TOP NEWS

GBA hailed for achievements as trade hub

Bay area seen as global example for regional coordination, innovation

By ZHAO JIA in Shenzhen
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Foreign officials and scholars have described the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as one of the world's most dynamic economic engines, saying its openness, innovation and integrated development are creating new opportunities for countries seeking growth in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

They made the remarks on Thursday in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, at a thematic briefing on the Greater Bay Area, held to showcase China's approach to coordinated regional development and what it has achieved. The event was jointly hosted by the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee.

The Greater Bay Area brings together the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions and nine mainland cities in Guangdong. One of China's most open and economically dynamic regions, the GBA is being developed into a world-class city cluster. In 2025, the region's economic output exceeded $2 trillion, placing it among the world's leading bay area economies.

Md Ismail Zabihullah, adviser to the prime minister of Bangladesh, said that the Greater Bay Area shows how openness, long-term planning and policy innovation can reinforce one another. He added that the region's connectivity, innovation-friendly environment, financial support and efficient flow of goods and services have not only reshaped local development, but also created opportunities for countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Noting Bangladesh's close trade ties with cities in Guangdong, he said his country hopes to strengthen links between its key industries, shipping routes and the Greater Bay Area's globally oriented economy.

Abdulla Siyaz, the Maldives' minister of state for economic development and trade, said the Greater Bay Area's technological dynamism and development experience have left a deep impression. He described Shenzhen as a major trade and innovation hub whose geographic advantages and global connections could help Maldivian small businesses and startups reach new markets.

He added that the Maldives had recently opened its first international business center in Nansha district of Guangzhou, Guangdong, to deepen economic ties with China and tap into the Greater Bay Area's commercial networks, and expressed hope that the new platform will help bring more Maldivian aquatic products to international consumers.

Charles Onunaiju, director-general of the Center for China Studies in Nigeria, said that one of the Greater Bay Area's most valuable lessons lies in its ability to bring together the distinct strengths of different cities within a coordinated regional framework.

He added that, as African countries also have different industrial priorities and areas of strength, and greater complementarity across the continent is something that Africa could learn from China's experience of pursuing development and industrialization.

Vlad Batrincea, deputy speaker of the Parliament of Moldova, said that the rise of the Greater Bay Area reflects not a single policy success, but the effective coordination of institutions, infrastructure, research and talent. He said Moldova is paying close attention to how China has integrated industrial policy, investment, education and innovation into a coherent long-term strategy, particularly through industrial clusters, digital transformation and green growth.

Liu Haixing, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, said that the Greater Bay Area's development reflects China's broader strategy of coordinated regional development. He added that as the global economic order and supply-demand cycles face severe disruption, China will work to strengthen economic resilience, bolster internal growth drivers and pursue long-term sustainable development, while advocating innovation-driven growth, openness and win-win cooperation.

Colorful array of goods



Overseas buyers select products in the gifts and premiums exhibition area during the second phase of the 139th China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair, on Thursday in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province. The second phase of the Canton Fair runs from Thursday to Monday. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Striking echoes of time



Folk musicians from the Traditional Instruments Orchestra of Nanjing University in Jiangsu province and the Confucius Institute at Bogazici University in Turkiye perform in a flash mob event at the Basilica Cistern in Istanbul, the capital of Turkiye, on Wednesday, attracting many people to stop and enjoy the music. LIU LEI / XINHUA

Safety: Grassroots help maintain order

From page 1

A British vlogger who goes by the name "Jason in China", previously filmed himself walking at night in Kunming, Yunnan province, pointing out the busy streets and the absolute absence of any sense of unease. In many Western countries, he said, going out late would mean looking over one's shoulder and worrying about danger. In China, such thoughts never crossed his mind.

Spanish vlogger "Zhuli from Spain" offered a similar account in a video recorded in a park in Guangdong province. "It's 11 pm. … For me, this is real freedom — a woman on the street after 11 pm, walking alone without any fear. This is how it should be."

These accounts, widely shared and discussed, focus on everyday experiences — walking alone, interacting with police, being in public spaces after dark, or finding left-behind packages and personal items untouched.

Third-safest country

A recent survey echoes these impressions. According to the Global Safety Report 2025 released in January 2026 by Gallup, a United States-based analytics and advisory company, China ranked the third-safest among more than 140 countries and territories surveyed. The report also noted strong public confidence in local law enforcement in the country and low levels of personal experience with crime.

