Pedal to the metal on vehicle reforms

While once enjoying a well-sailed fleet of government vehicles, county officials in Xinyu city can now be walking to work.

Among them, Zhou Minsheng, deputy secretary general of the Xinyu City Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in east China’s Jiangxi Province.

“As a veteran working 25 years in government, he enjoyed a chauffeur-driven commute for the last 10 years. Earlier this year, reforms led his branch to auction off 80 percent of their government vehicles. ‘Now I have to walk to work,’ he said.”

On Dec. 4, 2012, CPC leaders introduced a new point rule to fight against corruption and bureaucracy.

The campaign requires officials from various levels to minimize meetings, cut government spending and follow strict housing and vehicle standards.

From June 2013 to September 2014, the CPC initiated a “mass line” campaign, calling for officials to renew focus on the public.

Part of the campaign included eliminating more than 114,000 government vehicles, 95.5 percent of the target number.

In March, reform on government vehicles was included in China’s State Council government work report for the first time. Zhou describes the reform as one “with the most decisive resolution.”

In Xinyu, 130 vehicles, or one sixth of the previous amount, were kept. These vehicles are now equipped with a positioning system that allows travel routes to be tracked by the public.

Ways to make SAARC more dynamic

After the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu on November 26-27, Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, the Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), told AFP its comments on the Summit and its future.

Could you please highlight some achievements of the 18th SAARC Summit?

The summit, which issued 36-point declaration, is a big success. Framework Agreement on Energy Cooperation is one of the major achievements. The issue of migration has been included in the declaration for the first time.

SAARC leaders promised to collaborate and cooperate for orderly and responsible management of labor migration from South Asia to ensure safety. Member states agreed on the issue of security and wellbeing of their migrant workers in the destination countries outside the region.

In addition, SAARC leaders emphasized on linking South Asia with contiguous regions, including Central Asia, and beyond by all modes of connectivity.

Why could not be motor-vehicle and railways agreements signed?

Some of members were yet to complete preparation for signing those agreements. The meeting of the transport ministers is reported to be held within next three months to finalize and approve the agreements.

What is your opinion about the innovation of the regional centers?

SAARC members agreed to close down three Regional Centers and merge four centers in order to set up SAARC Centre. Some of those centers could not establish centers will perform better in the days to come. Member states are ready to make the centers effective and result-oriented.

The SAARC is criticized for moving in a slow pace, why?

Yes, in some quarters, SAARC is moving very slowly and not doing well as other regional bodies—European Union and ASEAN.

But given the history and experience of SAARC, I would say it has been making good progress so far. We are going to do many things to make it more dynamic. I am very much optimistic about SAARC’s future.
Resurgence of Madhesh  

BY BINAY PAJAR

A new wave of change has gained momentum in the southern plains. Despite the land’s history and heritage, representatives of the Madhesi failed to reach to the grassroots level and make people realize that the major issues of the Madhesh are ‘colonial suppression’ and ‘racial discrimination’. People of the Madhesi community are called Black Buddhas, hadad and have still great expectations from Kathmandu. Several Madheshes sacrificed their lives for democracy, which they anticipated would guarantee their right to state all levels and organs. As Adam Smith in his popular books ‘Wealth of Nations’ and ‘Theory of Moral Sentiments’ clairvoyant about the need of liberty. This veil of ignorance among the Madhesh people made them suffer from hatred and discrimination. With the uprisings of 2007/08 scattered the feelings of nationalism among the Madheshes. All these campaigns are resurgent for the role of Madhesh. The current national and international level. The major demands of the movement are to reach the Madhesh identity at all levels, and proportionate inclusion of Madheshes in all state organs. After the nomination of Myck 4 Madhesi NCP, the movement was signed between the representatives of Madhesh and the government. The agreement couldn’t address the sentiments of the Madheshes, they, however, rejected with the thought that suppression, discriminatory behavior would end.

Dr C R Raut, in his book “History of Madhes”, explains the colonial influence on Madhesi terming it as ‘harsher’ than the life of Madheshes. Rather than addressing the sentiments of the Madhesh movement, the government is in open suppressions of the Madhesh. Several youths have been killed in the name of encounter. James Robinson in his book “Why Nations Collapse” blames non-inclusive institution of the nation. His argument addresses the problem of the Madheshes, they, however, rejected with the thought that suppression, discriminatory behavior would end.  

