

Rural vitalization helps residents live better

By YUAN SHENGGAO

After years of cultivation, farmers in Buzheng Village, Zhanjiang city, finally found a new development pattern to boost the local agriculture by planting pitaya, or dragon fruit.

Local pitaya farmer Li Jianqing owns nearly 20 hectares of planting sheds. After doing business elsewhere for more than 20 years, he returned to the village in 2020 and invested 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million) in his pitaya-planting project.

By the end of 2022, the yield of the base is expected to reach 22.5 metric tons per hectare.

The planting base not only generated a significant fortune for the villagers, but became a place for sightseeing and training.

It has attracted a number of villagers and brought them long-term employment. They learn skills at the planting base and earn monthly salaries.

The farmers in the village are now growing more than 266.7 hectares of pitaya fruit in total, with an annual output value of more than 80 million yuan.

Walking around the village, people see cars driving on clean and tidy roads, and trees and flowers planted in the surroundings of farmyards. Besides pitaya, villagers also plant agricultural products such as sugarcane and bananas.

The great change of Buzheng Village is an example of Zhanjiang's achievements after the city stepped up efforts to implement the rural vitalization strategy.

Liu Hongbing, Party secretary of Zhanjiang city, said that with a total planting area of more than 2,800 square kilometers of grain crops, Zhanjiang has attached great importance to the agricultural industry for a long time. Zhanjiang is accelerating the pace to build up a modern rural industrial system, promote the village construction, and make new achievements in its rural vitalization campaign.

In 2021, the city's total output value of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery reached 105.2 billion yuan, up 9.1 percent year-on-year.

The added value hit 65.9 billion yuan, up 7.8 percent year-on-year. The per capita disposable income of rural residents was 20,693 yuan, up 10.3 percent year-on-year.

The city has built 25 national-level and provincial-level modern agricultural industrial parks. The number ranks first in the province. Signature product lineups have been expanded with lotus root,

flowers, ginger and aquatic products. Other advantageous industries are improving their scale and industrialization.

The industrial parks have attracted more than 1,200 entrepreneurs back to rural areas and provided working opportunities for more than 87,500 farmers in the past few years. Combined, this has benefited more than 58,000 households.

Zhanjiang has made great efforts in recent years to develop an agricultural product processing industry, including the deep processing of tropical fruits and vegetables, aquatic products, livestock products, ready-made dishes, grains, oilseeds, sugar, animal feed and medicine.

Currently, customers' needs for ready-made dishes are rising significantly.

In response to the trend, Zhanjiang has established a ready-made dish industry alliance and supplemented industrial parks. "Wuchuan Roast Fish," "Zhanjiang Prawn," and "Naozhou Abalone" are among some famous brands.

Xuwen county aims to accelerate the construction of a modern market system for agricultural products.

Leveraging the operations of Suixi RCEP Agricultural Products (Banana) International Trading Center and Xuwen RCEP Pineapple International Procurement Trading Center, the city is planning more agricultural products trading centers to serve global partners.

The living environment in the city's rural regions has also improved significantly.

The city established sanitation and cleaning funds to support face-lift projects in villages and also set up garbage collection and transportation systems.

Zhanjiang has focused on building a beautiful countryside and developing rural tourism at the same time, giving full play to the villages' natural, cultural, industrial, green ecology and other advantages.

By promoting the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism, the rural areas have generated a new force to drive industrial development in Zhanjiang.

One village in the city has become a national key village for rural tourism; one county, three towns and 28 sites have been recommended as Guangdong's leisure agriculture and rural tourism demonstration areas. Fifteen villages have been recommended as Guangdong's featured villages of culture and tourism with 13 rural tourist routes available.



Dragon fruit is widely grown in Suixi county in the course of rural vitalization. QIU QUANLIN / CHINA DAILY



A cargo ship docks at Zhanjiang Port in Guangdong province. The port is the only one with 400,000-DWT wharfs in South China. GUO LONGBI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Provincial subcenter Zhanjiang boosts opening-up and coastal economic belt

Industrial parks and improving infrastructure attracting wide range of businesses

By YUAN SHENGGAO

German chemical giant BASF announced on Oct 11 that it will invest in a new world-class Neopenyl Glycol plant at its new Verbund site in the coastal city of Zhanjiang in the western part of Guangdong province.

