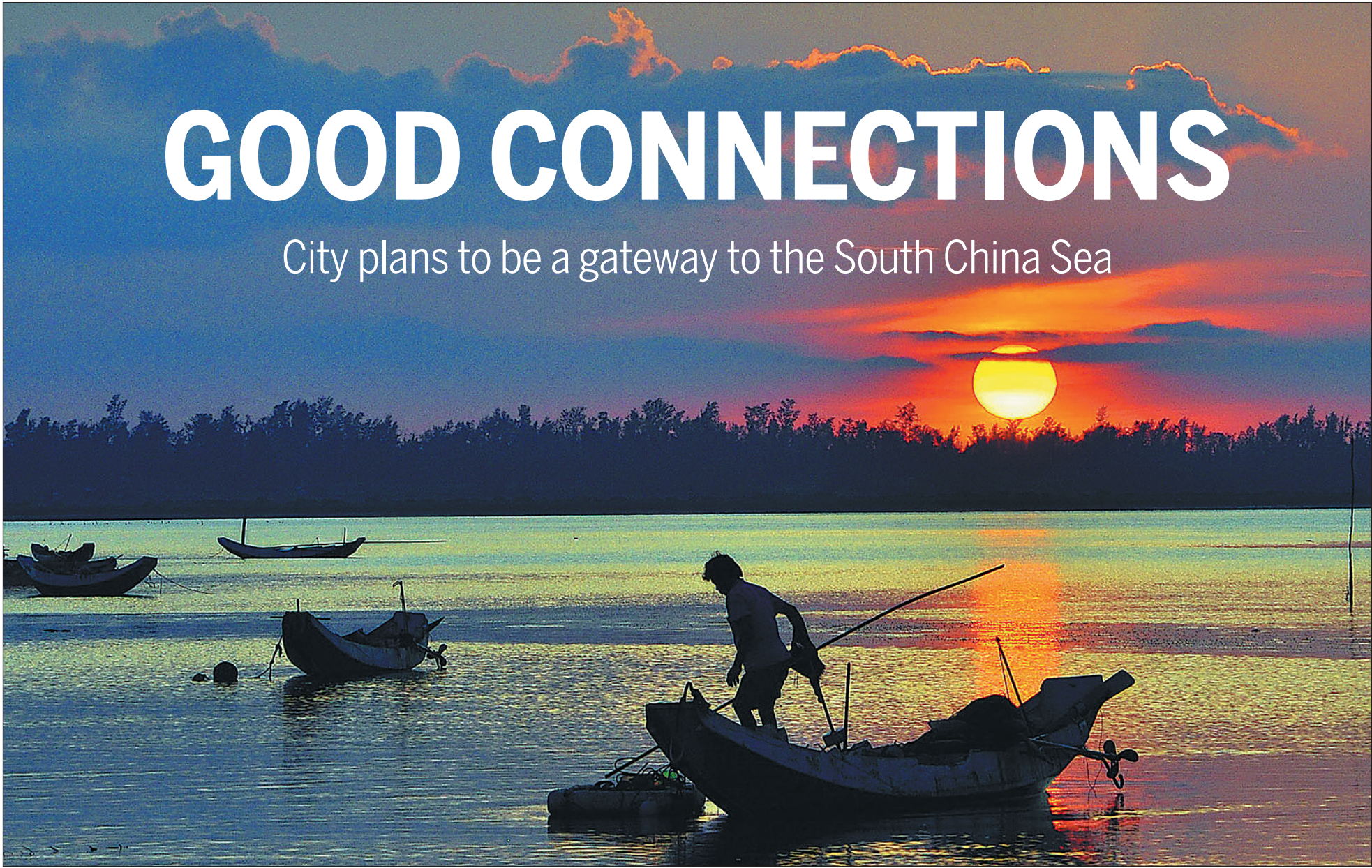


Zhanjiang special

中国日报 CHINA DAILY

GOOD CONNECTIONS

City plans to be a gateway to the South China Sea



The fishing and aquaculture industries have a long history in Zhanjiang and are the sectors that have earned the city national and international fame. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHENG JINRAN

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Zhanjiang, located in the southern tip of the Chinese mainland, was a hub of the ancient Maritime Silk Road. Zhanjiang Mayor Wang Zhongbing recently talked to China Daily about the city's strategic position in the Belt and Road Initiative and its plans for development and international cooperation in the future.