Official figures show a similar pattern. According to the Ministry of Public Security, in 2025, criminal cases in China dropped 12.8 percent year-on-year, the lowest level in decades, while public order cases also declined. Public perception of safety remained above 98 percent for the sixth consecutive year.

Experts said the online discussions reflect deep structural factors rather than mere impressions.

Kong Fanbin, dean of Nanjing University's Huazhi Institute for Global Governance in Jiangsu province, said the viral content highlighted the results of long-term efforts toward ensuring public security.

"It shows that China has built a high-level public safety network covering all citizens and social actors," he said.

He emphasized that the system extended beyond formal law enforcement. "Public security here is not maintained by police alone. Community and other grassroots forces also play an important role."

According to him, what many foreigners noticed in China was not just the absence of danger, but a wider environment shaped by public order, responsive governance and social cooperation.

He Yanling, a professor at Renmin University of China's School of Public Administration and Policy, described the phenomenon as part of a broader governance model that had so far received less international attention than China's economic growth.

"Grassroots governance in China is also a 'miracle,'" she said. "The sense of safety people are talking about is a real social reality."

Prioritizing people

She identified several key reasons for it. First is the prioritization of public safety as a core public good. "Safety is placed at the center of governance," she said, describing it as a fundamental responsibility of the State. Another is a multilayered governance system, from national institutions to local communities. Long-term neighborhood policing and grid-based management allow for detailed management and early response. Broad public participation is also key.

"Safety is not achieved by government forces alone," she said. "It is supported by active involvement of ordinary people."

Many foreigners marveled at the fact that nobody touched packages left at doorsteps or public places. The professor said it reflected societal development, not fear. With major survival and development issues resolved, people did not need to break rules for minor gains.

She said that communities have also established norms where residents maintain public order, reducing societal costs and enhancing civic awareness through positive interactions.

The viral videos of children interacting with police, Kong of Nanjing University noted, also reflect a particular relationship between law enforcement and the public. Such practices, he said, are rooted in a long tradition of close police-community ties.

"Trust is built over time," he said. "It comes from consistent service and responsibility."

He added that protecting people's lives and property is seen not as a narrow legal duty, but a broad responsibility in China. That helped explain why people in both major cities and small towns feel safe going out late at night.

Debates around safety often intersect with discussions about privacy, particularly in Western discourse. Kong rejected the notion of a trade-off in China's management. He said surveillance in public spaces is intended to support safety management, not invade private lives, and that access to such systems is governed by strict legal procedures.

In an increasingly digital society, Kong said, safety management and information-based governance should not be seen as opposites. "Only when authorities have sufficient real-time information can they provide more effective protection. The two are complementary," Kong said.

He, from Renmin University, also stressed that as a rapidly developing, highly market-oriented and urbanized country, China prioritizes safety and order as fundamental to social progress. She added that legal frameworks governing technologies such as surveillance continue to evolve, aiming to balance security and data protection.

"The key measure is people's sense of gain," she said, referring to public perception as an important indicator of policy effectiveness.

Bridge: Rural tourism, local communities get a boost

From page 1

For many travelers, though, the appeal is not adrenaline but scale.

The bridge's 1,420-meter-long main span stretches between two mountain peaks, often rising through the mist that hangs over Guizhou's mountains like a dragon in the clouds. Its deck stands roughly the height of two Eiffel Towers stacked above the water.

"This looks impossible," said Canadian YouTuber Daniel Dumbrill when he saw the bridge in full. "I'm not an engineer, but I would imagine this is amazing even for engineers."

Dumbrill traveled to the site by motorcycle and stayed in the nearby Huajiang village, a traditional Bouyei ethnic village closest to the bridge. From his guesthouse bed, he could see the bridge crossing the canyon.

As more visitors arrive, the communities around the bridge are transforming too. Hundreds of restaurants and guesthouses have opened, and young residents who once left are returning to run inns, cook dishes and serve travelers seeking a rural escape.

For others, the bridge offers a quieter experience.

The easiest and most popular way to get there is to drive yourself. Visitors can stop at the Yundu service area, which has a viewing platform, before taking a sightseeing elevator into the bridge's interior.

In the cafe near the bridge's midspan, coffee comes with a view that city rooftops cannot match.

