



CHINA • YUNNAN



Construction of China-Laos railway progressing smoothly

At the construction site of the China-Laos railway, about 30 kilometres away from Vientiane, a giant bridge-building crane moved slowly. It was lifting a giant T-beam 32 metres in length that weighs more than 140 tons. The beam was steadily put in place on the Nam Khone super large bridge. The span has a total length of 7,506 metres, setting a new record in the history of Laos infrastructure. The bridge beams began to be laid on February 9th. Now construction is advancing at a speed of two holes per day, and the entire bridge will be completed by late May 2019.

Laos is a landlocked country, and now one of its national development goals is to become a 'land-linked' country. The China-Laos railway stretches for a total length of 414.332 kilometres



A bridge-building crane works on the China-Laos Railway. (Xinhua)

between Moten in the north and Vientiane in the south. The railway line, which has a designed speed of 160 kilometres per hour, uses Chinese technical standards and equipment. The railway holds the key to implementing Laos' national developmental strategy.

Even at the present stage, railway construction has directly driven

the country's development of its building materials, electricity, agriculture, animal husbandry, service industry, logistics and other sectors. According to incomplete statistics, construction of the railway has cumulatively created more than 32,000 jobs for Laotian people, and currently 4,300 Laotian employees are on the job.

In the future, the China-Laos Railway will link up China, Thailand, Malaysia and other countries. It will become an important part of the artery of communication in Southeast Asia, while also improving Laos's transportation situation and facilitating its economic development.

Laos is a mountainous country. Bridges and tunnels, extending 62 kilometres and 198 kilometres respectively, account for 62.7 percent of the China-Laos Railway. "They don't build the railway. They erect and dig it," the locals justifiably say.

In 2018, construction of the railway's key and control projects went into full swing. So far, 98.5 kilometres of tunnels have been dug, 11 tunnels have been successfully bored.

(People's Daily)

CULTURE

Family reunion dinner – the taste of happiness

For every Chinese family, the reunion dinner on New Year's Eve is the most important meal. As a highlight of Spring Festival celebrations, it reflects the attachment to family of the Chinese people. With China's socioeconomic development over the past 40 years of reform and opening up, the family reunion dinner on New Year's Eve is now more about "affection" than "food".

The New Year's Eve dinner dates back to ancient times in China. Legend has it that a monster named **Nian** ('year' in Chinese) would come out on New Year's Eve to wreak havoc. Therefore, families would gather together to worship their ancestors and pray for blessings. They also set off firecrackers to scare away **Nian**. After that, they closed the doors and windows of their homes to eat a dinner and usher in the New Year. Later, this practice evolved into the Chinese New Year celebration. Today, Chinese people no longer believe in the legend of the monster **Nian**, but the custom of eating a reunion dinner on New Year's Eve has been passed down from generation to generation.

China is a huge country, so people in different places have developed different cuisines. For example, people in the north love **jiaozi** (dumplings), while people in the south like to eat **nian'gao** (rice cakes). Despite their different eating habits, people want to express their good wishes for the next year with food. The yearly reunion dinner reflects the Chinese tradition of venerating family, which brings people closer.

(Staff reporters)

ECONOMY

Yunnan's GDP increases by 8.9% in 2018



Yunnan has three high-speed rails by the end of 2018. The mileage reaches 1,026 kilometers. Photo by Yang Zheng

The second session of the 13th Yunnan Provincial People's Congress, the province's legislature, was held recently in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province.

According to the government work report delivered by Yunnan Provincial Governor Ruan Chengfa, Yunnan's GDP reached about 1.79 trillion yuan

last year, growing by 8.9% year on year. 15 counties in the province were removed from the impoverished list.

In 2018, Yunnan authorities rolled out a series of measures to cultivate new momentum driving local economic development, including developing eight major industries such as biological medicine and tourism. Yunnan

also decreased production of crude steel and coal, and lowered costs for local companies.

