

Annual film festival promotes growing cultural exchanges

By SONG MENGXING

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Lu Chuan, a Chinese director

The second BRICS Film Festival, held in late June in Chengdu, showcased excellent films from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, promoting cultural exchanges among representatives.

Part of a series of events during the ninth BRICS Summit being hosted in Xiamen in September, the festival represented openness, inclusiveness and a win-win situation, according to organizers.

Activities held at the festival included movie shows and awards, a cooperation forum and the national film day activity.

Ten films that competed at the event, including *Soulmate* from China and *Hatchet Hour* from South Africa, represented the latest achievements in film development in different countries, according to the festival's organizing committee.

The film festival, for the first time, held the national film day activity for each country to showcase their respective excellent films and distinctive movie cultures.

The innovative activity helped further viewers' understanding of BRICS members, an insider said.

Where Has Time Gone, the first film co-produced by BRICS members, was screened as the opening film of the festival. Five directors from China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa each shot a short section and then worked together to edit the final 110-minute film.

Jia Zhangke, a Chinese director and also the film's producer, said that the theme of time reflects common social development backgrounds of BRICS members.

"They are all experiencing rapid economic development and face huge social changes," Jia said. By exploring the theme, the film focused on the changes in individual emotions and group life in a rapidly-developing society.

The film was given a "Special Contribution" award by the festival's organizing committee at the closing ceremony and said to be an innovative fruit of cultural communication and film cooperation among BRICS members. It is scheduled to be officially released in China in September.

At the BRICS Film Cooperation Forum during the festival, a film co-production plan was launched for 2017 to 2021. According to the plan, artists from BRICS

members will co-produce a film annually in the coming five years.

Participants of the festival praised Chengdu, especially after they visited the city's scenic areas such as the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding and the Chengdu Wuhou Shrine.

Alexandre Rodrigues, who starred in classic Brazilian film *City of God*, said Chengdu has great diversity and that visiting the Wuhou Shrine was a truly memorable experience.

Neelakanta Reddy, an Indian film producer, said that he was struck by the charm of traditional culture and modern civilization in Chengdu. "Visiting the Wuhou Shrine was like walking through history, yet outside the walls is a bustling modern city," he said.

Reddy added that he hopes to have the opportunity to cooperate with Chinese counterparts to produce films that are rich in culture.

Aleksey Fedorchenko, Russian director of *Where Has Time Gone*, was excited to see pandas and said that the animal is loved by people worldwide, and that any film involving pandas would be well received.

Lu Chuan, a Chinese director, said he appreciates Chengdu's film culture. "The city boasts professionals and colleges, including Sichuan University and Sichuan Film and Television University, and will become another center of Chinese movies like Beijing," Lu said.

Bollywood filmmaker Aamir Khan said on a recent visit to Chengdu that the city is like a paradise, where he came into contact with giant pandas and experienced local cuisines, attractions and culture.

He said he will use the perception and inspiration he received from the trip in his next movie creation.



Renowned directors from BRICS members participate in the opening ceremony of the BRICS Film Festival in Chengdu, Sichuan province, in June. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Filmmakers discuss cooperation possibilities at the BRICS Film Cooperation Forum.



Participants of the film festival visit the Wuhou Shrine, which was built in 223 to memorialize Zhuge Liang, a noted strategist of the Shu Kingdom (221-263).



Chengdu, Sichuan province in Southwest China, hosts the 2017 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum in July. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

CHENGDU SETS SIGHTS ON CLOSER TIES WITH BRICS

Initiative launched at forum touts increased cooperation in tourism and trade

By SONG MENGXING
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Chengdu has seen increased friendly exchanges with Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa, as the capital of Sichuan province has become a key window for China's cooperation with BRICS members, according to local officials.

The city hosted the 2017 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum in July, which offered an important opportunity for local governments from BRICS to enhance understanding, deepen cooperation and share experiences.

The Chinese government values cooperation with local governments from BRICS highly, especially its partnership under the sister city framework, said Wang Jiarui, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

"The forum is an ideal platform for promoting the cooperation," Wang said.

The Chengdu Initiative released at the forum proposes BRICS focus on culture, tourism, economy and trade, and science and technology to expand foreign exchange channels and boost international communication and cooperation.

The initiative encourages colleges from BRICS to join in the Chengdu college innovation alliance for sister cities, which was founded in June 2016 and aims to work as a communication platform for institutes from Chengdu and its international sister cities.

Alliance members share higher education resources and benefit from strengthened communication and cooperation among scientific research organizations and personnel. They also experience the concept of running an institution bilaterally and multilaterally.

