

Zhanjiang on the growth accelerator

Dynamic opening-up city adds weight to the construction of its transport network, marine economy, **Chen Hong** reports.

Zhanjiang, one of the most important marine cities in southern Guangdong province, is strengthening its reform and opening-up effort to accelerate its already rapidly growing economy and to enhance its development potential, according to senior local officials.

"Zhanjiang is one of China's first 14 coastal opening-up cities and is now an important area that links the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the urban agglomeration of the Beibu Gulf," said Zheng Renhao, Party secretary of Zhanjiang.

The importance of the reform and opening-up would add weight to the construction of its transportation network, the upgrade of port facilities and the repositioning of the marine economy, he said.

The city plans to get support from the provincial and central governments to set up a free trade port in Zhanjiang and put Zhanjiang Port and Donghai Island on the map as a part of the China (Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone, as it expands.

"The move aims to strengthen our commerce with Hong Kong and Macao, so that our opening-up performance can be upgraded and optimized and we can participate more actively in the construction of the greater bay area," Zheng said.

While reaching out for increased integration with the greater bay area, the city — located at the southernmost part of Guangdong province that is separated from Hainan by a strait — can seek commercial opportunities with the island province on the other side.

"Both the greater bay area and Hainan enjoy national strategic policy arrangement," Zheng said.

"Zhanjiang is located at a key position in between that can't be replaced."

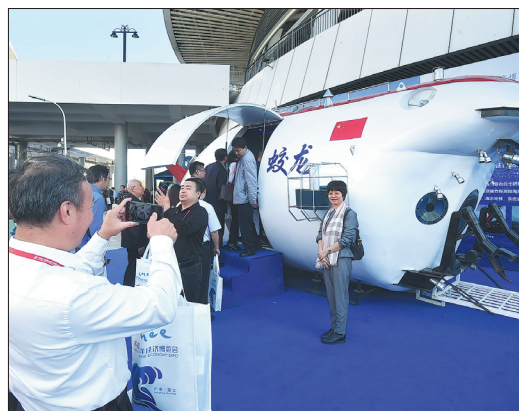
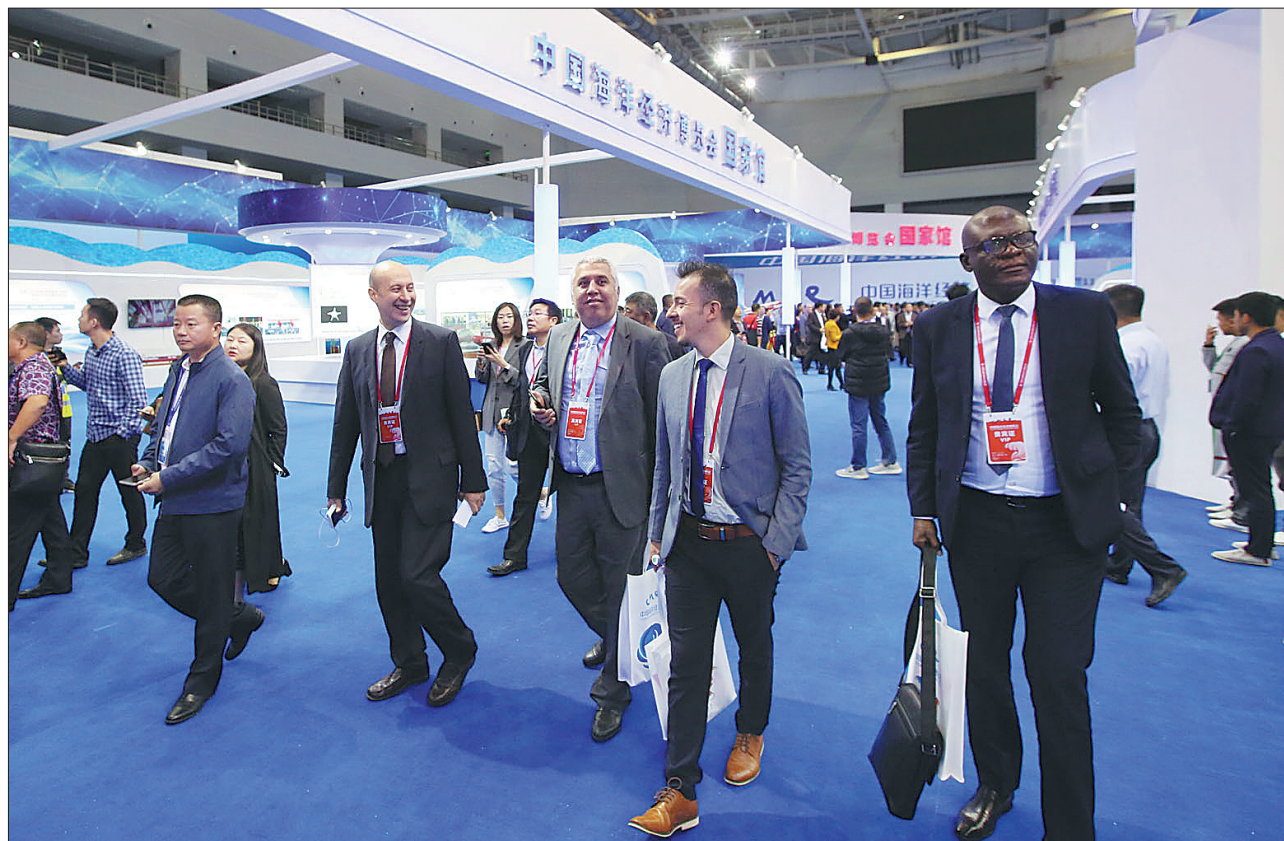
The city will stay on course to develop its port processing trade and entrepot trade, that are complimentary with Hainan's economy, and make full use of the spillover effect of the preferential policies that the nation has implemented for Hainan, Zheng noted.

