

Pilot free trade zones push China's opening-up to new heights

The Information Office of China's State Council, held a press conference on August 26, to brief on the establishment of pilot free trade zones in Yunnan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Hebei and Heilongjiang. So far, China has set up 18 such zones, and cumulatively 60 percent of its provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions have participated in building pilot free trade zones.

Pilot free trade zones are set up in both coastal and border areas

In September 2013, the China(Shanghai) pilot free trade zone was established and became another forefront of China's reform and opening up. Ever since then, China has set up more pilot free trade zones in batches. Among the six newly established ones, three are on the coast and three are along the border. They join the twelve previously established zones to form a stronger version for the country's system of opening-up.

"The setup of eighteen pilot free trade zones reflects the overall enhancement of opening-up in China's coastal regions, as well as the



During the unveiling ceremony of China(Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone, a signing ceremony was held between China(Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone, China(Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone and China(Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone. (Yunnan Daily)

priority given to opening-up in central and western regions," said Bai Ming, deputy director of the International

Market Research Institute under the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. Bai believes

that this will provide more reproducible and transferable experiences for expanding China's opening even further.

China builds new heights of opening-up in a differentiated manner

Each of the six newly established pilot free trade zones has its own features and advantages. For example, the China (Yunnan) pilot free trade zone is located on the southwestern border of the country and is close to South and Southeast Asia.

The China(Yunnan) pilot FTZ

covers parts of Kunming, the provincial capital, Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture that neighbors Vietnam and Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, which borders Myanmar, amounting to an area of 119.86 square kilometres.

After the establishment of the pilot free trade zone, Yunnan will take a more active part in building the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, the China-Laos Economic Corridor and other similar international cooperative efforts. The province will strengthen ties with neighbouring countries and pursue innovative models of border and cross-border economic cooperation. It will promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitate people-to-people exchanges with these countries. It will also increase cross-border cooperation in areas including production capacity, finance, tourism, e-commerce, agriculture, energy, logistics and RMB-based businesses.

(Staff correspondents)

Read More: Pilot free trade zones bring dividends

From 2013 to 2018, China set up twelve pilot free trade zones. They are located in Shanghai, Guangdong, Tianjin, Fujian, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Henan, Hubei, Chongqing, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Hainan. These pilot free trade zones have made bold explorations and achieved remarkable results in areas including investment and trade

liberalization and facilitation, financial services for the real economy and the transformation of government functions. Their reproducible and transferable experiences will help to expand China's reform and opening-up throughout the country. Statistics show that in the first half of 2019, these twelve pilot free trade zones attracted foreign

investment of nearly 70 billion yuan (about US\$9.79 billion), accounting for about 14 percent of the national total. Actually utilized overseas investments grew by more than 20 percent year-on-year, almost 13 percent higher than the national growth rate of seven percent.

(Staff correspondents)

VOICE

China can weather the impact of trade friction

As China was forced into counter-measures a third time, some people in the United States threatened to raise tariffs of about 550 billion US dollars on Chinese exports to the country so that China would succumb to extreme pressure. However, this was another misjudgement of the will and ability of Chinese people. When it comes to defending the core interests of the country and the fundamental interests of its people, China is strong-willed and capable of weathering the impact of any Sino-US trade friction.

Over the past year, faced with trade friction unilaterally provoked and escalated by the United States, China has been forced to take counter-measures three times. These counter-measures are inevitable for China to

safeguard its legitimate rights and interests and to uphold both multilateral trading systems and international rules.

The international community has expressed universal support for China's position. This was an inevitable response from Beijing after the unwarranted tariff hikes on the U.S. side, said John Ross, a former director of economic and business policy for the mayor of London.

