

By CHEN HONG

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Zhanjiang in South China's Guangdong province has strengthened its position as an important regional center by sticking to its development plan despite the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The city, located in a less-developed western area of affluent Guangdong, has been increasingly leaned on by the provincial government to lead the economic development of its neighboring region.

"We have mapped out a comprehensive plan for high-quality development for the city in terms of transportation, industry, openness to the outside world and innovation," said Jiang Jianjun, mayor of Zhanjiang.

"We are moving smoothly toward our goal to be a sub-center of the province and build a modern coastal economic belt," he noted.

In the first quarter of this year, when COVID-19 swept the country, 97 planned key projects, which included new investments as well as renewals, were all carried out in Zhanjiang, according to the government figures.

They accounted for nearly 14 percent of the city's projected investment this year.

BASF (Guangdong) Verbund Site project, the German chemical giant's largest overseas investment that began construction in Zhanjiang last November, will start its piling work at the end of May.

Sinopec, China's leading energy and petrochemical company, put the country's largest petrochemical



City hitting its development targets despite virus complications



Top: An aerial view of Zhanjiang, a coastal city in Guangdong province. LANG SHUCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY Above: A mega petrochemical project funded by Sinopec is scheduled to be put into operation in Zhanjiang in the near future. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Zhanjiang becoming key regional hub



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Jiang Jianjun, a deputy to the National People's Congress who serves as Zhanjiang mayor

wharf into operation in Zhanjiang earlier this month.

Meanwhile, the Zhongke Refinery and Petrochemical Project, the biggest project of its kind under construction by Sinopec, will be put into operation in June. It will form part of Zhanjiang's integrated refinery and petrochemical complex.

While the construction of key projects has resumed after a suspension due to the pandemic, the transportation plan has been accelerated as well.

According to the mayor, the city will accelerate the construction of 46 key transportation projects planned at the beginning of this

year, which will cost nearly 15.8 billion yuan (\$2.22 billion).

The projects include high-speed rails, an international airport and port channel expansion. They will greatly upgrade Zhanjiang's transportation network to make it better connected with other cities in Guangdong and neighboring regions, thus helping Zhanjiang realize its goal of becoming a regional hub.

In a recent decision made by the provincial government, Zhanjiang has been named as one of five metropolises, together with the neighboring cities of Maoming and Yangjiang, to enhance the quality of their urban development.

Zheng Renhao, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, said the cities can collaborate to strengthen their industrial cooperation and transport links.

"We can set up a joint meeting system to strengthen the interaction and cooperation, enhance the discussions on major issues that will affect all sides to reach common ground and promote mutual development," Zheng said during a visit to Maoming on May 13.

He said the two cities can deepen cooperation in the sectors of agriculture, marine fishery, port and logistics and carry out water treatment projects together to improve the ecologic environment.

Mayor Jiang said Zhanjiang will improve the construction of public facilities this year to aid the goal of becoming a regional center for economy, finance, commerce and trade, science, education and culture.

Bumper catches lift village out of poverty

By LIANG KAIYAN

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Fu Jianshang, a fisherman in Xuwen county of Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, feels good about his catch this year.

From Baimao fishing village, Fu has been busy hauling in fish for over two months. Thanks to the good weather, he can earn about 1,000 yuan (\$140) a day selling at the local market, he said.

Fu's experience is shared by many people in Baimao who also earn a living on the water.

However, in the past income could be volatile due to poor weather conditions and aging equipment.

The situation changed four years ago on the back of Zhanjiang's renewed poverty alleviation drive.

In 2016, the Zhanjiang science and technology bureau cooperated with relevant authorities to set up a team to help lift 33 disadvantaged households out of poverty in Baimao village.

Focusing on fishing, the team carried out tailor-made projects, including an agreement with an aquaculture company from Guangdong province, and granted 1.5 million yuan to support the company's anti-poverty project in the village, thus giving villagers an annual dividend worth 1,400 yuan.

By 2019, the 33 poverty-stricken households in the village had been lifted out of poverty, and the per capita annual disposable income of the village's residents was 18,825 yuan.

To prevent people from falling back into poverty, the local authorities said they have continued to focus on boosting the village's economic development via financial support and the development of rural tourism.

Last year, Xuwen county was list-

ed among the first batch of national demonstration parks for the integrated industrial development in rural areas.

The county represents the epitome of Zhanjiang's progress in rural revitalization.

Rural revitalization plays a prominent role in promoting high-quality development in Zhanjiang, said Jiang Jianjun, a deputy to the National People's Congress, who serves as mayor of the city.

The city has launched a series of measures and made substantial achievements in them, Jiang said. One of the efforts is setting up specialized groups in helping develop rural areas in fields including industries, culture, ecology and human resources.

In 2019, the added value of modern agriculture in Zhanjiang reached 58.52 billion yuan, up 4.2 percent from 2018, and the grain output reached 1.47 million metric tons, an increase of 6.3 percent.

The city has implemented environmental projects in rural areas including building five new wetland parks and scheduling 1,522 villages to develop rural tourism, the mayor said.

Zhanjiang is advancing the rural revitalization plan issued last year to make great achievements in the next three years. The plan covers governance of rural areas, cultivation of experts and specialists working at grassroots level, agriculture development and rural tourism.

"Rural revitalization is a huge topic and task requiring long-term strategies and input," Jiang said.

Zhanjiang will continue its efforts revolving around ensuring the victory in the battle against extreme poverty, and the completion of the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, he added.



Jiang Jianjun (center), mayor of Zhanjiang, and other deputies to the National People's Congress, who are from the city, attend China's annual top legislative gathering in Beijing. WANG HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

NPC deputies praise government's role in spurring economic growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

During the ongoing National People's Congress, NPC deputies from Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, hailed the 2020 Government Work Report as "a great encouragement" to the city's high-quality development, Zhanjiang Daily reported.

