Chinese President Xi Jinping called for joint efforts with Arab states on July 10 to build the Belt and Road together, promote peace and stability in the Middle East and safeguard justice.

Xi made the remarks in his speech at the opening ceremony of the eighth ministerial meeting of China-Arab States Co-operation Forum in Beijing on Tuesday.

The president announced that China and Arab countries had agreed to establish a "future-oriented comprehensive partnership of comprehensive cooperation and common development".

History and fact prove that no matter how the international relations change and how many differences there are, China and Arab countries have always been good partners in both good times and bad, and benefit from each other, Xi said.

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative has gained wide support and proactive participation from the international community, Xi said, adding that Arab countries are natural partners of the Belt and Road given their important geographic locations.

The president called on Arab countries to boost strategic mutual trust with China, uphold the principle of sovereignty, propose inclusive reconciliation and oppose terrorism.

Xi announced that China will set up a special program to rebuild economies and benefit from each other, Xi said.

The China-Arab community members of the Belt and Road given their importance, should be built cyberspace civilization, Xi said.

Xi said the China-Arab Reform and Development Research Center, which was launched in Shanghai in April, should be built stronger to provide more intellectual support for both sides.

China and Arab countries should make joint efforts to answer the call of the people and promote vitalization in the Middle East, Xi said.

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**POVERTY ELIMINATION FOR COMMON PROSPERITY**

Gorse growing boosts farmers’ income in Nanjian

“My family earns more than 20,000 yuan a year by selling the yellow flowers,” said Ran Liansen a farmer from Gonglang Town in West Yunnan’s Nanjian County.

The past years have seen local authorities and party branches in Nanjian County’s Gonglang Town lead farmers in planting gorse, tea, kohlrabi and walnut, as new ways to fight against poverty.

In the Xiaomidi village alone, more than five hectares of gorse are planted by 15 households, with several new houses built out of the flower income.

For each household the average income from growing the said plants has exceeded 50,000 yuan.

(Yunnan Gateway)

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**FOUNDER OF SUPER BRIDGES COMPLETED**

The concrete casting for the last pier understructure of Luang Prabang railway bridge has been successfully completed, laying down all the foundation construction work of the two cross-Mekong River super major bridges along the China-Laos railway.

At Tuesday night over the Mekong River in Luang Prabang city’s north, some 220 km north of Lao capital Vientiane, tankers were busily carrying concrete for the casting of No.21 pier foundation of the bridge.

Tang Guoyun, division secretary of the Communist Party of China working committee with the China Railway No.5 Engineering Group (CREC-8), responsible for the construction of the third section of the China-Laos Railway and the construction of the two cross-Mekong River railway bridges, said on July 11 that after building the No.21 pier foundation of the Luang Prabang railway bridge, his CREC-8 division has planted a major milestone along the China-Laos Railway, which means the completion of the main body and the most difficult work of the two cross-Mekong River bridges’ construction.

“We have passed through a critical juncture,” Tang said. “The completion of the No.21 pier foundation will pave the way for the CREC-8 to raise all the Mekong River bridges’ piers above the flood level before the flood season.”

As one of the key projects of the China-Laos Railway, the Luang Prabang cross-Mekong River super major bridge is 1458.9 meters long, with 34 spans. And the construction of No.21 pier is the most complicated and risky, due to its proximity to the main shipping lane in the middle of Mekong with deep water and strong current around.

(Xinhua)

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**ECOLOGY**

River chief scheme strengthens eco-protection in Lijiang

Lijiang, a renowned tourist city in Yunnan province, has seen strong results since it began implementing a river chief scheme in June 2017 to protect local lakes, rivers, reservoirs and canals.

Now, Lijiang has established a four-level river chief scheme which includes rivers in local municipalities, counties, townships and villages as well as a two-level inspection system and relevant supporting policies.

In total, the city has set up 1,109 river chiefs, including 16 for city-level rivers, 443 for township-level rivers, and 665 for village-level rivers. As many as 2,355 patrols have been launched on the rivers under the river chief system in 2017.

(Lijiang Daily)

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**CULTURE**

First Confucius Institute in northern Laos inaugurated

The first Confucius Institute in northern Laos, also the second in the country, has been inaugurated.

The institute will help further promote exchanges between universities of China and Laos, Li Baoguang, Chinese consul general in Laos’ Luang Prabang, said at the opening ceremony on July 13.

It will also contribute to the cooperation between the two countries, Li added, noting the growing China-Laos ties at present.

The institute was jointly established by Souphanouvong University and Kuming University of Science and Technology.

Kongsy Sengmany, deputy minister of education and sports of Laos, Brong Lanxai University of Science and Technology, deputy secretary of the provincial party committee and deputy provincial governor of Luang Prabang, and Wang Xueqin, president of Kuming University of Science and Technology also attended the ceremony.

They spoke highly of the role Confucius Institute has played in strengthening people-to-people exchange and cooperation between the two countries.

The first Confucius Institute in Laos was was jointly established in 2010 by NUOL and China’s Guangxi University for Nationalities.