

Cruising ahead to provincial subcenter

Zhanjiang host to major port-based projects that helped expand economy and high-quality growth

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Zhanjiang, a port city in South China's Guangdong province, enjoyed sustained growth during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), with remarkable progress made in industrial development and transport.

In 2019, Zhanjiang moved into top gear to build itself into a subcenter of the province as well as a major area of growth in the country's modern coastal economic belt.

Authorities are committed to deepening supply-side structural reform, cultivating a host of modern industries and optimizing economic structure, Zhanjiang Mayor Zeng Jinze said in his government work report earlier this year.

Zhanjiang's GDP stood at 310 billion yuan (\$47.88 billion) last year, with average annual growth of 5.1 percent over the past five years. The added value of industries above designated size — those with annual revenue of 20 million yuan or more — grew by 5.4 percent year-on-year to nearly 64 billion yuan.

According to the report, port-based industries thrived. Four key projects, each with an investment of more than \$10 billion, are proceeding smoothly.

Among them, the Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical project, which began operation in June 2020, is able to achieve an annual output value of 60 billion yuan. The project will also generate profits and taxes amounting to 26 billion yuan annually.

In addition, the smart Verbund petrochemical project from German chemicals giant BASF is China's first large petrochemical project owned solely by foreign investors. Its first phase is estimated to be completed by the end of this year.

The projects paved the way for Zhanjiang to become South China's port-based industry center and



Zhanjiang in Guangdong province is cultivating a host of modern industries and optimizing its economic structure. FANG XIONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

pushed forward the city's high-quality development, Zeng said.

As the city government implemented the innovation-driven strategies, a host of high-tech companies chose Zhanjiang as their home.

By the end of last year, Zhanjiang was host to 301 high-tech enterprises, up sevenfold since 2016.

A group of innovation institutions were also put into operation, including the Southern Marine Science and Engineering Guangdong Laboratory and the Zhanjiang Marine High-tech Industry Innovation Center.

Zeng said the city is accelerating the construction of 5G base stations and aims to launch a big data industrial park this year.

Zhanjiang attached great importance to the construction of transport infrastructure in a bid to become a national comprehensive transport hub.

Statistics show the combined investment in transport infrastructure in the city reached 70 billion yuan over the past five years, 2.6

times the figure of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15).

Xuwen Port's new roll-on roll-off cargo-passenger dock, which came into service in September 2020, is the world's largest of its kind. It halved the shipping time to Xinhai Port in Haikou, Hainan province, to around one hour.

The Zhanjiang International Airport relocation and expansion project started in October 2019 and is expected to be completed this year.

With an investment of about 4.9 billion yuan, the project includes a 61,800-square-meter terminal, a 3,200-meter runway, and 30 aircraft stands. Upon completion, it will become the third-largest airport in the province, behind those in Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Construction of many other transport infrastructure projects in the city is in full swing.

After expansion, Zhanjiang Port will be the only deep-water port in South China qualified to handle 400,000-tonnage vessels.



A groundbreaking ceremony takes place for 10 major industrial projects in Zhanjiang in late February. QI ZHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

In addition, the Guangzhou-Zhanjiang high-speed railway with a designed speed of 350 kilometers per hour is to open in 2024.

In the long run, Zhanjiang plans to build an extensive railway network consisting of five high-speed rail lines. They are to link Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong prov-

ince, Haikou in Hainan province, Zhangjiajie in Hunan province and Hepu in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. This will help Zhanjiang participate in the two-hour traffic circle in the Pearl River Delta region and strengthen interconnectivity with the southwestern region, according to the city government.

Business first as region is inspired by premier domestic trading hubs

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhanjiang in South China's Guangdong province has launched a campaign to improve its business environment, pledging to learn from the best and be attentive to businesses.

The campaign, running from February to December, will draw on the experience of the country's top business destinations including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

The central government expects Zhanjiang to become an important area of growth on the country's coastal economic belt. The Guangdong provincial government has tasked the city with serving as a sub-center of the province and rolled out policies to support its development. This presents a golden opportunity for Zhanjiang, local officials said.

