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REMARKABLE 70 YEARS

Pilot free trade zones lead the way in China's opening up

China's State Council Information Office held a press conference on August 26 and introduced the situation of the six newly set-up pilot free trade zones in Yunnan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Hebei and Heilongjiang. So far, China has 18 pilot free trade zones. The total number of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities involved in the construction of pilot free trade zones accounts for nearly 60% of China's total.

New layout of pilot free trade zones in costal and border areas

In September 2013, the Shanghai pilot free trade zone was inaugurated, becoming a new testing ground for China's reform and opening up. Since then, China has advanced the construction of pilot free trade zones in several batches and made bold explorations in investment and trade liberalization and facilitation, financial services and transformation of government functions in real economy. Remarkable results have been achieved

The six new pilot free trade zones, three in coastal area and three in border area, together with the previous 12 pilot free trade zones, have formed a more complete construction layout.

"The layout of the 18 pilot free trade zones reflects the integration of an overall opening up of coastal areas and the key opening up of central and western regions." Bai Ming, deputy director of International Market Research Institute of the Research Institute under the Ministry of Commerce, said that this will help to develop more experience that can be copied and promoted for promoting a wider opening-up.

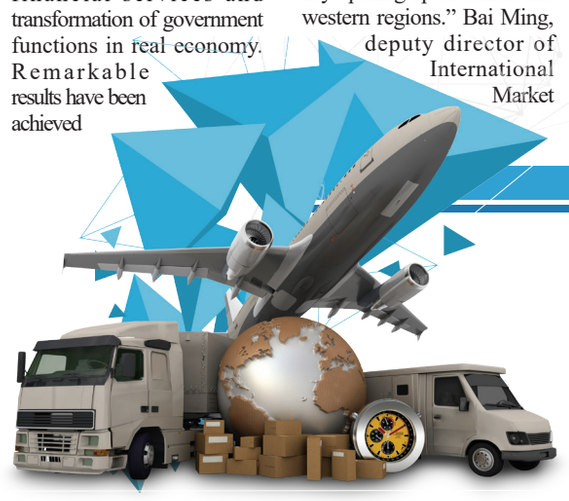
Gu Kejian, professor of Trade and Economics Department, Business School, Renmin University of China, said that the continuous expansion of pilot free trade zones is China's practice of reform and innovation on a larger scale. It demonstrates China's determination to integrate itself into economic globalization and continue to open wider to the outside world.

Differentiated development for a new opening up

Each of the six new pilot free trade zones has its own characteristics and advantages. The China (Yunnan) pilot free trade zone will focus on bringing into play the advantages of Yunnan's location by the border and facing South and Southeast Asia.

The China (Yunnan) pilot free trade zone covers an area of 119.86 square kilometers with three lots. There are 76 square meters in Kunming, including 0.58 square meters for Kunming Comprehensive Bonded Zone; 14.12 square meters in Honghe and 29.74 square meters in Dehong.

Through construction of pilot free trade zones, Yunnan will actively participate in the construction of the China-Indo-China peninsula economic corridor, Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor, China-Myanmar economic corridor and China-Laos economic corridor to strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries, develop new models of cross-border economic cooperation, facilitate free exchanges of investment and trade and people-to-people exchanges with neighboring countries, accelerate cooperation on cross-border production capacity, cross-border finance, cross-border tourism, cross-border e-commerce, cross-border agriculture, cross-border energy, cross-border logistics, and cross-border RMB business.



PILOT FREE TRADE ZONES BRING DIVIDENDS

From 2013 to 2018, China has built 12 pilot free trade zones respectively in Shanghai, Guangdong, Tianjin, Fujian, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Henan, Hubei, Chongqing, Sichuan, Shanxi and Hainan. Pilot free trade zones have played a leading role in creating a law-based, international and business-friendly environment. They have become a strong attraction for foreign companies and a large number of pilot reform experiences have been replicated across the country. Data show that in the first half of this year, the 12 pilot free trade zones attracted nearly 70 billion yuan of foreign investment, accounting for about 14% of the country's total. The actual use of foreign capital increased by more than 20%, nearly 13 percentage points higher than the national growth rate of 7%.

(Comprehensive report)

XI'S REMARKS

The Chinese people will stay committed to the strategy of opening-up for win-win results. We will pay equal attention to "bringing in" and "going global", and break new ground in opening China further through links running eastward and westward, across land and over sea. We will adopt policies to promote high-standard liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment, and explore the opening of free trade ports with Chinese characteristics. We will continue to work together with the rest of the world and make greater contribution to humanity. China will stick to the path of peaceful development, actively pursue global partnerships, firmly support multilateralism, and take an active part in reforming the global governance system. By doing so, we will be able to build a new type of international relations and promote a community with a shared future for mankind.