What role will Zhanjiang play in the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road? And what's its development plan for the future?

According to the national and provincial plans for the Belt and Road Initiative, Zhanjiang is one of the four strategic pivotal cities in Guangdong province for the initiative, which refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road strategies.

The city will build itself into an important hub for the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, a demonstration zone for industrial cooperation between the province and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and also a gateway city to the South China Sea.

The city plans to reach these targets in 15 years. In the first five

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Zhanjiang has carried out sound cooperation with all 10 ASEAN members in recent years.”

Wang Zhongbing, mayor of Zhanjiang



5.6 billion yuan

will be invested to build 20 berths in Zhanjiang's county-level harbors

years, till 2020, the city will lay a solid foundation by improving its infrastructure and making breakthroughs in key economic sectors.

The following five years (2021-25) will see further improvement in the mechanism for exchanges and cooperation with other regions in China and countries along the new Maritime Silk Road.

Then the five years till 2030 will be the final phase to achieve these

goals and establish a well-functioning cooperation mechanism.

We have confidence that Zhanjiang will be able to realize these goals since the city has unmatched advantages as it has smooth connections and good economic cooperation with China's vast western regions with a convenient transport network, and with its neighbors Southeast Asia.

Besides, the city has a promising future in foreign trade and frequent international cultural and science and technology exchanges.

How about the city's plans to improve its infrastructure facilities?

Zhanjiang will enlarge the handling capacity of its ports, especially for containers, through improving the existing berths and terminals and building new ones based on the city's advantages of deep water and a long shoreline.

For example, it will invest 5.6 billion yuan (\$854 million) to build 20 berths in Zhanjiang's county-level harbors.

Among the ports in the plan, Zhanjiang Port will receive the most investment to boost its growth and it will play the leading role in fueling the city's development in the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

It is the domestic port with the shortest distance to the sea routes connecting China to the countries

in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and Oceania.

Moreover, Zhanjiang will expand the airport, making it able to accommodate more flights. Its target is to serve 51 million passengers and handle 21,600 tons of cargo annually.

Could you introduce the cooperation between the city and the ASEAN countries?

Zhanjiang has carried out sound cooperation with all 10 ASEAN members, focusing on trade and business, and cultural exchanges in recent years.

Trade with ASEAN members has increased from \$431 million in 2011 to \$795 million last year, and ASEAN has grown into the city's largest export market since 2013.

Besides, the city already established a trade representative office in Cambodia in 2014, the first step to set up branches to boost trade with ASEAN.

How is the cooperation in agriculture between Zhanjiang and ASEAN?

The city will host the 2016 Agricultural Products Trade Fair for Zhanjiang and ASEAN from June 2 to 5, which aims to promote cooperation among related industries and companies of China and ASEAN members, and it's also a measure to serve the development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

ASEAN takes center stage for trade

By ZHENG JINRAN

As one of the pivotal cities for China's Belt and Road Initiative, Zhanjiang has enhanced its opening-up endeavors and deepened cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road routes, especially those in Southeast Asia.

The city in the southwest of Guangdong province has intensified its efforts to facilitate exchanges with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members through exhibitions and trade fairs, according to the city's commercial bureau.

Since 2013, the ASEAN members have become the largest export market for Zhanjiang, with Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore now the city's top three export destinations. And the city's trade with ASEAN members has soared rapidly from \$431 million in 2011 to \$795 million in 2015, an average annual growth rate of 18.6 percent, according to the bureau.

\$795 million

the trade with ASEAN members in 2015

In addition, the city has taken more measures to attract investment from and push forward trade with the 10-member bloc in the fields of modern agriculture, aquaculture, port logistics and tourism.

Businesses from ASEAN have established about 20 companies in Zhanjiang in the past five years, with their operations mainly in the aquatic products industry, such as food processing and feed production.

At the same time, companies from Zhanjiang invested \$634 million in 11 projects in ASEAN countries.

