



Government officials from Guangdong and Hainan provinces as well as other representatives attend the opening ceremony of a new roll-on roll-off dock in Xuwen Port in Zhanjiang, a coastal city in Guangdong, on Saturday. PHOTOS BY LIU JICHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## New ro-ro dock to strengthen trade, exchanges with Hainan

Zhanjiang capitalizes on advantageous location to better integrate with nearby economic areas

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A new roll-on roll-off — or ro-ro — dock was put into operation in Xuwen Port in Zhanjiang, South China's Guangdong province, on Saturday, reinforcing the city's position in the province as a key connection with neighboring Hainan province across the Qiongzhou Strait.

"The construction of Xuwen Port is a key move for Zhanjiang to cooperate with the Hainan Free Trade Zone," said Zheng Renhao, Party secretary of the city, at the opening ceremony.

The project cost some 2 billion yuan (\$293.6 million) and it has 16 ro-ro berths for 5,000-tonnage cargo and passenger vessels, and one 5,000-tonnage ro-ro berth specially designed for hazardous goods.

The new dock, capable of handling 3.2 million vehicles and 17.28 million passengers a year, aims to create seamless connectivity among roads, waterways, railways and urban public transport, facilitating shipments across the Qiongzhou Strait and promoting cooperation between Guangdong and Hainan provinces, local officials said.

Upon the port's opening, the travel time by sea between Xuwen county in Zhanjiang to Haikou, Hainan has been reduced from two to three hours to about one hour.

"Zhanjiang will take the new dock at Xuwen Port as a fresh start to serve the national strategies, including the Hainan Free Trade Port and make greater contribution to the country's development," Zheng said. "We will improve facilities at Xuwen Port and provide better management and services to build it into a model port."

Situated in a strategic position linking the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Beibu Gulf economic zone and the Hainan Free Trade Port, Zhanjiang enjoys distinct advantages in terms of its location.

The Qiongzhou Strait, across which the two provinces face each other, is an important channel in



A car drives onto a vessel at a roll-on roll-off dock at Xuwen Port.

terms of Hainan's free trade port construction and development, as more than 90 percent of daily supplies to the island are shipped via the strait.

Government data show more than 14 million passengers and 5 million vehicles are transported from Zhanjiang to Hainan by sea annually.

One of the first batch of key cooperation cities to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, Zhanjiang is committed to building itself into a provincial subcenter city and a pillar in a drive of creating a modern coastal economic belt. It is integrating itself into an expanded regional transport network, local media reported, noting that the Xuwen Port project is of great significance to developing Zhanjiang into a national comprehensive transport hub.

To date, Zhanjiang has established regular cooperation with Hainan at different government levels in trade, transportation, tourism and fields closely related to people's quality of life, with more than 20 agreements signed between the two sides.

Among them is a strategic cooperation framework agreement inked by Zhanjiang and Haikou in February

2019 to jointly build a new western international land-sea trade corridor.

The two cities have joined hands to advance the formulation of a Qiongzhou Strait transport plan in a bid to promote integrated shipping routes and ports development.

Industries are a key part of the cooperation between Zhanjiang and Hainan province, Zheng said.

Capitalizing on the effects of reform policies launched at Hainan Free Trade Port, Zhanjiang will ride the wave of the free trade port's development to boost its own growth with complementary advantages, he said.

The cooperation will drive harbor-based industries, coastal tourism, featured agriculture and military-civil integrated development, which are all priority sectors in Zhanjiang's efforts to develop into a modern service extension hub for Hainan, local officials said.

Currently, Zhanjiang is improving its bonded logistics center, preparing to upgrade it to a comprehensive bonded zone and applying for incorporating Zhanjiang Port and Donghai Island into the Guangdong Free Trade Zone extensions.

the cooperation is expected to grow, local officials said.

Ning Ling, vice-president of Guangdong Ocean University, said that with Guangdong and Hainan

provinces cooperating to build the Qiongzhou Strait Economic Belt, Zhanjiang's tourism industry is expected to benefit greatly.

The roll-on roll-off dock and a

The construction of Xuwen Port is a key move for Zhanjiang to cooperate with the Hainan Free Trade Zone."

Zheng Renhao, Party secretary of Zhanjiang

At the same time, Zhanjiang and Hainan have increased the frequency of scheduled liner services, jointly exploring shipping routes to destinations involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Government data show 266,000 containers of twenty-foot equivalent units were shipped between Zhanjiang and Hainan in 2019, an increase of 15.7 percent year-on-year.

The two sides' joint efforts also include a plan to create a bulk cargo trade center in Zhanjiang and a strategic cooperation agreement between Zhanjiang Port Group and the Hainan International Energy Exchange.

During an inspection to Zhanjiang by Li Xi, Party secretary of Guangdong, and Ma Xingrui, governor of the province, Li called on Zhanjiang to integrate itself into the development of the Bay Area and the Shenzhen Pilot Demonstration Zone for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, align itself with the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port, and advance infrastructure construction, such as high-speed rails, a new airport, expressways and ports.

He also encouraged the city to attract major projects and collaborate with the cities of Maoming and Yangjiang for coordinated development of port-neighboring industrial clusters in the coastal economic belt, in a bid to improve strength and competitiveness.

## Key regional transport hub bolsters capacity, expands infrastructure

By HU YUYAN  
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17 ro-ro berths

at Xuwen Port in Zhanjiang

A newly launched dock for handling cargo and passenger roll-on, roll-off vessels in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, is expected to help supply the necessary transport capacity for the city to serve as a subcenter of Guangdong province.

With the operation of the new dock, located in Zhanjiang's Xuwen Port at the southern tip of China's mainland, the travel time by sea between Xuwen and the island province of Hainan is halved to about an hour, according to the local government.