With an annual production capacity of 80,000 metric tons, the new NPG plant is expected to come on stream in the last quarter of 2025, to boost BASF's global NPG capacity to 335,000 metric tons annually from 255,000 tons at present.

The announcement came shortly after its first plant at the Verbund site was put into operation in early September, which marked a milestone in the comprehensive construction of the Zhanjiang project.

The smart Verbund site, with a total investment of 10 billion euros (\$9.55 billion), will form a solid foundation for a world-class industrial cluster in Zhanjiang, local officials said.

The site is the first large petrochemical project solely owned by a foreign investor in China.

On Sept 15, less than 10 days after the plant went into operation, 11 petrochemical companies signed cooperation agreements with the Zhanjiang Economic and Technological Development Zone and BASF, with a combined investment hitting about 7 billion yuan.

They will strengthen cooperation in such sectors as fine chemical industry, public and supporting facilities, and logistics services. The estimated industrial output value



From left: The first plant at the BASF Verbund site in Zhanjiang begins operation in early September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

will exceed 11 billion yuan in total. Big projects such as BASF's Verbund site in Zhanjiang are paving way for the city to speed up its high-quality economic development, officials said.

In recent years, Zhanjiang has made great efforts to develop port industries, coastal tourism and agriculture with local characteristics, in a bid to form a high-level modern industrial system.

It now has four major industrial projects each with an investment of more than \$10 billion and several Fortune Global 500 companies including Air Liquide and Veolia.

Also, the annual industrial output value of some advanced manufacturing clusters, such as green steel making, high-end paper making and green energy, is about to reach 100 billion yuan, respectively.

At present, Zhanjiang is striving to build itself into a subcenter of

Guangdong, and an important growth point of a modern coastal economic belt of the province by integrating industrialization and digitalization with ecology and highlighting the construction of big industrial parks, the development of big cultural tourism and application of big data.

From 2012 to 2021, Zhanjiang's GDP increased from 190 billion yuan to nearly 356 billion yuan, and the fixed-asset investment rose from 57.23 billion yuan to 137.6 billion yuan.

Located in the southernmost part of the Chinese mainland, Zhanjiang is one of the first 14 open coastal cities and serves as a pivot of maritime cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative framework.

It is also a national marine economic development demonstration zone, a national comprehensive transportation



hub and a central city of the Beibu Gulf.

Zhanjiang is an important gateway for Guangdong to connect with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations members. It is also located at the intersection of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Hainan Free Trade Port and the Beibu Gulf city cluster.

"The city will give full play to its geographical advantages, and actively build a new highland for opening-up in China," Liu Hongbing, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, told local media.

It is planning to build an industrial park covering around 620 square kilometers, which is designed to be the largest of its kind in the province. The park will focus on the cultivation of 100-billion-yuan industrial clusters of green steel, green petrochemical and advanced materials. It will also develop automobile and green energy industries.

In addition, Zhanjiang's traditional advantageous industries like agriculture, aquatic product processing and food featuring local characteristics have enhanced their competitiveness.

The city is now home to 25 high-level modern agricultural industrial parks, including four State-level ones.

In 2021, Zhanjiang ranked first in Guangdong in terms of grain planting area, the total output value of aquatic products, and agricultural output value which stood at 105.2 billion yuan.

In addition to industries, the city has also sped up the construction of a modern three-dimensional transportation system of land, sea and air in the past decade.

The modern and comprehensive transportation network is helping Zhanjiang enhance co-operative ties with the island province of Hainan, which is on the other side

356
billion yuan
GDP of Zhanjiang in 2021

of the Qiongzhou Strait.

The two are preparing to build a special cooperation zone between Guangdong and Hainan provinces in Zhanjiang's Xuwen county.

With a total planned area of 140 sq km, the zone will have a modern logistics park, a high-end manufacturing park, a port service and business area, and a cultural tourism and ecological innovation demonstration area.

Zhanjiang and Hainan will also jointly promote the construction of the Qiongzhou Strait Economic Belt; boost the coordinated development of modern service industry; and strengthen cooperation in marine biopharmaceutical industry, marine energy and marine equipment manufacturing.

The city has also fortified its sub-center role in terms of scientific and technological innovation, education, healthcare service as well as modern service sectors.

The city ranks top in the western region of Guangdong in the numbers of high-tech enterprises, tech-intensive SMEs, State-level incubators for technological enterprises and spaces for mass innovation.