Cleaning the holy river  

BY SAPHALA PRADHAN

Bagmati River once hailed as “clean, pristine and holy” has turned into a stinking open sewer. There was a time when citizens of the Kathmandu Valley used to take a holy dip in the Bagmati River, conducting early morning prayers and worshiping the holy river. Now, the river is empty and alluvial sediments are carried to the sea. Bagmati River was named after the goddess. Several youths have been killed in the name of encounter. James Robinson in his book “Why Nations Collapse” blames non-inclusive institution of the nation. His argument addresses the problem of the Madheshes, they, however, rejected with the thought that suppression, discriminatory behavior would end.  

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Arnaud Cauchois, Senior Water Resource Specialist at ADB’s South Asia Department, has explained the river’s ecological and environmental challenges with its waters losing purity and richness with the deterioration of quality and integrity. “The Bagmati River has huge cultural and economic benefits. However, despite its beauty, the river is suffering from pollution, which has left it biologically dead in the Kathmandu Valley,” said Cauchois.  

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan and grant assistance of USD 30 million to improve river bank beautification from Kathmandu to Lalitpur. Several Madheshes sacrificed their lives for democracy, which they anticipated would guarantee their right to state all levels and organs. As Adam Smith in his popular books ‘Wealth of Nations’ and ‘Theory of Moral Sentiments’ clairvoyant about the need of liberty.
How to meet people's rising aspirations with limited resources?

Talking exclusively to APD recently, Minister for Finance Dr. Ram Sharani Mahat expressed optimism towards pushing Nepal into a higher growth trajectory. Excerpts:

- We expect to achieve 6% growth this fiscal year.
- Nepal fails to develop hydro potentiality and to promote tourism.
- Corruption is getting worse, hurting the economy.
- AIIB is complementary with ADB more than competitor.
- Nepal's performance in foreign projects is improving.

Firstly could you elucidate Nepal's current national economy and the financial situation?

With numerous problems, Nepal is not at least one of the least developed countries. The income level here is low, but development and investment cost is high. Despite all these, we have been managing our economy in a satisfactory manner. Our overall macro situation and deficit is under control. Our debt level is low. We were able to maintain 5.2% growth last fiscal year and we expect to achieve 6% growth this year. However, due to the huge landslides and floods this year, the country's agriculture may not yield as expected. Our main objective is to attract investment as much as possible to boost our export level. Therefore, our major challenge at the moment is to promote export by invigorating infrastructural investment, especially in hydro, agriculture and tourism.

What is your impression about Nepalese entrepreneurs?

While many of his colleagues were hunting new job or intending to go overseas for government, Abhijit was focused on getting his company called "Entrant Solutions" going. The firm works on vulnerability assessment, penetration testing and information system audit, and the clients include some of the reputed players in Nepal including Surly Nepal and Civil Bank Pvt. Ltd.

"Initially, the days were tough. While many of my friends got easy job and remuneration, I had to earn with struggle. There was no other way," he shared. Six people started the enterprise and three more joined in a couple of months, making it a strong team of nine.

Abhijit argues that entrepreneurship is about creating a value in the society by solving the problems of unemployment. Jiban Khatwadi, 23, also started his company a few months ago. His firm, E-Web Tech Pvt. Ltd. works on web development and software solutions. "Till now, we have created and maintained websites of half a dozen INGOs and other reputed organizations. We are also working on our own product," Jiban shared his experience. Starting a company is tough at the beginning but it gives a great pleasure in a long run. "You become master of your own fate," he exclaimed.

Jiban suggests youngsters being very careful in choosing partners with whom they create a syndicate. A good entrepreneur is a combination of marketing, management and technical skills.

"Teamwork and the habit of respecting others are mandatory," mused he.

A simple idea may lead to a great innovation. Decades ago, Facebook was also a university site would one day gain a huge market development for income and other purposes. As on local economic development positive impact on tourism as well

The operation of Rasuwagadhi customs point certainly facilitates Nepali-Chinese trade by reducing dependency on Tatopani route, operationalized by 2015 end. Transportation cost and expanding market access easily.

