

BUSINESS



Visitors pass the Cambodia booth during the 16th China-ASEAN Expo in September in Nanning, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. XINHUA

Manufacturing centers to boost China, ASEAN trade

Cambodia sees room for stronger synergy in bilateral ties with nation

By ZHONG NAN
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With the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations surpassing the United States to become China's second-largest trading partner this year, its member economies are rushing to establish more trade promotional and manufacturing facilities across China to seek new growth opportunities.

Pan Sorasak, Cambodia's commerce minister, said the country will open its sixth trade center in China by the end of this month to further promote bilateral ties in trade, investment, culture and tourism.

The new trade center will be located in Kunming, capital of southwestern China's Yunnan province, he said, and Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Yim Chhay Ly is scheduled to attend its opening ceremony.

"The center will exhibit Cambodian products and documents related to cultural and tourism sites, the business environment and investment potential in Cambodia," he said in a speech at the ministry's annual conference.

The minister noted the five existing Cambodian trade centers in China are in Guangzhou in southern Guangdong province, Xi'an in northwestern Shaanxi province, Haining in eastern Zhejiang province, the Hong Kong Special Admin-

istrative Region, and Yantai in eastern Shandong province.

Cambodian Ministry of Commerce spokesman Seang Thay said Cambodia saw China as a huge market for its products, particularly for agricultural ones.

"Cambodian trade centers in China are useful in promoting Cambodian products, investment potential, investment law and regulations, tourism attractions, and culture to Chinese investors and tourists," he said.

China is the biggest source of both foreign direct investment and tourists to Cambodia, and a key trading partner of the nation.

According to Cambodian government data, the Southeast Asian nation attracted a total investment of \$21 billion from China from 1994 to date.

On the tourism side, the country gained 2 million Chinese tourists during the first 10 months of 2019, up 24 percent over the same period last year.

And for trade, the bilateral trade volume totaled \$6.6 billion last year and is projected to hit \$10 billion by 2023.

China has remained ASEAN's top trading partner for a decade. Bilateral trade volume reached \$578.04 billion between January and November this year, jumping 7.5 percent year-on-year. With promising trade prospects, both sides aim at a joint target of two-

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way trade of \$1 trillion and \$150 billion in investments by 2020.

Asia Pulp & Paper Co, the Indonesia-based paper product manufacturer, pledged to raise its investment in China as the country's demand for baking paper, oil-proof paper, packaging paper, baby care and biodegradable paper products has notably surged due to strong purchasing power in major cities and the fast urbanization pace throughout the nation.

Supported by more than 70,000 employees globally, the group, with 25 million metric tons of annual production capacity for various paper goods, invested 45 billion yuan (\$6.43 billion) in Rudong county, Jiangsu province, to build a plant producing high-end paper-made items in July. Once the facility becomes operational, it will be able to produce 3.96 million tons of paper products annually.

At last year's China International Import Expo, the company received \$170 million worth of orders from clients both in China and globally. It also sealed import deals with a number of Chinese companies in Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces during the first CIIE.

Zhang Ge, CEO of the household paper unit at APP's China branch, said China's second-child policy has also brought new momentum to the mother and child care area, giving the company a clearer view of consumer demand, such as safety, purity, zero stimulation and softness.

Li Yong, deputy director of the China Association of International Trade Expert Committee, added that China and ASEAN will see sustained trade growth in the future after the upgraded protocol of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area came into effect in October. In comparison with the previously goods trade-focused agreement, the upgraded CAFTA covers more areas including trade in goods and services, investment, and economic and technological cooperation.

To better confront protectionism, he said ASEAN and China both export a large amount of manufactured goods, agricultural and commodity products to global markets annually. They have been upholding a rules-based multilateral trading system and promoting regional integration.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Tourism efforts help Guizhou reap poverty eradication rewards

By ZHENG YIRAN in Beijing
and YANG JUN in Guiyang

Guizhou is banking on its tourism industry to provide a cutting edge for poverty eradication, as the southwestern Chinese province strives to be a role model for China's anti-poverty efforts.

By September this year, the tourism industry provided employment opportunities for 986,400 people in the province, which in turn helped 897,000 of them to come out of the shadow of poverty, according to data provided by the provincial authorities.

Guizhou has developed 19,495 tourism spots in 66 poverty-stricken counties, with 4,490 of them in 16 counties that are suffering from deep poverty. During the first three quarters of this year, Guizhou's rural tourism attracted 423 million visitors, up 21.7 percent on a yearly basis. Total rural tourism revenue surged 30.6 percent year-on-year to 256.2 billion yuan (\$36.5 billion).

During the same period, total tourism revenue in Guizhou reached 1 trillion yuan, up 28.3 percent year-on-year, according to the Guizhou Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism.

"In recent years, Guizhou has attracted tens of thousands of tourists with its unique landscape and rich culture. Promoting the development of the tourism industry is an important approach for targeted poverty alleviation. Through tourism, we hope to bring more people out of poverty," said Wang Wenxue, deputy head of the Guizhou Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism.

Xijiu, a northern town in Guizhou, is an ideal example of tourism-driven poverty alleviation in the province. As a town famous for producing *baijiu*, the town attracts tens of thousands of *baijiu* lovers every year. Guizhou Xijiu, the largest *baijiu* producer in the town, regularly organizes *baijiu* discovery tours. The tours include learning brewing techniques at the factory, visiting liquor collection museums, as well as *baijiu* tasting parties guided by liquor professionals.

