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The Nation

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FOCUS

2019: Memorable things in Yunnan

Editor's Note: 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.

● 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 per cent, 2.6 per cent higher than the national average of 6.2 per cent.

● 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 per cent fewer complaints on the 12301 national tourist complaint platform as compared to previous years.

● 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 per cent to 3.52 per cent.

● 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 of scenic spots, tour guide services, transport

services, tourist complaint handling and other functions. The "Yunnan at Your Fingertips" platform has made an increasing number of government services available online. Furthermore, Yunnan took the lead in becoming the first province in the country to introduce facial recognition check-in services for passengers of all airlines.

● 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.

The high-speed railway lines have been woven into a network and changed the lives of people.

Last year, many people left the mountains for the first time, to embrace the outside world. Seeing the enormous potential for development, businesspeople came to the province with projects and funds. Opening up and convenient transport are making the province a better place to live in.

● Key term: Pilot Free Trade Zone ●

On August 30, 2019, the China (Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone (consisting of the Kunming, Honghe and Dehong areas) was established. On December 1, the China (Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone rolled out the reform of separating permits and certificates for business licences, to further improve the business environment. The reforms mean that many pre-registration

approvals have been replaced by post-registration approvals, thus significantly reducing the time limit required for securing approvals. From August 30 to December 6, 2019, some 2,500 enterprises, encompassing processing and trade, big health, cross-border tourism and e-commerce, registered in the three areas of the China (Yunnan) Free Trade Pilot Zone.

XI'S REMARKS

“ We are pledging to achieve the first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in the “milestone” year. We pledged to lift all rural residents living below the current poverty line out of poverty and eliminate poverty in all poor counties. The year of 2020 is crucial in winning the anti-poverty battle, the clarion has sounded. We must work together and work hard... to secure a victory in the battle against poverty. **”**
—Excerpt from the New Year speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping on Dec. 31, 2019.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Targeted poverty alleviation leads to happiness

“Deng Xuesheng’s eldest daughter studies economics at Sichuan University, the elder daughter studies Food Quality and Safety at Yunnan University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the little one studies in a middle school in Dali. We are going to help his three daughters to finish their college educations.” On November 5, in the small courtyard of Deng Xuesheng, a resident of Juxiang Village and Cigesang Village group, Yongchun Township, Weixi Lisu Autonomous County, one of the hot topics was to avoid going back to poverty because of his kids’ schooling.

In Juxiang, every family values education. Children, regardless of gender, are supported to go to school. Zhao Jianghong, village party secretary of Juxiang village, said, “The future is bright, but it is hard to support children to school.”

“It is not that difficult with the care from our Party and Government,” said Deng Xuesheng’s wife, smiling. “Now, Deng Xuesheng works as a security guard at the county ethnic primary

school, earning 1,500 yuan per month. I work in the village as a cleaner and an ecological forest ranger, earning 500 yuan and nearly 800 yuan a month respectively. We are thankful for all these with the support from our Party and Government.”

Deng Xuesheng added, “On top of these, we got a subsidy of 20,000 yuan when we built our house back in 2017. And we apply for a loan of 8,000 yuan once a year to pay our children’s tuition fee. Taking targeted measures to alleviate poverty, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture has been implementing a new policy of compulsory education for 14 years. With the policy, children are tuition-free until they go to college.”

“I came to work in Juxiang village in 2015, involved and witnessed the precise poverty alleviation,” said Zhao Jianghong. Targeted poverty alleviation not only brought happiness to Deng Xuesheng’s family, but also brought great changes to Juxiang village. Every family’s sense of gain was very real.

By Xiong Yan

China unveils logo for 2020 UN biodiversity conference



China, the hosting country of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biolog-

ical Diversity (COP 15), and the convention’s secretariat on HIGH-TECH ECO January 9 jointly unveiled the logo for the United Nations gathering. In the shape of a water droplet or a seed, the logo is inspired by the art of Chinese paper-cuttings and seals, and consists of elements with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Against the background of the oracle bone inscriptions, the “water droplet” contains a giant panda, a girl in an ethnic costume, a peacock, a butterfly, plum blossoms and sea waves that reflect biological and cultural diversity.

“Dianxi Xiaoge” bringing the flavour of Yunnan to the world



Dianxi Xiaoge with yellow bucket hat happily taking picture with her fans.

A 90s Yunnan girl’s video, “Dianxi Xiaoge”, has achieved enormous popularity abroad.

She records how Yunnan food is prepared from the field to the table, shares the daily life of her family and outlines a moving rural life.

She works from sunrise to sunset, turning seemingly ordinary days into a poem and making people yearn for Yunnan cuisine.

As of December 19, 2019, “Dianxi Xiaoge” had 3.24 million followers on Weibo, 3.57 million followers on YouTube, 380,000 Facebook users and 1.4 million fans on Douyin.

