



CHINA • YUNNAN



40th ANNIVERSARY OF REFORM AND OPENING UP

Kunming showing geographical advantage through connectivity

[Editor's Note] As early as 2,000 years ago, Kunming held an important position on China's portion of the Southern Silk Road. Today, with new opportunities brought about by the Belt and Road Initiative, the capital city of Yunnan province is becoming a regional international hub. It acts as a colourful bridge of cooperation and exchange between China and the nations of South and Southeast Asia.

People used to talk 18 odd things about Yunnan, and one of them was that trains travelled slower than cars because of all the province's mountains.

In recent years, Kunming has greatly improved its aviation, railway, highway and other transportation infrastructure. In 2012, Kunming Changshui International Airport went into operation. Now this aviation hub has connected Kunming with 35 cities

in South and Southeast Asia, and more than 50 international flights fly from here to destinations all over the world.

In 2017, Changshui Airport handled a passenger throughput of 44.73 million, ranking sixth in the country and 37th in the world. When its second construction phase is completed in 2030, the airport will be able to handle an annual passenger throughput of 120 million passengers and a cargo and

mail throughput of 1.2 million tonnes.

In December 2016, the Yunnan section of the Shanghai-Kunming High-Speed Railway went into use and ushered in the province's era of high-speed rail. Meanwhile, the Trans-Asian Railway is now under construction. In the near future, passengers will be able to travel by train from Kunming to Bangkok and other places. **(Xinhua)**

CONNECTIVITY

First tunnel cluster cut through on Chinese section of China-Laos Railway

The No. 1 Huangzhulin Tunnel, located on the Yuxi-Mohan Railway in Jinghong City, Yunnan Province, was opened the other day. Up until now, all tunnels of the Huangzhulin tunnel cluster, the first tunnel cluster on the Chinese section of the China-Laos Railway, have been dug through.

The Huangzhulin tunnel cluster consists of the No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 tunnels. Each of them passes through a mountain and the three tunnels are located on a curve with a radius of 2,800 metres. Since construction began in September 2016, builders have overcome various difficulties. These include geological complexity and high environmental protection requirements.

The railway passes through the Wild Elephant Valley Nature Reserve in Xishuangbanna. While conducting an environment impact assessment, the relevant departments studied the distribution and migration routes of Asian elephants. They also analyzed the impact construction would have on the activity of the elephants and their migration corridors. To avoid disturbing the Asian elephants, work crews have built a six-kilometre protection fence, which will grow to more than 30 kilometres in the future.

The Yuxi-Mohan Railway will extend from Yuxi City in the middle of Yunnan to Mohan on the border of China and Laos. There it will connect to the Lao section of the China-Laos Railway.

(Hu Xiaorong)

BUSINESS

Makers of Laos 'old tree tea' explore Chinese market



In the international pavilion of the recently held China (Kunming) Tea Industry Expo 2018, Golden Champa black tea and Luang Prabang old tree tea from Laos attracted many tea lovers. The high-quality Golden Champa series was especially popular. Through technical cooperation and Yunnan-based processing and production, the company has expanded its business to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and other places in China. **(Yang Zheng)**

BEAUTIFUL YUNNAN

Marathoners hail Yunnan's beauty

"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, 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, 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



A competitor crosses the finishing line.

Photo by Chen Fei

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

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. Reina said that he was happy to compete in Kunming and win the championship. The marathoners found the weather pleasant and the enthusiastic audience impressive. **(Long Zhou)**

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Luorong villagers: Lucid waters and lush mountains are our rice bowl



A photo of the Pudacuo National Nature Reserve.

Photo by Lan Fang

Arong, 50, lives in the Pudacuo National Park in Luorong Village, Jiantang Township, Shangri-La City, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Like other villagers here, Arong still follows the traditional way of farming and grazing.

The Pudacuo National Park is home to streams, lakes, wetlands, forests, meadows, valleys and a variety of rare animals and plants. It covers an area of 602 square kilometers with an average elevation of 3,500 meters.

Luorong Village was not always like this. There used to be no highways here. Due to the cold and changeable weather, the villagers could not be adequately fed by growing barley and potatoes. To support themselves, some villagers hunted and cut trees for timbers and firewood.

"We did not get along with the forestry officials," said Arong. In 1998, Diqing Prefecture announced the ban on cutting of natural forests. Many villagers did not understand the policy. When the forestry officials and rangers talked to them about ecological protection, the villagers thought that they were preventing them from supporting their families.

Later, Shudu Lake and Bitu Lake became tourist attractions and brought about business opportunities. Some villagers began to offer horse rides and sell food and barbecues to make money. Tourism also increased wastes and the horses damaged the surface vegetation, greatly affecting the ecological systems.

Starting 2006, according to Tang Hua, director of the Pudacuo National Park Ad-

ministration, the local government began the attempt to build a national park and set up a strictly protected zone, an ecological conservation zone, a recreation and exhibition zone and a traditional utilization zone.

"We must stop the projects that damaged the environment, but we must also take into account the people's livelihoods," said Ding Wendong, head of the Preservation Section of the Pudacuo National Park Administration. Starting 2008, the operating company of the national park began to give money to the surrounding villages for ecological compensation. The compensation contracts are signed every five years. The ecological compensation fund was nearly 10 million yuan per year for the first round and about 20 million yuan for the second round. So far, the ecological compensation funds have reached 150 million yuan.

Now besides receiving about 40,000 yuan from the ecological compensation fund, Arong's family members could also act as sanitation workers at the national park. The ecological compensation work has aroused the villagers' awareness of environmental protection. Even when they gather wild mushrooms in the mountains, the villagers act carefully for fear of affecting the ecosystems.

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