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A vital trade port in ancient China, Zhanjiang is to play a key role in building a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

Zhanjiang to strengthen foreign ties

Port city urged to grasp Maritime Silk Road revival opportunities.

By ZHENG CAIXIONG

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The port city of Zhanjiang has vowed to further expand its economic ties and cultural links with nations and regions along the ancient Maritime Silk Road to help regain its past glory.

Liu Xiaohua, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, said the city, a major foreign trade port in the mainland, should grasp opportunities to expand its cooperation with nations along the ancient route as the country pushes forward the establishment of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

Zhanjiang has been an important foreign trade port for China since ancient dynasties, Liu said.

The city, which faces the South China Sea, established ports, harbors and related facilities to expand its foreign trade and economic cooperation with the rest of the world, Liu said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the idea of a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road during his visit to Indonesia last October.

The old sea route from ports in China's eastern and southern coastal cities to overseas markets spurred trade for the country's silk, ceramics and tea in ancient times.

Xi called on nations and regions along the Maritime Silk Road to turn "their wishes into a driving force" and enhance exchanges and cooperation in maritime, business, infrastructure, defense, tourism and other areas to accelerate renewal of the ancient route.

Liu said that Zhanjiang should participate in the renewal in every way possible.

"Located in the western coastal area of Guangdong province, Zhanjiang, a major oceanic city in the mainland, has a long history in opening to the outside world," he

said. The city was one of the first 14 coastal mainland cities to open to the outside world, according to Liu.

He urged his city to deepen reforms and advance cooperation with foreign countries, particularly nations and regions along the ancient road, to develop its port, logistics and foreign trade industries.

Zhanjiang's ocean industry is also playing an increasingly important role in the city's economic devel-



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WANG ZHONGBING
MAYOR OF ZHANJIANG

opment. The city's ocean industrial output value reached 127.58 billion yuan (\$20.88 billion) last year and the figure is expected to hit more than 180 billion yuan in 2015.

Wang Zhongbing, mayor of Zhanjiang, said the city had great potential to expand cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Europe and Africa, as it has the country's shortest sea route to these areas.

"Zhanjiang, a coastal garden city in Leizhou peninsula, has opened many international sea routes and flights to link the city to Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa," Wang said.

Work to particularly strengthen economic ties with North America, Hong Kong and Taiwan regions was also underway and no effort would be spared, he added.

Ports in Zhanjiang handled more than 180 million tons of cargo last year.

To further strengthen economic ties with foreign countries and regions, the China Ocean Economy Expo 2014 will be held in Zhanjiang from December 3 to 7.

Seminars and lectures during the

expo will help boost Sino-foreign cooperation in the ocean industry.

Zhanjiang's foreign trade with nations and regions along the ancient Maritime Silk Road saw an average annual growth of 11.2 percent from 2.87 billion yuan in 2001 to more than 10.25 billion last year, according to statistics from Zhanjiang customs.

The growth rate of the city's foreign trade with these nations and regions was faster than with the United States, Europe, Japan and other developed countries and regions.

Zhanjiang's import and export volumes with the ancient Maritime Silk Road region, which represented more than 30 percent of the city's total import and export volume, has become a new growing point for the city's foreign trade industry.

The city's import and export volume to the region hit 8.51 billion yuan in the first nine months this year, up 6.4 percent and accounting for 31.7 percent of the city's total.

Last year, Zhanjiang exported 4.69 billion yuan worth of products to nations and regions along the ancient route, an annual increase of 19.6 percent.



The cargo throughput at Zhanjiang port is expected to hit 300 million tons in 2016.

Offshore investment for city overhaul

By ZHENG CAIXIONG

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Zhanjiang is expecting overseas investment to play an increasingly important role in the city's economic construction in the coming years.

According to the city's development blueprint, the port city in the western part of Guangdong, is hoping to attract foreign investment to build 11 economic and technological development zones, industrial parks and projects.

Zhanjiang Economic and Technological Development Zone, which covers an area of more than 354 square km, is one of the largest State-level economic and technological development zones in the Chinese mainland.

In addition to industrial projects shifted from the prosperous Pearl River Delta regions, the zone is expecting to attract offshore investment to develop its pillar industries of steel, petrochemical and paper-making.

The Fenyoung New and High-Tech Development Zone will give top priority to the biochemical, new and high-tech equipment, electronics, ocean biology, new medicines and new materials industries.

The 46-square-km zone includes Guangdong-ASEAN Industrial Park and China-ASEAN Eco-

nomical and Technological Development Zone, which mainly attract investment from ASEAN regions, as well as the United States, Europe and Japan.

Zhanjiang city government is also looking to expand Sino-foreign cooperation to further develop the city's infrastructure.

Zhanjiang plans to build 11,700 km of highways and 223 km of railways in the coming years, with total investment of more than 90 billion yuan (\$14.73 billion), some of which will be sought from foreign partners.

Zhanjiang is sparing no effort to attract foreign investment to reconstruct its old city and develop its information, finance, insurance, commerce, trade, holiday resort, luxury hotel, yacht, tourism and modern service industries.

Meanwhile the central government gave the green light for construction of a free trade logistics center in Zhanjiang at the end of last month.