Actually, behind China's decision to hit back is the confidence provided by the country's enormous development potential and the leeway the government has in managing its domestic economy. First, China can expand domestic demand to weather the impact of Sino-US trade friction. Second, the government's strategy to encourage

more diversity in China's trading partners has also helped to bolster the country's capacity to deal with trade friction. In the long run, the country's ongoing reform and opening-up process will serve as a cushion against the negative impacts caused by the trade disputes with Washington and continue to drive China's high-quality economic development.

China is willing to resolve trade disputes with the United States through fair and reasonable negotiations, and it resolutely opposes any escalation of the conflict. If the U.S. side insists on pursuing through with its own course of action, China will have no choice but to fight to the end.

(CNR Network)

HONG KONG

China voices firm opposition to G7 statement on Hong Kong

China on August 27 voiced strong dissatisfaction with and resolute opposition to "random accusations" and "irresponsible remarks" on Hong Kong affairs in a statement from the Group of Seven (G7) summit.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang made the remarks at a daily press briefing.

The G7 reportedly reaffirmed the existence and the importance of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong and called for avoiding violence in a joint statement issued on August 26 at the end of a G7 summit held in Biarritz, France.

"As we have emphasized on many occasions, Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs, and no foreign governments, organizations or individuals have the right to intervene," said Geng,

when responding to a query about China's comment on the statement from the G7 summit.

The demonstrations and violent protests have been running in Hong Kong for more than two months, and Hong Kong's rule of law, social order, economy and wellbeing of the people, as well as its international image have been severely impacted as a result, Geng said.

On the aforementioned Joint Declaration between China and Britain, Geng said its ultimate goal and core content were to make sure China would take back Hong Kong in 1997 and the government of the People's Republic of China would resume its exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong with effect from July 1, 1997.

"Since Hong Kong returned to the motherland in 1997, the Chinese government has exercised jurisdiction over Hong Kong according to the Constitution and the Basic Law," he said. "Based on international law and basic norms governing international relations, no other country or organization is entitled to meddle in Hong Kong affairs under the pretext of the Joint Declaration." (Xinhua)

"No one cares more about Hong Kong's prosperity and stability than Chinese people, including residents of Hong Kong," Geng said. "(Those) are our own affairs, we will handle them well. G7 members should not poke their noses into others' business with ill-harboured intentions and conspiracies."

BELT AND ROAD

Chinese hybrid rice benefits the world



Chinese agriculture experts Liu Lianjin(third from right) and Zhang Yong(first from left) elaborated on rice-growing techniques for farmers in The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on April 10, 2016. (Xinhua)

This Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Centre is located in a courtyard by a small path in Mapoling, Changsha, in Central China's Hunan province. Despite its inconspicuous appearance, it has given birth to a series of super hybrid rice varieties and breeding materials that are up to the world's highest standards. The facility's hybrid rice technology, with completely independent intellectual property rights, has contributed greatly to the grain security of both China and the world.

Since Hunan province began researching hybrid rice in 1964, rice breeding scientists and technicians represented by Yuan Longping, an academican of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and the father of hybrid rice, have achieved many breakthroughs in hybrid rice research and ensured adequate food supplies for the Chinese people.

In 1979, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture presented 1.5 kilograms of hybrid rice seeds to the Occidental Petroleum Corp of the United States as a gift, marking the first step in distributing Chinese hybrid rice abroad. When these seeds were grown in the United States, they proved to be 33 percent more productive than the best local varieties. Over the past four decades, hybrid rice technology

has been spread to more countries and regions. The Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Centre and the Yuan Longping High-Tech Agriculture Co Ltd have jointly offered nearly 100 hybrid rice training sessions and educated more than 10,000 technicians from 80 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

"Today, hybrid rice acreage has increased to seven million hectares in other countries. India tops these countries with a hybrid rice acreage of two million hectares," said Yuan, adding that hybrid rice not only has fed the Chinese people, but is also benefiting the entire world.