"This is the first time I've been inside a bridge, and it's an unmatched viewing experience," said Asa Cheng, a 65-year-old visitor from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, after lying on the glass floor and looking down at the river and settlements below. "It is a little thrilling, but just right for me."

For Bidogia, the extreme sports enthusiast, the bridge is more than a spectacle.

"When I fall, I become part of nature," he said. "When I walk on this bridge and jump from it, I become part of engineering wisdom."

As the sun sinks into the canyon and visitors sit on the glass platform with cups of coffee, the bridge becomes more than a mere crossing. In Guizhou, it has become a destination, an experience and a new way to see the landscape itself.

Contact the writers at liuboqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Travel tips

Via the expressway, drive or hail a car to the Yundu service area in Zhenfeng county, Guizhou province, which also serves as the visitor center. Parking and entry to the service area are free with advance reservation via the WeChat mini-program of the Huajiang Canyon Bridge Tourism-integrated Service Area.

Access to the bridge itself requires a ticket, which can be booked through the same mini-program or purchased on site if available. Standard admission is 99 yuan ($14.50). Opening hours are 9 am to 5 pm.

In peak season, reservations up to 15 days in advance are recommended for both tickets and parking.

Yiwu: Growing international pull draws world's investors as reform legacy bears fruit

From page 1

It is imperative to guide all regions to leverage their own resource endowments and explore high-quality development paths suited to their respective local conditions, he said.

Xi's ties with Yiwu go back many years. In December 2002, shortly after taking office as Party secretary of Zhejiang province, he visited the Yiwu International Trade Market for an inspection.

From 2002 to 2007, Xi made more than 10 fact-finding trips to Yiwu, pressing for reforms to remove institutional bottlenecks holding back its fast-growing private economy. He once likened Yiwu to "a fast-growing child wearing unsuitable clothes", a vivid metaphor for the constraints on the city's development needs.

In November 2005, Xi called for efforts to remove institutional bottlenecks ranging from financing to registration for foreign trade enterprises and tax policies. A year later, Zhejiang issued guidelines on piloting local government administration reforms, delegating Yiwu a total of 131 economic and social management powers — the first county-level city in the country to enjoy such broad authorization.

According to previous reports, Zhou Yongnan, then a reporter with Zhejiang Daily, later recalled that when local media and officials sought to sum up Yiwu's path as the "Yiwu model", Xi advised against the term "model", saying that it implied something fixed and unchanging, whereas reform and innovation are endless.

"He said it should be called the 'Yiwu experience' instead," Zhou recalled.

With Xi's support and Yiwu's influence as an exemplar of reform, many cities across Zhejiang began receiving expanded administrative powers, and the "Yiwu experience" was later promoted nationwide.

In September 2023, Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, revisited the Yiwu International Trade Market during an inspection tour of Jinhua, Zhejiang province.

Speaking with merchants and representatives of small business owners, he urged the trade market to make fresh achievements and contribute further to expanding both domestic and international markets and smoothing dual circulation of domestic and international trade.

That call for Yiwu to scale new heights has since been reflected not only in the city's trade figures, but also in its growing international pull.

With Pakistani businessman Ali Kamran obtaining his own business license on July 31, the total number of foreign-invested business entities in Yiwu reached 10,000, making Yiwu the first county-level city in China to surpass that mark.

Today, investors from more than 160 countries and regions have put down roots in Yiwu.

In 2025, Yiwu's total imports and exports exceeded 800 billion yuan ($117.2 billion) for the first time, reaching 836.5 billion yuan. Meanwhile, total retail sales of consumer goods reached 215.38 billion yuan, up 5.2 percent year-on-year, also the highest among all county-level regions in the province.

Since the beginning of this year, turbulence in the Middle East and broader global uncertainty have once again rattled international trade, and Yiwu has inevitably felt the impact.

Yet the city has continued to show striking resilience, with its total imports and exports in the first two months of the year reaching 173.56 billion yuan, up 52.8 percent year-on-year, official data showed.

"As merchants rooted in Yiwu, we have not only participated in the city's development, but also benefited from it," said Nie, the businesswoman. "Xi's instruction is both a full affirmation of Yiwu's development and an earnest encouragement to every market operator here."

Nie plans to move into a new factory complex covering more than 100,000 square meters in October.

She said, "The journey has been hard, but the outcome keeps getting better."

Contact the writers at mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn