

# BUSINESSFOCUS

**BUILDING THE NEW ERA**

## Guizhou moving up economic rankings

Province's GDP currently stands in 22nd place, up from 26th in 2010

By **OUYANG SHIJIA** in Beijing and **YANG JUN** in Guiyang

When one thinks of Guizhou, the image of a remote province with lush green mountains and ethnic group customs may come to mind. But new images are also coming, thanks to the government's effective measures to develop big data, boost innovation, drive industrial transformation and upgrades as well as deepen reform and opening-up over the past decade.

The southwestern province's GDP reached 1.96 trillion yuan (\$309 billion) last year, placing it 22nd out of 31 provincial-level regions on the mainland, up from 26th in 2010.

Fueled by the country's new decision to support Guizhou's high-quality development, the province is now set to blaze a new path for the country's western development program in the new era.

A new guideline, released in January by the State Council, the country's Cabinet, requires building Guizhou into a reform demonstration area for the nation's western development program, an example of how to consolidate poverty alleviation achievements, an inland economy with new levels of openness, an innovation area for digital economic development and a pioneer in ecological progress.

By 2025, Guizhou seeks to further open its economy, consolidate poverty alleviation achievements, bolster rural revitalization, form a modern industrial system and become a national leader in terms of the growth of the digital economy.

By 2035, Guizhou aims to boost international economic cooperation and competitiveness and improve its basic public services, infrastructure and people's well-being.

The new document is part of the country's ongoing efforts to foster high-quality and innovation-driven development, promote more balanced growth, and further deepen reform and opening-up in the nation, said officials and experts.

They said Guizhou is expected to become a key driving force to boost western development, setting an example for other western areas to foster high-quality development and injecting new impetus into the nation's economy.

Shen Yiqin, Party secretary of Guizhou, said the new document marks the country's key move to boost western development in the new era, promote coordinated regional development, foster high-quality development and promote common prosperity.

Looking ahead, Shen said the key focus would be deepening reforms, expanding opening-up, spurring innovation-driven devel-



Children experience a 360-degree video-shooting technique at a big data expo in Guiyang, Guizhou province, in May. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

opment and promoting industrial transformation.

Du Ying, former deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, said at a recent Guizhou development forum that the province has a relatively solid foundation and favorable conditions to blaze a new path for the country's western development program in the new era, suggesting the central government give Guizhou more autonomy in key areas to carry out reforms.

Miao Wei, former minister of industry and information technology, highlighted the importance of developing the digital economy, saying Guizhou needs to actively explore data flowing in the market and the application and development of such data.

Based on its unique climate and geographical advantages, Guizhou is striving to become a big data hub. In February 2016, the province was approved by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Cyberspace Administration of China and the NDRC to establish China's first national big data comprehensive pilot zone.

China has recently approved a project involving the construction of eight national computing network hubs, with Guizhou being among them.

Huang Dongbing, director of the research center for modernization in western regions at Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, said Guizhou is at a key stage of rapid development.

Under the western development



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**1.96 trillion yuan**

GDP of Guizhou province in 2021, thanks to its ongoing efforts for high-quality and innovation-driven development

project, Guizhou has been ramping up efforts to accelerate the development of key industrial chains in fields including big data, artificial intelligence, equipment manufacturing, new materials and new energy vehicles, providing strong support for its high-quality development over the long run, Huang said.

Last year, total high-tech industrial output value in Guizhou surged 16.8 percent year-on-year to hit 533.4 billion yuan.

According to Huang, Guizhou has been actively integrating itself into key strategies such as construction of a new land-sea corri-



A user checks real-time information via an intelligent big data platform in Guiyang in January. OU DONGQU / XINHUA

dor in the western region, the Belt and Road Initiative, construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the co-development of the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle. And Guizhou needs to speed up the construction of its free trade zone and expand high-level opening-up.

Huang also warned of challenges ahead, saying the western region will become a key base for developing strategic emerging industries in the nation, and Guizhou needs to seize the opportunities and boost innovation-driven development over the long run.

Li Xudong, head of the comprehensive transportation division at

the Guizhou Provincial Development and Reform Commission, said the new document also creates new development opportunities in the province's transportation sector.

“In the next step, we will strive to build Guizhou into a key hub which connects economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, links the Yangtze River Economic Belt with the Pearl River-Xijiang River Economic Belt and connects the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area,” Li said.

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## Southwest China seen as rising tech center

By **CHENG YU** in Beijing and **YANG JUN**, **WANG JIN** in Guiyang

China has called for more efforts to promote digital economy in Southwest China's Guizhou province in a new guideline, which industry experts and company executives said will help drive the province's great advantages in cloud and big data sectors for higher-quality economic development.

The guideline, released by the State Council, China's Cabinet, clarified Guizhou's strategic role as a demonstration area for comprehensive reform in the development of China's western regions. The aim of the guideline is to support the province in breaking new ground in the country's pursuit of large-scale development of its western regions in the new era.