At the forum, representatives from local governments of BRICS expressed interest in cooperation with Chengdu. Luciano Nunes Santos Filho, presi-



Above: Representatives of Npp Itelma, a Russian manufacturer of electronic components, and Aoxing Group, a Chengdu-based auto parts maker, sign an agreement to establish a joint venture in the city to produce electrical control units in vehicles. Right: Chinese yoga practitioners perform at the India-China (Chengdu) International Yoga Festival in June.

dent of Brazil's National Union of Legislators and State Legislatures, said Chengdu and Brazil have a solid foundation for cooperation.

Brazil offers business opportunities in agriculture, infrastructure construction and the mining industry, and hopes to cooperate with Chengdu in those fields, Filho said.

Brazil is the third-largest shoemaker in the world, while Chengdu is an important center of the footwear industry in China. Brazilian shoe companies have already cooperated on projects with Chengdu, according to insiders.

Shipilov Aleksei, first deputy governor of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous



Okrug-Ugra, Russia, said he thinks highly of the opportunities brought about by the Chengdu-Europe Express Rail.

The Russian autonomous region is rich in mineral resources, which can be shipped to Chengdu via the express rail to boost the city's industrial growth, he said.

LA.Kundan, additional municipal commissioner of the Municipal Cor-

poration of Greater Mumbai, India, praised Chengdu's achievements in city engineering, infrastructure construction and sewage treatment, and said she hopes to cooperate with Chengdu in those areas.

Des van Rooyen, South African minister of cooperative governance and traditional affairs, said Chengdu is a world-known tourist destination, while South Africa boasts many

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tourism resources and the two sides have a broad spectrum for cooperation in tourism.

The two sides also have huge cooperation potential in the aspects of manufacturing, agriculture and cultural exchanges, Van Rooyen said, adding that he is especially interested in exchanges in traditional Chinese medicine.

"Sichuan has advantages in developing the pharmaceuticals sector, as it is rich in professionals, and TCM and modern medicine are combined well in the province," he added.

With South Africa's traditional medicine sector being revived in recent years, Van Rooyen said he hopes the two sides can enhance exchanges.

To further promote communication and cooperation between local Chinese governments and South Africa, a dialogue was held during the forum. South Africa is one African country that has close ties with Chengdu, local officials said.

The Chengdu and South African governments have conducted frequent mutual visits in recent years and launched cooperation in fields such as sister cities, trade, tourism, and conventions and exhibitions, they said.

Chengdu has established a friendly city cooperation relationship with Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa. Later, a South Africa visa application center was established in Chengdu, the first of its kind in western China.



Bosch Group's packaging plant at the Sino-German Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Cooperation Park in Chengdu. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Integrated into Belt and Road, city to draw more investment

By WANG JINHUI
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Known as "the city of brocade" in ancient times, Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, was once a major source of exquisite silk products along the Silk Road.

In present day, Chengdu has retained its historical role and gained a new mission as a key window for the opening-up of China's western region.

It is now a vital hub along the Belt and Road, a comprehensive development plan for China to boost cooperation and economic growth with countries and regions along the routes.

Ivan Scalfarotto, Italy's vice-minister of economic development, said Chengdu is a city of elegance, fashion, livability and vitality.

"Chengdu and Italy have many similarities, such as a diverse food culture and the desire for a good quality of life," Scalfarotto said, adding that he hopes Italy can play a proactive role in the Belt and Road Initiative.

"The future development of China lies in its western areas, and Chengdu is one of the main driving forces for the growth," he said. "Italy is willing to become a strategic partner of Chengdu in the fields of trade, investment and tourism."

Italy signed a joint agreement with Chengdu on Aug 3 to build a cultural park in the city's Tianfu New Area.

Chengdu is already home to the Sino-German Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Cooperation Park, Sino-French Ecological Park and China-South Korea Innovation and Entrepreneurship Park.

Covering about 670 hectares, the new park will see a series of joint projects between China and Italy in areas such as culture, environmental protection, medical care, agricultural and the aviation industry.

China and Italy will enhance cooperation in art, design and music, with events including Italian music festivals, operas and fashion shows.

Scalfarotto said the two sides could cooperate on common problems troubling mankind, such as



A lifelike embroidery pattern features traditional expertise originating from ancient Sichuan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

14.6 percent year-on-year rise in Italy's exports to Sichuan in the first half of this year

aging populations and urbanization.

Italy's exports to Sichuan grew 14.6 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2017.

To further tighten ties with Chengdu, Italy will also be a host country for the 2018 Western China International Fair, a platform for China to promote trade, investment and bilateral relations with foreign countries.

Other cooperation includes selecting Chengdu as the host city for the Fifth Sino-Italian Food Safety Dialogue in September.

Another example of Chengdu's internationalization is its economic cooperation with Germany.

One of the significant achievements is the Sino-German Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Cooperation Park in Chengdu's Pujiang county.

Covering about 30 square kilometers, the park is home to more than 50 enterprises in the precision machinery and related industries. It is one of the five demonstration zones for cooperation between China and Germany set by the Ministry

of Industry and Information Technology.

