



Government officials mark the launch of Ruili pilot area for the province's development and opening-up.

LEI TONGSU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Gateway Project to improve trade, infrastructure

By LI YINGQING AND GUO ANFEI

A meeting was held in Ruili, Southwest China's Yunnan on Monday, to advocate its officials to accelerate its progress of building the province into China's southwest gateway.

China's central government announced that it was making Yunnan a national gateway, as part of its overall strategy, on May 6.

This Gateway Project is expected to last 10 years: five years for the first phrase, and the second phrase to run from 2016 to 2020.

The central government said that it plans to build Yunnan into a southwestern gateway, a major base for outwardly focused industries, and a pioneer in its outward-bound strategy.

The government said Yunnan needs to improve its infrastructure, regional development plans, and economic and trade cooperation, and take advantage of its resources and location, while protecting the ecology and environment to help it open up in an all-round way.

The central government said it will support Yunnan through tax policies, financing, investment, and various forms of compensation. It will increase investment in the province and have preferential policies for local projects and clean energy projects.

"The announcement is expected to help Yunnan's economic and social development. The opening-up atmosphere in Yunnan is expected to get stronger, as will foreign demand for its industries, infrastructure will improve, and communications with surrounding countries will grow," said Bai Enpei, Yunnan's provincial Party secretary.

China and Southeast and South Asia have immense market potential and Yunnan, itself. The province has been working on an advanced communication and transportation network that links Southeast Asia and South Asia, said Hu Liequ, of the Yunnan Foreign Financial Cooperation Research Center and a professor at Yunnan University of Finance and Economics.

The gateway strategy will benefit the local people and promote social well being because it will help economic growth and provide employment opportunities, according to Chen Lijun, head of the Yunnan Social Science Academy's South Asia Research Institute.

Yunnan started the Gateway Project in 2009, in response to remarks by China's President Hu Jintao about making Yunnan "a major gateway" for Chinese co-operation with Southeast and South Asia and the Mekong River valley.

Ruili now is one of the most developed cities in Yunnan and it was approved by the National Development and Reform Commission to be a national-level pilot opening-up city last year.

The province held a foundation-laying ceremony in Ruili, inaugurating the construction of the Baorui section of the Dali-Ruili railway line, which is a crucial part of the Trans-Asian Railway. Longrui (from Longlin to Ruili) highway was also inaugurated.



Opening ceremony of the Gateway Project in Ruili.



Ground-level view of corporate buildings in Kunming.



The parking lot of Ruili Port.

# Yunnan opens all its borders

By LI YINGQING, GUO ANFEI AND LIU YUJIAO

Yunnan province has seen new opportunities for improving both its economy and its society now that a provincial project has become part of a national strategy.

Yunnan's Gateway Project was started in December 2009 as a direct response to remarks that President Hu Jintao made during a visit to Yunnan in July of that year.

Hu said that Yunnan should be a gateway for China to open up further to Southeast Asia.

This is also just a part of China's grander scheme to open not just to Southeast Asia, but to South Asia, West Asia and East Africa as well. This covers more than 50 countries and more than 2.8 billion people.

Qin Guangrong, Yunnan's governor, explained it in this way, "The Gateway Project will change Yunnan and other provinces from a peripheral border area to the front and give vitality to a new round of development for ethnic regions in the southwest."

Qin added that the gateway idea has five different forms - as a channel, window, platform, base, and barrier.

The channel, which is the key to the project, means building an international thoroughfare to Southeast and South Asia.

The window refers to making Yunnan a showcase of Chinese culture and friendship. The platform means that Yunnan should have an economic and trade cooperation role. The base refers to Yunnan as a manufacture and processing base, while the barrier refers to its role as an ecological barrier.

"We're going to build international highways, railways, water routes and oil and gas channels and make the city of Ruili a pilot in opening and exploring."

"It will accelerate economic cooperation as a cross-border economic zone, and take part in building trade and economic cooperation zones beyond the border," Qin went on to explain.

Even as these routes are being built,



Qin Guangrong, governor of Yunnan province.

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Yunnan already has three links to Southeast and South Asian countries.

One follows the Southern Silk Route and consists of the Kunming-Myanmar Road, China-India Road and Guangtong-Dali railway. It runs from Kunming, through Myanmar, to India and Bangladesh.

A second route consists of the Lancang-Mekong River, three highways that link Kunming and the port of Mohan port, and the Xishuangbanna airport. It reaches Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

The third, via the Kunming-Vietnam railway, Kunming-Hekou highway, and the Honghe River, runs to Hanoi, Haiphong, and other cities in Vietnam.