The city also plans to get the approval from the central government to be a State-level pilot to explore a quality development mode for the marine economy, Zheng revealed.

Zhanjiang is expected to be developed as a strategic stop to promote commerce between countries and regions along the Maritime Silk Road, to fit into China's modern marine economic system — and to become a powerful engine that can link and balance the development of land and ocean, he explained.

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After the first high-speed rail came into service in July, it took about three hours

to travel from the city to Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong.

However, the municipal government of Zhanjiang plans to further reduce the travel time to two hours to any of the cities in the greater bay area, after four high-speed

rail links are gradually put in place in the near future.

The local government also plans to upgrade its deepwater port channel, currently capable of handling vessels with a capacity up to 300,000 to 400,000 tons, Zheng said. After the improvement, the

port will be a real international seaway that can handle direct sea traffic from more than 150 countries and regions.

Air transportation has not been neglected, either. The city's existing airport handled just over 2 million passengers

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last year. A new international airport, located more than 20 km away, will go into service by 2020, according to a government blueprint.

Fan Xinlin, vice-president of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade's Guangdong committee, said the city will have a better future given its favorable location, desirable port conditions and important position as a sub-center of the province.

"The council will continue to act as a bridge and a platform to help Zhanjiang go global and make the city better known by the world. It is the best time to invest in Zhanjiang," Fan said.

National marine show lands a record at latest event

By **CHEN HONG**

The China Marine Economy Expo, the nation's only State-level comprehensive marine show, wrapped up with preliminary agreements on deals worth more than 110 billion yuan (\$15.8 billion) signed in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province on Sunday, a record since its launch in 2012.

Co-hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Guangdong provincial government, the four-day expo attracted more than 2,400 exhibitors from 72 countries and regions. There were 150 heavyweights companies on show including Fortune 500 corporations, State-owned enterprises, industrial leaders and listed groups, according to the organizers.

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About 50,000 professional visitors and more than 500,000 members of the public flocked to the show — which covered an area of 380,000 square meters this year, up 23 percent from the year before — to experience the latest in marine technology, materials and products, including unmanned craft, deep diving equipment, underwater robots and deep sea energy.

The exterior exhibition area was a popular highlight for the public, who were able to climb aboard actual vessels, including fire fighting boats, surveillance ships, coast guard vessels, rescue ships and oil recovery vessels to find out how they work.

The South China Sea Fleet, one of the navy's three military fleets, which set up its homebase in Zhanjiang, opened four of its warships to the public during the expo, attracting strong interest from many visitors from surrounding cities, according to the organizers.

The CMEE is a multifunctional platform — that integrates transactions, technological promotions, academic exchanges, announcements on achievements, cooperation talks and investment negotiations — which has been critically important to the development of the marine economy development," said Ou Xianwei, vice-mayor of Zhanjiang.

