

CHINA • YUNNAN



EDUCATION

Yunnan to set up S and SE Asia School of Communication

Luo Nan

Recently, China Radio International (CRI), the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee Publicity Department, Yunnan University and Yunnan Minzu University signed an agreement in Kunming concerning the establishment of the South and Southeast Asia International School of Communication in Yunnan University and Yunnan Minzu University.

Under the agreement, CRI will be responsible for setting up an academic committee, and then preside over the preparation of curricula while participating in the development of courses for the School. Additionally, CRI will designate practice mentors, provide a training base and offer employment opportunities for the students attending the School. The four parties will cooperate in training high-quality international communication pupils studying South and Southeast Asian languages. Together they will cultivate a number of students for international communication among South and South-eastern Asian countries.

COOPERATION

China hailed for help in tackling Vietnam's drought



Photo by Qing Feng (Xinhua Agency)

Since late 2015, countries along the Lancang-Mekong River, including Vietnam, have suffered from drought to varying extents due to the impact of the El Nino phenomenon.

China released an emergency water supply from its Jinghong Hydropower Station in the southwest Yunnan province to feed the downstream Mekong River between March 15 and April 10, helped to greatly alleviate the devastating situation.

The Nation reported, according to the Thai official, China has become more transparent in managing the cross-border water resources. China had sent letters to all four member-countries of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) of its water-discharge plan to help ease the shortage of fresh water in downstream countries.

Nuanla-or Wongpinitwarodom, director of the Mekong

River resources management office at the Department of Water Resources, said this time Chinese authorities also had expressed an intention to work more closely with downstream countries to solve their problems.

In Chaing Saen district in Thailand's northern province of Chiang Rai, the water level in Mekong River started to rise rapidly on March 15 from 2.30-2.50 metres to 3.29 metres yesterday evening, benefiting the operation of river boats in China, Laos and Thailand which borders Laos and Myanmar.

The information that water discharged from the upper Mekong River has arrived in Vietnam to help alleviate both drought and saline intrusion in has drawn great attention both domestically and globally.

"The best news of the day is that fresh water has arrived." "I am so happy." "I am a farmer in Soc Trang

province (a locality in Vietnam's Mekong River Delta region) and I couldn't be more delighted," read some of the comments in the local VNExpress online newspaper, after the news broke that the water level in the Mekong River in Vietnam had risen.

Nguyen Van Tinh, deputy director of the Water Resource Directorate, under Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, told local media on Monday that since April 3, water discharged from the upper Mekong River has arrived in Vietnam.

According to initial calculations, water from the upper Mekong is expected to help drive saltwater back towards the sea by around 10 to 20 km, Bao Tin Tuc, an online edition of Vietnam's state-run news agency, quoted Tinh as saying. (Xinhua Agency and *The Nation* contributed to this article)

ECOLOGY

Oriental white storks found in Chuxiong

Li Kewu

Recently, a flock of about 50 birds were spotted in Shuangbai County in Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture. Based on the large number of pictures taken on site, ornithologists at the Yunnan Wild Animals Park identified the birds as oriental white storks, which are a first class nationally protected animal in China. It is very rare for them to appear in a flock in Yunnan.

According to Qin Lihong, an ornithologist working at the Yunnan Wild Animals Park, the oriental white storks belong to the family Ciconiidae. In the pictures, their feathers are greyish white instead of pure white because they are still young. The birds can feed themselves, but they

are only about one year of age and not yet fully mature. These chicks are similar to adult birds, but their feathers are lighter in colour and have a weaker metallic lustre. As they grow older, their beaks and legs will gradually turn red, and their feathers will turn from grayish white to pure white.

Oriental white storks are large, beautiful wading birds, and they are classified as first class nationally protected animals. These oriental white storks probably have migrated from the north to winter in Yunnan. As temperatures rise, they will fly to the north to breed. In late September or early October, they begin to leave the breeding grounds and migrate southward in flocks.

FESTIVAL



Local residents and tourists have fun during the water-splashing festival in Shuangjiang Lahu, Va, Blang and Dai Autonomous County, southwest China's Yunnan Province, April 16, 2016. People splashed water to each other to express best regards during the water-splashing festival, which is also the New Year for the Dai ethnic group.

Photo by Chen Haining (Xinhua Agency)

TAX REFUND

Yunnan implements tax refund policy for purchases of overseas tourists leaving China

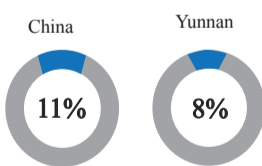
Hu Yuanhang

On April 1, Yunnan officially started to implement tax refunds for purchases of overseas tourists leaving China. Overseas tourists can enjoy an eight percent tax refund on goods purchased in China.

According to the tax refund policy for purchases of overseas tourists leaving China, overseas tourists who have resided in China for no more than 183 consecutive days can get a value added tax (VAT) refund for tax refundable articles purchased from tax refund stores when they leave China from designated departure ports.

Tax refundable articles

The refund rate



¥500 The amount of tax refundable articles purchased by an overseas tourist from the same tax refund store on the same day shall reach 500 yuan.

are mainly personal articles purchased by overseas tourists themselves from tax refund stores which meet tax refund conditions. However, they do not include articles prohibited or restricted from export as listed in the List of Articles Prohibited or Restricted by the People's Republic of China for

Import and Export. Articles sold by tax refund stores to which the VAT exemption policy applies also include other articles prescribed by the Ministry of Finance, the General Administration of Customs (GAC), and the State Administration of Taxation (SAT).

For an overseas tourist to apply for tax refund, the amount of tax refundable articles purchased by an overseas tourist from the same tax refund store on the same day shall reach 500 yuan. Additionally, tax refundable articles cannot have been unpacked or used, tourists must have purchased articles fewer than 90 days before leaving China, and the purchased

tax refundable articles must be personally carried by the overseas tourist, or within his or her luggage upon departing China.

The refund rate for tax refundable articles is 11 percent. It is worth noting that the Yunnan Tax Refund Agency will charge a three percent commission fee, so the tax refund that an overseas tourist will actually get is eight percent of the invoice amount (including VAT) of refundable articles.

So far, according to Wu Shu, deputy inspector of the Yunnan Provincial Department of Finance, a total of 25 enterprises in Yunnan have been included in the first batch of tax refund stores.

INDUSTRY

Kunming Advertising Industrial Park becomes national

Long Zhou

At a recent meeting by national industry and commerce authorities and national advertising market regulators, the Kunming Advertising Industrial Park was officially identified a national-level industrial park.

Since 2012, the Park, which covers an area of 1,577 square kilometres in a northwestern corner of downtown Kunming, has pooled the advertising clusters of its neighborhood. Focused on promoting Yunnan's tourism development, ethnic culture, creative industry and

SME brands, the Park has attracted 303 companies in the advertising and creative industries, including Sina Housing, S-Max, Wenchan Digital, e-Kunming and Yunnan TV International, becoming Yunnan's advertising hub. In 2015, the Park registered revenue of 1.2 billion yuan, accounting for a quarter of Yunnan's total advertising share.

