



PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The opening ceremony of the Zhongshan Trade and Investment Fair that opened on Monday drew visitors from around the globe.

Zhongshan trade fair increases business at home and abroad

By QIU QUANLIN

Thanks to its strong economic ties overseas, Zhongshan, in Guangdong province, signed an impressive number of trade agreements at the annual Zhongshan Trade and Investment Fair.

The city signed around 250 investment and trade agreements, at the event on Monday. These are worth more than \$6.1 billion, city government sources have said. As much as \$1.94 billion of that is in exports.

The city also signed agreements on 119 foreign-backed projects, worth about \$1.23 billion, the city government said.

The annual fair, started in Hong Kong in 1990, has become a key government-backed affair to help local industries become a part of the global economy, explained Feng Yurong, vice-mayor of Zhongshan.

"The event has proven effective in helping local companies



We placed great hope in this event as a means to strengthen foreign economic and trade cooperation."

FENG YURONG
VICE-MAYOR OF ZHONGSHAN

improve industry," Feng commented.

This year, the fair's focus was on new industries of strategic importance, improving local industries, and strengthening cooperation with European companies.

To help attract investment from Europe's new, high-tech, environmentally friendly industries, Zhongshan arranged a series of match making events for local companies and their

European counterparts.

After the fair, the local government invited European company representatives to visit townships and development zones developing emerging industries for LEDs, healthcare, medical equipment, and online games.

"In this way, European companies will get a deeper understanding of local industries, so they can find more business opportunities here," Feng said.

The Zhongshan government organized more than 30 local companies in these fields to get them to attend the fair.

Also invited were industry transfer zones in the cities of Zhaoqing, Heyuan and Yangjiang. This idea, from the Zhongshan government, was intended to give local companies business opportunities, and the possibility of transferring industries to neighboring cities.

Zhongshan is also placing

importance on modern service industries and is introducing as many as 92 projects in that area.

In relation to this, institutes from the cities of Beijing, Nanjing, Chengdu, Wuhan and Guangzhou attended the event to promote several hundred of high-tech projects, while looking for cooperation with local companies, according to the Zhongshan government.

"We placed great hope in this event as a means to strengthen foreign economic and trade cooperation," Feng explained.

City government sources said about 300 business people from Europe, the United States, Columbia, the United Arab Emirates and Japan attended the fair.

"Companies from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, the US and Europe have shown great interests in investing in Zhongshan, not just in signing trade agreements," Feng concluded.

zhongshanspecial

SOEs play important role in helping build a modern industrial system

By QIU YINUO

One key part of this city's move to develop emerging industries, according to a local official, is the investment agreements it has signed with centrally controlled State-owned enterprises (SOEs).

"They (investment agreements) will be an engine for local industrial improvements," explained Ouyang Jinqian, deputy director of the Torch Hi-tech Industrial Development Zone's administrative committee.

Investment project agreements were signed with 12 SOEs on March 2, in Beijing, local government sources have said.

The projects have as much as 71.4 billion yuan in backing, for developing new energy, electric cars, shipbuilding, ocean engineering, and logistics.

They are expected to have an annual industrial value of more than 155 billion yuan when they go into operation, Ouyang said. That could mean that this Pearl River Delta city will get a new industrial zone.

The Torch Hi-tech Zone's industrial output last year was 113.1 billion yuan, which made it the first township-level zone to pass the 100-billion-yuan mark annual industrial output value in Zhongshan.

One of the investors, Beijing's Foton Motor Group, has said it will develop an electric automobile plant here.

Some new electric buses

made their debut at the annual Zhongshan Trade and Investment Fair, on Monday.

Work on the electric car plant is expected to begin sometime in the second half of this year, Feng Yirong, vice-mayor of Zhongshan, said.

Work on nine other projects will start construction in the first half of this year, Feng added.

The zone was approved as a State-level torch zone for equipment manufacturing

in 2004, and now has more than 30 large projects in operation.

"The next five years will become an important time for the torch zone and new industries. We're building a modern industrial system here," Ouyang went on to explain.

The zone's industrial output is expected to be worth 250 to 300 billion yuan, and, "the investment projects and SOEs will play an important role in helping us reach that goal."



QIU QUANLIN / CHINA DAILY

Visitors squeeze in to get a look at the exhibition hall adorned with a large picture of Sun Yat-sen, the father of modern China and a Zhongshan native.