



# CHINA · YUNNAN



FOCUS

## Yunnan leads the country in biodiversity

China to build a National Museum of Plants in Kunming



Menglun Botanical Garden in Xishuangbanna is a haven of plants. Photo by Zhang Tong

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Yunnan Provincial Government, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Kunming Municipal Government jointly signed an agreement concerning the establishment of a National Museum of Plants in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. Construction of the museum is to begin in the near future.

Yunnan province features varied terrains and landforms and a large diversity of natural environments. As a biodiversity

haven in the country, and a gathering place or place of origin of many important plant populations, many plant species of tropical, subtropical, temperate and even frigid zones have amassed here.

Kunming is known as “The City of Eternal Spring” and “The Flower Capital”. Its output value from the flower industry has been the highest in the country for 20 consecutive years. The abundance of flowers provides favourable conditions for carry-

ing out scientific studies, developing a healthy industry and a green economy.

The National Museum of Plants will integrate the collections and displays of traditional museums as well as the collection, display and research of living plants, traditional culture and the health industry. The museum will be located in the northern part of downtown Kunming and will cover an area of about 10 square kilometres.

(Yunnan Daily)

### Numbers

Currently, Yunnan province is home to 19,365 higher plant species, subspecies and variants, accounting for 50.2 percent of the national total.

The *List of Biological Species in Yunnan (2016)* shows that 153 wild plants in the province are under special national protection. This accounts for 41.6 percent of the country's total of plants under special protection. Of these, 45 are under first-class national protection and 108 species of plants are under second-class national protection.

Yunnan has set up 161 nature reserves, covering 2.86 million hectares or 7.3 percent of the province's land area.

### XI'S REMARKS



Environment is livelihood; green mountains are beauty; and blue skies are happiness. We must protect this planet like our own eyes, and cherish nature the way we cherish life.

— Remarks made by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his participation in the deliberation of the Jiangxi delegation on March 6, 2015 at the “two sessions” of that year.



### BELT AND ROAD

## The main beam of the China-Laos railway Ganlanba Bridge successfully closed

According to the Kunming Railway Bureau Group of China Railways, the main beam of the Ganlanba Bridge over the Lancang River, a major bridge in the Yuxi-Mohan section of the China-Laos railway, has been successfully closed.

The Ganlanba Bridge is located in Jinghong, south Yunnan's Xishuangbanna. It is with a total length of

495.65 meters. “The closed main beam provides a working surface for installing the enforced steel arch. It has laid the foundation for the scheduled completion of the entire bridge in May 2020,” said Li Shiming, the chief engineer of the bridge's constructor—China Railway Fourth Bureau Group.

(Xinhua)

### CULTURE

## Dongba paper lasts for more than 1,000 years

Dongba culture holds an important position in the life of Naxi people in Yunnan province. Traditionally, the Naxi people use Dongba paper as the carrier of their scriptures and paintings.

“Ink on Dongba paper won't fade over time. The paper can last for more than 1,000 years. Therefore, we Naxi people refer to it as immortal paper,” said He Huaqiang, an inheritor of Dongba culture in Lijiang. Today, Dongba paper is still handmade according to the same process of more than 1,000 years ago. Unlike or-

dinary paper, Dongba paper is not smooth but feels rough and grainy. The paper has historically been made of the fibres of an indigenous plant called Wikstroemia. When you hold the paper against the light, you can clearly see the stems and leaves.

Why does the paper have such a long life? “Wikstroemia, the raw material for making Dongba paper, contains a special toxin. After processing, it is not harmful to humans but it deters the growth of borers and moulds,” He explained. (Duan Jianxin)

### SHANGRI-LA

## Xianzi festival held at Deqin



Photo by Diqin TV

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meili Snow Mountain Xianzi Festival was open in Deqin County, northwest Yunnan's Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on October 22, bringing an audio-visual feast to the audience. Xianzi is a three-stringed plucked instrument popular among the Tibetan folks. The festival saw a participation of artistic troupes from the neighboring areas in Sichuan province and Tibet

Autonomous Region. This year, the festival will last till October 30. (Wang Shixue)

### Extended reading

#### Hometown of rhododendrons

For botanists, Yunnan province is the home of rhododendrons. Of the world's 800-plus rhodo-

dendron species, over 600 exist in China, and over 400 grow in Yunnan.

#### Royal water lilies can bear a 20-kilogram child without sinking

Tropical rainforests in Xishuangbanna and other areas, home to more than 20,000 plant species, are a true botanical treasure house in China. At the Menglun

Botanical Garden in Xishuangbanna, a fully-grown royal water lily has leaves that are shaped like a basin, which can bear a 20-kilogram child without sinking.

#### Largest planting area of Chinese medicinal herbs

Yunnan has been known of the virtues of medicinal herbs for more than 1,000 years. Statistics show that Yunnan produces 6,559 kinds of Chinese

herbal medicine, accounting for 51.2 percent of the nation total. The province ranks first in the country in area for planting Chinese medicinal herbs.

#### Region with the most wild mushroom species in the world

Statistics reveal that Yunnan is a producer of more than 850 wild mushroom species, accounting for 43 percent of the world's total, and 91 percent

of China's total of wild mushroom species. The province tops the world in terms of both variety and amount of wild mushrooms found.

### FTZs

## Yunnan made early-stage achievements in pilot FTZ building



Photo by Zhang Yanqun

The China (Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ) has made early-stage achievement since its launch on August 30.

The pilot FTZ covers parts

of Kunming, the provincial capital, Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture that neighbors Vietnam and Dehong Dai and Jingpo Au-

tonomous Prefecture which borders Myanmar.

In the Kunming area, 129 companies have registered, with a total investment of nearly 120 million RMB (approximately 16.9 million US dollars).

“Due to the efficient approval process and preferential policies in taxes and house rent in the pilot FTZ, we can save operating costs,” said Mark Respinger, person in charge of a trade company in the Kunming area.

According to Jin Jiabin, an officer of Hekou Customs in the Honghe area, different lanes have been set up for

tourists, bicycles and vehicles to reduce clearance time at Hekou Port. And measures have been taken to lower logistic and storage costs for specific goods like fruits, vegetables, aquatic products and mineral products.

Since the pilot FTZ's establishment, 210 enterprises, including five foreign ones, has registered in the Dehong area. Accordingly, the authorities will lay more stress on the development of cross-border e-commerce and finance, making more contributions to the building of China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. (Li Hengqiang)



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