



BELT AND ROAD

Construction of Chinese section of China-Myanmar railway progressing steadily

It is already midwinter. The construction of Dali-Ruili railway, the last section of China-Myanmar railway in China, is picking up speed. And the longest railway tunnel in China—the Gaoligong tunnel—is advancing at full speed.

From the ancient Southern Silk Road to the Yunnan-Myanmar Highway that played a vital role in Chinese people's war of resistance against Japanese aggression, Yunnan province maintained exchanges with South and Southeast Asia for thousands of years. In the past times, however, the lofty Gaoligong Mountains hindered the opening-up and development of western Yunnan. The peoples on both sides had to climb over the mountains to stay in touch.

In late 2015, as the domi-

nant project of Dali-Ruili railway, the 34.538-kilometer-long Gaoligong tunnel began to force its way through the hardly surmountable mountain.

The Gaoligong Mountains have almost all the adverse geological structures that baffle tunnel construction. The risks, among others, include wall rock deformation, broken fracture zones, rock burst, water and mud inrush and high terrestrial heat.

Before the tunnel went into construction, the design alone took ten years and more than 30 lines were proposed. "After repeated exploration and comparison, experts decided on the present proposal," said Si Jingzhao, chief engineer of Dali-Ruili Project Management Team of the China Railway Tunnel Bureau Group. To ensure safety and progress, the



On the morning of December 10th, 2018, the steel truss arch of the four-track railway bridge on the Nujiang River was completed. The bridge is a key project of the Dali-Ruili Railway in Yunnan Province, and this step marks significant progress in the construction of the China-Myanmar Railway. The steel bridge is the world's longest-spanned railway arch bridge. (Xinhua)

Group innovatively used the hard rock roadheader for the first time under the complicated geological conditions in western Yunnan.

Now Caiyun and Caiyun I, two hard rock roadheaders

independently developed by China, are in use at the tunnel construction site, improving the efficiency by six to eight times as compared with the conventional methods. So far, the main tunnel has advanced more

than 3,000 meters, over 2,200 meters of which have been dug with Caiyun.

"The two hard rock roadheaders are independently developed by China for the Gaoligong tunnel. The forward thrust has increased by more than 50 percent compared with past versions," said He Fei, vice president of General Institute of Design and Research of China Railway Engineering Equipment Group Co., Ltd.

Currently, the construction of Dali-Ruili railway is steadily advancing, and the railway is expected to go into operation within four years. By then, passengers will hopefully cover the over 600 kilometres between Kunming and Ruili in less than six hours, cutting the travelling time by more than two hours from the original travelling time by highway (Xinhua)

TRADE

Trade increases between Kunming and Southeast Asia

In the first nine months of 2018, according to statistics released by Kunming Customs, Kunming achieved a total import and export trade value of 9.575 billion US dollars. This statistic represents a year-on-year increase of 93 percent, ranking first among Chinese provincial capital cities in terms of consecutive-month growth.

In the first three quarters of 2018, trade grew by 166.1 percent between Kunming and countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. In the fruit shops of Kunming, people can buy fresh tropical fruits from Southeast Asia including durian from Thailand and pitaya from Vietnam. Roses for sale in the flower shops of Bangkok and Singapore might have been growing in the fields of Kunming the day before.

The flower stalls in

Dounan, Kunming combine to create the largest fresh cut flower market in Asia. Last year, 6.5 billion fresh cut flowers, equivalent to one flower for every person in the world, went from here to more than 50 countries and regions. Hua Mingsheng, now in his fifties, is a first generation flower grower in Dounan Village. In the 1980s, when he first began to grow gladiola, he was a laughing stock for other villagers.