Germany's Bosch Group has built a new plant in the park, which can realize annual output value of 500 million yuan.

With a total investment of 180 million yuan, the plant produces advanced products such as packaging machinery, hand-held electronics and desktop power tools.

By 2020, the park is expected to attract more than 100 foreign enterprises with an output value of 10 billion yuan.

There are also other cooperative platforms in Chengdu between China and Germany, such as a 22-sq-km zone for industrial innovation in research and development, medical care, intelligent manufacturing and international trade; a 7-sq-km innovative upgrading demonstration zone; and a 58.8-sq-km park for the auto industry.

As Chengdu is advancing its integration into the Belt and Road Initiative, 278 Fortune 500 companies have made investments and 16 countries have established their consulates in the city.

Chengdu's airport has opened 102 international and regional air routes linking to destinations around the world.

The Chengdu-Europe Express Land has expanded to Kurt in Poland, Tilburg in the Netherlands and Nuremberg in Germany. It is set to make about 1,000 journeys this year.

Their respective rooms and outdoor spaces.

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Top experts from the zoo have paid

Young professionals help innovation-driven hub dream come true

By ZHUAN TI
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Zhou Yinan, a job seeker in Chengdu

For overseas returned Chinese who are looking to start a business, Chengdu ranks No 3 among the most popular destinations in China, according to a report released by the Center for China and Globalization and Zhaojin, one of China's leading job websites, in August.

Another recent report released by Liepin, a job portal, shows that the city took third place in terms of the number of professionals brought in during the first half of this year.

A series of incentives offered by the city government partially explains Chengdu's appeal to the professionals.

The Chengdu government released new policies in July to attract professionals and promote industrial development.

The move will help the city in Sichuan province to develop into an innovation-driven hub and accelerate the construction of a modern industrial system, which features improved international competitiveness and expanded regional influence, local officials said.

To draw graduates from other cities, local authorities have built 22 inns across the city, providing more than 730 beds in total, which are free of charge for the first seven days.

Zhou Yinan, a master's degree holder who graduated from College of Engineering at Peking University, was one of the first to use the inns in the Tianfu New Area in mid-July.

"I had planned to book a hotel in Chengdu, yet with little knowledge of the city, I had no clue about which one to choose," Zhou said.

After learning of the inns designed for young professionals via WeChat, he filed an application, which was approved via email the following day.

Zhou said he is happy with his well-furnished room.

In addition to accommodation, the inns provide job information, help job seekers with their career plans and facilitate communication between them, local officials said.

"Chengdu is appealing to job hunters," Zhou said.

"The city was my first choice for work after graduation because its high-tech industry is able to compete with those in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, yet living costs are much lower," he said. "The Tianfu New Area focuses on high-tech businesses, which is in line with my personal career development."

The incentives include "green cards", mostly designed for foreign nationals. The first batch was issued in August to academics and experts on a list of key national recruitment programs, who are authorized to access 24 service items, covering administrative procedures, daily life and business.

The number of items will be increased in the future, local officials said.

At the same time, the government has earmarked a 160-million-yuan special fund to provide free training for residents that have a startup plan.

In addition, the new policies emphasize commercialization and industrialization of research results, value the use and protection of intellectual property, and promote collaboration between higher-learning institutions and the business community.

Local authorities have built 22 inns across Chengdu to attract graduates from other cities. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

176 pandas at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding by the end of 2016

of its kind in the world, was founded in 1987 and rescued six wild pandas that year, which were frail due to hunger or disease.

Noted for its leading-edge technologies, the base had developed the world's largest domestic panda population of 176 by the end of 2016.

To increase connectivity between different habitats and promote integrated protection across regions, Sichuan and neighboring provinces are planning to set up a national panda-themed park as a pilot project.

As part of the planned national park, the Chengdu section will take up 1,616 sq km on Longmen Mountain, which is currently home to 73 wild pandas.

The project will help to protect the ecosystem and preserve the biodiversity in panda habitats, according to

Hou Rong, director of the research center at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding and a deputy of the National People's Congress.

The city government has made it a priority to develop ecological civilization in Chengdu's development plan.

The authorities released a series of policies in June to reduce smog and water pollution, control traffic and increase green coverage, in a bid to build an eco-friendly industrial structure.

A total of 1,500-kilometer greenbelts will be added to the city, including a 500-km tree-lined avenue, according to the latest development plan.

Work on the initial 95 km section started in the Chengdu Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone in August, which will include entertainment and smart service facilities.

The 22nd Session of the UN World Tourism Organization General Assembly is scheduled to be held in Chengdu from Sept 11 to 16, partially thanks to its improved environment.

It will be the second time that the UNWTO general assembly will take place in China, after the first was held in Beijing in 2003.



Chengdu is famed as a major giant panda habitat. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY