



HIGH-SPEED RAIL

China-Thailand rail project finally gets on track

BY PAN MENGQI

The construction of the long-awaited high-speed railway connecting Thailand and China started on December 21.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang sent a letter of congratulation, saying the China-Thailand Railway is a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative and will improve the level of regional infrastructure construction.

Li said he hoped both sides can maintain close cooperation and finish the construction of the first phase with high quality, and push forward the second phase of the project and strive for an early realization of the interconnection of the China-Thailand Railway and the China-Laos Railway.

Thanin Somboon, Thai director-general of department of highways, said in a news release on December 19 that the construction of the first 3.5-kilometer section will be a great chance for Thai and Chinese engineers to learn from each other.

On Nov 24, Thai Transport Minister Arkhom Tempittayapaisith said the construction of the remaining 249 km would start gradually after being



Thai Prime Minister Prayuth (3rd, L) attended the foundation-laying ceremony. (Xinhua)

put out to tender next year, and the full railway is set for completion in 2021.

The first phase of the high-speed project, linking Bangkok and the northeastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima, is set to cost 179 billion baht (\$5.4 billion) and would become Thailand's first high-speed railway with a maximum speed of 250 km/h.

Under the deal, the Thai government will pay for the construction by issuing bonds or seeking loans from banks, said Arkhom, adding that China will design it and provide engineers, track systems and equipment.

According to the proposal, the railway is expected to bring about 2 million more Chinese tourists to Thailand every year and will make it

easier for Thailand to export its products.

Xu Liping, director of Southeast Asian studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the railway is a pilot project in ASEAN countries and it will stimulate alongside regions comprehensively.

The second phase of the project, which will link up with a China-Laos line that is currently under construction, is allowing travelers to make the trip between Bangkok and the Lao capital of Vientiane in just four hours, and even travel all the way up to Kunming in China's Yunnan province.

The railway will make Thailand become a transportation hub in ASEAN countries, Xu said.

In the future, the railway will be extended southward to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Singapore, as part of the pan-Asia railway network spanning from Kunming through Laos and connecting Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

Zhu Xijun, general manager of the Southeast Asia Company of China Railway Construction, said: "After the railway is put into use, people will enjoy a much more convenient transportation between China and Thailand." (China Daily)

VOICE

China energizes the world economy

BY WANG JUNLING

Recently, the Communist Party of China held its first central economic work conference after the 19th National Congress. The world is particularly concerned about China's economic policy in 2018.

The attention stems not only from China's tremendous achievements in terms of its own development, but also from the real development opportunities China is bringing to other economies, as well as the vitality it has injected into the world economy.

First of all, China has created momentum in terms of growth. Over the past five years, China has contributed over 30 percent of the world's average annual economic expansion, exceeding the total combined contributions of the United States, the Euro zone and Japan. China's economic aggregate share of the global economy increased by 3.5 percent in 2018. This means that China has become the major driver and stabilizer for world economic growth.

Secondly, over the years, China has accumulated vast development experience. The country will produce at least 720 billion kilograms of staple goods this year. It has also successfully produced the Tiangong, Jiaolong, Tianyan, Mozi and other large-body aircraft. It

has lifted more than 60 million people out of poverty, and strengthened educational capacity in its central and western regions and rural areas. These development achievements not only make China a "straight-A student" in the school of the world, but has also created useful experience from which other countries can learn.

Thirdly, China provides effective solutions. China actively advocates building a community of shared future for mankind, has proposed and initiated the Belt and Road Initiative and promoted the establishment of a series of multi-party dialogue mechanisms. These efforts have provided Chinese ways for all countries worldwide to bridge their differences and reinforce their complementary advantages. These solutions benefit the world in real time. From 2014 to 2016, the total trade volume between China and "Belt and Road" countries exceeded three trillion U.S. dollars, while related investments exceeded 50 billion U.S. dollars.

The good opportunities are not to be missed. China has achieved economic growth through reform and opening up, and it will further open up to benefit the world. History will eventually prove that China's development momentum will push the world economy into a virtuous cycle. (People's Daily overseas edition)

NEWS IN BRIEF

YCIH ranked 5th among Chinese contractors

BY YANG JIANHUA

The "2017 China Top 80 Contractors and Top 60 Engineering Design Enterprises Press Conference and Awards Ceremony" was jointly held by *China Construction Times* and *Engineering News Record* (ENR) in Suzhou recently.

Yunnan Construction and Investment Holding Group (YCIH) jumped from the 14th place last year to 5th place of the top 80 Chinese contractors. YCIH made the greatest progress among all Chinese contractors.