It has also topped other cities in Guangdong outside the prosperous Pearl River Delta region in the retail sales of social consumer goods in the past few years.

Area capitalizing on digital construction

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In recent years, Zhanjiang in Guangdong province has taken digital construction as its key to government operation and services.

One example is the in-depth integration of environmental governance and big data, aiming to build a strong governance capacity and create an intelligent system for the ecological environment, local officials said.

On the digital platform of the Zhanjiang Ecological Environment Intelligent Command Center, data of the city's atmosphere, water, soil and other environmental elements are continuously collected and transmitted.

The platform has gathered the information of thousands of enterprises in Zhanjiang as well as ecological factors, becoming a "super brain" for the daily management and decision-making of the ecological environment department.

Zhanjiang has vigorously consolidated the foundation of digital government construction and continuously improved its basic support services.

From industry and agriculture to social governance and people's livelihood, Zhanjiang is striving to promote high-quality development with big data applications.

The application of big data puts local welfare services within easy reach, making citizens' lives more convenient, and adding wisdom to urban development and economic operation.

In the past 10 years, "5G plus industrial internet" is boosting the transformation from traditional manufacturing to intelligent manufacturing.



People gather at a 5G pavilion of a tech expo in Zhanjiang. PHOTOS BY LIU JICHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



A staff member monitors data at a company in Zhanjiang.

Examples include the application of "5G plus industrial internet" in Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel base and Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical's project in Zhanjiang.

In Zhongke's nearly 2,000 square-meter control hall, nearly 400 consoles automatically control more than 30 sets of production devices in the whole plant, providing a guarantee for safe production.

For small and medium-sized enterprises, the city's "5G plus industrial internet" platform plays

an active role in order management, raw material procurement, the completion of production tasks, production and manufacturing collaboration and automatic warehousing.

Agriculture in Zhanjiang is also making great strides on the road to digitalization.

In the agricultural industrial parks, industries such as shrimp, dragon fruit and bananas are empowered by digitalization.

The application scenarios of information technology cover the

The city will focus on building a new system of digital infrastructure to explore paths for industrial transformation."

Liu Hongbing, Party secretary of Zhanjiang

entire chain of production, processing, branding and marketing.

Big data also improves people's sense of happiness. With a mobile phone, enterprises and citizens can easily handle administrative matters that previously required a series of documents onsite.

In the digital age, "informatization and digitization" has become the cornerstone of the city's digital development and the road for the city's high-quality and leap-forward development, said Liu Hongbing, Party secretary of Zhanjiang.

"The city will focus on building a new system of digital infrastructure to explore paths for industrial transformation. It needs to cultivate new momentum for the digital economy and focus on digital governance to improve social governance capabilities."

According to the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Reform and Construction of Zhanjiang's Digital Government and the Implementation Plan for the Construction of Zhanjiang's New Smart City (2021-25), Zhanjiang will optimize government service and innovate in models through digital transformation.

Greater transport facilities fuel city's growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

There was good news for people traveling from downtown Zhanjiang to Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport as an expressway section opened to traffic on Sept 21.

The 5-kilometer section is part of the Zhanjiang airport expressway which extends about 25 km and is also a fast lane connecting the urban area to the airport economic zone.

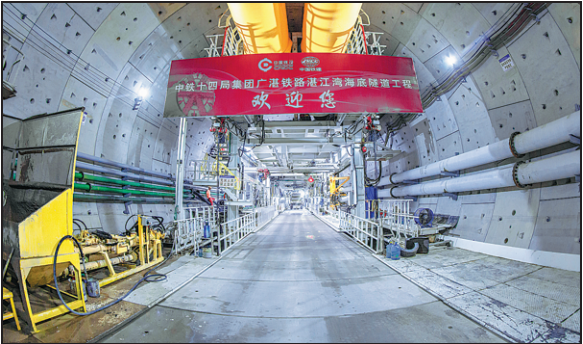
The 401-km Guangzhou-Zhanjiang High-speed Railway, which allows bullet trains to run at a maximum speed of 350 km per hour, is expediting its construction as the major part of the undersea tunnel was finished in mid-September. The railway will begin to operate during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25).

In late March, Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport opened to traffic. It further promoted the city in Guangdong province to become a comprehensive transportation hub.