A big challenge is to be done in order to facilitate the trade with construction of dry port, warehouse, quarantine laboratory facility, road construction and maintenance, bank, and providing efficient service to tourists visiting Nepal and China. The Rasuwagadhi route will have positive impact on trade as well as on local economic development by providing employment to local people, building up people to people relationship and local market development for income generation of local people. The expansion plan of roadways and railway up to Kerung will further create opportunities in trade promotion. Nepal can get cooperation from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank for its development.

Besides the opportunities, there are also some hurdles to Nepal. The trade deficit may escalate further. Nepal cannot immediately improve export strength significantly but Chinese exporters have easy market access to Nepal. Though transportation curtailment is a problem in Tatopani area, it will remain at Rasuwagadhi too that escalates transportation cost.

According to officials of both the governments and local chambers cooperation should and show interest in non-commercial trade at the border point. There is a need of capacity building to take benefit of zero duty facility offered by China for export promotion of Nepal.

Now the ball is in the Nepalese court.
GADHIMAI FESTIVAL

Gadhimai festival is a month-long Hindu festival that is held once every five years at the Gadhimai temple of Bariyarpur, in Bara District, about 175 km south of the capital Kathmandu in southern Nepal, near the Indo-Nepal border. As the world's second largest sacrificial slaughter, the event involves approximately 100,000 animals including water buffaloes, pigs, goats, chicken and pigeons—with the goal of pleasing Gadhimai, the goddess of power.

About one million people participate in the festival, in which 70% of the devotees are the people from the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Devotees believe that animal sacrifices for the Hindu goddess Gadhimai will end evil and bring prosperity.
Religion of non-violence sees some 100,000 animals slaughtered

BY CHRISTOPHER HELALI

The Gadhimai Mela, which is the second largest in Southern Asia after the Kumbh Mela in India, is known to some as the “festival of murderers” and as the largest animal sacrifice in one place in the world. The location of the festival, a remote village in rural and impoverished Southern Nepal creates a host of logistical problems for the organizing committee. Sanitation is almost nonexistent with participants using fields and streets as open sewers, and people moving about barefoot on a dirt ground mixed with bodies of water buffalo beginning to decay. Major troubles include sanitation, accessible and safe drinking water and dirty, unpaved and narrow roads.

With all of the difficulties, locals at the event are extremely excited for the festival. “I am very, very, excited,” exclaimed a man I stopped to speak to who was coming back from the organizing committee and has been coming to the Gadhimai Mela since he was a boy. While walking to the site from the local school we were staying at, we were packed tightly into crowds with people trampling over one another, pushing, pulling and screaming and with the occasional leper begging in the middle of the road.

Standing in the arena towards the end of the sacrifice, one could smell death. The putrid atmosphere was revolting. Worshippers still milled about and prayed, offering puja and prayers to the goddess. However, after the gory spectacle had ended, one could sense a period of reflection as people turned away to go about their days and enjoy the festivities while the field slowly turned into a cesspool of rot and decay.

As the sun set to rise on the 28th, thousands of carcasses were left rotting in the blazing heat and sun, strewn about on the arena grounds. They had yet to be collected or even properly stored and had already started to decay with flies swarming and bodily fluids and feces still coming out of the animals.

Official sources say that the company has rescinded its offer after around 4,000 of the estimated 10,000 buffalo were slaughtered. The financial blow to the Gadhimai organizing committee will have repercussions for the future festival in five years time.

Finally on the 29th, the animal carcasses were carried away into trucks by hide collectors with the heads and internal organs remaining on the arena grounds. Estimates of the water buffalo slaughtered varied from 10,000 to just under 4,000 with most estimating approximately 5,000 buffalo were killed. Sources say now that it was between 3,000 to 4,000 buffalo, far under the approximately 18,000 buffalo sacrificed at the previous Mela in 2009. The future of the Gadhimai Mela remains uncertain as international and local activists pressure the Gadhimai Trust and organizing committee to cease all animal slaughter. One thing is certain, the amount of animals sacrificed this year pales in comparison to the amount of animals slaughtered in previous Melas.

(Christopher Helali, a freelance journalist who now studies philosophy at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, China.)
The discovery to fight malaria

What is the main problem that the Health Ministry faces?

It has so many problems. Health Ministry is given the least priority compared to other ministries. It is due to coalition governments in the past that remained in power. Health ministry always fell in the hands of small parties. The parties all the time are busy for their own welfare but really worked for the nation’s welfare. But we have been working hard to address these problems by bringing different policies.

What has happened to the health sector since you became the minister about 10 months ago?