Considering the booming business between the two sides, the city has geared up its moves in setting up representative offices in ASEAN countries for market expansion and better communications, the bureau said. It is also making efforts to improve its transportation links with the region.

To date, Zhanjiang Port has developed nine freight routes with major trade partners such as Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Malaysia.

The Zhanjiang Airport also launched its first international flight to Bangkok last year.

The better sea and air connections have facilitated the flow of cargos and people-to-people communication and helped Zhanjiang become a regional logistics hub, the bureau said.

The country's booming e-commerce business is also helping Zhanjiang become a logistics hub.

According to the bureau, an online platform for parcel deliveries has been put into operation, leading to substantial improvements in efficiency.

Besides, more platforms aiming to facilitate trade and investment are about to be completed.

For example, a special industrial zone for companies from ASEAN countries is under construction with many companies from Thailand and Indonesia agreeing to come.

Moreover, Zhanjiang will build a demonstration center for exhibiting agricultural products from both the city and Southeast Asia.

Aquatic products industry looks overseas for growth

By ZHENG JINRAN

Zhanjiang, a port city in South China's Guangdong province, is working to build an international cooperation platform for the aquatic industry, encouraging local businesses to use foreign investment and other resources to expand their domestic and foreign markets.

One such effort is the 2016 China International Aquatic Products Exhibition, which has been an annual event in the city since 2014.

The event will kick off in Zhanjiang on June 18 and is scheduled to last for three days.

"We have built the exhibition into the second-largest trade show in China for aquatic products," said Zhuang Xiaodong,

Zhanjiang's deputy mayor. He added that the event will help local businesses explore larger markets for their products in China and overseas.

Zhuang said the city has a complete aquatic products industry chain, from aquatic feed production, breeding, cultivation and seafood processing to the final logistics, with all the sectors coordinating well to improve the local industry's competitiveness in the market.

Recognizing the solid foundation of Zhanjiang's aquatic industry, in 2011 the Ministry of Commerce designated the city as a demonstration base for upgrading the country's aquatic industry and the aquatic products trade.

Since then, the aquatic industry has become a pil-

lar of the local economy and exports of aquatic products have grown quickly, now accounting for around 30 percent of the city's annual exports.

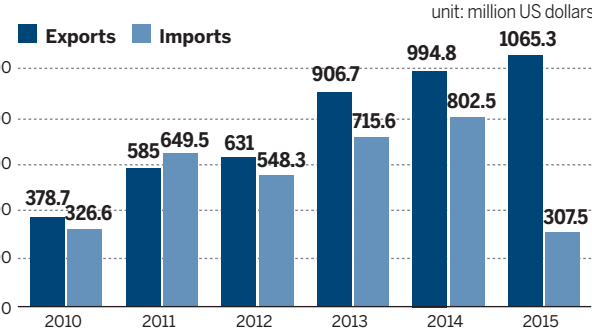
However, the city's aquatic products trade reached its peak in 2013 and 2014 with total exports and imports surpassing \$800 million in both years.

Foreign trade decreased a little last year due to weakening demand in foreign countries and rising domestic labor costs.

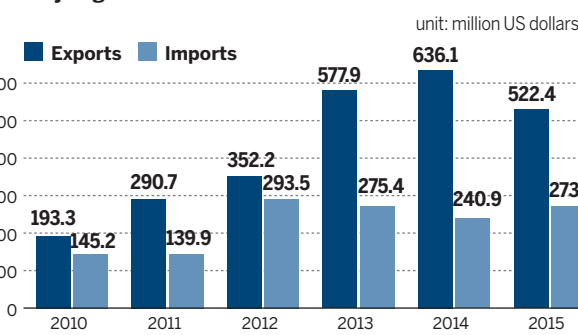
And in the first three months of 2016, the city's aquatic products trade totaled 713 million yuan (\$109 million).

On the other hand, local companies have already taken efforts to adjust to the downturn, with some of them putting their focus on investing directly in for-

Zhanjiang's trade with countries along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road from 2010-15



Zhanjiang's trade with ASEAN members from 2010-15



foreign countries, according to Zhuang.

Ten companies from Zhanjiang have established operations in members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with their total investment reaching \$634 million in the past five years.

The investments have mainly gone to the aquatic products industries in countries including Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand.