Qin said that transport is an important part of the Gateway Project. During the 12th Five-year Plan (2011-2015), the provincial government will rely on a national highway construction plan and improve links with inland cities, coastal cities, Southeast Asia and South Asia.

By 2020, the government is expected to complete work on superhighways in Yunnan; roads to cities, prefectures and tourism sites in Yunnan; improved roads to national ports; and superhighways to Sichuan and Guizhou provinces, and the Guangxi and Tibet regions.

Yunnan's transportation infrastructure

has already improved relations with Southeast and South Asian nations, turning the border province into a major front and, according to Qin, "This has been an important provincial policy in recent years."

Yunnan has been following this policy for 10 years, going back to the beginning of China's West Development Program. The province has spent more than 250 billion yuan (\$38.48 billion) on it.

It is believed that making Yunnan a gateway will increase economic and social growth in the Southwest. It will also connect China with developing markets in Southeast, South, and West Asia, as well as East Africa, while strengthening relations.

At the same time, it holds the key to Yunnan's social and economic development, especially in ethnic regions.

In 2010, Yunnan saw some progress in its foreign trade, with an annual increase of 69 percent, over 2009, which ranked second in China.

Trade with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) amounted to 4.58 billion yuan, while imports from ASEAN members increased 59.3 percent. These show the possibilities for the Gateway Project.

According to Qin, ASEAN and South

Asia mark the beginning of a new era for Yunnan. The province has been active in the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), Greater Mekong Sub-region cooperation (GMS), and in India, Burma and Bangladesh Regional Economic Cooperation.

In doing so it has increased China's connections with neighboring countries in the areas of electric power, commerce and customs activity.

Yunnan has played a major role in exploring the Mekong River Valley and in GMS economic cooperation. The Kunming-Bangkok International thoroughfare is already completed, shipping cooperation on the Lancang-Mekong River has helped the vegetables-for-oil, flowers-for-fruit, and other exchanges, and there has been progress in railway and energy cooperation.

And it does not end there. Qin told China Daily that, "This is a golden opportunity for Yunnan's tourism. Yunnan will take advantage of the Gateway Project to internationalize its tourism and build a first-class tourist province and popular tourist destination for Southeast Asia and the rest of the world."

"It will enrich tourism, by making use of airlines and tourist channels to neighboring countries, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe and America."

In addition, "Yunnan's education has promising prospects with the Gateway Project," Qin said.

Yunnan can use its unique climate and ethnic diversity to provide a place where various cultures communicate and assimilate. The thing is, to gear education to international standards, and increase communications with ASEAN and South Asia colleges.

Over the next five years, the goal is to get 100,000 foreign students to come to Yunnan and to send Yunnan's young people to study abroad.

Thus, "going outside" is a major part of Yunnan's opening-up policy. Thanks to the reciprocal trade relations with Southeast and South Asia, many Yunnan enterprises will invest in those areas and get involved in projects there. Yunnan's foreign investment has it ranking higher than neighboring provinces.

## Kunming aims to be 'regional air hub' by 2015

By LI YINGQING AND GUO ANFEI

The capital of Yunnan province will build itself into a gateway city for China's opening up to the Southwest before 2015, according to the Party secretary.

The capital, Kunming, is near the bor-

der with Southeast Asian countries and a transportation hub for the Southwest, making it an important trade center for the region, Qiu He explained.

It has rail links with Vietnam and road links with Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. It also sits between the ASEAN-China free trade zone and the greater Pearl River

Delta regional economic cooperation zone.

It is expected to play an ever greater role in Yunnan province's Gateway Strategy now that the Kunming-Bangkok highway is in operation, and work is progressing on the Trans-Asian Railway and the new Kunming airport.

The Kunming regional finance center is part of the Gateway Strategy, whose purpose is to facilitate trade with South and Southeast Asia.

To attract more investment, Kunming is cutting a broad path and looking to the Yangtze River Delta region, Pearl River Delta, Bohai Sea area and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, as well as Japan, Korea, ASEAN, Europe and America over the next five years.

"The new airport is expected to be in operation by the end of 2011 and will be China's fourth-largest regional air hub, after Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It will be able to handle 60 million passengers annually and is expected to improve Kunming's trade and travel links abroad,"

**The new airport is expected to be in operation by the end of 2011 and will be China's fourth-largest regional air hub, after Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.**

ZHANG ZULIN  
KUNMING MAYOR

said Zhang Zulin, the city's mayor.

Kunming is paired with cities in almost 20 countries and more foreigners are coming here for studies, travel, or business.

Ma Yong, vice-head of the Yunnan Social Science Academy's economics institute, says he believes Kunming will become an international city and attract many foreigners, within five years.

Most international financial institutions are expected to set up branches here.



Kunming is becoming more and more international.

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