

Lancang-Mekong Cooperation for Subregional Development

Policy

By CHEN Chunyou

China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and the economic and trade authorities of the five ASEAN member countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) adopted the Five-Year Development Plan for Cross-Border Economic Cooperation Among Mekong-Lancang Countries (2023-2027) in December 2023. The plan was incorporated into the Nay Pyi Taw Declaration of the Fourth Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Leaders' Meeting as an outcome in the field of economy and trade.

The plan aims to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the Mekong-Lancang countries at the fourth LMC Leaders' Meeting on promoting economic and trade cooperation.

The LMC is a new type of subregional cooperation mechanism to promote peace, stability and sustainable development in the region. The plan identifies enhanced connectivity, production capacity cooperation, cross-border economic cooperation, water resources, agriculture and poverty reduction as the key areas of cooperation.

MOFCOM said, "This holds great guiding significance for economic and trade cooperation among Mekong-Lancang countries, and will further enhance the level of cross-border economic cooperation among member countries and promote the integrated development of



A view of the China-Laos Railway's Ban Ladhan Mekong River Super Major Bridge, located some 230 km north of Vientiane, Laos. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

the sub-regional economies."

As per the plan, in order to establish a vibrant innovation ecosystem, a framework for cooperation in science, technology and innovation in the Mekong-Lancang region will be developed, and R&D, application, commercialization and technology transfer will be promoted in mutually agreed key areas. Innovation corridors will be established to support industrial development of the subregion, especially in border areas and special economic zones.

Efforts will also be made to promote cooperation in technologies and research related to the development of a bio-cycling green economy. This includes promoting technologies and innovative solutions for transitioning to a cir-

cular economy, and achieving carbon neutrality and net-zero emissions.

Moreover, measures will be taken to deepen cooperation in satellite development and satellite ground stations, with the goal of enhancing the space capacity of Mekong-Lancang countries.

The countries are also welcome to participate in the International Lunar Research Station and cooperate at different levels and stages, including joint demonstration, mission design, technical cooperation and payload ride.

In addition, based on the needs of each country, action will be taken to promote the application of advanced space technology in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, safety production, road

transport management, disaster prevention and mitigation, weather forecasting and urban management. A Lancang Earth observation data cooperation center will be established to facilitate the use of relevant technologies in these sectors, and ensure that all countries have equal access to information.

Young people from the Mekong-Lancang countries will be supported to apply for the atomic energy scholarship program and pursue postgraduate education in nuclear science and technology in China.

Enhancing cooperation on digital economy, public health, energy, climate change and environmental protection is also on the agenda, according to the plan.

Xinjiang's Fabulous Winter Wonderland for Skiers

By GONG Qian & ZHU Xi

"It is really a great experience," a snowboarding lover, surnamed Bin, told *Science and Technology Daily (S&T Daily)*.

As a beginner, Bin has chosen the Jiangjun Mountain Ski Resort in Altay, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in northwest China, for his first try at snowboarding.

It took him over 10 hours of flight to arrive at Altay from Nanning, capital of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, a distance of about 4,300 km.

"The resort is very close to downtown Altay, taking 10-odd minutes of driving," Bin said. "So it is very convenient for us newbies."

The Jiangjun Mountain Ski Resort has become an ideal skiing destination in recent years. A series of entertainment projects, dining services, guest houses and other facilities have been constructed and upgraded to give snow enthusiasts a better skiing experience. It has welcomed a large number of tourists since the opening of its ski season in November 2023.

Shi Zhiqiang, deputy general manager of the Xinjiang Altay Tourism Group, told *S&T Daily* that 72 ski trails have been built to cater to skiers with different ability levels.

Le Wen, a veteran snowboarder, comes to Altay every year to enjoy the ice and snow. Her five-year-old son is learning snowboarding in the resort and Le thinks he has become braver and more capable of dealing with stress

since then. She is hoping her younger child will also fall in love with the sport.

After Beijing was chosen to host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, ski sports have become hugely popular, especially among young people. Le has seen the number of skiers coming to Altay rising.

She has rented a house in the city to enjoy the snow season. "We're going to stay here for two months," Le told *S&T Daily*.

This year, the resort cooperated with Club Med Ski Academy from France, bringing in international coaches to train its certified ski instructors so that they can provide more specialized training courses, Shi said.

"I have been working in many different ski resorts in Russia and abroad like Finland and Austria. Compared with ski resorts in European countries, this is a good one. It looks really amazing," Russian coach Marina Denisova told *S&T Daily*. "I love the snow conditions of the resort. The slopes are well prepared and arranged."

It is Denisova's first visit to China. She will work in the Jiangjun Mountain Ski Resort for the whole 2023-2024 snow season.

The resort is also providing more new services such as electric music performances at sunset, offering skiers the charm of music, a beautiful scenery and skiing at the same time.

"The atmosphere is so pleasant and relaxing," said Bin, adding, "I'll definitely come back next year."