The “Dianxi Xiaoge” actually is a girl. “It is a playful and easy way to call myself a Xiaoge (little brother), and West Yunnan represents the geographical coordinates of her hometown Baoshan,” she explained her online name. In the video, the Dianxi Xiaoge can chop down sugar cane and also get irritated with tears by hot peppers.

The “Dianxi Xiaoge” studied at Sichuan Police College and participated in rescue operations in two incidents and won a series of honours and bonuses, which paid for her

living expenses in college. In four years, she hadn’t ask for money from her family.

After graduation, she joined an internet start-up company and ended up back in her hometown in 2016 because of her father’s illness.

Perhaps because of her work experience in the internet company, the “Xiaoge” changed from relying on acquaintances to sell Yunnan local products to shooting videos. The target audience shifted from family and close friends to strangers in front of a screen.

The Yunnan flavour presented in her video has become the most prominent label of her works that made countless netizens from knowing Yunnan cuisine to longing for Yunnan.

She made seasonal crops in Yunnan into delicious food never heard of by foreigners, liketamarind cake, Yunnan ham cake, bamboo-tube cooked rice, spicy sauce and others. Each episode of her video has about 3 million views. AWOL, an Australian media outlet, says the “Dianxi Xiaoge” channel has fascinated the world.

By YDPG

CULTURE

Poya song book of Zhuang: 81 symbols and 81 love songs



Poya villagers are singing folk songs on the stage. Photo by Zhou Can

Poya Village is located in the deep mountains of Boyi town, Funing county, Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan province. The 55 Zhuang households in the village still retain a tradition of singing folk songs.

The *Poya Song Book* is an ancient rune handed down from the village. On a white cloth a foot wide and two feet long, there are 81 symbols of objects such as moon, stars, trees, rice leaves, people, horses, bird cages painted with red cactus juice, which represent names of 81 love songs. It records the love journey of a young man

and a woman’s meeting, getting to know each other, falling in love, and getting old.

Nong Fengmei, the owner of the song book, can sing an entire song whenever she sees these pattern symbols. This method of recording folk songs is passed down from generation to generation with a long history. Now more than 20 people in the village can read folk songs through picture symbols. The Funing Zhuang Poya Song Book was included in the national intangible cultural heritage protection list in China in 2011.

(Xinhua)

CONNECTIVITY

Yunnan: High-speed rail brings new hope

On December 20, 2019, construction began on the Yunnan section of the Chongqing-Kunming high-speed railway, an important part of China’s high-speed railway network. When this railway is completed, one can travel by train from Kunming to Chongqing or Chengdu in just about two hours, as compared to the current five to six hours. On December 14, the Chengdu-Guizhou high-speed railway went into operation, bringing northeast Yunnan’s Zhaotong into the high-speed rail era. The Chengdu-Guizhou high-speed rail starts in Chengdu (Sichuan), calls at Zhenxiong and Weixin in Zhaotong, and terminates in Guiyang (Guizhou). The railway has a total length of 648 kilometres and a speed of 250 kilometres per hour.

The high-speed railway network has improved connections between southwest China’s Yunnan province and other provinces in the country. Zhenxiong is, with more than one million inhabitants, the most populous county in Yunnan. Weixin is a county at the junction of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan. Both counties are impoverished and used to be quite inaccessible but are now connected to the high-speed railway network. The high-speed railway



Tourists take pictures at the Biseizhai Station on the Yunnan-Vietnam Railway.

will increase their connections with other areas, thus helping develop their economy and lift residents out of poverty.

The Chongqing-Kunming high-speed railway and other high-speed

railway projects will make Yunnan even more accessible. On the internet, Chinese netizens are expressing the hope that high-speed railways will soon come to their own home.

Yunnan’s first railway goes abroad

The 859-kilometre Yunnan-Vietnam railway is the province’s first railway. It went into operation in 1910, to connect Kunming with Haiphong. It is still in use today. The first railway connecting Yunnan with other Chinese provinces was the Guizhou-Kunming Railway,

which was completed in 1966. Today, Yunnan is building more railways to improve connections with other countries. Construction on the China-Laos Railway, from Kunming in the north to Vientiane in the south, is accelerating and will go into operation in 2021.

Figures

1. Since the founding of the New China, the operating railway mileage in Yunnan has grown from 649.8 kilometres in 1949 to 3914.7 kilometres in 2018, a six-fold increase.

2. The high-speed railway in Yunnan has been expanding in terms of both density and scope. Now, one can travel directly from Yunnan to the major cities in 19 other provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions by high-speed railway, and transfer to most cities in the country.

3. The Chengdu-Guizhou high-speed railway is the first tourism-oriented high-speed railway in China. It calls at 26 AAAAA-rated scenic spots in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan. These include the Leshan Giant Buddha and Mount Emei in Sichuan, and Zhijin Cave, Huangguoshu waterfall and Qingyan Ancient Town in Guizhou.