In recent years, southwestern China's Yunnan province has also increased cooperation with Southeast Asia in terms of agricultural science and technology. The province has collaborated with Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and other countries in setting up demonstration parks for agricultural science and technology, effectively promoting the commercialization of Yunnan's agricultural achievements. Many two-line hybrid rice varieties cultivated in Yunnan, including the Yunguang series, are now widely grown in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Pakistan and other South and Southeast Asian countries.

(Guangming Daily)

XI'S REMARKS

China today is more than the country itself; it is very much a part of Asia and the world. In the time to come, China will open its arms wider to embrace the world and contribute the dynamic achievements of Chinese civilization to a better

world in the future.

— Excerpt from keynote speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

'Sweet' industry changes Lahu people's lives



Ermei is checking the beehives. (Xinhua)

Banmu is a village of Lahu people in Ximeng, located in southwest China's Yunnan province. Farmers here used to practice slash-and-burn agriculture. In a sense, some of them lived a literal 'sweet' life. They hunted wild bees for their honey during the cold season.

Then one day, something new happened.

Last April, a bee company came to Ximeng, bringing beekeeping skills and jobs to locals. One of the new employees was a Lahu woman named Ermei. At first she could only do simple work such as carrying beehives and cutting grass. Later she learned to cultivate queen bees and help them form new colonies. Now Ermei earns 2,600 yuan (US\$370) a month.

Ermei, once a timid girl, has become a shining example of poverty alleviation efforts in the region, and often teaches other villagers her beekeeping skills. This year, she began to sell honey to Guizhou,

Jiangsu and other provinces in China. She believes that this 'sweet' industry has a bright future.

Recently, the government and the bee company jointly organized a Chinese bee breeding training session in the town of Banmu. The event attracted the 86 villagers. "The people here have some beekeeping experience, but they don't know modern methods. We try to introduce them to advanced techniques," said Pu Guangwei, a training instructor.

"To live a really sweet life, we must learn new skills and change the old way of production," said Wang Bo, the first Party secretary of Banmu. Thanks to targeted poverty alleviation policies like this, the poverty headcount ratio in the village has dropped from 24.78 percent in 2015 to 1.58 percent at the end of last year. Having shaken off poverty, the local Lahu people are living a 'sweet' life.

They believe 'sweeter' days are still ahead. (Xinhua)

EXCHANGE

Bangladesh-China youth camp kicks off in Kunming



Flag-conferring ceremony. (Liu Ziyu)

The 2019 Bangladesh-China Youth Camp kicked off on August 27th at Yunnan University. Over the next two weeks, campers will study the Chinese language, attend themed lectures and experience Chinese culture on the campus. Also, they will visit the Stone Forest, the Jinding Science Park, the Shuncheng Community in Kunming and No. 1 Middle School in Dali for field studies. These activities will help campers understand the urban construction and technological development, the building of an ecological civilization and the common prosperity of all ethnic groups in Yunnan.

The 2019 Bangladesh-China Youth Camp is sponsored by Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters and the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh and organized by Yunnan University. It attracted 150 campers in total. At the opening ceremony, Consul General of Bangladesh in Kunming, Md Tauhedul Islam, delivered a speech. In addition, two students from both countries spoke on behalf their peers, and other students sang songs, performed instrumental music and demonstrated Chinese

kung-fu.

Yunnan University has been organizing the Bangladesh-China Youth Camp on a yearly basis since 2017. Its previous sessions have helped young people from both countries communicate with each other and carry out cultural exchanges. In the future, the university will further cooperate with relevant agencies in Bangladesh to promote educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

It is understood that Yunnan University has joined hands with Dhaka University and North South University in Bangladesh in establishing Confucius Institutes. In addition, Yunnan University has collaborated with these two Bangladeshi universities in setting up the Bangladesh-China Culture and Arts Centre and the Centre of China Studies, respectively. In 2017, the Chinese Ministry of Education approved the establishment of the Archiving Centre for Regional Country-Specific Studies under the Centre of Bangladesh Studies of Yunnan University.

(Liu Ziyu)