

SPOTLIGHT

Ningbo Hosts SCO Green Forum as Green Development Advances

By Zhao Yu

The Green and Sustainable Development Forum of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held in Ningbo in April, underscoring the city's growing role in regional cooperation on green growth. Under the SCO's broader vision of building a community with a shared future for sustainable development, Ningbo, a manufacturing powerhouse, is advancing practical collaboration through efforts spanning low-carbon technologies, renewable energy and cross-border industrial partnerships.

The forum also highlighted how Ningbo's green transition is increasingly reflected in real-world cooperation and everyday innovation, from overseas clean-energy projects to the city's own evolving environmental landscape.

A Green Partnership, Powered by the Sun

Over a decade ago, Pakistan's solar market was practically non-existent. Su Shenghua, deputy sales director of Ningbo Ulica Solar Co., Ltd., recalled attending an exhibition in Lahore, where interest from local buyers was limited by high costs.

A breakthrough came the following year at the Canton Fair, where Su met Afnan, owner of a water pump factory in Pakistan. The two later established a partnership after Afnan visited the company in China. Around the same time, Pakistan began constructing solar-powered irrigation projects in regions such as Peshawar, creating new opportunities.

Large areas of Pakistan's fertile farmland lie in remote regions, at the edges of deserts and deep in the mountains, with limited road access and little connection to the elec-



Ningbo eastern new town. [Photo by Lu Wei]

tricity grid. Solar-powered water pumps have since provided an alternative, allowing farmers to draw water from wells to irrigate fields using solar panels rather than back-breaking manual labor.

"Whenever there is sunlight, the pumps can operate and water can be supplied," Su said.

The partnership between Ulica and Afnan has continued for more than ten years. Afnan has participated in government tenders and placed regular orders, ranging from about a dozen shipping containers in slower years to more than a hundred in stronger periods. In recent years, growing demand for solar energy among individual households has also led him to become a distributor.

Over the same period, Ulica's photovoltaic products have evolved from polycrystalline to monocrystalline technology, and from PERC to TOPCon modules. Panel output has increased from around 200 watts to more than 600 watts, while conversion efficiency has

risen from about 16% to over 22%.

Prices have also fallen significantly. "A container of solar panels would cost around \$200,000 ten years ago. Now it's only \$50,000," Su said, noting strong demand for cost-effective products in the markets of SCO countries.

The company has since expanded beyond Pakistan into Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The solar panel markets in countries such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are emerging, while demand in Russia and Belarus is burgeoning as the energy transition gathers pace.

A Green Ningbo Through an Everyday Lens

Sudheer Uralath, an Indian photographer based in Ningbo, has documented the city's landscapes and daily life over eleven years, capturing what he describes as its "greenery and vitality" through a series of images.

One photograph shows a rural field he encountered by chance while travelling to Xumin Village in Ninghai. Captivated by the sight, he stopped and waited for nearly an hour to capture the moment as the setting sun cast a pink-orange glow over the hills. In the frame, a villager carrying a bamboo basket walks along a ridge.

"Ningbo's beauty is often found off the beaten track," Sudheer said, noting that quiet country roads can offer glimpses of everyday life.

Another image features the redwood trees at Siming Lake at dawn. While the area is known locally for its autumn and winter scenery, Sudheer sought a different perspective. After two unsuccessful attempts, he returned a third time, setting out at 3:50AM. As the sun broke through the mist, light spread across the lake, with a duck passing through the illuminated water.

"It felt like a gift from nature," he said. He later returned with a telephoto lens,

but the moment could not be recreated. "Some scenes can only be encountered, not planned."

A third photograph reflects a more personal experience. Early one spring morning, Sudheer cycled to Limin Village near Dongqian Lake to photograph pear blossoms. On the way, he stopped at a small shop after catching the smell of freshly cooked rice. Villagers were pounding warm rice in a huge mortar to make rice cakes; they gladly offered him a piece, steaming hot and delightfully chewy.

"It was simple, just the natural sweetness of the rice. I've never had anything like it," he recalled. Afterwards, he continued to the lake, where he photographed a boat resting on still water under a light mist.

Having travelled widely, Sudheer has since made Ningbo his home. He said he plans to continue exploring the city by bicycle, photographing its streets, villages and landscapes in search of beautiful moments that emerge un-

expectedly.

Ningbo Heritage Showcased at Florence Handicrafts Fair

By Lu Xinyan

Ningbo's intangible cultural heritage was presented at the Florence International Handicrafts Exhibition (MIDA), which opened in Italy on April 25, marking the first official appearance of cultural heritage items from Zhenhai District in the country.

Representing Zhenhai, the Red Peony Academy of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, together with the "Hi Craft" cultural brand, took part in MIDA, an event that draws artisans and professional visitors from Italy and abroad each year.

At the exhibition, Jiang Hongsheng, head of the Red Peony Calligraphy International Exchange Association, demonstrated traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy, attracting steady interest from visitors. Many stopped to watch and take part in hands-on calligraphy sessions.

"I am honored to be invited. There is strong interest in traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting," Jiang said, adding that the booth had seen a high volume of visitors since the opening.

In addition to live demonstrations, Jiang also introduced more than 10 cultural heritage-inspired products from Zhenhai, including farmer paintings from Xiepu, bamboo wind chimes, traditional fans, and handbags. Visitors and exhibitors alike showed interest in the origins and production techniques of the items.

The exhibition forms part of Ningbo's broader push to promote its culture overseas. A city-backed initiative encouraging local companies and cultural brands to expand internationally was named among the "Top Ten Outstanding Cases for International Communication" by the China International Publishing Group last year.

Zhenhai has in recent years developed its "Hi Craft" brand as part of its longterm efforts to promote intangible cultural heritage through creative products. The brand has been featured at exhibitions in countries including Spain, Hungary and the United States, and earlier this year appeared at a New Year event in Barcelona.

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Zhejiang Completes First Ship-to-Ship Green Methanol Bunkering

By Jin Lu

Zhejiang province has completed its first ship-to-ship green methanol bunkering operation at the Meishan port area of Ningbo Zhoushan Port on April 22, marking a new step in the port's alternative marine fuel capabilities.

A total of 503 metric tons of green methanol was supplied to COSCO Shipping Libra, a 20,000-TEU dual-fuel container ship, by the bunkering vessel Da Qing 268. The operation took about one hour.

With the latest opera-

tion, Ningbo Zhoushan Port is now among a small number of ports in China capable of ship-to-ship bunkering for liquefied natural gas, biofuel and methanol.

Ship-to-ship bunkering is the most widely used methanol refuelling method internationally. Compared with truck-to-ship operations, it is faster and better suited to large vessels, aligning with the port's high container throughput and tight scheduling demands.

Green methanol is increasingly viewed as a key alternative fuel for the shipping industry's low-carbon transi-

tion, due to its lower sulphur and nitrogen emissions and significantly reduced life-cycle carbon footprint.

However, methanol is flammable, explosive and toxic, and its vapors can accumulate, making handling more complex than conventional marine fuels. The bunkering process also requires close coordination between vessels, port operators and port-side agencies.

To ensure safety, Ningbo maritime authorities have put in place a layered supervision system covering key risk points across the entire bunkering operation.



Ship-to-ship green methanol bunkering operation at the Meishan port area of Ningbo Zhoushan Port. [Photo by Lin Yuchen]