"Now we have expanded our business to markets all over the world," Hua said proudly. In the late 1990s, with the Dounan flower market developing rapidly, the flowers of Southeast Asia also entered the market. "We are peers, but we do not exclude foreign flower merchants. We have even become good friends. We learn from and cooperate with each other in order to expand our businesses." (Xinhua)

BEAUTIFUL YUNNAN

Marathoners hail Yunnan's beauty

BY LONGZHOU

"It's a beautiful city. People here are friendly. In the past two years, I have been to Kunming five times and I'm happy each visit," said Leela Mani Paudyal, Nepali Ambassador to China. When our reporter interviewed him on December 2, 2018, the ambassador had just completed the SCO Kunming International Marathon 2018—Yunnan Salt Industry.

Marathoners from all over the world praised Kunming for its pleasant weather, nice layout and hospitable residents.

Andrei Denisov, Russian Ambassador to China, started learning Chinese at the age of 16 and spoke fluent Chinese during our interview. He thought that the warm weather in Kunming left a positive impression on people from northern countries. "When I return to my country, I will recommend this beautiful city to my countrymen so that they will visit it," he said.

Kazakhstan's ambassador to China, Shakhmat Nuryshev, said that Kunming is a beautiful city and that the SCO

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Kunming International Marathon was well located. He never expected that in December the event could have been held on a sunny day amidst fresh air and beautiful landscapes in Kunming.

Belay Olkeba Jene from Ethiopia won the championship with a time of 2 hours, 20 minutes and 49 seconds. That time was the fastest in three years of SCO Kunming International Marathon races. Jene said that he was happy to compete in Kunming and win the championship. The marathoners found the weather pleasant and the enthusiastic audience impressive. Both aspects encouraged the competitors to do well during the competition.

SPORTS



On December 28, 2018, the 2018 "Wings for Love" Wingsuit Flying World Cup Final kicked off in southwest Yunnan's Jinggu County, attracting more than 20 racers from around the world. Here Chinese racer Yang Cheng lands at the designated point. Yunnan boasts abundant resources for extreme sports. In recent years, more and more professional and amateur extreme sport lovers are attracted to race in different part of the province. (Xinhua)

China offers 144-hr visa-free transit in 5 more cities

China began to implement its 144-hour visa-free transit policy in five more cities on January 1 for travelers from 53 countries.

These cities are Qingdao, a major port city in Shandong province; Xiamen, a coastal city in Fujian province; Wuhan, capital of Hubei province; Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province; and Kunming, capital of Yunnan province.

The visa-free transit policy approved by the State Council, applies to people from 53 countries including Austria, Belgium, Czech, Denmark, France, Germany, Russia and the United States.

Passengers are required to carry effective international travel certificates and have definite onward travel within 144 hours, when entering those five cities.

Previously, a 72-hour visa-free

transit policy was adopted in the cities. In the new move, passengers can enter and exit Qingdao and Xiamen through their air and sea ports. Those who transit through Qingdao are allowed to stay elsewhere in Shandong during the 144-hour period, according to Li Zhuqun, deputy head of the Shandong Provincial Public Security Department.

(Xinhua)

TRAVEL IN YUNNAN

Internet plus tourism helps Yunnan people enjoy a better life



A tourist is scanning QR code in Stone Forest scenic spot.

Photo by Li Hengqiang

BY CHU DONGHUA

"At the Kunming western toll station, the ETC lanes are unimpeded. The payment is automatically made through WeChat, and we can enjoy dual discounts. It's awesome!" commented a netizen by the name of Rattle & Hum on the non-contact mobile payment after a post of the WeChat public account Yunnan at Your Fingertips. This is just one of the stories about how Internet Plus Tourism helps improve people's quality of life.

In 2017, Yunnan province launched the Yunnan at Your Fingertips project and accelerated the development of Internet Plus Tourism. On December 26, 2017, Yunnan Tengyun Information Industry Co., Ltd. was established and began to focus on the development and platform operation of Yunnan at Your Fingertips. As China's first provincial all-for-one tourism service management platform, Yunnan at Your Fingertips led the construction of the

country's smart tourism ecosystems.

After the joint efforts in the past year, the platform not only played an important role in the integrated development, transformation and upgrading of the cultural tourism industry, but also brought tangible benefits to the local people and tourists by connecting the industry with people's wellbeing.

