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RIGHT TRACK

Online tech ‘connecting’ State firms

Companies using livestreaming and other solutions for tangible progress in global ventures

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact travel agencies, airlines and shipping companies, centrally administrated State-owned enterprises have begun to announce progress on their overseas construction sites via online open events.

Beijing-based China Communications Construction Co Ltd launched an online event late last month to provide the public a chance to virtually tour Port City Colombo in Sri Lanka.

At the event, Indeevari Amuwatte, a well-known Sri Lankan TV news anchor, acted as a guide to usher people into the “City of the Future” and show them the construction and development of the project from various angles.

During the live broadcast, she explained and demonstrated the COVID-19 pandemic prevention measures adopted by construction companies at the worksite.

There are now 530 workers on the project following the government’s pandemic prevention regulations requiring strict compliance. They have been on the job since the Sri Lankan government approved the resumption of work in early May, said Jiang Houliang, CCCC’s general manager for the Port City Colombo project.

A mobile cabin buffer zone has been specially built to quarantine local employees returning to work. They are also provided with two free nucleic acid tests. So far, there are no COVID-19 infections at the site.

Amuwatte then visited construction projects including a marina, man-made canal, beach and vehicular bridge, explaining the construction progress and future plans of each area.

CCCC announced that land reclamation of 269 hectares had been completed and the entire port city, which integrates commercial, residential, leisure and entertainment functions, is expected to cover more than 5.7 million square meters, with more than 200,000 people working and living in the area.

After completion, the area will



China Communications Construction employees undertaking construction work at Port City Colombo in Sri Lanka in June. XINHUA

83,000

number of jobs that will be created by the Port City Colombo project in Sri Lanka

evolve into the new central business district (CBD) of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

The local government said a total of \$1.4 billion was invested in the project’s first phase and more than \$13 billion was raised for the second phase of development.

As the largest foreign direct investment project in the country ever, the Port City Colombo project will create more than 83,000 jobs, Jiang said.

Eager to let the port city play a vital role like Dubai and Singapore do, the Sri Lankan government has been keen to build the port city into both a service hub and a commercial center, making the area an

engine driving the country’s economic and social development. An international financial center is also planned for the implementation of various preferential policies to attract foreign investment.

The large-scale urban development project is invested, constructed and operated by Beijing-based China Harbour Engineering Co Ltd, a CCCC subsidiary.

A key component of Sri Lanka’s Vision 2030, Port City Colombo was selected as one of the “five new cities to shake up the future” by Forbes magazine in 2018.

During the construction, which began in 2014, Jiang said CCCC fulfilled its social responsibilities by organizing several public service activities, such as the “Fishermen’s Livelihood Improvement Program” and “the Colombo Beautiful Beach Project”, which have garnered popular local support.

CCCC is not alone. China Civil

Engineering Construction Corp (CCECC), a subsidiary of China Railway Construction Corp, also held a media event on July 24 to show the Lagos-Ibadan railway project in Nigeria and the life of workers at the site.

It was themed “Working Together for a Connected Future” and presented with vlog and cloud livestreaming. Yakubu Adogie, an external liaison officer with the project, introduced the railway and guided international viewers on a virtual tour around the entrance hall and dispatch center of Lagos Railway Station.

Under his guidance, viewers learned about COVID-19 prevention and control measures taken during the construction in West Africa.

As the first double-track railway in West Africa to adopt Chinese standards, the 156-kilometer railway runs between Lagos — a commercial hub and

port city — to the city of Ibadan.

The railway is expected to be operational by the end this year. It will cut travel time between the two cities to less than two hours, facilitate the transport of commodities to and from Lagos and bring growth opportunities to areas along the line, said Li Depeng, a CCECC engineer with the project.

Lagos Railway Station, which is designed to accommodate up to 6,000 passengers, will be the largest in West Africa, he said.

Backed by mature digital technologies, solid construction experience, corporate social responsibility and future economic synergies, these open media events will be persuasive in improving the image of Chinese companies across the world, said Gao Lingyun, a research fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Hebei airport expansion completed on schedule

By ZHONG NAN

China Railway Construction Corp Ltd, one of the country’s two major rail construction contractors by sales revenue, has completed extension work at Zhangjiakou Ningyuan Airport in Hebei province, a key infrastructure project in support of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, executives said.

With passenger service launched on Aug 3, the Beijing-based group said the expansion project involved construction of 11 buildings including a new terminal, an emergency rescue center and a control tower, all on an area of 28,000 square meters.

Taxi lanes, an extended runway, a visual navigation aid system and advanced air traffic control engineering were also included in the project.

The project’s contractor — Tianjin-based China Railway 18th Bureau Group Co Ltd, a CRCC subsidiary — said the project covers some 205,000 sq m with 14,000 sq m reserved for the terminal building. With 1.3 billion yuan (\$186.67 million) in investment, the construction work began in September 2018.

“Now there are 14 aircraft gates and about 1 million passengers can be transported annually,” said Li Hui, CRCC’s head for the project.

