dai traditional culture with modern techniques and created a new style of Dai pottery. It has attracted the industry at-

ention. He has been repeatedly invited to Thailand and other ASEAN countries for academic exchanges. So far, Qiu and his team have developed three categories and more than 300 varieties of new Dai pottery products.

According to Qiu, the Dai pottery developed by his team is now popular in Beijing, Dalian and other cities. Their products are mainly used for decorating high-profile office buildings and real estate projects. However, due to insufficient production capacity, supply still lags far behind market demand.

Over the past seven years, the Kunming-

Bangkok Highway has gone through continuous upgrades, bringing valuable opportunities for enterprises to invest in Mohan. Xishuangbanna Zhongjin Investment Company is invested by a Kunming-based business. According to Zeng Yong, general manager of Mohan Zhonghui Operation and Management Centre of the company, the opening of Kunming-Bangkok Highway has brought huge business opportunities for the company. "I believe more enterprises from ASEAN countries will come to join us in the future," said Zeng Yong.

(Li Hongfeng and Li Jisheng)

Photo News

Scarecrows and art

The First Dali Scarecrow Field Art Festival kicked off by the Erhai Lake the other day. It was cold and windy and there was a light rain before the opening ceremony, but the scarecrows still attracted many visitors. They took photos with Minions, climbed into the mouth of big cats or explored the labyrinth as if they were children again.

In order to give visitors some hands-on experience, the organizer prepared 99 scarecrow frames in the parent-children interaction area. Visitors could choose scarecrows to decorate with environmentally friendly materials and experience the fun of DIYing.



Photo by Jiang Yang

Kunming ol' boy travelling across China on motorcycle



Xi Tong finally arrives in Kunming after the long journey.

Photo by Jiang Yang

When Xi Tong again stood in front of his bunch of old friends, the ol' boy, as he is sometimes called, had been away for 160 days. In the words of his old pal Peng Yongkang: "He's finally drifted back!"

160 days ago when Xi Tong was turning seventy, he was ready to realise a long-cherished dream and embarked on a solo motorcycle journey despite his venerable age. In 160 days, he left footprints in Tibet, Xinjiang, Ningxia and Gansu; he came to Mohe, the northernmost city of China, on his own; in Wusu Township at China's easternmost end, he witnessed the first rays of dawn...

"He's coming. He just called and he's passed Mile!" On the afternoon of Novem-

ber 23, Xi Tong's friends gathered at the Guandu Square in Kunming to welcome the return of the ol' boy, who had just accomplished the heroic feat of travelling across China. "Had I known he could make it, I should have gone with him on my motorcycle," said one of his friends.

After the long trek, Xi was still hale and hearty: "I've been away for a while; gotta go home to hug my grandson." His motorcycle odometer read "42,877" kilometres, and it was only "16,926" kilometres when he set out from Kunming more than five months ago. He covered 26,000 kilometres in 160 days!

160 days, 26,000 kilometres, 70 years of age, a heart bypass operation, and various

potential dangers... Xi Tong chose not to mention them or make light of them when his family expressed their worries. His 70-kilo luggage included solid food, clothing, a tent, a repair kit and motorcycle parts. In the Gobi Desert, he sometimes rode 600 kilometres in a day; he camped in the wilderness and luckily met the patrol police before dawn. Xi Tong said, at such times he would sing at the top of his voice, and it was quite an unspeakable experience to ride under the scantily clouded sky.

As his seventieth birthday is coming soon next year, Xi said he has another dream: to experience the exotic scenery and customs of Southeast Asia on motorcycle.

(Zhang Yang)

Yunnan's beauty shown in little stamps

If you want to know a place, the best shortcut is to see the stamps issued by the country.

Known as the "Kingdom of Animals and Plants", Yunnan is a veritable big province of stamps. In the eyes of common people, the mysterious Yunnan is showing its charm through the tiny stamps continually. Through the stamps, many outlanders have known the bamboo house of Dai Nationality, the stone forest known as "No. 1 Wonder of the World", Tengchong with volcanoes, and the ancient town Lijiang.

Stamps with Yunnan elements are not only loved in China, but also adored abroad. Romania used the stone forest scene for their stamps, Korea used the ox and tiger copper table in their stamps, and in the stamps issued by Laos we have seen the Kunming Expo of World Horticulture of 1999,

the great seafarer Zheng He has appeared in the stamps of Madagascar, Singapore and Malaysia, and Yunnan's black-necked crane has shown up in the stamps of America...

As Yunnan has plentiful cultural and historic material resources, since the year 1949, China has issued 50-plus sets of stamps covering the theme of Yunnan, including 153 stamps and 13 types of stamps showing Yunnan elements on full scale. Yunnan-themed stamps have also proved Yunnan is one of the provinces with the most kinds of stamps issued in China. Because of its profound history and wonderful and beautiful scenes, Yunnan has become a favourite for stamp design art.

After the founding of People's Republic of China, the first complete Yunnan-themed stamp was the set of stamps named "Camel-

lia of Yunnan" issued in 1979, containing 10 stamps and one small sheet. Moreover, in 1963, a sort of butterfly only seen in the southern mountains of Yunnan flew into the homes of common people through the stamps, and that is the first stamp on Yunnan's animals, "Butterfly - Yunnan Lixia Butterfly". This kind of butterfly living in the tropical rain forest of Xishuangbanna has a very pretty flower pattern on its body, symbolizing the supernatural magnificence of the colourful Yunnan.

In September 1963, China issued a set of special stamps called "Golden Monkey" on the Class-I national key wild animal for protection. The set contains three stamps without sprocket holes. One of them is the picture of a monkey mother scratching an itch for her baby, showing the mother love of golden monkeys so vividly. Nowadays, this set of stamps have increased its value by a hundredfold, deeply loved by collectors. In 2000, the golden monkey appeared again on the stamps, becoming one corner of the miniature sheet "Rare Animals".

(Lian Huiling and Li Yarong)

