



Located at the southeastern end of Shandong Peninsula, Rizhao is a key city in the modern land and maritime Silk Roads. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rizhao strengthens Central Asian ties

City hosts forum in line with Belt and Road Initiative, Wang Qian reports.

Rizhao, a port city in East China's Shandong province, is welcoming more than 300 government and business leaders from China and five Central Asian nations for a cooperation forum in the city on Tuesday.

With the theme of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and boosting connectivity, the forum is a platform for pragmatic, social and trade cooperation between China and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization good-neighborly and friendly cooperation committee and Rizhao municipal government are hosting this year's event.

Yang Jun, Party chief of Rizhao, said the forum would help forge closer economic and trade ties between Shandong province, especially the city of Rizhao, and Central

Asian countries.

"As a key city of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Rizhao will actively embrace the 'Belt and Road' initiative and seize the opportunity to further expand its opening-up and broaden international cooperation channels," said Yang.

Strategic location

Located at the southeastern end of Shandong Peninsula, Rizhao is considered the starting point of the New Eurasian Continental Bridge, which starts in Rizhao and Lianyungang in the East and passes through seven countries to end in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. The route is an important part of the overland modern-day Silk Road.

The city of about 2.9 million people is in the middle of China's eastern coast and is less than 200 kilometers from Qingdao and Lianyungang, which are both major business hubs. Rizhao also acts as a transition point between the new land and maritime Silk Roads and is a significant seaport that connects China to Central Asian regions.

"Such unique geographical advantages have greatly fueled the development of the city and given it huge potential to promote trade with countries along the new land and maritime Silk Roads," said Yang.

Local government statistics show that the total foreign trade volume of Rizhao is \$34.77 billion in 2014, and the foreign trade between the city and countries along the modern-day Silk Road reached \$7.66 billion last year, a 13.7 percent annual increase that accounted for 22 percent of the city's total.

Twenty-nine enterprises and institutions from these countries invested in Rizhao, with an actual investment of \$1.05 billion, accounting for 27.8 percent of the city's total.

With shipping routes connecting to more than 100 countries and regions, Rizhao port has become an important international logis-



Rizhao port's overall throughput capacity ranked eighth among China's seaports and 11th worldwide in 2014.

tics hub for container shipping, bulk cargo, iron ore and crude oil.

Its overall throughput capacity hit 353 million metric tons last year, ranking it eighth among China's seaports and 11th worldwide. The port's throughput capacity for iron ore, grain, timber and cement outranked all other ports in the country.

A 120,000-square-metre port logistics park between China and Central Asian countries is due to be built in Rizhao. Rizhao Port Group and enterprises from five central Asian countries invested in the project, with registered capital of 60 million yuan (\$9.67 million).

Rizhao plans to further improve its trade channels and facilities to become an all-round bridgehead for land, sea and air transport and trade. It has built a direct route for rail freight from Rizhao to Central Asia and Europe. An airport in the city is due to come into service by the end of the year.



With 168.5 kilometers of coastline, Rizhao is dubbed "China's Excellent Tourism City".

"With these efforts, we hope to make the city not only a key transportation hub, but also a trade, logistics, financial and leisure-tourism center along the new land and mari-

time Silk Roads," said Yang.

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100

countries and regions connected to Rizhao through its port's shipping routes

Sunrise city boasts competitive advantages

By ZHAO RUIXUE
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Rizhao is one of the first places in the country to see the golden hues of sunrise because of its geographical location in East China.

Located on the Yellow Sea, the city in East China's Shandong province is one of the eastern starting points of the new Eurasian Continental Bridge, making it a major station for Central Asian countries reaching out to sea, and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road extending to the West.

The 5,348-square-kilometer city stretches along the 168.5-km coastline and is home to 2.93 million people. With years of development, Rizhao has strengthened in several areas.

Massive cargo handling capacity

Rizhao Port has 56 berths for coal, ore, containers, crude oil and grains. With links to more than 100 countries and regions, the port's total throughput last year hit 353 million tons, ranking it 11th among the world's ports and the eighth among China's ports.

The port's throughput of iron ore, nickel ore, wood chips and soybean tops the list of Chinese ports.

According to the development plan for Rizhao Port approved by the Ministry of Transport and Shandong provincial government in 2009, the number of berths at Rizhao Port will reach 280, bringing the total throughput to 600

million tons.

Competitive industries

Industries at Rizhao Port have maintained brisk development for years. The city produces 12 million tons of steel every year, as well as 750,000 automobiles, 780,000 engines and 1 million automatic gearboxes. The city can produce 8.4 million tons of soybean oil each year, ranking it second in China in terms of soybean processing.

Rizhao has the world's largest production base of refined sugar. Annual sugar production has reached 2.4 million tons.

Coastal resort

Annual sunshine duration in Rizhao reaches 2,540 hours. The city is blessed with clean seas, golden beaches and large stretches of green space.

The city is home to a 4,000-year-old ginkgo tree and several renowned mountains, creating an ideal resort destination.

City of water sports

The city has a world-class 9.2-sq-km Olympic park for water sports. More than 40 world-class and national-class water sports competitions, including sailing competitions, the National Water Sports Games and the Laser Worlds 2013 have been held in the city.

Environmentally-friendly

More than 40 percent of the city is covered by forest.

Scientific research park

Eight universities and colleges, including Qufu Normal University and Shandong Sport University, have set up branches in Rizhao. Renowned Peking University and Tsinghua University also have research and production bases in the city. Rizhao was the first city named as a national pilot zone for attracting foreign professionals to develop its maritime economy.

Rich historical culture

Rizhao is one of the birthplaces of Longshan culture, which dates back to 3,000 BC. The city boasts 5,000 years experience in black pottery.

Rizhao was also home to many renowned Chinese, including Jiang Shang of the Western Zhou Dynasty (c.11th century-771 BC) and Ding Zhaozhong, Nobel laureate in physics.

Green tea city

Rizhao is a major production base for peanuts, seafood and fruit. The city is one of China's four centers of aquatic product cultivation.

The city has 14,660 hectares of tea plantations, accounting for 60 percent of the total tea planting area in Shandong province. The city produces more than 10,000 tons of tea every year, accounting for 75 percent of the total tea production in the province.

The city's green tea, blueberry and macra antiquata spengler, a kind of clam, are certified by the national trademark of geographical origin.

RIZHAO'S ACCOLADES

- The eastern point of the new Eurasian Continental Bridge
- UN Habitat Scroll of Honor
- Top 100 City of Excellent Investment Environment
- China's Excellent Tourism City
- Prize of Habitat Environment in China
- Innovative Prize of City's Scientific Development
- China's Top 10 Green City
- China's Top 10 Most Beautiful Coastal City
- National Pilot Zone of Sustainable Development
- National Health City
- National Model City of Environmental Protection
- National Garden City
- The City of Financial Ecology
- City of Water Sports
- National Demonstration Zone of Marine Ecology



The 470-Class Sailing World Championships in Rizhao in 2006. The city hosts a series of world-class water sports competitions every year.



Rizhao is one of China's major green tea production bases, producing more than 10,000 tons of tea every year.