"If we can't seize this great opportunity and make use of the good policies, we will definitely regret it," Zheng Renhao, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, was quoted as saying by local media. "We must regard improving the business environment as the lifeline of economic development."

Zeng Jinze, mayor of Zhanjiang, told local media that despite seeing continued progress in its business environment, the city still has room to improve, compared with more developed regions in the country.

By making it a priority to improve the business environment, Zeng said Zhanjiang is striving to become an ideal destination for investors and innovators, and a great place to live.

The campaign will focus on eight aspects including redesigning and streamlining administrative processes, breaking down barriers among departments, building a credit system and attracting investment.

The city seeks to fix weak links in

18 aspects including business setup, property registration and cross-border trading, which are seen as among the most important indicators for assessing the attractiveness of a business destination.

For instance, five separate procedures for starting a business, such as obtaining a business license and company seal, will be merged into one. Entrepreneurs can complete the five procedures by filling out a single form and submitting it to one service window.

Also, the number of procedures for registering real estate will be cut to one. The processing time will be shortened to one day.

The time needed for clearing imports through customs will be made shorter than the provincial average, and that for exports will be slashed to 2.5 hours.

For businesses faced with pressing and difficult problems, the local government has promised to help solve them in a timely manner and serve their needs like an attentive waiter, according to local media.

Li Zhong, chairman of Zhanjiang Guolian Aquatic Products, welcomed the campaign.

"A guideline of strategic importance like the action plan (for the campaign) is something Zhanjiang urgently needs, as it seeks to generate growth through developing its real economy in the next five to 10 years," Li told Zhanjiang Daily.

Mo Shuijing, chairman of Zhanjiang Bokang Marine Biological, told the city newspaper he believes the campaign will "greatly improve the local business environment". He added that he hopes government departments will continue to reinforce their service orientation.

Mo suggested more policies be introduced to support Chinese brands with regional characteristics and technological achievements that have gained government approval to develop as an industry.

What they say

It is heartening to see many opportunities for Zhanjiang's growth in the Government Work Report delivered at this year's National People's Congress and the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25). The plan stressed the country will pay more attention to coordinated regional development, which is helpful to Zhanjiang integrating major national strategies. Moreover, the central government noted improvements to opening-up. Zhanjiang's opening-up has improved in recent years and the city will embrace more opportunities for opening-up in the future. The city has sound development opportunities in aspects such as transport infrastructure and the welfare of residents.

Ning Ling, a deputy to the National People's Congress

The Government Work Report shows the country values highly the progress in science and technology and coordinated regional development. They can be taken as the thrust to drive Zhanjiang's all-around social and economic development, promoting the city's high-quality growth and building itself into Guangdong province's subcenter. They will also provide an engine for Zhanjiang to accelerate the pace of creating a key area in the country's modern coastal economic belt, becoming a demonstration zone for coordination and integration of major national strategies; a strategic point to support the country's domestic and international dual-circulation development paradigm; and a crucial engine for the province's coordinated regional development.

Wu Xiwei, a deputy to the National People's Congress

The report said the country will create more employment opportunities and develop high-quality education, providing students with healthy growth and bright career prospects... As a front-line worker, I noticed that the report stressed the spirit of craftsmanship and the upswing in Chinese products through improved craftsmanship. These down-to-earth development goals demonstrate the Chinese government's commitment and I have strong faith in my country's development.

Wu Xiang, a deputy to the National People's Congress

As a representative of private businesses, I'm excited at the encouragement the report gives to market players, calling on them to become sustainable and dynamic. It came as a boost to private businesses' innovative development, helping resolve difficulties and relieve pressure on them, and will give them a new lease on life.