Zhanjiang has sped up to develop a modern transportation network focusing on large ports, roadways and aviation in the past decade. The city's investment in fixed transportation assets amounted to about 109.9 billion yuan (\$15.47 billion) during the period, according to official statistics.

In terms of sea transportation, the city's port facilities have stepped up a level in the past 10 years.

The 400,000-dead-weight tonnage channel of Zhanjiang Port and 400,000-DWT bulk cargo terminal



The construction site of the Zhanjiang undersea tunnel along the Guangzhou-Zhanjiang high-speed railway. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

in the Xiashan port area were put into use in 2021.

Zhanjiang Port began 27 domestic container routes and 16 container lines connecting to regions such as Singapore and Malaysia by the end of 2021.

It offered navigation to more than 150 countries and regions by that time.

Xuwen Port's roll-on roll-off passenger and freight wharf started operation in 2020 and has facilitated traveling from Zhanjiang to Hainan Free Trade Port.

Regarding railway networks, the Jiangmen-Zhanjiang section of the Shenzhen-Zhanjiang High-speed Railway opened traffic on July 1, 2018.

The Hepu-Zhanjiang High-speed Railway and Zhanjiang-Haikou

High-speed Railway are now ready for construction.

In terms of air transportation, Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport, one of Guangdong's four regional hub airports, offers traffic to more than 60 cities and benefits more than 15 million people in western Guangdong.

Transportation has advanced Zhanjiang's living environment over the past decade.

People can travel within downtown Zhanjiang in 15-20 minutes while the Leizhou Peninsula, where the city is located, realized a one-hour living circle.

According to the development planning of Zhanjiang's comprehensive transportation system for the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), the city will improve its airports, high-speed railways, expressways

and sea ports by the end of 2025.

Travel times between Zhanjiang and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Beibu Gulf will be within two hours by high-speed trains by 2025.

People will enjoy more convenient commutes in Zhanjiang which can also allow them to travel faster to other domestic and foreign regions by the end of 2035.

The city's position as a comprehensive transportation hub will become more prominent while the city's status as a regional freight hub will be consolidated by that time. Improvement of Zhanjiang's transportation infrastructure will help to promote industrial upgrading, be it the port-based industrial cluster, the big data industrial park, or tourism based on coastal resources and intangible cultural heritage.

The city has attracted Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel and Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical and BASF's smart Verbund site, and has had many tourist destinations such as Loong Bay International Ocean Resort and Fanchengtui Resort linked with the traffic network in the past decade.

Large industrial projects have had a deep effect on the local economy and require more diverse professionals and technologies. The fast and convenient transportation system will help to reduce the cost of production and operation and enhance coordination and the certainty of economic development, experts said.

Mangroves restored to promote green advancement

By YUAN SHENGGAO

With the largest area of mangroves in Guangdong province, Zhanjiang has restored 9,960 hectares of mangroves in recent years through ecological reclamation.

The city's area of mangroves accounts for 33 percent of the nation's total and 78 percent in the province. Mangroves are becoming fertile grounds for the region's green economic development.

In April in 2021, the Zhanjiang Mangrove Afforestation Project was approved in which the 380 hectares of mangroves planted in the protected area from 2015 to 2019 were registered as China's first blue carbon credit project.

Later, the Beijing-based SEE Foundation purchased 5,880 tons of carbon dioxide emission reductions generated by the project as of May

2020. In addition, the foundation raised more than 7.8 million yuan (\$1.09 million) for the protection and restoration of mangroves and for community building in Zhanjiang.

At present, Zhanjiang is working on an ocean carbon sink accounting system and working mechanism and developing a replicable technological methodology for ocean carbon sinks.

Zhanjiang plans to build and restore another 4,183 hectares of mangroves by 2025. A total of 300 million yuan is expected to be invested this year to plant 594.67 hectares of mangroves.

The ecological benefits of Zhanjiang mangroves are becoming increasingly prominent.

Every winter, Zhanjiang Mangrove National Nature Reserve, the largest single mangrove area in Chi-

na, is an important stop for international migratory birds.

In recent years, a variety of waterbirds have been feeding on the tidal flats in the nature reserve, and even rare birds such as spoon-billed sandpipers and black-faced spoonbills have appeared.

"The return of these rare waterfowl, which are particularly sensitive to the environment, shows that the mangrove ecosystem is becoming increasingly stable and the ecological functions are recovering and improving," said Wu Xiaodong, chief of the protection management section of the Zhanjiang Mangrove Reserve Administration.