In 2017, YCIH also moved up to 183rd place on the list of top 500 Chinese enterprises. It was also ranked 6th among the Top 200 Competitive Chinese Construction Enterprises and was ranked 159th among the ENR Top 250 International Contractors for the eighth year in a row.

YCIH getting promoted to 5th place this year demonstrates the group's advanced development, as well as characterising its substantial improvement and overall strength.

Yunnan Cultural Tour well received in North America

BY LIU ZIYU

The 2017 "Cultures of China, Colours of Yunnan" exhibitions and performances recently arrived in the United States and Canada. Local people from all walks of life were deeply impressed by the colourful cultures of ethnic minorities of Yunnan.

The exhibitions and performances included four parts. They were Yunnan's tourism and cultural promotions, Yunnan folk songs, dances and instrumental music performances, an ethnic costume exhibition, and the "Charm of Yunnan" cultural and nature photography exhibition.

The tour was designed to showcase Yunnan's unique ethnicities and tourism spots.

The aim was to the many highlight multiple angles and perspectives of Yunnan's people to audiences in the United States and Canada, as well as to promote cultural exchanges between the three countries.

The audience was amazed by Tibetan songs and dances, the Yi people's Haicaisong—which is a national intangible cultural heritage in China—as well as dances accompanied by traditional flutes, the Wa people's dances and other programmes. Statistics show that the theatrical performances attracted an audience of more than 2,000 people.

HI-TECH



On December 21, the first metro vehicle developed for Hong Kong by CRRC Qingdao Sifang Locomotive and Rolling Stock rolled off the assembly line. It is the first train built by China's largest metro vehicle project, and is also built to the highest ever fire safety ratings in the world. The picture shows the first metro train developed by Qingdao Sifang rolling off the assembly line for use in the Hong Kong downtown area. (Xinhua)

FRIENDSHIP

China, UNDP offers \$4m for Bangladesh's disaster recovery

To support the flood response, the Ministry of Commerce (MoFCOM) of China has partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide four million US dollars for early recovery efforts in Bangladesh.

This is a part of MoFCOM's Disaster Recovery Support in South Asia, said the UN agency in a statement received here December 20.

Under this partnership, UNDP will provide 13,000 flood-affected households in flood-hit Bogra, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Nilphamari districts with emergency shelter and

household items packages including materials to repair housing and to keep warm in the upcoming winter months.

Additionally, UNDP is partnering with UNFPA to ensure that 14,000 flood-affected women and girls will be provided with emergency dignity kits containing clothing, personal hygiene items and a flashlight, and 125 health workers provided with emergency health response kits to serve women and girls' health needs.

In recognition of the government of Bangladesh's support to the Rohingya, the Chinese

contribution will also support the procurement of medical supplies for health facilities serving Rohingya women and girls in Cox's Bazar, 292 km southeast of capital Dhaka.

China will also provide support in Pakistan and Nepal to restoring the livelihoods of the flood-affected people, said the statement.

It is expected that, with this first of its kind initiative, UNDP and the Chinese government will have stronger collaboration with a larger impact on disaster management and early recovery in Bangladesh and in South Asia, it added. (Xinhua)

EXCHANGE

Nepali version of China • Yunnan launched in Kathmandu

BY JOHN LI

Jointly published by Chinas Yunnan Daily Press Group and Nepalese *Jana Aastha National Weekly*, the Nepali version of the *China•Yunnan* news page makes its debut in Kathmandu on December 20. It is the third

of its kind published by Yunnan Daily Press Group in South Asia, following its English versions published in Bangladesh and India.

By far, Yunnan Daily Press Group has launched 14 *China•Yunnan* news pages in six languages via partnerships with mainstream media in nine countries, including the

United States, Indonesia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Nepal.

As the biggest media outlet in southwest China's Yunnan Province, Yunnan Daily Press Group has been committed to cooperations and people-to-people exchanges with South and Southeast Asian countries.

Kishor Shrestha, chairman of Nepal-China Media Forum said Nepal and China are not only close to each other geographically, but also old and good friends with a common goal. He hopes to promote the friendship of people from the two countries via media cooperation.

As a page of the *Jana Aastha National Weekly*, the *China•Yunnan* news page will be published on a monthly basis. It will focus on Yunnan-Nepal cooperation in fields of people-to-people exchange, culture, education, art, religion under the framework of Belt and Road Initiative, so as to deepen mutual understanding, promote socio-economic development in Nepal and Yunnan, and enhance China-Nepal friendship.