—Excerpt from keynote speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference held on April 10, 2018

BUSINESS

Indian companies to ramp up investment in China

Most of the 57 Indian companies across industries that have operations in China told an industry survey that they will increase their investment this year on the back of rising revenues and profits, amid a business-friendly, innovation-powered environment in the country.

The survey by the Confederation of Indian Industry and Evalueserve, a professional services firm, found that Indian companies in China are neither daunted nor affected by talk of slowing economic growth and uncertainty caused by Sino-US trade tensions.

Indian corporate investments in China range from 500 million yuan (around $70 million) down to 5 million yuan each. Their annual revenues are in the range of 60 million yuan to 600 million yuan, accounting for 3 to 20 percent of their global total.

Industrial manufacturing, consumer products, services, information technology, business process outsourcing, logistics, healthcare, business consulting, financial services, telecommunications and chemicals are some of sectors where Indian companies have a presence in China.

"Our second annual survey shows Indian companies in China are cautiously optimistic and confident," said Chandrajit Banerjee, CII director-general.

Of the surveyed companies, 30 percent generated revenues higher than 100 million yuan from China in 2018. Four out of every five respondents said their China revenues in 2018 were higher than in 2017, thanks to the quality of their products and services.

East China in general, and Shanghai in particular, remain the key investment destinations of Indian companies, while Jiangsu and Guangdong provinces and Beijing are also receiving attention.

Sumeet Chander, who heads Evalueserve's China operations, said: "Given Indian companies' growth plans in China, the deep economic relationship between India and China will continue to grow."

Xue Rongjiu, deputy director of the China Society for WTO Studies, agreed. "Both China and India should stand together against trade bullying and enhance commercial ties. They need to confront irresponsible trade policies caused by unilateralism."

Ramakrishna Velamuri, Chengwei Ventures chair professor at the China Europe International Business School in Shanghai, said: "From a long-term perspective, the prospects for Indian companies in China are bright because of two key reasons. One, whatever happens on the international trade front, the Chinese domestic market is huge and will continue to grow; and two, the Chinese government realizes that the only way to deepen the economic relationship with India is by giving India better access to the pharma, IT and agricultural products sectors."

(Abridged from Chinadaily)

HONGKONG

CNN apologizes for wrongly blaming HK police

CNN has apologized for its "erroneous" reporting after falsely blaming Hong Kong police for the actions of protesters during the illegal protest in Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong on the night of Aug 25.

In a letter to the police, CNN Hong Kong's vice-president and bureau chief Roger Clark admitted that a news story headlined "Police use petrol bombs and water cannons against Hong Kong protesters" on the CNN website was "erroneous" and said that it was later "replaced".

The petrol bombs, as revealed later in an original video clip, were hurled by protesters at police officers.

CNN, in its letter, failed to disclose how the mistake was made.

In a daily news conference recently, Kong Wing-cheung, senior superintendent of the police public relations branch, referred to a widely circulated tampered video suggesting petrol bombs were thrown by police in the direction of protesters.

Kong said attempts to conceal the violence by protestors by lying are doomed to fail.

Fake news about police has circulated in Hong Kong following a spate of violent protests since June 9.

(Abridged from Chinadaily)

Indian ambassador: 70th anniversary of Sino-Indian ties to boost exchanges

A series of events will start next year to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China, the Indian ambassador to China Vikram Misrisaid recently in Beijing.

Vikram Misri said the connections at the people-to-people level and cultural exchanges between India and China have continued to flourish since the two countries have established diplomatic ties in 1950.

"People-to-people exchanges can get an additional boost next year as much of the celebration will have to do with the people-to-people contact and cultural exchanges," he added.

Misri also calls for more progress to be made on this matter through high levels and more mechanisms to be established.

"More work is needed to be done to bring people of the two countries closer and build understanding," he said.

Misri observed that the second meeting of the China-India high-level people-to-people exchange mechanism recently held in Beijing is meant to address those problems and re-link the two countries' connections in areas of culture, tourism and upgrade exchanges in the fields of literature, education, films and museums.

"The mechanism is one innovation in our relationships," Misri added.

(By Chinadaily)

IN PICS

Yunnan's foreign trade maintains rapid growth

From January to July this year, Yunnan's foreign trade import and export was 125.83 billion yuan (around US$18.51 billion), an increase of 17.9% over the same period of the previous year. Yunnan's foreign trade is characterized by close cooperation with countries along the "Belt and Road", large increase in featured areas, and continuous improvement in trade facilitation. Among them, Yunnan exported 14.48 billion yuan (around US$2.06 billion) of agricultural products, an increase of 14.1%; the province's imported agricultural products reached 6.44 billion yuan(around US$0.92 billion), an increase of 29.5%.

The overall customs clearance time for Yunnan's exports is 0.52 hours (the national average is 4.18 hours), and the overall customs clearance time for imports is 25.15 hours (the national average is 42.39 hours).

Picture shows workers are busy with romote controller manufacturing in Hekou, southeast of Yunnan.