After 22 years we have formulated New Health Policy and we are about to bring Immunization Policy, New Population Policy soon. In a few months we formulated Blood Transfusion Policy and Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Action Plan. Since long Bir Hospital under National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) had no any CT-Scan machine, we have bought CT-Scan machine in the government hospital now. After a long period, we organized NAMS senate meeting and we are organizing first convocation of NAMS very soon after 13 years. We are going to establish Pokhara Health Science Academy (PHESA) and Kidney Centre. Nepal has been able to become WHO executive board member for the first time. In addition we are formulating Urban Health Policy for the first time.

What significant changes in New Health Policy recently brought?

Universal Health Coverage is our fundamental guiding principle in the policy and it is set to make health services reach to remote and rural people who are deprived of it now. We are making vital registration process in urban areas to bring poor people in health statistics which are lacking in the context of districts or regions already declared fully immunized. We are planning to establish some regional trauma centers besides Central Trauma Centre inaugurated recently in Kathmandu. Health centers are located at rural areas but people are migrating to cities. The new policy will provide health services on the basis of population density. New policy has provision of a 25 bed well equipped hospital for thousands of people and within the reach of 15 minutes distance. We have planned to invest maximum Rs. 900,000 for each patient of kidney, Alzheimer and Parkinsonism diseases.

It is reported that service provided by government hospitals is very poor. The real situation is not disclosed. Media has made them show worse in the voice of private hospitals and stakeholders. If even private hospitals, we can see no hospital has multidisciplinary treatment system as in the government hospitals. Private hospitals refer serious cases to the government hospitals. They have rumoured about their public competitors. They are cheating and exploiting patients. Only some private hospitals are doing well. We have formed a body to check cheating attitude of private hospitals.

What you said is true, why our leaders including PM Sushil Koirala, K.P. Oli go abroad for their treatment?

I am very serious about this fact. We have set up VIP andVVIP wards at Bir Hospital separately. We are hopeful such overseas treatment will definitely decrease in future. In fast Nepal lacks modern and sensitive treatment equipments.

What is the annual budget for Health Ministry?

Very minimum budget is allocated for health ministry, just below 6% of the total budget despite that in different international conventions Nepal’s government promised to allocate at least 9%.

Where do the foreign health funds/grants go?

Some foreign grants are directly spent on the field without any planning to make them come through the ministry. Some grants come as medical goods (vaccines, drugs, etc.). Limited funds are provided for confirmed areas. Those funds are not invested in the health infrastructure such as WHI, DVID, USAID, etc. are funding with this strategy.

What causes Nepalese people suffer most in the health field?

Besides lack of health insurance system, dangerous diseases of kidney, heart, cancer are the major challenges.

How do you analyze the health status of Nepal?

Neonatal death rate has decreased to 23 per cent from 32 per cent. Quality life and health conscious level of people have upped, number of medical institutions have increased, and medical education has been standardized. Three hundred five doctors are educated directly by the ministry for service, 2,250 salute health posts have been promoted to health posts. Previously doctors used to ignore the government but now young health professionals are showing good interest to work with us. Our life expectancy has reached to nearly 70 from 42 years. Anyway, we are progressing and is about to meet millennium development goals by 2015 despite crunch of resources.

While talking about health, women and children are more suffered?

We are working through safe motherhood program. We have established birthing centers, and given token money to encourage safe delivery at hospitals. We have also provisioned to needy patients in remote areas by using air transport.

Does the government put concern to develop our traditional health practices?

Nepal is rich in altitudinal quality herbal medicines. Recently Nepal has signed MoU with India to develop traditional systems of medicines like Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Unani, Yoga, etc. We are seriously planning for it. We have also setup 91 Ayurveda hospitals throughout Nepal.
“A man is no man who has not travelled to Lhasa”

Chief attraction of Reply from Tibet

BY HISILA YAMI

Just when 18th SAARC has taken place in 2014 in Nepal, it is worth recollecting socio, economic and cultural relations among Nepal, China and India in relation to Tibet in 1930s. Then all the three countries were under the grip of feudalism with their own specifics and variant stages of development.

In Nepal the oligarchic rule of Ranas was prevalent. China had yet not completed new democratic revolution. India was still being ruled by the British.