A screen shot of the *China • Yunnan* news page. (Yunnan Daily)

"Biggest dry wharf" connecting Yunnan with S and SE Asia expanded

BY HU XIAORONG

Recently, workers completed the installation of four interconnected platforms along newly constructed tracks running from Kunming East Railway Station to Wangjiaying West Railway Station. This means the "single lane" between Yunnan's largest passenger station and largest railway freight station has been converted to "three lanes". The changes will greatly reduce de-marshalling, handling and transit times for rail cars. Therefore, the "biggest dry wharf" connecting Yunnan with the countries of South and Southeast Asia has successfully completed

this most recent upgrade.

Kunming East and Wangjiaying West stations are the province's two largest railway marshalling and railway freight stations. As an important part of China's cargo transport hub to South and Southeast Asia, they are collectively referred to as the "biggest dry wharf" in Yunnan. With the "single lane" between the two stations now converted to "three lanes," the centre is now able to more efficiently handle freight coming to and from Kunming by the Nanning-Kunming, Shanghai-Kunming, Chengdu-Kunming, and Kunming-Yuxi-Hekou railways.

Photographers' association expanding Yunnan's int'l influence

BY LI HONGFENG

This year, the Yunnan Provincial Photographers' Association (YPPA) successfully held a number of South and Southeast Asia-oriented exhibitions and activities in order to expand the province's international reputation and influence.

During the 2017 China-South Asia and Southeast Asia Arts Week, and the Lancang-Mekong Arts Festival, the YPPA successfully hosted the fourth South and Southeast Asia Photography Exhibition at the Kunming International Convention and Exhibition Centre. More than 200 works taken by photographers from all over China —

as well as those from 18 South and Southeast Asian countries including India, Bangladesh, Laos, Singapore, Cambodia and Myanmar participated. Additionally, the YPPA made great efforts to promote Yunnan as a "paradise for photographers" in an effort to build the province into an international photography brand. The YPPA held seven sessions at the Dali International Photography Exhibition, four at the China-South and Southeast Asia International Photography Exhibition, six at the Luoping International Photography Festival, five at the Xishuangbanna International Photography Exhibition and three at the Honghe Hani Rice Terrace World Heritage International Photography Exhibition.

BRIDGE STORY

Longjiang Bridge: Asia's longest and highest of its kind

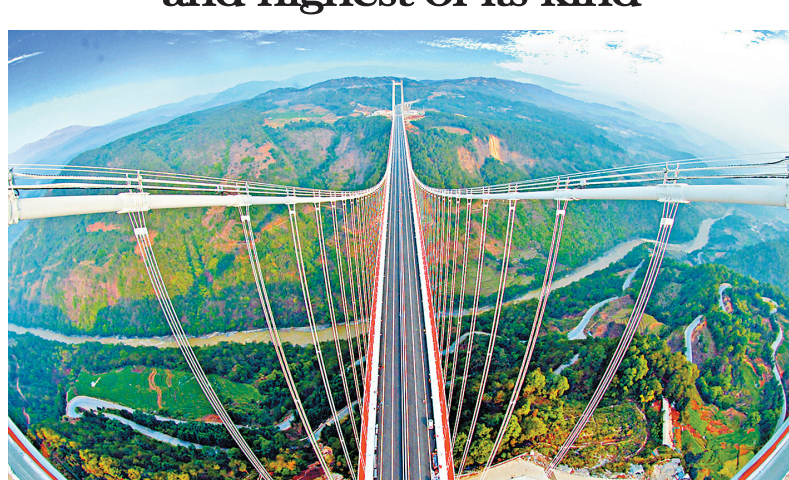


Photo Li Wensheng

BY ZU HONGBING

Editor's Note: On this planet, there are many kinds of bridges. Each of them has its own uniqueness and stories. What is the most beautiful and unforgettable bridge you have ever seen. Today, we introduce you the Longjiang Bridge in Yunnan.

The Longjiang Bridge, connecting the cities of Baoshan and Tengchong in west Yunnan, is the tallest and highest of its kind in Asia. A suspension bridge over the Longjiang River, it

is 2,471 meters high, 33.5 meters wide and 280 meters high above the river. The central span of the bridge, which is the distance between the two main towers, measures 1,196 meters and is only slightly shorter than that of the famous Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

Since the construction of the Longjiang Bridge was very complicated, it took five years to complete the whole project. And on April 20, 2016, the bridge was open to traffic and it shortens travel time from Kunming, capital of Yunnan province to Tengchong, to 7.5 hours.