Taking nearly four years to build, the dock is one of the world's largest for handling passenger and cargo roll-on, roll-off vessels with the most functions.

Xuwen Port has 16 roll-on, roll-off berths for passenger and cargo transport, and one for hazardous goods. Each of the berths is capable of accommodating vessels with a carrying capacity of up to 5,000 deadweight tons.

The designed handling capacity of the port is 3.2 million vehicles a year and 17.28 million passengers a year, according to the local government.

The Multimodal Transportation Complex at Xuwen Port has an area of about 77,000 square meters. Bus stations, taxi stands and car service pickup areas are available at the complex.

Space has also been reserved for connecting a high-speed rail to the port.

Xuwen Port also makes travel easier for passengers by automating its services. Passengers can purchase tickets from self-service ticket machines, and scan the ticket and their faces to enter the waiting area. The whole process takes about eight minutes.

Passengers who purchase tickets online can board the ship after scanning their ID cards and faces, which is even quicker, according to local officials.

The eight boarding gates at Xuwen Port resemble those at an airport, with corridors connecting the waiting area to the ships. Passengers can board the ships almost the same way they would board an aircraft.

Zheng Renhao, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, said the city is carrying out structural reforms on the

supply side of transport infrastructure, building a massive land-sea corridor, expanding expressway networks, building a new international airport and upgrading harbors.

The goal, according to Zheng, is for the city to become a multimodal transport hub that is efficient and nationally and internationally connected, which will provide the necessary transport capacity for Zhanjiang to serve as a subcenter of Guangdong province and a growth pole on the province's coastal economic belt.

In terms of maritime transport, in addition to the Xuwen Port project, Zhanjiang is reconstructing and expanding the 300,000 DWT channel at Zhanjiang Port. The project involves an investment of 3.9 billion yuan (\$572 million) and is due to be completed in 2022.

When completed, Zhanjiang Port will become the only world-class deep-water port in South China that can handle 400,000 DWT vessels.

On the rail transport front, Zhanjiang has become the third city in Guangdong to be included in the national master plan for railway hubs, after Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Zhanjiang was connected to the high-speed railway network in 2018 and a new high-speed rail line connecting the city to Guangzhou is under construction.

In terms of land transport, Zhanjiang has 316 kilometers of expressway and a road density of 2.4 km per 100 square kilometers, up 37.5 percent and 36.36 percent from 2016 respectively.

In terms of air transport, Zhanjiang Airport launched 11 new routes in 2019, adding the flights to 38 domestic and international destinations. Construction of a new international airport is underway and is expected to be completed in 2021.

According to the local government, Zhanjiang will roll out plans for 46 key transportation projects this year, involving an annual investment of 15.9 billion yuan.



A cross-sea bridge is under construction in Zhanjiang.

CHAI HUA / CHINA DAILY

## Tourism to take off on back of port developments, improved transit links

By LIANG KAIYAN  
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With the opening of a new roll-on roll-off dock in Xuwen Port in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, a new era of tourism is set to be embarked upon between the South China city and the neighboring island province of Hainan.

The roll-on roll-off dock has 16 berths for passenger and cargo vessels capable of accommodating vessels of up to 5,000 deadweight tons each, and a special berth for hazardous goods.

Travel time by ferry from Zhanjiang to Hainan province has now been cut from two to three hours, to about one hour.

Separated by the Qiongzhou Strait, Zhanjiang and Hainan province have worked together for mutual benefit in trade and tourism in the past couple of years, and with a reduced travel time by sea,



Residents in Leizhou, a county-level city under the administration of Zhanjiang, celebrate Spring Festival with a drum performance at a park in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

the cooperation is expected to grow, local officials said.

Ning Ling, vice-president of Guangdong Ocean University, said that with Guangdong and Hainan

provinces cooperating to build the Qiongzhou Strait Economic Belt, Zhanjiang's tourism industry is expected to benefit greatly.

The roll-on roll-off dock and a

6.9 percent

of China's coastline is in Zhanjiang

new duty-free shopping area at Xuwen Port are set to boost development in tourism, retail and logistics, Ning said.

A popular tourist destination, Zhanjiang's coastline accounts for 30.2 percent of Guangdong's total, and 6.9 percent of the country's coastline.

The Zhanjiang Jinsha Bay scenic spot and the Suixi Confucius cultural town have become popular tourist attractions in recent years.

Peng Hui, director of Zhanjiang's bureau for culture, radio and television, tourism and sport, said the city will promote regional tourism and create more and better prod-

ucts, services, marketing and management.

The city should strengthen regional tourism integration across the Qiongzhou Strait, planning a tourism corridor focusing on the Zhanjiang section of the Guangdong Coastal Highway, Peng said.

In addition, the planning and construction of the northern area along the Qiongzhou Strait should focus on building an ecotourism village in a bid to support the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port, she added.

Official data showed that in 2019, Zhanjiang had nearly 60.23 million visits, up 16.4 percent year-on-year, and total tourism revenue reached 60.1 billion yuan (\$8.9 billion), an increase of 17.6 percent year-on-year.

According to the city government's 2020 working report, Zhanjiang will enhance coastal tourism

through a series of projects related to "all-in-one" tourism, in an attempt to provide a comprehensive package for visitors.

At the end of June, Zhanjiang started construction on a tourism development project funded by OCT Group, a Shenzhen-based theme park developer and operator. The project covers an area of 47.87 hectares, with a total investment of 8 billion yuan.

The project includes the construction of a Zhanjiang culture center incorporating a grand theater, art museum, and cultural and creative block.

According to this year's city government working report, the city will build administrative districts with distinct characteristics. Chikan district will exhibit ancient commercial culture, Xiashan district will be styled with coastal elements, and Leizhou characterized by its pastoral scenery.