Highlighting the importance of a modern industrial system led by digital economy, the document encourages the province to enhance science and technology innovation and fully develop the potential of data elements so as to promote the integrated development of digital economy and the real economy.

Liao Fei, head of Science and Technology Department of Guizhou provincial government, said: “The guideline is of great significance to driving the province's high-quality economic and social development through scientific and technological innovations. The guideline asked us to continue promoting key technologies, products, major technology companies and related talent. With the new guideline, more efforts are also expected to be made in supporting leading tech players and optimizing the industrial structure to further drive digital economy development.”

Nestled in a mountainous region, Guizhou has been striving over the past few years to become a global hub of big data so as to help develop its local economy and boost employment.

Last year, revenue of the province's electronic information manufacturing and telecommunications industries grew 27.8 percent and 18.8 percent, respectively, year-on-year.

Yang Yunyong, president of Guizhou-Cloud, a government data exchange and sharing platform, said, “It inspires us to catch up on opportunities brought by the guideline to beef up our core competitiveness in cloud development.”

With such efforts from the government, Yang said that the company is confident of achieving a production value of 2.1 billion yuan (\$330 million) this year. In January, the company achieved a production value of 92 million yuan, an increase of 17.6 percent year-on-year.

The move also came as the country has approved a project involving the construction of eight national computing hubs and plans to build 10 national data center clusters including one in Guizhou province, in order to channel more computing resources from the country's eastern regions to its less developed yet resource-rich western regions.

Guian New Area, a national-level new urban area in Guizhou, plans to create a hub of 12 mega data centers and 4 million servers with a fixed-asset investment of over 40 billion yuan by 2025.

Tao Changhai, Guizhou's vice-governor, said in an earlier interview: “The province will continue to leverage the digital economy to offer important engines for the upgrade and transformation of traditional industries. Guizhou has unique advantages and conditions for the development of big data. It has attracted many large and super large data centers. More efforts will be made to create a better environment for the development of big data in the future.”

More than 5,000 big data companies have been set up in Guian New Area. The output of the area's digital economy reached 164.9 billion yuan in 2020, accounting for 38 percent of the region's GDP. Last year's data have not yet been released.

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## Landlocked region eyes transport links

By **ZHU WENQIAN** in Beijing and **YANG JUN** in Guiyang

Guizhou province, a mountainous area with no access to the sea and without shared international borders, serves as an important transportation hub in Southwest China. It possesses unique geographical advantages to further develop its transportation network.

In the latest guideline released by the State Council — the country's Cabinet — in late January, the government provided clear direction for the strategic positioning of Guizhou as a new inland highland to develop the opening-up economy, and gave favorable policy support to push forward the development of the province.

“Next, Guizhou will further promote trade and investment by strengthening its cooperation with other regional partners and actively participating in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership,” said Zheng Haishu, an official with the inland opening-up division at Guizhou Provincial Development and Reform Commission.

The RCEP agreement, signed

by 15 Asia-Pacific countries in November 2020, covers a market of 2.2 billion people with a combined economic size of \$26.2 trillion, or 30 percent of the world's GDP. Under the partnership, members will further ease market access standards, cut tariffs and offer reciprocal policies.

“Guizhou will also build itself into an international database hub, and consolidate and enhance its geographic position in China to connect land and sea transportation routes. Guizhou will also promote the building of its airports as gateways and actively cooperate with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Yangtze River Economic Belt and the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle,” Zheng said.

In September, the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic regulator, unveiled a plan to promote the high-quality development of the new western land-sea corridor during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25).

The construction of the new

western land-sea corridor has been fast and effective. Last year, the annual volume of goods transported through the corridor increased 57.5 percent over 2020, which has injected new vitality into the building of a dual-circulation development pattern of the country, according to the provincial government.

Guizhou said it will build itself into a transportation hub for economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as a transportation hub that connects with the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle and the Greater Bay Area.

“Based on the demand of regional economic and social development, Guizhou will advance the preliminary work of some local projects in an orderly manner and start construction work in time,” said Li Xudong, head of the comprehensive transportation division at the Guizhou Provincial Development and Reform Commission.

“Meanwhile, Guizhou will do a good job in planning some long-term projects and incorporate some railway projects with



The first direct China-Europe freight train linking Guizhou province and Moscow departs Guiyang in November. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

mature conditions into the planning, and thus strengthen the positioning of Guizhou in the new western land-sea corridor. Specifically, we will focus on promoting renovation of the Guiyang-Guangzhou high-speed railway, and the railway connecting Huangtong in Guizhou and Baise in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region,” Li said.

By the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan period, the total railway net-

work in the province is expected to exceed 4,500 kilometers, including about 2,000 km of high-speed railways. By 2025, the total length of expressways is foreseen to exceed 9,000 km in Guizhou. The province will also complete the building of airports in Weining and Panzhou by 2025, according to the local government.

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