

BRI exhibitors impress at 6th CIIE

Yang Meiping

Giguruwa Gamage Sathyajith Prasada participated in the China International Import Expo for the sixth time. He was a sales representative for Ceylon Tea in the previous five years, but this year he launched his own brand, “Prasada.”

The Sri Lankan exhibitor, whose Chinese name is Li Delong, claimed the expo helped him realize his “Chinese dream.”

Prasada came to China to study martial arts, but he was impressed by China’s rapid development, which imprinted the “Chinese dream” in his heart.

He became a “cultural ambassador” in China to promote Sri Lankan culture and tourism. In 2017, he established a company in Shanghai to promote Sri Lankan tea brands. Fortunately, the first CIIE was held the following year, and his company has participated in every edition since then.

“Thanks to the CIIE, the annual sales growth rate of my company has averaged 60 percent, improving the lives of Sri Lankan farmers. This year, I’m here with my new brand, which includes not only tea but also sapphire and handiwork.”

Sri Lanka was one of the earliest countries to join the BRI, and Prasada said that, over the past decade, the collaboration between China and Sri Lanka has resulted in significant achievements, such as the construction of the Colombo Port City and the Hambantota International Port, both of which have greatly contributed to improving the livelihoods of the locals.

“Sri Lanka is a small country with a small market. We have been seeking a good venue to showcase our items. So when the BRI came up, we got access to

the enormous Chinese market, which has tremendously enhanced our output and solved our economic difficulty and employment problem,” said Parasada.

Parasada’s experience is not a solitary case at the CIIE. The expo has become a dependable venue for BRI member countries to discover opportunities in the Chinese market, exhibitors at the expo stated.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of BRI, and the participation of the Belt and Road exhibitors is one of the highlights. Among the 72 exhibitors in the Country Exhibition, an amazing 64 are from BRI countries. Additionally, over 1,500 firms from BRI nations presented their products in the Business Exhibition zone, covering a total exhibition area of nearly 80,000 square meters, which is 30 percent larger than in the previous edition.

TCP Group, a five-time CIIE participant, represented firms from another BRI nation, Thailand, bringing Chinese customers a diverse array of products from its “House of Great Brands.”

Among them were Red Bull Vitamin Flavor Drink and Red Bull Vitamin Energy Drink, which were previously displayed at CIIE events and are popular among Chinese consumers, demonstrating how the CIIE and its exhibitors have achieved a mutually beneficial outcome.

In addition, to better meet the diverse needs of Chinese consumers, the firm developed the world’s first bottled Red Bull Energy Drink this year.

“The CIIE’s spillover effect and the BRI’s driving effect complement one another. Through the excellent platform provided by the CIIE, new products and technologies are commercialized at a remarkably faster rate, turning exhibits into goods; worldwide enterprises



TCP Group booth at the CIIE — Ti Gong



Ceylon tea is offered to visitors at the national pavilion of Sri Lanka. — Dong Jun

are gathered for trade and form an international market in China, turning exhibitors into investors,” said Saravoot Yoovidhya, CEO of TCP Group.

According to Yoovidhya, the BRI has played a positive role in improving connectivity between nations, assisting participating countries and regions in better integrating into the global industrial, supply and value chains, and generating greater space for development during the last decade.

“At a new historical juncture, we are more than ever looking forward to seizing new opportunities in China’s market through regional cooperation and wider opening. And our belief in investing in the Chinese market has risen.”

The multicolored camel skin lamps presented by Pakistani exhibitor Habibur-Rehman have caught the attention of many visitors.

Habib first participated in CIIE in 2021, exhibiting salt lamps with “great success.” “Thanks to the exposure at the

CIIE, now every year, I have five to seven TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) of salt lamps exported to China,” he said.

“It has benefited not only me but also other salt lamp producers in my country, as I am unable to meet the massive demand from the Chinese market alone. The entire salt business in Pakistan has improved.”

He said that he brought the camel leather lamp this year because it is a beautiful cultural legacy of Pakistan.

“It’s pure handmade and takes several days to finish one,” he said. “It’s not a well-paying job, and there are only about 60 artisans who know how to make it now, with the majority of them being elderly.”

“Via the CIIE, I hope it will gain popularity in the Chinese market so that the huge demand will stimulate the government to introduce incentive policies for the development of the industry and attract more young people to work and pass on the heritage.”



Camel skin lamps from Pakistan at the CIIE. — Dong Jun