For 2019, Yunnan aims to achieve a GDP increase of around 8.5%, with the fixed asset investment growing by 12%. A total of 1.3 million impoverished residents in the rural areas will be raised out of poverty. (Yunnan Daily)

ODE TO 70 YEARS

Living standards greatly improved since 1949



Editor's note: The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Over the past seven decades, China has developed from a poor, weak country to the second largest economy in the world. Starting from this issue, we will

publish a column called "Ode to 70 years" to help you understand the earth-shaking changes that have taken place in New China.

Since the founding of New China in 1949, the living standards of Chinese people have greatly

improved. With the substantial increase in people's income, urban and rural residents are shifting from food and clothing-oriented consumption to pleasure and development-oriented consumption. In China, the Engel coefficient (the proportion of food expenditures to total expenditures) of urban and rural residents dropped from 63.9 percent in 1978 to 29.3 percent in 2017. The sharp fall indicates that the consumption level and structure of people's lives has improved remarkably.

The photo shows that in a Kunming's super market people were selecting their goods before this year's Spring Festival.

(Photo by Zhou Can)

BEAUTIFUL YUNNAN

Lucid waters and lush mountains add charm to amazing Yunnan



An elder feeds seagulls in Shuanglang, Dali.

Photo by Li Qiuming

Bearing in mind the philosophy of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets", Yunnan people have embarked on a road to develop an eco-tourism industry.

Located on the shores of Erhai Lake, the town of Shuanglang is regarded as one of the most beautiful places in western Yunnan's Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture. Every year, thousands of tourists visit the town.

However, the coming of tourists not only spurred economic growth in Shuanglang, but also affected the ecological environment. In recent years, a disordered tourism-related service industry began to pose threats to the environment. In early 2017, Erhai Lake even faced the risk of eutrophication. Since then, a campaign has been launched to protect the lake.

"In two years, we have built sewage interception facilities, regulated the hotel and catering market, returned wetlands to the lake and controlled the agricultural diffused pollution," said Shi Guodong, deputy director of the Shuanglang Old Town Scenic Area

Management Committee. Measures were also taken to end the extensive development of tourism and improve tourism infrastructure. These efforts were all made to offer a better tourism experience.

In Dali, an old saying goes "Dali thrives as Erhai Lake gets cleaner". Since early 2017, the water quality of Erhai Lake is getting better. In 2018, the quality had been kept at Grade II for seven months. And Shuanglang has become more amazing and popular among tourists.

Puzhehei National Wetland Park is situated in Qiubei County in southeast Yunnan. Up to now, Qiubei has invested 280 million yuan for environmental protection initiatives in Puzhehei. Xianrendong is a small but beautiful village with 196 households inside the park. Now, most villagers are involved in the tourism sector. They say that only a better environment can draw more tourists to Xianrendong. People there are longing for a better life as the ecological environment is being improved. (Wang Huan)

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Yang Kaixiang: From poverty-stricken villager to model for poverty alleviation

Dressed in farming clothes and with a tanned face, Yang Kaixiang did look like a farmer, but not a millionaire.

Living in Tongzi Village in southeast Yunnan's Pingbian County, Yang Kaixiang's family was once a poverty-stricken household. But this situation began to change in 2012 when Yang Kaixiang started to plant fructus amomi.

Where there is a will, there is a way. Yang Kaixiang succeeded in his first year and earned more than 10,000 yuan.

Now, he plants 16 acres of fructus amomi each year. His total income exceeds one million yuan.

From a poverty-stricken resident to a millionaire, Yang Kaixiang always thinks about how to help his fellow villagers climb out of poverty. He sells fructus amomi seedlings

to them at a price lower than market value, and teaches them his planting skills.

Today, under the influence of Yang Kaixiang, there are more than 300 poverty-stricken households growing fructus amomi in Tongzi Village. The total planting area covers 1,650 acres in the village, which generates a value exceeding 80 million yuan. More and more villagers are benefiting from the industry.

(Yunnan Poverty Alleviation Hotline)



Editor: Wang Shixue
E-mail: 973659397@qq.com