

Opportunities of Bay Area in focus

Governor says Guangdong will play its role well in demonstrating high-quality development

GD TODAY

NUMBERS TELL

By YUAN SHENGGAO

South China's Guangdong province has pledged to spare no effort in accelerating the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and better leverage the role this can play in its economic development in 2024.

Wang Weizhong, governor of Guangdong, made the remarks when he delivered his government work report to the second session of the 14th Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, which opened in the southern metropolis of Guangzhou on Tuesday.

The provincial government has set the goal of a 5 percent GDP growth rate for Guangdong in 2024. Wang said the province will promote soft and hard connectivity with Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, and accelerate the construction of an advanced rail network to link cities in the Bay Area.

In addition to promoting the preliminary work of the Guangzhou-Zhuhai-Macao high-speed railway, relevant departments will speed up the reconstruction and expansion of the exit-entry land ports of Huanggang and Shatoujiao in Shenzhen, he said.

Meanwhile the provincial government will make use of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to optimize and improve northbound travel for Hong Kong and Macao vehicle access programs while promoting "southbound travel for Guangdong vehicles" this year, Wang said.

He said that Guangdong will expand the list of "Bay Area standards" and the scope of "Bay Area certification" projects, and increase the functions of the Bay Area as a trade and shipping hub to strengthen the synergy and linkage between the construction of the Bay Area and major national development strategies.

Wang said Guangdong will accelerate high-quality development through advancing the construction of an international science and technology innovation center and the comprehensive national science center in the Bay Area.

"Focusing on industrial and technological cooperation, we will give full play to the leading role of the pilot free trade zones of Hengqin, Qianhai and Nansha and Shenzhen Park of the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Cooperation Zone to accelerate the creation of an important driving force for leading high-quality development," he said.

Located at the border between Shenzhen's Futian district and Hong Kong, the Hetao cooperation zone covers 3.02 square kilometers in Shenzhen in an area known as Hetao, and nearly nine-tenths of 1 sq km in Hong Kong.

The cooperation zone is regarded as an attractive and suitable place due to its strategic location,

2023 achievements

Modern services' contribution to the service industry's output value

75,000+

Number of high-tech businesses in Guangdong, ranking first nationwide

71,000+

Number of manufacturing enterprises with annual business revenue surpassing 20 million yuan each, ranking first nationwide

Guangdong has enhanced 8 industrial clusters each generating at least 1,000,000,000 yuan in output value.

The annual output of new energy vehicles reached 2.53 million across the province.

Major 2024 targets



5 percent rise in GDP



4 percent growth in fixed asset investment



6 percent increase in retail sales of consumer goods



1 percent rise in foreign trade



5 percent increase in industrial added value



11 million newly employed population



12.7 million tons output of grain produce

established infrastructure, business-friendly environment and innovation ecosystem.

Wang said the provincial government will also go all out to maintain the leadership in taking a Chinese development path to modernization.

"Starting from the development needs and people's expectations of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, we will continue to promote cooperation in such areas as employment, education, healthcare and social security, and support Hong Kong and Macao to better integrate into the development strategy of the country," he said.

Wang said Guangdong must shoulder the responsibility of being one of the country's economic powerhouses.

He urged the prosperous cities of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan and Dongguan as well as other major economic cities to play a role in the province's overall economic development while other cities make efforts to catch up, contributing to Guangdong's high-quality development in 2024.

To this end, Guangdong will expand high-level opening-up to the world and try to build a new system of a higher-level open economy this year, he said.

While promoting high-quality development of the finance industry, Wang promised to deepen reform in key areas to build a market-oriented, legal and internationalized first-class business environment.

According to the governor, Guangdong — which registered 13.57 trillion yuan (\$1.94 trillion) in GDP in 2023, up 4.8 percent year-on-year — plans to increase fixed-asset investment by 4 percent, lift total retail sales of consumer goods by 6 percent and lift foreign trade by 1 percent this year.

Guangdong's added value of industrial enterprises above designated size is projected to grow 5 percent. Grain production is estimated to hit 12.7 million metric tons in 2024.

Meanwhile, the province will create more than 1.1 million new urban jobs with the urban unemployment rate forecast to be around 5.5 percent this year.

What they say

This year's provincial government work report gives us more faith in rooting our operations in Guangdong. At present, the supportive and incentive measures from government departments are crucial (to businesses). For example, when supporting enterprises in ramping up investment and production, upgrade and transformation, as well as enhancing the resilience of industrial and enterprise development, it is essential for the government to truly achieve high efficiency in handling matters on request and not to intervene without request.

Luo Aiping, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress and the chairman of Guangdong Fangyuan New Materials Group

Industrial development provides a foundation for advancing the integration of urban and rural areas and coordinated regional growth. Qingyuan city's major platform for orderly industrial transfer has been designated by the province as one of the five key facilities, whose construction receives pri-

ority support from the government.

Kong Xianwen, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress and deputy general manager of Qingyuan Desheng Investment Group

This is the second time my proposal has been rated as excellent. I'm really inspired. I feel that it fully reflects the Guangdong CPPCC's function of political participation and consultation. This year, I brought a new proposal for the interconnectivity of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area cities. The southern extension line of Guangzhou Metro Line 22 might connect three cities ... If this one-hour express line can connect three cities, I think this will be a very important infrastructure project.

Adam Kwok, a standing committee member of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and executive director of Sun Hung Kai Properties

Southern province practicing Chinese-style modernization

By WANG JINHUI
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Over the past year, Guangdong in South China has fueled the practice of Chinese-style modernization in such aspects as constructing the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, opening up a new panorama for coordinated development between urban and rural areas, and upholding the real economy as the foundation, according to the province's latest government work report.

