



# CHINA • YUNNAN



## Belt and Road: Things and people in China-Laos cooperation

**Editor's note:** The second Belt and Road Forum on International Cooperation is being held in Beijing from April 25 to 27. With the theme of "Belt and Road Cooperation, Shaping a Brighter Shared Future," the second forum aims to bring about high-quality cooperation under the BRI framework. This issue, we see the cooperation between China and Laos in the backdrop of Belt and Road Initiative from the cooperative projects under construction and people-to-people exchanges.

### Saysettha Development Zone: A new platform for China-Laos cooperation

The Saysettha Development Zone in Vientiane is jointly funded by China's Yunnan Construction and Investment Holding Group and the Vientiane municipal government. It covers an area of 11.5 square kilometres and is an important bilateral platform for creating more production capacity.

"The Saysettha Development Zone involves an infrastructure investment of nearly one billion US dollars. It has introduced 59 international and local companies, which have invested more than one billion US dollars and created over 10,000 new jobs. It will hopefully achieve an output value of over 1.5 billion US dollars by the end of next year," said Liu Hu, chairman of the zone.

In a corner of the development zone, Lao-China Dongyan Petrochemical Co. Ltd. (Dongyan Petrochemical) has basically completed the first phase of a building project. "We expect to go into operation in the first half of 2020. When that happens, the first phase will produce 800,000 tonnes of gasoline and diesel fuel every year," said a young local employee of the company.

China's Yunnan Construction and Investment Holding Group, and the National Petroleum Corporation of Laos, jointly established Dongyan Petrochemical. When the project goes into production, it will achieve an annual industrial output value of 1.5-2 billion US dollars and create more than 1,000 jobs.

"We introduce the industries that Laos needs most. Currently, Laos relies on imports for gasoline, diesel and liquefied gas, so we in-



Saysettha Development Zone

troduced the petroleum refining project. It is of great significance for Laos' economic development," Liu Hu said.

So far, 59 companies from China, Japan, Singapore, Thailand and other countries have settled in the development zone. They cover energy, chemicals, electronics, biomedicine and the processing of agricultural products. "Upon completion of the third phase, the development zone is expected to attract 150 companies. These companies will achieve an annual output value of six billion US dollars, create more than 30,000 jobs for local people," Liu Hu said.

During a recent visit to the Saysettha Development Zone, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and Lao President, Bounngang Vorachith said, "China has made important contributions to the economic and social development of Laos. By connecting the Belt and Road Initiative with the strategy of changing Laos from a landlocked country to a land-linked one, the two countries have further strengthened coop-



The photo shows children playing near the first stage hydro-power station on the Nam Ou River in Luang Prabang. (Xinhua)

eration. This will bring more practical benefits to the two peoples." (People's Daily)

### China-Laos Railway brings Laos villagers new dreams

In the past, this valley in the northern mountains of Laos was cut off from the outside world, and the villagers mainly farmed or sold local products along the road for a living.

Today, the China-Laos Railway's roadbed has taken shape in the valley. It is clean and bright at both ends of the tunnel, and the railway station blueprint is completed. Villagers living nearby are looking forward to new lives.

Simala is 30 years old and her family grows green peppers for a living. "We earn a little more than ten million Kip in a year, but that depends on the weather," she said.

In 2016, the building of the China-Lao Railway helped Simala realize her first dream. She cooked for construction workers of the 14<sup>th</sup> Engineering Bureau

Photo by Han Chengyuan



Chinese volunteer teacher Lin Jieyu

(Xinhua)

of China Hydropower and earned nearly 20 million Kip, which was even more than what her entire family used to earn in a year.

In February, the 2019 China-Laos Railway Construction Conference announced that 95 percent of tendered roadbed and bridge have been completed. Furthermore, construction of track-laying bases and station buildings will soon be in full swing. As the railway advances, Simala now has another dream.

"I've never taken a train before. When the railway is open to traffic, I will go to Vientiane by train to sell my green peppers," Simala said.

(Xinhua)

### Chinese volunteers find teaching in Laos rewarding

"When I first came to teach here, I sweated a lot even if I stood below a fan. Seeing me trying to stay cool, my students surrounded me and used their exercise books as fans to help me cool down," said Lin Jieyu. She is a 24-year-old Chinese volunteer teaching at a pri-

mary school in a village near Vientiane. Recalling her first days in this country, she still cannot forget this touching scene.

The primary school, funded by the China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD), was completed in May 2013. It began to teach grades one through five the Chinese language beginning in October of the same year. The CFPD sends Chinese volunteers to teach at the school.

The headmaster of the primary school is very satisfied with the performance of the Chinese volunteers. "All the Chinese teachers have performed very well. The students, parents and local teachers love them very much. The students enjoy learning Chinese with their teachers, and parents are happy about that," she said.

Local teachers would invite Chinese teachers to join in the celebration of major local festivals, which have enriched the lives of Chinese teachers in Laos and deepened their understanding of Lao culture. (Xinhua)

### Chinese hydropower project helps resettle Laos migrants

The Nam Ou drainage basin hydropower project is PowerChina's first overseas BOT (build-operate-transfer) project that is planned with an entire river basin in mind. It is also an important project to turn Laos into the "battery of Southeast Asia" and improve people's wellbeing in northern Laos. When the project is completed, it will generate 12 percent of the electricity required by Laos each year.

Construction of the dam pays special attention to environmental protection concerns, not just as it is built, but also in terms of migrant resettlement. The project includes plans to build 28 new villages and resettle more than 2,300 households. This will involve 12,600 people who will gradually have to change their lifestyles. The project will bring great economic and social benefits as well as environmental ones. (Xinhua)

### ECOLOGY

#### Doctor of ornithological ecology building "villas" for birds

"People say that with so many years of education, I should sit behind a big desk rather than trek in the mountains," said Luo Kang. Wearing slightly curly hair and dark skin, he looks like a farmer. But he has been studying ornithological ecology for nearly eight years, and is now a doctoral student at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

When he was a little boy, he was obsessed with watching birds. To learn more about them, he majored in ecology at university. Since he began to study for his master's degree, he has given up an opportunity to work in the city and headed for the slopes of the Ailao Mountains in Yunnan province. Now that he has fully adapted to the forest, he sometimes ignores traffic lights during the monthly 10-day reunion with his wife.

During his studies, Luo Kang has noticed that many birds in the Ailao Mountains were unable to build nests in the planted pine forests. He introduced artificial nests that have been in use in Western countries for more than a century. After two years of hard work, he has built some 500 "bird villas" and 22 percent of them are occupied. Real-time monitoring of the nests shows that the birds have settled into their new homes and multiplied in the forest, effectively reducing the occurrence of pests and diseases. (Yunnan Daily)

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China-Yunnan news page



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