Apart from meeting traffic demand during the 2022 Games, which will be hosted jointly by Beijing and Zhangjiakou, after the event the airport will help promote coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

1.3 billion yuan

total cost of the Zhangjiakou Ningyuan Airport expansion project in Hebei province

There are 76 competition venues and supporting infrastructure projects in Zhangjiakou for the 2022 Games. Total investment in the venues and projects is around 32.8 billion yuan, according to the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

So far, more than 50 projects have been completed by various State-owned enterprises, private and foreign enterprises, and others are scheduled to be finished and meet requirements within this year, said the games’ organizer.

Yan Guangtian, general manager of China Railway 18th Bureau Group Co Ltd, said that the growth of the regional aircraft market in China is still in its early stage and there is considerable growth potential for construction project providers.

For prosperous lower-tier cities and counties, local governments usually provide financial aid to support the development of air transportation, he said, adding it will enhance their image if they have airports with multiple flights. It would also help attract investment and tourists, thus boosting the regional economy.

Eager to sell more aircraft in this fast growing area, Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (COMAC) announced late last month that it successfully completed high-altitude test flights, takeoffs and landings for the ARJ21, the nation’s first domestically built regional passenger aircraft, at Daocheng Yading Airport in Sichuan province, currently the highest airport in the world at over 4,400 meters in altitude.

ARJ21 jets had transported 1 million passengers globally by July 21.

The successful tests indicate that the operational range of the ARJ21 includes all super-high plateau airports. Therefore the aircraft model has built a solid foundation for its launch of more such routes in the future, said the Shanghai-based centrally administrated SOE.

In addition to seizing more market share from the nation’s regional airport project market, CRCC also made breakthroughs in the first tunnel of the Moscow Southwest Line project by using its self-developed shield machines last month.

New CRRC engine to speed up cargo services

By ZHONG NAN

Attracted by surging demand for more powerful freight trains to bolster regional connectivity and stimulate trade, CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co Ltd rolled the world’s most powerful electric locomotive, Shen-24, off the production line late last month in Hunan province.

With 28,800 kilowatts of power, the locomotive is able to generate forward propulsion of 2,280 kilonewtons, the most powerful of its kind in the world.

CRRC Zhuzhou, a subsidiary of China Railway Rolling Stock Corp — the country’s largest rolling stock manufacturer by production volume — said this is a breakthrough in China’s heavy haul railway sector and a milestone in the country’s self-innovation in equipment manufacturing.

Jointly developed by CRRC Zhuzhou and China Energy Investment Corp, the locomotive is capable of moving up to 120 kilometers per hour and can pull 10,000-metric-tons of rolling stock up a 1.2 degree slope.

In addition to its impressive power, the locomotive is smarter, safer and more environmentally-friendly than previous versions.

Zhou Qinghe, chairman of CRRC Zhuzhou, said that as the locomotive is installed with smart-driving technology, it can start, adjust speed and stop by itself, which avoids human error in manual

operation and eases driver fatigue. The smart operation and maintenance platform is also capable of recognizing key system faults and monitoring operations.

To ensure operational safety, Suo Jianguo, CRRC Zhuzhou’s chief engineer, said the locomotive is installed with an innovative traction converter that provides a reliable and steady grip on the rails.

The braking system is of state of the art and underpins safety during operation. Accurate control of the locomotive is also ensured thanks to the differential positioning of China’s Beidou Navigation Satellite System.

Water-based paints are used, reducing emissions of volatile organic compounds by 40 percent, he said.

Because lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, Suo said the locomotive promotes China’s battle against all kinds of pollution.

Once the locomotive enters operations, CRRC Zhuzhou said it will be deployed on China Energy’s Shenmu-Shuozhou railway to improve energy transport efficiency.

Even though COVID-19 has been a destructive force in the global economy, especially for services sector operators, airlines and shipping firms, it has brought opportunities for rail freight enterprises, such as the China-Europe freight train, said Li Muyuan, secretary-general of the Beijing-based China Container Industry Association.



CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive employees inspect the Shen-24, the company’s newly rolled-out electric locomotive, in Zhuzhou, Hunan province, in July. XINHUA

The number of China-Europe freight trains operated in the first half surged to 5,122, up 36 percent year-on-year, breaking the monthly record several times over, according to China State Railway Group Co Ltd, the nation’s railroad operator.

With many countries, especially European economies, introducing green emissions standards for cargo transport, market demand for green and high-efficiency trains will keep growing during the post-pandemic era, said Luo Renjian, a researcher at the National Development and Reform Commission’s

Institute of Transportation Research.

“Whether it’s a domestic base or an overseas base, we are working nonstop to make sure orders can be delivered normally”, said Huang Hai, head of CRRC Zhuzhou’s ASEAN Manufacturing Center in Malaysia, adding that the company has prepared sufficient epidemic prevention materials to ensure employee safety.

Huang said the company’s new generation electric multiple-unit (EMU) trains, currently in the mass delivery phase, are manufactured in Batu Gajah, Perak, Malaysia.

CRRC Zhuzhou currently runs three subsidiaries in Malaysia. It has cultivated nearly 1,000 local railway workers in Malaysia and established long-term cooperative relations with more than 600 local suppliers, effectively promoting economic and social development.

The State-owned enterprise to date has exported its products, including locomotives, mass-transit vehicles, EMUs, diesel multiple-unit (DMU) trains and electric locomotives, to more than 22 markets including Singapore, Turkey, India, South Africa, Serbia, Germany, Austria, Brazil and Mexico.