It was delivered by Guangdong Governor Wang Weizhong at the second session of the 14th Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, which opened on Tuesday.

Wang said the year 2023 marked the beginning of a comprehensive implementation of the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. It was a year of economic recovery and development following the three-year battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Guangdong anchors the goal of

building a strong country and national rejuvenation, focusing on the primary task of high-quality development and the strategic mission of building a new development pattern. It continues to lead the nation in the comprehensive deepening of reforms, expanding high-level opening-up, enhancing self-reliance in science and technology, and building a modern industrial system," Wang said.

He emphasized the need to work hard, bolster Chinese-style modernization, achieve outstanding results, and contribute to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In 2023, Guangdong's GDP reached 13.57 trillion yuan (\$1.89 trillion), up 4.8 percent year-on-year, making it the first province in the country to surpass 13 trillion yuan. Despite challenges, the province's foreign trade achieved positive growth and the added value of industries above designated size exceeded 4 trillion yuan.

The number of operating entities

It (Guangdong) continues to lead the nation in the comprehensive deepening of reforms, expanding high-level opening-up, enhancing self-reliance in science and technology, and building a modern industrial system."

Wang Weizhong, Guangdong governor

in the province exceeded 18 million, with a net increase of 1.73 million throughout the year, including more than 10 million household businesses and 7.8 million enter-

prises, accounting for one-seventh of the national total.

The added value of Guangdong's manufacturing sector accounted for 32.7 percent of the province's GDP in 2023, while the added value of the financial industry exceeded 1.2 trillion yuan.

The Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou science and technology cluster grabbed second place in the Top 100 Science and Technology Clusters for four consecutive years, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization. The province's research and development expenditure reached approximately 460 billion yuan and the comprehensive innovation capability has been the best in the country for seven consecutive years.

The per capita disposable income of rural residents in Guangdong increased by 6.5 percent, narrowing the income gap between urban and rural residents to 2.36:1. The province has improved the economic outlook for villages with annual incomes below 100,000 yuan.

The annual production of new energy vehicles in the province reached 2.53 million; one in four new energy vehicles in the country is made in Guangdong. Construction has begun on 100 new energy storage projects, with a total investment of 229 billion yuan. It includes the second phase of CATL's plant in Zhaoqing. The company is China's largest automotive lithium-ion battery maker.

Guangdong incubated a total of 132 national-level manufacturing champions and 1,528 "little giant" enterprises with specialized expertise and innovation. Nineteen enterprises entered the Fortune Global 500 list. The total number of A-share listed companies and the number of newly listed companies in China and abroad ranked first nationally.

In 2023, Guangdong aimed to build a high-level talent hub in the Bay Area, with 220 disciplines from 28 universities including the top 1 percent on the Essential Science Indicators list.

GDToday briefly

Annual conference opens in Guangzhou

The second session of the 13th Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference commenced in Guangzhou on Monday. Over the past year, Guangdong CPPCC has received 998 proposals, all of which have been filed and replied to and its members have continued to submit proposals on advancing the major platform construction of Hengqin, Qianhai, Nansha, Hetao and other areas, as well as promoting the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, helping boost the government's introduction of policies and measures to support the development of the service industry and improve the business environment.

Latest bilingual legal guide released

Guangdong has recently published a bilingual legal guide for foreigners, aiming to facilitate the lives of expats living in the province. The guide covers daily life, marriage and family, legal services, and special management. The content encompasses laws and regulations directly relevant to work and life, including stay and residence, employment, traffic and travel, marriage registration, notarization, legal aid, mediation, arbitration, management of foreigners with irregular status, those with illegal entry, illegal employment or illegal residency, and management of domestic activities of overseas non-governmental organizations.

1.41m vehicles from Hong Kong and Macao

The number of cross-border vehicles entering the Chinese mainland from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions was about 1.41 million in 2023. The driving north travel program took effect on Jan 1, 2023 for Macao and July 1, 2023 for Hong Kong. The scheme allows eligible vehicles to travel between the two special administrative regions and Guangdong via the mega sea-crossing bridge.

Regulations unveiled to boost manufacturing

Guangdong unveiled the Regulations on Promoting High-Quality Development of the Manufacturing Industry in Guangdong on Jan 19, which will take effect on March 1. The regulations cover the fields of manufacturing industry development and platform construction, investment promotion and enterprise development, resources allocation, and supportive services. According to the regulations, Guangdong will support enterprises in adopting new technologies, new processes, new equipment, and new materials to upgrade existing facilities, process conditions, and production services. Manufacturing enterprises will also be supported in setting up research and development institutions, increasing R&D investment, and introducing and training scientific and technological talent.

130.91b yuan worth of agri-products exported



Frozen spicy crawfish, a prepared dish from Zhanjiang Guolian Aquatic Products Co, finds a ready market abroad. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Guangdong exported 130.91 billion yuan (\$18.31 billion) worth of agricultural products in 2023, with a year-on-year increase of 13.3 percent. The figure accounts for 18.8 percent of the national exports of agricultural products. A total of 2.935 million metric tons of meat, aquatic products, fruits and vegetables were exported in 2023, including 31,000 tons of prawns, representing a 71.1 percent increase. The province exported 26,000 tons of Cantonese fruits such as lychee, longan and pineapple, which was a 46.7 percent increase compared with the previous year.



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