A coach teaches beginners how to ski at the Jiangjun Mountain Ski Resort. (PHOTO: GONG Qian / S&T Daily)

Upgrading Traditional Manufacturing Industries on Fast Track

By LI Linxu

As part of efforts to build a manufacturing powerhouse, China recently unveiled a guideline on accelerating the transformation and upgrading of traditional manufacturing industries.

The guideline was jointly released by eight government bodies, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

As the main body of the county's manufacturing industries, traditional manufacturing industries are the foundation of a modern industrial system,

said an official from NDRC, adding that their transformation and upgrading are critical to enhance resilience of the industrial chain and supply chain.

Focusing on quality, efficiency and innovation, a series of goals were put forward in the guideline.

By 2027, the country's traditional manufacturing industries are expected to achieve notable progress in their high-end, intelligent, green, and integrated development.

Meanwhile, their position and competitiveness in the global industrial division will be further strengthened.

For industrial enterprises, the popu-

larizing rate of digital R&D and design tools is expected to exceed 90 percent, while the numerical control rate of key processes is on track to surpass 70 percent.

The intensities of industrial energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are also going to be continuously decreased.

By then, the water consumption for every 10,000 RMB of industrial added value will have been down 13 percent compared with that of 2023, and the comprehensive utilization rate of bulk industrial solid wastes could be more than 57 percent.

To achieve these goals, the guide-

line calls for upholding innovation-driven development, speeding up the application of digital technologies, and advancing intelligent manufacturing.

It also attaches great importance to the green and low-carbon development, promoting industrial convergence, and building a favorable development environment.

In recent years, significant achievements have been made in the transformation and upgrading of traditional manufacturing industries.

Latest statistics show that value added of traditional manufacturing accounts for about 80 percent of the country's manufacturing industries.

Digital Engine for Common Prosperity

By ZHONG Jianli

Chinese authorities recently released an implementation plan for promoting common prosperity through the digital economy, aiming to address the imbalance in development and share

digital dividends among all the people.

The introduction of the plan comes at a time when the digital economy is playing a pivotal role in fostering a more equitable and inclusive economic landscape. The plan sets out comprehensive objectives and practical measures to har-

ness the potential of the digital economy in narrowing the developmental gaps across various sectors.

Over the past decade, new technologies such as big data and AI have empowered various industries, leading to significant productivity gains and streamlined processes.

According to statistics, intelligent manufacturing projects have shown an average 48 percent increase in production efficiency, a 38 percent reduction in product R&D periods, and a 35 percent decrease in product defects.

The plan stresses the role of digital infrastructure in promoting equal access. China now has over one billion Internet users and the Internet penetration rate has exceeded 76.4 percent. Rural areas in particular have seen a penetration rate surpassing 60 percent. The availability of diverse software also now facilitates equal access to opportunities, while the circulation and application of data assets enable various innovation entities to participate in creating new formats and models.

The plan outlines four practical

measures aimed at narrowing gaps and advancing coordinated development.

- It seeks to promote coordinated regional digital development, bolster digital infrastructure, and foster industrial collaboration to reduce regional disparities.

- It emphasizes the development of digital villages to bridge urban-rural gaps by promoting digital agricultural infrastructure and enhancing digital governance.

- It focuses on nurturing digital talent and ensuring employment through continual enhancement of digital literacy and skills for vulnerable groups.

- It aims to improve the equitable supply of essential public services by facilitating the sharing of quality digital education and healthcare resources and expanding digital social security services.

By prioritizing the digital economy as an engine for common prosperity, China is positioning itself to leverage technological advancements for widespread and inclusive progress in the country's socioeconomic development.

Space Advances To Be Expected in 2024

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Nurturing commercial space industry

Recently, construction work was completed on the No.1 launch pad of China's first commercial spacecraft launch site in Wenhang, Hainan province, marking a key step forward in China's commercial space industry development.

The commercial space industry, as one of the strategic emerging industries, will be prioritized in 2024, according to the annual Central Economic Work Conference held last December. This year, the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site is expected to carry out its first commercial spaceflight mission.

Harmony Between Railway Construction and Natural Protection

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In addition to finless porpoises, various rare birds are also regular visitors to the Huangshan-Nanchang section. Every autumn and winter, tens of thousands of migratory birds from all directions gather in Poyang Lake, including white cranes. At that time, stable pillars supporting the railway's power contact network became favorite places for migratory birds to visit.

In order to protect migratory birds from being injured by high voltage electricity and avoid contact network tripping caused by objects such as bird nests, builders installed reflective bird deterrents on all important contact network pillars.

At the same time, the team also used an intelligent monitoring platform to dynamically monitor and analyze various important equipment along the line during bird migration, and timeously discover bird nests in the process of being built. The young workers in this section also spontaneously formed a migratory bird protection team to learn emergency treatment measures for injured birds and strengthen promotion of migratory bird protection.

Now that the Hangzhou-Nanchang high-speed railway has commenced full operation, Huang is looking forward to seeing the ecological beauty of the harmonious coexistence of finless porpoises, white cranes and high-speed trains.



Staff check Miao embroidery products made via the digital production platform in southwest China's Guiyang city where the Miao ethnic group lives. (PHOTO: XINHUA)