Among them, Zhanjiang Mayor Jiang Jianjun said the report, delivered at the opening of this year's NPC annual meeting on Friday, takes into consideration the influence of the COVID-19 outbreak and the mounting pressure from an economic downturn.

It emphasizes pandemic prevention and control on the government's agenda and calls for socioeconomic development while curbing the virus spread, he added.

Government funding will boost new types of infrastructure con-

struction and urbanization expansion as well as major projects, which are conducive to improving people's quality of life, promoting consumption, optimizing industrial structure and spurring economic growth, according to the report.

"For Zhanjiang, that means significant opportunities," Jiang said.

The city is advancing the construction of another four high-speed rail lines linking to Guangzhou in Guangdong province, Hupu in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Haikou in Hainan province and Zhangjiajie in Hunan province, in addition to the Shenzhen-Zhanjiang high-speed railway in operation.

Other major projects in Zhanjiang, including the Zhanjiang International Airport and a shipping channel capable of handling 400,000-tonnage vessels, will also

benefit from the country's favorable policies aimed at unleashing demand from the domestic market, Jiang said.

A comprehensive national transport hub is taking shape in Zhanjiang, which provides key support for building the city into a "provincial sub-center" and developing a modern coastal economic belt, he noted.

"We will accelerate the construction of a modern comprehensive transport hub, put western Guangdong (where Zhanjiang is located) on a fast track to growth and help the region join the ranks of advanced economies in the country," he said.

With mega investment projects as an engine to drive growth of the local economy, Zhanjiang is creating world-class industrial clusters in its harbor areas, which will enable

Zhanjiang to participate in high-level regional cooperation and competition, he added.

Its goal is to build a regional center of economics, finance and business, as well as hub of research, education, culture and healthcare. Thus the city can better serve key national strategies, including the Belt and Road Initiative, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the China (Hainan) Pilot Free Trade Zone, and make greater contributions to the country's drive to develop a marine economy and promote regional growth, the mayor said.

Jiang's opinion was echoed by Ning Ling, another NPC deputy and also vice-president of Guangdong Ocean University, who cited proactive fiscal policies, expansion of domestic demand and employment opportunities, and a shift in economic growth mode — as shown in the report — as timely incentives to Zhanjiang's development.

Lin Shuixi, board chairman of sugar maker Jinling Group who is also in the Zhanjiang NPC deputy delegation, said the report features a pragmatic approach by addressing specific issues. It reflects the central government's insistence on people-centered development.

Government financial support, designed to go down to the grassroots level, gives businesses more strength and faith in weathering the current difficulties caused by the COVID-19 outbreak

Zhao Jianshe, an NPC deputy and also deputy general manager of Zhanjiang Communication Investment Group, said what impressed him most about the report was the high value that the central government placed on people's well-being.

The report sent an uplifting signal to Zhanjiang's infrastructure construction, the NPC deputy said.

He added that the report calls for increasing investment in major transportation and hydro projects, which will play an encouraging role in promoting projects in Zhanjiang that need improvements on the infrastructure facilities.

Coastal area aimed at building itself into a national transport center

By LIANG KAIYAN

Zhanjiang in Guangdong province is expected to strengthen its position as a national transport hub this year on the back of major projects, local officials said.

The last year of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) period, 2020 is crucial for Zhanjiang to achieve its goal of becoming a national comprehensive transportation hub, said Jiang Jianjun, mayor of the city and a deputy to the National People's Congress.

In 2020, the city plans to implement 46 major transportation projects, with a total investment of 15.86 billion yuan (\$2.23 billion). It will continue to focus on improving the construction of a transportation network connecting the Hainan Free

Trade Port and city clusters in the Beibu Gulf covering Guangdong and Hainan provinces and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

In addition, construction on the Guangzhou-Zhanjiang high-speed railway will start this year.

The 400-kilometer-long high-speed railway is expected to be completed in 2024. After completion, it will slash the travel time from Zhanjiang to Guangzhou to just one and a half hours, and becoming the first high-speed railway allowing trains to travel as fast as 350 kilometers per hour in western Guangdong province.

"The year of 2019 was a milestone for Zhanjiang's transportation construction, and the city has made historic breakthroughs in sectors of



A high-speed train runs through Zhanjiang. The city is advancing construction of more high-speed rail lines as part of its efforts to become a national transport hub. LANG SHUCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

investment, project construction and planning," Jiang said.

Zhanjiang's overall plan for 2016-30 in terms of railway development

was approved by the Guangdong provincial government and China State Railway Group in July 2019, making the city the third in the prov-

ince to become a planned national comprehensive transportation hub.

"Transportation used to be a bottleneck for Zhanjiang's development," Jiang said. However, the operation of the first high-speed railway from Shenzhen to Zhanjiang in 2018 and the approval of the plan have given the city impetus to increase its development, he added.

As the status of a national transportation hub has been recognized, Zhanjiang has transformed from being a small player in transportation to an important player in supporting the country to develop an open economy and a marine economy, the mayor said.

This year, Zhanjiang will continue to ramp up efforts in establishing itself as a modern transportation hub

revolving around ports construction, transportation network expansion and aviation services, according to the city plan.

The city will promote building new channels for ports and wharves in a bid to enhance participation in the construction of the new sea-land corridor in western China. These efforts include accelerating the construction of functional wharves such as the Donghai Island port area for general cargo, the Xiashan port area for common purposes and the Baoman port area for containers.

For urban transportation, the city will increase efforts in its construction of highways and a highway system extending to Zhanjiang Bay, the city's downtown area and surrounding areas, according to Jiang.