The protection and restoration of mangroves is only a microcosm of Zhanjiang's vigorous promotion of environmental protection.

Since 2019, Zhanjiang's surface water and drinking water sources at

the county level and above have maintained a 100 percent rate of excellent quality.

Since the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), the air quality of Zhanjiang has remained excellent. In 2021, the city's air quality ranked first in Guangdong.

From January to August this year, the air quality of Zhanjiang was further improved. The air quality index was 99.2 percent, and the PM2.5 concentration has been at its best level in recent years and continued to rank first in Guangdong.

The industries in Zhanjiang have also adopted a green concept in overall development. One example is the construction of the hydrogen-based shaft furnace project of Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel on the city's Donghai Island, which is a zero-carbon demonstration plant.

In December 2021, the first phase

of the photovoltaic power generation project at Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel was connected to the grid and began to distribute photovoltaic power for the building of the plant.

This year, Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel plans to implement the second phase of its photovoltaic power generation project, which is estimated to reduce carbon emissions by 76,500 tons per year. It will be the largest distributed photovoltaic power generation project in the country. Meanwhile, the construction of the photovoltaic project of Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical was also rolled out in the first half of this year.

Enterprises on the island are connected to form a "green community" for environmental protection and recycling.

The hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen produced by steelmaking are continuously supplied to the next-door Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical, and



From left: Birds rest in the mangroves in Caotian town of Suixi county, Zhanjiang. LI BO / FOR CHINA DAILY A greenway in Zhanjiang. LIU JICHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



petrochemical production materials such as C5 and C9 are sent to the surrounding downstream enterprises through pipelines.

In 2021, the scale of onshore wind power and photovoltaic power generation in Zhanjiang ranked first in Guangdong. The cumulative consumption of new energy power was

about 6 billion kilowatt-hours, accounting for 32 percent of the total power supply in the city.

The 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for Ecological Environmental Protection in Zhanjiang issued earlier this year proposed that by 2025, Zhanjiang will achieve remarkable results in the green transformation

of production and lifestyle, greatly improve resource utilization efficiency and maintain the top air quality in Guangdong.

The goal of ecological and environmental protection has been set up in four categories and 18 target indicators of environmental governance, response to climate change,

environmental risk prevention and control and ecological protection.

Next, Zhanjiang will vigorously promote the protection and construction of "beautiful bays" and improve the quality of the marine ecological environment.

As a major marine city, Zhanjiang is surrounded by the sea on three

sides and is endowed with unique marine resources. The coastal water area under the jurisdiction of the city is about 15,000 square kilometers.

The mainland coastline is 1,243.7 km long. It has three typical ocean ecosystems of mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds.

Highlights

In 2012, Zhanjiang's GDP reached 190 billion yuan (\$26.7 billion); in 2021, the number hit 356 billion yuan.

In 2012, the fixed-asset investment in Zhanjiang reached 57.2 billion yuan and the number jumped to 137.6 billion yuan in 2021, with growth rate ranking third in Guangdong province.

In 2018, the Jiangmen-Zhanjiang section of Shenzhen-Zhanjiang High-speed Railway was opened, marking Zhanjiang's march into the express railway era.

In 2019, a master plan to establish Zhanjiang into a railway hub city was approved and Zhanjiang became the third national-level railway hub city in Guangdong.

In September 2020, the country's largest roll-on, roll-off passenger harbor started operation at Xuwen Port, shortening the sea voyage across the Qiongzhou Strait by more than one-third.

In 2021, the number of nationwide renowned signature agricultural prod-

ucts reached 40, with 214 leading agricultural enterprises and 21 modern agricultural industrial parks above the provincial level.

In 2021, 3627 5G base stations were newly established in the city to improve the local network. Optical fiber network users and 100M optical fiber network users reached 973 and 95.6 percent of the population.

In 2021, the Zhanjiang Port became the only world-class deep-water port in South China that can handle 400,000-dead-weight tonnage ships.

By the end of 2021, Zhanjiang had 18 sister and friendship cities, ranking first among the cities to the east, west and north of Guangdong.

In March 2022, Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport — the only airport in western Guangdong — was put into trial operation. As one of the four regional hub airports in Guangdong, Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport is a 4E-class airport.