The city, which boasts the longest coastline among mainland cities, has listed the marine economy as one of its pillar industries.

In 2017, the general industrial output of the city's marine economy surged 15.2 percent year-on-year to 144.6 billion yuan, and the added-value of the industry contributed nearly 27 percent to the city's gross domestic product, which ranked number one in Guangdong province.

During the expo, the government of Zhanjiang issued a big data platform for marine economic development — the first of its kind in the nation — to measure the rate of marine technological development and to provide data on the operation of marine assets.

Coastal magnet set to attract more emerging investments

By **CHEN HONG**

Overseas and domestic companies are increasingly seeing the coastal city of Zhanjiang as a prime emerging investment destination — given its abundant marine resources and improving transportation infrastructure, according to leading businessmen.

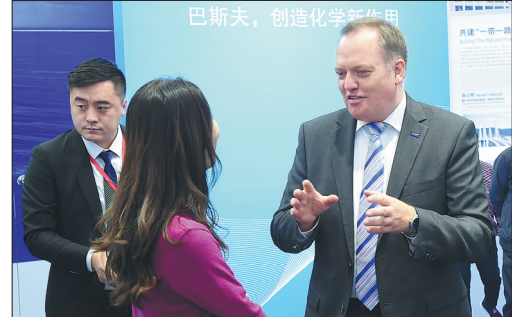
On Donghai Island in southeastern Zhanjiang, about 40 kilometers from downtown, German chemical leader BASF will invest a total of \$10 billion to build a chemicals production site, the single biggest investment project it has ever made internationally.

According to an agreement signed in July this year, it will ultimately be the third-largest BASF site worldwide, after its Ludwigshafen facility in Germany and its production site in the Belgian city of Antwerp, when it is completed around the year 2030.

As a result, the chemicals giant exhibited for the first time at the China Marine Economy Expo, or CMEE, which ran Nov 22-25 in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, to showcase solutions for the sustainability of the city's marine economy as well as a range of innovations designed to enhance the quality of life of its people.

China has a far-reaching impact on the future development of the world economy, and Guangdong province has always been the pioneer of China's innovative development," said Zheng Daqing, BASF's senior vice-president for China's market and business development, during the show.

"Here in Zhanjiang, we see the start of the Maritime Silk Road and it is China's window to the world," Zheng noted, adding that their presence in the market could help in leveraging the ocean resources, and in protecting people, cities and



A representative from BASF introduces products to a visitor during the expo. LIU JICHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

coastal infrastructure from risks. The company displayed a series of innovative products at the expo, including a utility pole that is made of a composite materials that can improve wind resistance by 2.5 fold while the weight is nearly one fourth that of traditional poles.

"The poles can withstand

severe weather conditions such as typhoons, snow and other natural disasters," Zheng said.

Also during the expo, China Merchants Group, a State-owned conglomerate headquartered in Hong Kong, announced it had kicked off construction of its international cruise terminal complex on Friday, which on

completion will include a cruise terminal, shopping malls and apartments.

It's the first project since the group signed a comprehensive strategic cooperative agreement with Zhanjiang municipal government last July. The cruise terminal alone will cost about 784 million yuan (\$112.8 million) — with a capacity for 500,000 passengers a year — and is expected to be put into trial operations in 2021, China News Service reported.

Wang Hong, deputy general manager of the group, said the project will nurture the headquarters economy on trade in Zhanjiang and enhance interconnections between Zhanjiang with surrounding cities, Belt and Road countries and regions and even the rest of the world.

CP Food, a subsidiary of CP Group, a transnational based in Bangkok which has the agro-industry and food sector as one of its core businesses, also plans

to increase its investments in the city, said Sun Xiaowei, head of its Zhanjiang operations.

He said his company would invest a total 1 billion yuan to build a slaughterhouse and chicken processing plant.

The first phase, which was put into operation last year, is able to slaughter 30 million broilers and process 70,000 tons of chicken products a year, according to Sun.

The plan to build two breeding chicken farms and expand the hatchery in the near future so that the production capacity can reach new levels," he said.

He noted that with the improving transportation facilities — widely extended highways, rails and the new international airport under construction, the market of Zhanjiang increasingly has the potential to reach the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, southern China and even southwestern China.