According to the company, in November, over 900 batches of tourists, or 13,400 visitors, experienced its liquor tourism.

Lou Bihua, Party secretary of

Xijiu town, said that in 2014, there were 4,628 villagers facing poverty. Through the active poverty alleviation efforts, the town managed to reduce the incidence from 13.86 percent in 2014 to 1.02 percent in 2018. This year, Xijiu town has managed to eliminate poverty, said officials.

Xiang Chengqiang, Party secretary of Xishui county, which Xijiu town belongs to, said: "Xishui county has beautiful natural scenery, a pleasant climate, and rich history and culture. More tourists are now coming to Xishui. We will continue to give full play to the role of the tourism industry in poverty alleviation, and realize high-quality development."

According to Xiang, during the first six months of 2018, Xishui attracted 3.02 million tourist visits, up 51 percent year-on-year. Its total tourism revenue surged 53.8 percent on a yearly basis to 3.48 billion yuan.

Tongzi county, in northern Guizhou, is another example of tourism-driven poverty alleviation. With the support of the government, the county transformed from a poverty-stricken area to a national 4A-level scenic spot.

The income from the scenic spot is mainly through tourism entrance tickets, parking fees, village-level labor service income, village-level housing rental and village-level land transfer.

According to the local government, currently, there are 1,822 village guesthouses in Tongzi. In 2018, the scenic spot attracted 19.39 million visits, lifting nearly 4,000 poor villagers out of poverty.

The annual Central Economic Work Conference held in Beijing from Dec 10 to 12 has called for resolute efforts in targeted poverty alleviation, as one of the "three tough battles". It also underscored the importance of using industry development for poverty alleviation.

Li Jinzao, vice-minister of culture and tourism, said tourism-driven poverty alleviation work can bring positive results to both the economic and civil enhancement sectors. Rural tourism has become the strongest force to lift villagers out of poverty, he said.

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Tourists watch a drum performance in Tucheng Ancient Town in Xishui county in Southwest China's Guizhou province.

LUO LIFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Livestreaming platforms gearing up to expand game companion business

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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Lin Hao, a 22-year-old college student, has found a way to beat his online competitors in popular mobile game *King of Glory*.

For about 8 yuan (\$1.14) per round, master players will keep Lin company and help him get higher rankings in the game.

"I've got a more dedicated gaming experience," Lin said. "I hate getting matched with bad teammates. Master players will not only share their superior skills but also talk to me. That really relaxes me a lot."

Lin is just one among the increasingly growing group of young tech-savvy people who are interested in this new business, which is gaining traction in China.

Seeing this growing trend, major livestreaming apps are gearing up to

expand the game companion business, as they attempt to diversify the offerings and generate new revenue streams.

Hangzhou-based Chushou TV, a popular livestreaming platform specializing in mobile games, is an early bird that has caught on to the new opportunity.

Chushou launched its game companion business in June. By the end of November, the platform had attained more than 5,000 game companions, with a total of 80,000 orders.

Yang Shuyu, chief marketing director of Chushou, said the game companion market is huge and one where the company sees continued growth.

"The market will be worth more than 10 billion yuan," Yang noted. "With a number of forward-looking investors and the emergence of several game companion apps,

“Basically, livestreaming users are also willing to pay for game companion services. Therefore, it's a good time for livestreaming platforms to enter the market this year.”

Yang Shuyu, chief marketing director of Chushou

game companion services are gaining huge popularity among Chinese players."

Yang said a survey conducted by Chushou found that many users

are interested in finding game companions.

"Basically, livestreaming users are also willing to pay for game companion services. Therefore, it's a good time for livestreaming platforms to enter the market this year," Yang added. "Compared to game companion platforms, livestreaming platforms have more paid users, which translates into a higher starting point for the number of companion orders and turnover."

"It is much easier for livestreaming platforms to gain those skill-sharers, as we have a large number of gaming hosts and it's not hard for us to hire new ones. Actually, we also can create a new way for those hosts to make money. For users, they can gain a better understanding of their required game companions via the livestreaming content."

Games, especially the esports sector, are now becoming mainstream in China, buoyed by strong government support and the growing number of young tech-savvy people.

Chinese gamers' rising enthusiasm has created a highly lucrative market worth 233 billion yuan this year, up 8.7 percent on a yearly basis, said a report released by Chinese gaming database Gamma Data Corp.

According to the report, revenues generated from the esports industry jumped 16.2 percent to 96.96 billion yuan in 2019.

Wu Xiaoyan, a researcher from Qianzhan Industry Research Institute, said game companions are a derivative industry of the gaming sector, which helps lower the skill barriers for novice players allowing them to enjoy the games.

"Although the success of profes-

sional esports is driving the esports boom in China, most master players have limited means to make money, such as producing original content," Wu said. "The game companion business allows them to share their skills. And it also brings novice players closer to the master players they admire, offering a new way to enhance gaming experiences and skills."

Yang from Chushou said the company will offer a higher linked set of livestreaming and game companion business.

For instance, Chushou launched a game companion voting event, where winners will join the ranks of popular hosts to attend Chushou's annual ceremony.

"As the market gradually matures, game companion services will likely become one of the main sources of revenue for livestreaming platforms," Yang added.