Lin Shuiqi, a deputy to the National People's Congress

The report said the country will leverage all resources to advance reforms and opening-up, motivate market players to be more active, encourage innovation and address the unbalanced development issue. The report called for determination, resolution and fruitful action to make achievements that satisfy people's expectations. Especially when the country is carrying out an all-around rural revitalization strategy, the report stressed promoting agricultural development, increasing farmers' incomes, enhancing the connection between achievements in poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, accelerating the development of rural industries and strengthening county-level economies. Zhanjiang must grasp the opportunities to advance agricultural modernization and rural revitalization.

Liu Xiaoquan, a deputy to the National People's Congress

Energy transformation and green development have become unstoppable global trends in recent years. Currently, the global energy system is progressing toward a diversified pattern with coal, petroleum, natural gas and new energy as polar sectors. China National Offshore Oil Corp has initiated a carbon-neutral plan to transform to green, low-carbon growth. We will increase our supply of clean energy and optimize our new energy industrial layout to promote energy structure upgrade and boost the realization of carbon emission goals.

Hao Zhenshan, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference



A farmer in Zhanjiang's Xuwen county shows his pineapple plantation to a visitor. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Rural revitalization drive reports a bumper harvest

By HAO NAN
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From being an unknown fishing village to a popular tourist attraction in South China's Guangdong province, Fangpo village in Zhanjiang city has accomplished the transition in just five years.

As a seaside resort located on the southernmost tip of China's mainland, the village not only boasts warm sunshine, soft beaches and coconut trees, but provides visitors with the best preserved coral reefs in China.

Fangpo is now a State-level natural reserve of coral reefs, having the largest area and most species of coral reefs in the epicontinental sea.

Ancient houses built with local corallite and other materials are another must-see in the village. Coral reef-themed bed-and-breakfasts have sprung up in recent years to help fuel local employment.

In addition to colorful reefs, Fangpo has rich sea-salt resources, with salt pans covering a total area of 136 hectares. Villagers have packed marine salt into souvenirs and developed the pans into a tourist attraction where visitors can

14,730+ yuan

Per capita disposable income of Zhanjiang's poorest people in 2020

experience salt production and taste high-quality sea salt.

The rural tourism industry has boosted the development of related sectors including catering and accommodation. At the same time it increased the incomes of local people.

In 2019, the per capita disposable income of Fangpo villagers reached 30,000 yuan (\$4,640), up from 14,000 yuan in 2016.

In the same year, Fangpo was selected as a famous cultural and tourism village in Guangdong. It was listed among the top 10 most beautiful villages of the province in 2020.

The great changes that have taken place there can be mainly attributed to an overall rural revitalization strategy the Zhanjiang city government has applied over the past several years.

The strategy should follow rural

development trends and make full use of each village's resources and industrial advantages, local officials said.

Over the past five years, Zhanjiang has established a slew of agricultural production bases with local characteristics. It also developed 21 demonstration sites for developing leisure agriculture and rural tourism.

Moreover, with a series of related projects carried out, living environments and basic infrastructure have been significantly improved in rural areas.

The projects included the construction of household trash and solid waste treatment plants, sanitary sewage treatment facilities and public toilets.

The city government has also promoted the separation of rain pipes from sewage lines, and the captive breeding of livestock and poultry.

Revitalizing rural areas is of key importance to Zhanjiang's poverty alleviation, the government said.

Last year, Zhanjiang urged the combination of rural revitalization by consolidating and expanding poverty alleviation outcomes. It held several meetings on targeted poverty alleviation with Foshan, another city in Guangdong, to create more cooperation opportunities. These include information sharing, personnel training and cooperation among companies, schools and villages in the two cities.

The initiative aims to prevent people in rural areas from falling back into poverty.

With years of anti-poverty efforts, Zhanjiang has raised the incomes of the poor. The per capita disposable income of its poorest people increased from 4,969 yuan in 2015 to nearly 15,000 yuan in 2020.

This year, which marks the beginning of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), Zhanjiang will promote the equalization of basic public services in rural areas, improve the level of electrification in villages to allow more rural residents cleaner energy options, harden road surfaces of 1,000 villages, accelerate the development of fiber-optic networks, and develop logistics and express delivery services in villages, according to the city government.