

Progress made to better lives

Tibet autonomous region sees the benefits of Belt and Road Initiative. **Zhao Xinying** reports

The Belt and Road Initiative has broken new ground for China and the world, and has brought new opportunities for the Tibet autonomous region to open up, said Jiang Jianguo, deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

The development of Tibet is keeping with the country's step to open up. The region's co-operation with neighbouring countries and regions is conducive to share common development, Mr Jiang told the 2019 Forum on the Development of Tibet in mid-June.

The forum had the theme of "the Belt and Road Initiative and the Opening-Up and Development of Tibet". It was jointly organised by the State Council Information Office and the government of the Tibet autonomous region. The event attracted 69 officials, scholars and journalists from 37 countries and regions outside China, organisers said.

President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the forum, saying that he hopes the Tibet autonomous region will seize opportunities for development.

As this year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 60th anniversary of the campaign of democratic reform in Tibet, Mr Xi spoke highly of the achievements in



Foreign guests at the 2019 Forum on the Development of Tibet visit the Potala Palace. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

the autonomous region in the past decades.

"Tibet is a key open border area designated by the country and an important channel opening to South Asia," Mr Jiang said.

Under the BRI framework, environmental co-operation has potential, he said. He added that Tibet must insist on green development and protect the environment.

Qizhala, chairman of the regional government, said Tibet is a crucial channel in China to South Asia and is an essential area along the BRI.

In recent years, Tibet has promoted infrastructure such as railways, aviation and internet, he said.

Official data showed in 2018 that the region's imports and exports reached 4.8 billion yuan (\$993 million).

With continued international exchanges in sectors including people-to-people communications and industrial co-operation, Tibet has become more open, inclusive and vibrant, Mr Qizhala said.

"Lhasa has become one of the most important international tourist destinations in China," he said.

The region will deepen communications and co-operation with others in areas ranging from policy, infrastructure, trade and finance to technology, the chairman added.

Topics such as Tibet in Silk Road civilisations; the role of Tibet in the BRI; the opening-up of Tibet; and the inheritance and development of Tibetan culture were also discussed at the forum.

Paul Tembe, a senior researcher at the Thabo Mbeki African Leader-

ship Institute in South Africa, said he saw a different model of development in Tibet. Development is focused not only on the growth of the economy but also features a "human happiness index". In this preservation of traditions, religion and the improvement of people's lives are measured.

Michael Harrold, a senior editor at the English channel of China Global Television Network, said he had thought of Tibet as remote, isolated and inaccessible.

"So it comes as a surprise, to be honest, particularly during this forum, to realise that Tibet is playing a role in the Belt and Road Initiative," he said.

Liang Kaiyan contributed to the story.

Traditional culture thrives and develops in new era

By LIANG KAIYAN

As a part of Chinese culture, Tibetan culture has been well preserved and developed by a sophisticated system covering many areas.

The Tibetan language in the written form, for instance, is an alphabetic system. It has a long history and is widely used in the Tibet autonomous region.

Qumig Yudron is a teacher from the No 2 Primary School of Nyingchi, who teaches the Tibetan language in grade 3.

In Tibet, the language is taught through primary school to university, Qumig Yudron says.

"The language should be learned and passed down as it is the essence of the local culture and the basic way of communication of the people."

The primary school currently

has a total of 44 classes with 24 taught in Tibetan and 20 in Mandarin Chinese. It has also set up courses related to Tibetan culture including dancing and music.

Traditional Tibetan medicine is also a major part of the Tibetan culture. Historical documents showed that the medicine has a history of at least 1,300 years. Nowadays, there are Tibetan medical hospitals in each city, prefecture and county within Tibet. The region has more than 90 Tibetan medicine clinics.

Tseten Namgyal is an attending physician at the traditional therapy centre of the Hospital of Traditional Tibetan Medicine. He says traditional Tibetan medicine consists of 18 main techniques including diagnosis and therapy.

The theoretical basis of Tibet-



More than half of the classes at Nyingchi No 2 Primary School are taught in Tibetan, highlighting the respect for local culture. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

an medicine is all in the Tibetan language. Traditional Tibetan medical methods are passed down through traditional therapies, he says.

"Tibetan medicine has unique advantages with its long history and profound theories," Tseten Namgyal adds.

Tibet has also seen rapid growth in its cultural industry.

Norbu Tsering, head of the

office of industrial and resources development at the Tibet Culture Department, says Tibetan culture attracts worldwide attention with its distinct features.

In 2018, Tibet had more than 6,000 cultural companies with about 50,000 employees. The annual output value of the cultural industry reached 4.6 billion yuan (\$951.7 million), according to Norbu Tsering.

What they say

The present and future of Tibet is based on the construction of a modern economic system, with sustainable and open development. This is done through government support to key industries adapted to the geographical conditions. Through economic development and expansion of openness and co-operation, new paths are extended to connect Tibet more efficiently.

Andrés Flores, a journalist specialising in international politics and news anchor of A24 TV Argentina

Tibet is expanding its relations with South Asia via Nepal through roads and air routes. The entire socioeconomic status of South Asia would be overhauled if the Lhasa-Shigatse Railway were linked to Gyirong and Kathmandu under the Belt and Road Initiative framework. So, the role of Tibet in BRI would not be limited to Tibet's development. Rather it would be a cornerstone for the development of the whole of South Asia.

Chet Nath Acharya, editor at the Nepalese department of the South Asian Radio Centre of China Radio International

As an important part of the Belt and Road Initiative, the development of higher education in Tibet will play an important role in the local economy. Tibet's colleges and universities should make full use of resources. They should strengthen extensive communications and co-operation with universities in countries involved in the BRI to improve teachers' academic level and the international vision of Tibet's universities.

Hamish Bennett Coates, deputy director in the Global Research Centre for the Assessment of College and Student Development of Tsinghua University

For more than half a century, China has devoted a large amount of manpower, materials and capital to protecting traditional Tibetan culture and developing Tibet's new culture, which has attained remarkable achievements. Tibetan culture has developed to be open and modern. As the traditional Tibetan culture was promoted and inherited, the new local culture related to modern sciences and education has got unprecedented development.

Wang Yongxi, artistic director of Olive Media in Italy