The ETC plus non-contact payment is a new way of paying highway tolls first introduced in Yunnan province through Yunnan at Your Fingertips. Now over 5,000 non-contact payment users are active on highways every day.

Yunnan at Your Fingertips boasts a tourism big data centre, two platforms (an integrated tourism service platform and an integrated tourism management platform), three tourism application ports (APP, public account and small program) and five systems (a digital identity system, a digital consumption system, a tourism complaint system, an AI service system and a digital integrity system).

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Ginkgo trees help lift Tengchong villagers out of poverty

The Jiangdong ginkgo village in Tengchong, Baoshan of Yunnan province, is golden in the winter. Ginkgo trees full of yellow leaves paint a beautiful landscape, attracting tourists from home and abroad.

The ginkgo village has over 10-thousand-mu ginkgo forest with over 30,000 plants, among which the oldest is about 1,300 years old. Besides ginkgo trees, there are various karst caves and valleys around the village.

Back to about 10 years ago, the ginkgo village has 2,520 people living in poverty, accounting for 70% of its total population. In 2007, with the guidance and help of local government, eight households started to develop agritainment businesses. Since then, villagers have engaged

in businesses including hostels, commodity sales and delicacy. Through developing agritourism, the poverty population has been reduced to 39. In 2017, the village received 360,000 tourists, and the tourism revenue totaled 48 million yuan.

Local embroidery industry has also developed. More than 500 female villagers engage in the business and their works are sold inside and outside the province. They have gained an average annual income of four million yuan. Besides, the crafts of baking and drying have helped the price of ginkgo fruit increase from around 10 yuan to about 80 to 100 yuan per kilogram, producing an annual output value of more than 5 million yuan in the village.

(Xinhua)

ECO

Dashanbao, where people and cranes live in harmony

Today, people no longer contend for land with cranes. Instead, they live in harmony with these magnificent birds in the Dashanbao Black-necked Crane National Nature Reserve in Zhaoyang District, Zhaotong City, Yunnan Province. According to the latest available statistics, the number of black-necked cranes wintering at the nature reserve has increased from more than 1,400 last year to a record high of over 1,600 this year.

Black-necked cranes are national first-class protected wild animals in China. In the mid-20th century, they migrated to Dashanbao for the first time ever. Since the establishment of the nature reserve in Zhaotong in 1990, Dashanbao has gradually become the most important wintering habitat and migration area for black-necked cranes on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau.

More and more tourists and birdwatchers now visit. In 2010, the nature reserve received 30,000 tourists. Five years later, that number exceeded 120,000. With the development of the region's tourism sector, people began to contend for land with the cranes.

In September, 2017, after two years of construction, a 55-kilometer, first-grade highway was completed. Just as it was ready to go into operation, the government of Zhaoyang District suspended tourism in the nature reserve.

If tourism is not stopped, the car ride from downtown Zhaotong to Dashanbao will be shortened from three hours to less than an hour.

Along this highway, which has a speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour, more traffic and passengers will flow into the nature reserve.

People must retreat to make room for the cranes. This represents an adjustment to the relationship between protection and development. Starting last September, besides suspending tourism at Dashanbao, the local government systematically planned new ecologically protective measures for the nature reserve designed to optimize its scope and function.

Dashanbao is located in a cold alpine area, making it difficult for black-necked cranes to find food in the wild. With the organization of the Nature Reserve Administration, local villagers plant more than 3,700 mu of potatoes alongside a large amount of buckwheat, oat and corn. These crops are planted in the traditional way in areas where the black-necked cranes typically congregate in the winter. The crops are planted without harvesting so that the black-necked cranes can have sufficient food during the cold months. Additionally, a large amount of corn is held in reserve to feed the black-necked cranes every year.

This winter, due to the significant reduction in human activity, the local ecosystem has improved. Many wetlands are restored and the grasslands have become lush again, attracting a growing number of black-necked cranes.

(Xinhua)



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Photo by Zhoucan