Yunnan expands education "friend circle"

In recent years, Yunnan Province has actively got involved in the Belt and Road cooperation, stepping up international cooperation in education in an all-round way.

In March 2019, Yunnan issued *Several Opinions on Expanding and Deepening the Opening-Up in the New Era*, proposing to expand the cross-border cooperation in education. The Yunnan-South Asia and Southeast Asia Education Cooperation Forum will be further improved, and the Confucius Institutes/Classrooms will be increased in neighboring countries.

In June this year, the 2nd Yunnan-South Asia and Southeast Asia Education Cooperation Forum was held in Kunming, drawing in 500 plus educational dignitaries from 31 countries and regions. The forum deepened exchanges and cooperation in education, increased the synergy effects of education, culture and academics, and helped cultivate talents for the Belt and Road cooperation.

Yunnan has initiated a number of high-quality platforms for educational exchange and cooperation, such as the Yunnan-South Asia and Southeast Asia Education Cooperation Forum and the South and Southeast Asian University Network. Thanks to the platforms, cooperation and exchanges have been widely carried out in the areas of teacher-student exchange, curriculum exchange, mutual recognition of credits, internship and training, and mutual granting in degrees. Such practices have facilitated mutual learning and joint progress among schools in the regions.

While bringing in friends, Yunnan also goes beyond the border for more educational exchanges and cooperation. In recent years, Yunnan University, Yunnan Normal University, Kunming University of Science and Technology and others have cooperated with peers in the neighboring countries. A number of Confucius Institutes or Confucius Classrooms were established in Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and more, popularizing the Chinese language by diverse activities. Yunnan has won popularity and fame in international education.

With new progress in pursuit of Belt and Road Initiative, Yunnan will continue to play its own advantages, bring in more educational personages from neighboring countries, and jointly step up cross-border cooperation in education.

For more information regarding the 48 universities which enroll international students, please scan this QR code.

BELT AND ROAD

Chinese hybrid rice benefits the whole world

For over 30 years, a courtyard sits on a side road in Mapoling, east of Changsha, Hunan Province where the Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Center is locatedb has been taken as a "holy place" for Chinese hybrid rice research. Yuan Longping,an academician of Chinese Academy of Engineering who calls himself a post-90s generation, has been leading a Chinese rice research team to research on salt-tolerant and alkali-tolerant rice breeding technology in this yard, and achieved preliminary results.

It is reported that more than 6% of the world's land is threatened by salt and alkali. Of the arable land, 19.5% of paddy fields and 2.1% of dry land have been affected by salinity. In Southeast Asian countries, millions of hectares of land suitable for growing rice are abandoned every year due to salinization.China has 1.5 billion mu(around 0.1 billion ha) of saline-alkali land, of which about 200 million mu(around 13 million ha) is suitable for growing rice. Hybrid sea rice research is one of the important directions of hybrid rice research in the future. It can not only improve the planting area of hybrid rice in China, but also solve the problem of rice loss caused by seawater invasion in Vietnam, Bangladesh and other countries.

Hybrid rice went abroad in 1979. That year, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture gave 1.5 kilograms of hybrid rice seeds to Occidental Petroleum Corp. When planted in the United States, the seeds increased production by more than 33% over local varieties. Over last 40 years, hybrid rice technology has been expanding. Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Center and Yuan Longping High-tech Agriculture Co., Ltd. held nearly 100 training courses internationally. More than 10,000 technicians from about 80 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America jioned the training. Hybrid rice technology has taken root and blossomed in many countries. "Today, hybrid rice is grown on seven million hectares abroad, with more than two million hectares in India." Yuan longping said that hybrid rice does not only solve the problem of feeding Chinese people, but also benefit the whole world.

In recent years, agricultural science and technology cooperation between Southwest China's Yunnan province and Southeast Asian countries has developed rapidly. Yunnan Province has cooperated with Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and other countries to establish agricultural science and technology demonstration parks, effectively promote the transformation of Yunnan's agricultural science and technology achievements. Several two-line rice varieties represented by *Yunguang* series have been widely growing in Southeast Asian countries. In March 2010, cooperating with Laos' Namtha provincial government, Yunnan established a China-Laos Agricultural Science and Technology Demonstration Park. The project has trained more than 300 people with special agricultural techniques for Laos. The local grain output has increased from 220 kilograms per mu (0.06 ha) per season to 450 kilograms per mu, and the economic benefits of rural households have increased significantly.

Yunnan has cultivated a number of new hybrid rice varieties with high quality, high yield and strong resistance to diseases represented by *Yunguang* series. The seed of *Yunguang No.14*, *Yunguang No. 16*, *Yunguang No.17* are widely grown in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Pakistan and other countries.Yunnan has also carried out a number of international cooperation with neighboring countries to give full play of Yunnan's rice resources and promote international cooperation in agricultural science and technology.

(By YDPG)