It is the first free trade logistics center in the vast western Guangdong region which borders Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and faces Hainan island. Also last month, more coastlines of Zhanjiang port were allowed to open up by the State Council.

A total of 44,400 meters of coastlines with 29 berths at Baoman port area and Donghai Island port area opened up.

Ocean expo showcases area's marine resources

By XU JINGXI

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The China Ocean Economy Expo will be held in Zhanjiang from Dec 3 to 7, to showcase the abundant marine resources of the port city and its role in building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

Zhanjiang's development is closely related to the progress of its ocean economy and marine industry, said Liu Xiaohua, Party chief of Zhanjiang.

The output of the city's marine industry hit 127.58 billion yuan (\$20.88 billion) in 2013.

Zhanjiang has the biggest output of aquatic products in Guangdong and produces two thirds of the country's sea pearls.

"Given that Zhanjiang has such close ties with the ocean, it is necessary for Zhanjiang to hold the China Ocean Economy Expo in Zhanjiang. It is an engine to boost the development of the marine industry and a platform to promote the exchanges and cooperation of ocean economy and marine culture," said Liu.

"We hope to introduce Zhanjiang to the world and go global through the expo."

It is understood that in the Han Dynasty (BC202-AD220), the ancient Maritime Silk Road started in Xuwen, the southernmost seaside county of Zhanjiang. The city is now applying to become China's strategic fulcrum of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

Lying at the southernmost reaches of the Chinese mainland, Zhanjiang boasts the shortest sea routes to Southeast Asia than any other city in the mainland.

Therefore Zhanjiang takes a leading role in China's trade with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It has sped up the construction of Fenyoung Hi-tech Economic Zone and Haidong New District, two pilot areas for the industrial cooperation of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area.

The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and the Beibu Gulf Economic Rim are expected to bring big opportunities to Zhanjiang and the city will grasp these, said Wang Zhongbing, mayor of Zhanjiang.

He said that the city would enhance cooperation with cities on the rim including Nanning, Beihai, Fangchenggang, Qin Zhou, Yulin and Chongzuo of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, to push forward economic integrated development of Guangdong and Guangxi.

Zhanjiang also plans to strengthen ties with Chongqing and the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou and Hunan in the Pan-Pearl River Delta region.

"The China Ocean Economy Expo is the country's one and only comprehensive grand fair specialized in the ocean catalogue."

"Choosing Zhanjiang as the permanent venue shows Zhanjiang's importance in China's development into a maritime power," Wang said.

"Zhanjiang will make good use of the expo to expand its market in Southeast Asian countries and extensively cooperate in industry, agriculture, tourism, science and technology, education and culture," he added.

More than 1,000 enterprises from home and abroad will have exhibition booths at the expo in December.

Transport network to transform new district

By XU JINGXI

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Construction of transport infrastructure is going full steam ahead to transform Haidong New District, on the east coast of Zhanjiang Bay, from farmland into a center for emerging industries.

Lack of access and traffic issues mean that the east coast has lagged behind the west coast in terms of development for the past 100 years.

The west coast is illuminated by neon lights at night and its busy streets bustle with people, but across the bay it is eerily quiet with faint lamps scattered among fish rafts.

Zhanjiang Bay Bridge, which crosses the sea and links the two areas, was opened in 2006 and sparked further construction of transport infrastructure to increase the interflow of people, goods and information.

"A modern rapid transport system with expressways covering every town in the city is expected to be built by 2016. We will particularly incorporate the network of roads in Haidong New District into the system, to speed up building the traffic support for the district," said Liu Xiaohua, Party chief of Zhanjiang.

The construction of Tiaoshun Bridge, the second sea-crossing bridge that links Haidong New District to the downtown area west of Zhanjiang Bay, is due to start by the end of this year. The bridge was designed to be the main east-west pass for Zhanjiang and the city's freight transport highway.

The 14th provincial sports games of Guangdong will be held in Haidong New District next year.

To support the games, another three sea-crossing bridges will be opened to traffic in August 2015 and seven roads around Zhanjiang Olympic Sports Center in the district will also be put into use in February next year.

Roads linking Haidong New District to the Guangzhou-Zhanjiang High-speed Rail are under construction and the Guangzhou-Zhanjiang Expressway is also due to be built to improve access to the prosperous Pearl River Delta economic zone.

The new transport network plans have made Haidong New District a popular destination for investors from home and abroad.

It is expected to bring in investments of 76.19 billion yuan (\$12.45 billion) for 97 projects.

"Developing the new district cannot be simply regarded as developing real estate and building high-rises. We must carefully select the industries that are suitable for the district and can benefit its long-term development," said Liang Pei, head of the administrative committee of Haidong New District.

"We aim to introduce large State-owned enterprises and draw in a great amount of private capital," said Liang, who is Party chief of Potou district.

The 20 projects that will kick off construction in the second half of this year include an e-commerce mall, a trade center for home appliance and a park for the city's creative industries such as animation.

The total investment on these projects is about 10 billion yuan.

Haidong New District also has its eye on emerging industries and plans to build bases for marine engineering equipment manufacturing, marine biological medicine research and advanced manufacturing of electronics and home appliances.