



# CHINA • YUNNAN



**FOCUS**

## 2019: Memorable things in Yunnan

**Editor's note:** Before we know it, another year has come and gone. In 2019 we witnessed an array of big and new things in Yunnan, such as the Pilot Free Trade Zone, digital Yunnan, tourism revolution, ecological protection and poverty alleviation. These have brought enormous changes to the province and left long-lasting memories on the people's minds.



A bird's eye view of Erhai Lake (Zhang Tong)

### Key term: Leading the pack

The National Bureau of Statistics of China recently published the economic growth data of 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions for the first three quarters of 2019. During this period, Yunnan achieved a GDP of 1,297.185 billion RMB (US\$ 186.246 billion). This is a year-on-year increase of 8.8 percent, 2.6 percent higher than the national average of 6.2 percent.

### Key term: Digital Yunnan

In 2019, the Digital Yunnan programme focused on smart tourism, smart education, smart agriculture and smart industry. The online platform "Yunnan at Your Fingertips", which was launched in October 2018, has been developed further. It now integrates live streaming on scenic spots, tour guide services, transport services, tourist complaint handling and other functionality. Furthermore, Yunnan took the lead, being the first province in the country to introduce facial recognition check-in services for passengers of all airlines.

### Key term: Tourism revolution

In Yunnan, tourism has long been a characteristic industry. However, it has gone through a period of unstable development. In 2019 the province launched a tourism revolution by regulating the market, to provide tourists with a better experience. It introduced a hassle-free returns policy and developed smart tourism. Data shows that from January to October 2019, the province received 15 percent fewer complaints on the 12301 national tourist complaint platform as compared to previous years.

### Key term: EMU

In 2019, EMUs (Electric Multiple Units) came to Lijiang, Mengzi and Zhaotong and made these cities more accessible. The high-speed rail has shortened the distance between cities and brought people closer. Opening up and convenient transport are making the province a better place to live in.

### Key term: Poverty alleviation

In 2019 tens of thousands of government officials, enterprise employees, teachers and volunteers went to poor areas and joined in the battle against poverty. Their goal was to lift all rural residents currently living below the poverty line out of poverty by 2020, in line with the rest of the country. According to statistics, the number of poor people in Yunnan's deeply impoverished areas has decreased from 1.378 million in 2018 to 365,400 in late 2019. The poverty headcount ratio has dropped from 13.29 percent to 3.52 percent.

### Key term: River chief

In 2019, with more than 1,000 river chiefs at work, all the streams feeding Erhai Lake in Dali reached the required quality standard. Last year, according to the monitoring data from environmental authorities, the water quality of Erhai Lake was classified as Class II for 7 months and Class III for 5 months. The changes in the lake are the epitome of changing development concepts in Yunnan. of nine major lakes in Yunnan has significantly improved. Fuxian Lake, Lugu Lake and Yangzong Lake in particular, have achieved the best water quality since 2015. Dianchi Lake recorded the best water quality in three decades.

### Key term: Pilot Free Trade Zone

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the China (Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone (consisting of the Kunming, Honghe and Dehong areas) was established. From August 30<sup>th</sup> to December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 some 2,500 enterprises, encompassing processing and trade, big health, cross-border tourism and e-commerce, registered in the Pilot Free Trade Zone.

**BUSINESS**

## Yunnan establishes business "red and black list" system

To improve its business environment, Yunnan province has established a "red- and black list" system, to assess the business environment in its cities and prefectures. If a city or prefecture is on the black list three times in a row, its principal leaders will be held accountable. Starting from the fourth quarter of 2019, all cities and prefectures in the province will be assessed in terms of business environment on a quarterly basis. The three strongest performers will be placed on the "red list" and the three weakest performers on the "black list". The assessment will cover ten indicators. These include the easiness of starting a business, obtaining a building permit and registering property, access to electricity, water and gas (only applicable for cities and prefectures with pipeline gas supply), tax returns, cross-border trade (only applicable for cities and prefectures with ports of exit or entry), access to business credit and government services. These indicators are subject to adjustment based on the actual conditions. (Xinhua)

**CHINA IN THE EYES OF EXPATS**

“Only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not. Only the people can best tell if the development path they have chosen for their country suits or not.” — From the speech by President Xi Jinping at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Russia on March 23, 2013

## “I will continue to write about China and tell its stories”

Tavares was one of the first journalists from Brazil to pay attention to the New China. In 1971, he realised the huge potential of China, and published his first news story about China. To date, he has published 10 books and thousands of articles on China and has become a real expert on Chinese issues. Today, the 95-year-old Tavares is still quick-witted and an indefatigable writer, introducing China to Brazilian people. The year 1990 was very special for Tavares. That year, he set foot on Chinese soil for the first time and published his first book about China—*O Despertar da China*. In the book, he wrote: “The Chinese people have envisioned their bright future. Every day one can witness amazing development and progress in the country.” In 2010, in recognition of Tavares’ remarkable contributions to enhancing mutual understanding between the Chinese and the Brazilian people, the Chinese government awarded him the Medal for Sino-Latin American Friendship. He considers it a great honour. “I will continue to write about China and tell China’s stories,” he said. (People’s Daily)

**IN-PICS**

## Main body of arched bridge of Dali-Ruili railway completed



On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the China Railway 18<sup>th</sup> Bureau Group completed the main body of a 1024.2-meter-long railway bridge over the Nujiang River, marking a major breakthrough in construction of the Dali-Ruili railway. After completion of the railway, a train ride between Dali and Ruili will only take about two hours. By comparison, driving between the two cities currently can take as long as six hours. (Xinhua)

**CULTURE**

## Silver-inlaid black copper ever more popular

The silver-inlaid black copper is a traditional Chinese handicraft unique to Yunnan. It has a history of more than 300 years. The objects are inlaid with either gold or silver, but the silver-inlaid black copper is more popular because of the sharp contrasts. In the past, most silver-inlaid black copper objects were stationeries. Today, craftsmen have created curios, ornaments, accessories and objects for daily use that are hailed by customers. In 2011, silver-inlaid black copper was inscribed on the third list of national intangible cultural heritage. (Yang Zhigao)



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