It was in 1950, my late father Dharma Rana Yami, a political activist jailed for opposing Rana regime wrote Reply from Tibet in the prison. It is an epic poem based on his memoir of seven years stay in Tibet as an assistant to Nepali merchants. Then my father Yami was only 15 years old when he first travelled to Tibet.

In 1930s, it took more than one month to reach Lhasa (capital of Tibet), unlike today when one can take direct flight from Kathmandu to Lhasa within one hour. Then trekking route to Lhasa was not only physically torturous, climatically unreliable with freezing cold, but also frightening. Travelers were fearful of being victims of looters and dacoits who could even kill them on the spot.

Reply from Tibet is a collection of poems describing the dignified and cordial breakup of a love story between a Nepali boy and a Tibetan girl. It first describes interest to travel, slowly unfolds economic, social and cultural relations and finally asserts pride of being a Tibetan woman.

Reply from Tibet consists of four parts. In the first part “Journey to Lhasa”, the poet describes his journey to Kalingpong, Pedong, Sikkim and finally to cross Juntara, one leading to Ladhak, another to Lhasa. In Pedung Yami met enlightened Lama who gave him glimpses of Tibetan social, cultural life which is simple, egalitarian and gender sensitive, compared to caste based complex Aryan culture of Nepal. Then he describes how he and his team narrowly escaped death when in Jara, a notorious single infested with dacoits who started attacking them for robbery. Finally when he reached Lhasa he recalled a saying “A woman is no woman if she has not given birth to a child; similarly a man is no man who has not travelled to Lhasa”.

The second part “Introduction to Lhasa” describes the richness of Tibetan culture, China and India in Tibet. He describes how 1400 years back a king named Strong Tsang Gampo who ruled Tibet and turned Lhasa into a highly developed, magnificent city by inculcating the rich treasure of literature, arts and religion from Vrikuti, the princess of Nepal and Chang Ling, and the princess of China, both were married to him.

Yami enriched himself by learning bits of Tibetan, Chinese, Hindi and English languages while learning politics, social science, culture, religion, history and literature from scholars and monks. He was impressed to see that there was no disparity between men and women in Tibet.

In the third part “Culmination of love”, Yami describes his love towards Hisila, a 19 years old Nepali girl impressed by her chirpiness, frankness and jet for life he became more poetic, trying to learn more, not only Tibetan language but also the writing skill so that he could express his feelings through poems. Yami was himself aware of his class position. He being an assistant to his Nepali master knew of cases in which such assistants had been ruthlessly punished when they were found falling in love with Tibetan women.

The last part Reply from Tibet represents culmination of poems. Yami desperate to get Hisila on his side started writing poems dedicated to her one after another in Tibetan language. But alas Hisila replied to Yami’s poem by taking sad but firm stand against the marriage proposal. She replied: Whenever you come here it is to earn money and eventually you leave for Nepal, taking away wealth and leaving behind us. If son is born, he becomes a subject of Gorkha relegated to “Komakh”; and if a daughter is born, she remains a subject of Tibet without claim to property. And if she is allowed to join her husband in Nepal, she is treated as Bhoteeni relegated lower creed. She then asserted her own identity as Tibetan woman who would rather stay in her own motherland which had nourished her, sheltered her than live uncertain life with uncertain destination.

Thus the love affair culminates to cordial breakup of relation, being transformed to brother and sister relationship. This way the Tibetan lover Hisila enlightened Yami to respect the dignity of oppressed class, gender and nationality.

Today in Nepal there is crying demand to include agenda of oppressed class, gender and nationality in constitution through Constitution Assembly. Reply from Tibet stands still valid for Nepal.

The Governance of China

Chinese leaders understand the West better than vice versa

Former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt wrote a review on Chinese President Xi Jinping’s new book on governance, saying the book offers the world a better understanding of China’s development. “Xi Jinping: The Governance of China” was published last September.

“From looking at this will help foreign readers to gain a better and more objective understanding of China from historical and other perspectives,” Schmidt wrote. Schmidt said it was a regret that the Chinese leadership has always had a better understanding of the West than vice versa. The publishing of Xi’s new book represents a positive attempt to change the status quo.

The book reveals the philosophy adopted by China’s leadership and the strategic guidelines on which China’s direction of development is based.

