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# China-Sri Lanka cooperation helps Hambantota, the largest port in Sri Lanka, take off

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Cars drive on the main road that runs through the center of downtown Hambantota. Driving along the widest and most advanced six-lane highway in Sri Lanka, Hambantota Port, the largest port in Sri Lanka, which is provided by China with loans and built by Chinese companies, is in sight.

As the southernmost important town in Sri Lanka, Hambantota has the most advantageous geographical location in this island country, as well as the most mature infrastructure for further development: Matra Airport, Southern Expressway Extension Line, Hambantota Port . The China-Sri Lanka Industrial Park project being promoted by China and Sri Lanka will inject the strongest impetus into the take-off of this emerging region.

As Sri Lankan Prime Minister Wickremesinghe said in an interview with Xinhua News Agency, relying on the development of Hambantota Port, the Hambantota area will become the "Shenzhen" of Sri Lanka in ten or twenty years.

After completion, Hambantota Port has eight 100,000-ton wharves, only 10 nautical miles away from the main international shipping line on the Indian Ocean, and more than 50% of the world's container freight, one-third of bulk cargo shipping and two-thirds of Oil is shipped via the Indian Ocean.

Relying on the construction of the port, the China-Sri Lanka Industrial Park covers an area of 50 square kilometers. Taking the commercial and logistics industry as the entry point, it develops shipping services, seafood, agricultural and sideline products and other processing and manufacturing industries. It is reported that the development and construction of the industrial park will lead and drive the overall development of the southern region of Sri Lanka, which will help Sri Lanka realize the goal of building a high value-added product processing center, an international shipping center and an international business center, and will also help further promote and deepen bilateral investment between China and Sri Lanka Collaborate with capacity.

"The change in Hambantota started from this port," said Suranga Perris, assistant general manager of Hambantota Port Management Co., Ltd., standing on the viewing platform, pointing to the busy port tower crane not far away. told reporters.

There was an engineer's agility and rigor in Peris' eyes. He has a form recording the number of connecting ships and transshipment vehicles at Hambantota Port in the past few years, but he doesn't need to look at it at all during the interview. Those data have already been printed in his mind:" In the first year, we connected about 31 ships, which increased to 137 ships and about 64,000 vehicles in 2013, 80% of which were transshipment vehicles. In 2014, we connected 289 ships, about 19.8 Thousands of cars."



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who was working for a private company at the time, joined the construction team. A few years later, thanks to his working experience in China Harbor and the good cooperative relationship with the construction team, Perris entered the management company of the Sri Lanka Port Authority, which is dedicated to docking Han Port, and he has now joined the management of this company.

According to Peris, currently his management company connects 20 to 25 ships and about 20,000 to 25,000 cars per month. In addition, the port also accepts and transships other goods such as construction materials. And with the second phase of the Hambantota Port project basically completed, this figure will have a huge increase.

In the past ten years, Hambantota has also undergone earth-shaking changes: wide asphalt roads, advanced conference centers, sports centers, five-star hotels, Matra Airport and the extension of the southern expressway under construction... The former small The fishing village has now become the most developed hub town in Sri Lanka.

In Perris' impression, since the construction of Hambantota Port began, there have been many voices of doubt. Perris said: "They didn't believe that the construction of the port could bring any change to Hambantota at first... It is bound to face many difficulties to promote development and reform in a poor and backward country, but I personally and many people around me Life changes are the best answer."

And like Perris, there are many people whose destiny was changed by the construction of Hambantota Port, such as Sidney, an engineer, Edward, a car maintenance worker, and thousands of local construction workers during the peak period of the project construction, and even those nearby for many years. The farmers who provide vegetables in the project department...

As Hambantota regional official Karunaratna said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua News Agency, the development of Hambantota not only benefits from the friendship and mutual assistance between the two governments, but also cannot be separated from the foundation of friendship between the two peoples.

"It can be said that Hambantota already has the elements to take off. The only thing it lacks is industry construction and a large amount of foreign investment. In the future, Chinese companies that will settle in the industrial park will bring billions of dollars in investment," Karunarath said. Na said.

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