The new generation of Chinese leadership with President Xi Jinping at the core alsoneeds to deal with the important, strenuous and complicated tasks brought about by high-speed economic development, he said. President Xi will pay special attention to problems caused by corruption, environmental pollution, illegal occupation of land, labor disputes, and threats to food safety, the former Chancellor wrote.

He also pointed out several major issues facing China such as pollution, aging population and the household registration system reform.

Schmidt said Confucianism is making a return as a philosophy embedded within the Chinese minds, citing the interpretation of Confucian principles by President Xi in the book. He said during the 5,000- year Chinese culture, there has rarely been any trace of imperialist thinking, and China has always honored peace above all else. “Often times the West finds it hard to suppress the impulse to act as a lecturer with regard to China and its leaders, which usually results in failure stemming from ignorance and arrogance,” Schmidt wrote.

“The West needs to apply more common sense, abandon its condescending attitude, and let fair play apply,” he said.
Over the past two decades, technology has had a massive influence on almost every sector of the society or world. Tourism can never be an exception to this technological upsurge, with the hospitality industry in many of the developed parts of the world relying largely on computer-based solutions.

It’s not that everything in Nepal is based on primitive techniques of hospitality management. “Almost all the five-star hotels have implemented online booking systems where you can get detail information of the cost and also in terms of services. Online brochures and interactive videotexts, integrated with the websites, can be used in order to fascinate the visitors.”

Tourists can enjoy the advantages offered by mobile applications dedicatedly built for android, IOS and windows based devices. “Applications like Tourist Eye, World Map, Wikitude, Gate-Guru etc. could be very useful for the international visitors,” says Pandey. Even a simple Google map could be handy during a long travel. “Though mobile application doesn’t always mean cheap video games,” he argues.

According to Pandey, tourism in Nepal is an area often ignored and untouched by the developers like him.

Since technology allows continuous communication and streamlines the guest experience, from reservation to checkouts, a tourism-based firm implementing IT solutions will obviously surpass the one indulged in primitive systems.

“Almost all is based on primitive techniques of hospitality management. Every single hospitality engineer and also an android application developer, “Number of hospitality industries implementing an IT solution is growing at a rapid pace. Even small hotels and restaurants are following their bigger counterparts, which is fascinating news for developers like us.”

“I wish there were an online payment system in Nepal, just like Paypal,” but says, “Sometimes, great ideas strike our mind but unfortunately, lack of legalized payment gateway becomes a hindrance.”

While many of the developers have developed so many products at a prototype level with most of them being experimental, only few of them have been successful in real implementation. According to Pandey, tourism in Nepal is an area often ignored and untouched by the developers like him.

“While many of the developers have developed so many products at a prototype level with most of them being experimental, only few of them have been successful in real implementation.”

Nepal Government has to realize the essence of implementing modern solutions and should start spending more money for the advancement of services provided by tourism industry.

“We have already spent many years in a primitive loophole. Now, it’s time to rise up,” Suraj adds.

By Shiva Bhusal

Chinese travelers to neighboring countries surge

Millions of other city dwellers in the mainland, has had a growing interest in overseas travel in recent years. According to official data released by tourism authorities, overseas trips by Chinese surpassed 100 million in the first 11 months of this year.

The number marked a historical record. In 1998, total overseas trips made by mainlanders stood at only 4.43 million. Since then, travel has expanded by more than tenfold.

Asian countries and regions accounted for 89.5 percent of Chinese overseas travel destinations, followed by 3.5 percent to Europe, 3 percent to Africa, 2.7 percent to the Americas, and 1.1 percent to Oceania, according to NTA data.

Meanwhile, China’s Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan accounted for 70.4 percent of total overseas trips from the mainland during the period. Six countries – the Republic of Korea (ROK), Thailand, Japan, the United States, Vietnam and Singapore – received over one million Chinese tourists each during the first 11 months of the year.

President of China Tourism Academy Dai Bin said that surging travel to neighboring countries is due to cultural proximity, lower cost and convenient transport.

Unlike predicted that the tourism market in neighboring countries will have even greater growth potential as a result of China’s diplomatically and strategically important Silk Road initiatives, which involve building a land-based belt from China via Central Asia and Russia to Europe, and a maritime Silk Road through the Strait of Malacca to India, the Middle East and East Africa.

“As China’s new diplomatic strategies and measures, the initiatives will boost cooperation in multiple fields such as politics, economy and culture. They are also poised to boost cross-border tourism,” Dai said.

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