

# Economic powerhouse holds top spot



GDP and foreign trade figures revealed in government work report of Guangdong

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Guangdong province's GDP is projected to surpass a milestone 14 trillion yuan (\$1.9 trillion) for 2024, maintaining its position as the top-ranking province in the country for the 36th consecutive year, a senior government official announced.

The import and export volume of the economic powerhouse in South China grew 9.8 percent year-over-year to more than 9 trillion yuan in 2024, securing the top position in the country for the 39th consecutive year, Guangdong Governor Wang Weizhong said while delivering a government work report to the local annual legislative meeting on Wednesday in Guangzhou, the provincial capital.

It marks the first time that Guangdong, a global manufacturing base, has achieved an import and export volume exceeding 9 trillion yuan, demonstrating its resilience and vitality in foreign trade. The province's import and export volume contributes 38.7 percent of the national foreign trade increment, according to the government work report.

"Facing the critical juncture of advancing high-quality development, we remain steadfast and promote the integration of industry and technology to optimize the industrial structure and develop new quality productive forces," Wang said.

Guangdong's efforts in advancing foreign trade, optimizing foreign investment, upgrading service exports, enhancing international economic cooperation, and attracting high-caliber international professionals contributed to the steady progress in the province's high-quality opening-up in 2024, said the government work report.

The province's strategic focus on optimizing those areas has become central to advancing its high-level opening-up, fostering stable growth in the province's foreign trade volume and foreign investment utilization.

"The coordinated advancement in these areas not only optimizes the independent development of each field but also breaks barriers and coordinates resources, creating a synergistic effect where the combined result is greater than the sum of its parts," said Hu Jun, former president of Jinan University.

In 2024, Guangdong's exports to members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Middle East grew 11.1 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively. The province welcomed 26,000 new foreign-funded enterprises, marking a year-on-year growth rate of more than 20 percent.

The construction of the Shantou and Zhanjiang port economic zones began in 2024, while the former Guangzhou Huadu economic development zone was upgraded to a national-level development zone from a provincial-level one.

Guangdong also unveiled an action plan in 2024 to enhance the China (Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone and completed 33 tasks for advancing institutional opening-up.

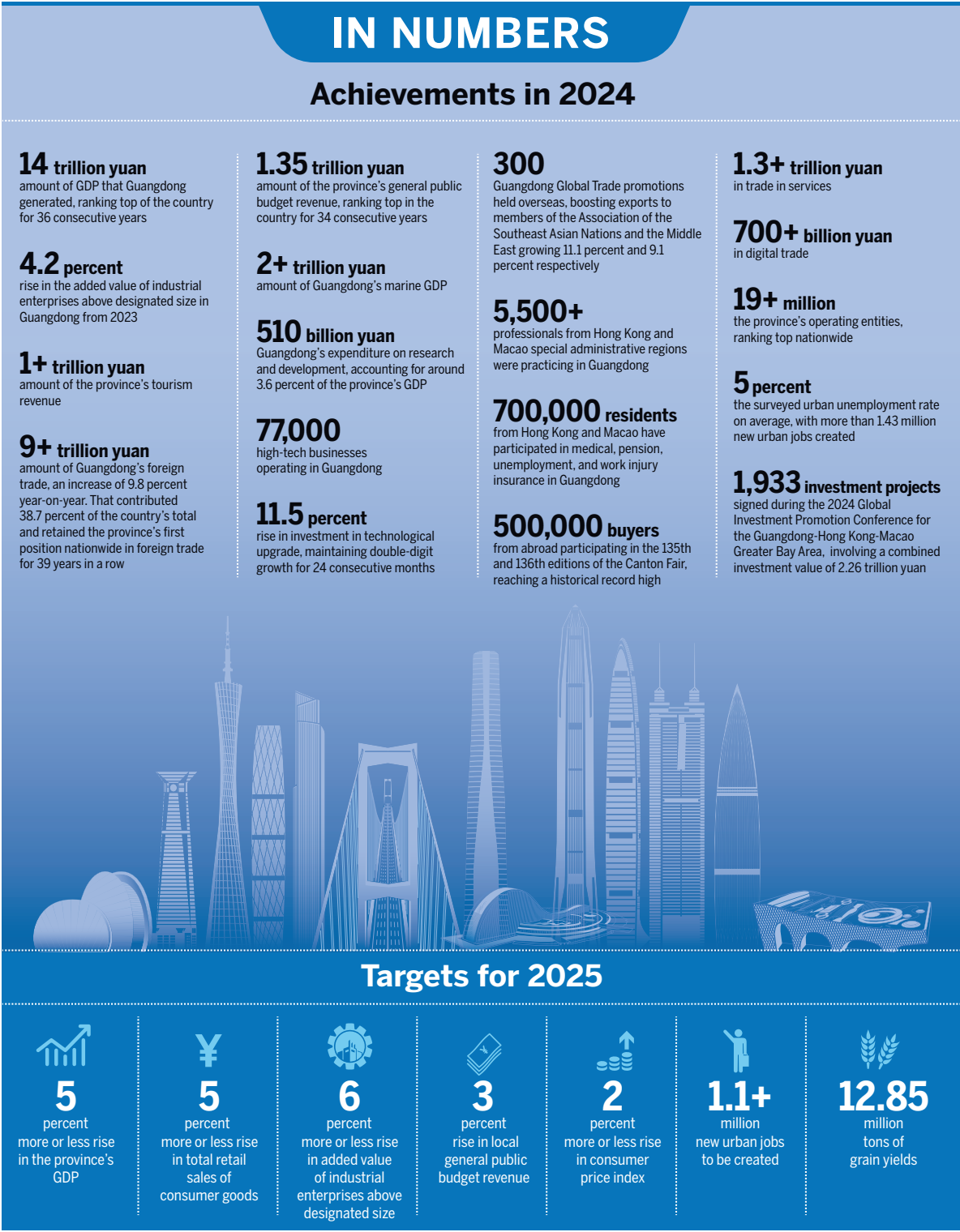
Guangdong hosted various international events in 2024, such as the Forum on China-Africa Local Government Cooperation, the China Import and Export Fair and the China Hi-Tech Fair, boosting trade and cooperation while showcasing its openness and vitality on the global stage.

The China Import and Export Fair, held biannually in Guangzhou, attracted approximately 500,000 foreign buyers in 2024, marking a historic high. Guangdong hosted 300 overseas expos as part of the government-run Guangdong Global Trade program, with transactions totaling around 60 billion yuan.

The province also advanced collab-



A provincial conference held in early 2024 sets the tone for high-quality development in Guangdong. SHI LEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



## what they say

Guangdong boasts a robust atmosphere of technological innovation and provides substantial support for fundamental research, making it one of the most concentrated areas for major scientific infrastructure in the country. The Guangdong Provincial People's Congress has enacted the Guangdong Science and Technology Innovation Regulations, which provide strong support and legal protection for fundamental research efforts. Our collaboration with Guangdong is mainly based on various factors such as regional innovation capacity, requirements for physical research, and policy support.

**Li Xiaonan**, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, a researcher at the Institute of High Energy Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences

The rapid development of Bronze Technologies is inseparable from Guangdong's excellent industrial ecosystem. Guangdong has cultivated an industry chain cluster around the semiconductor industry ... Given the increasingly well-developed industrial foundation, we are more confident in achieving technological innovations and industrial transformation and upgrades. We hope to contribute more to making Guangdong a semiconductor industry hub and advancing high-end manufacturing.

**Wang Zhinan**, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress and board chairman of Bronze Technologies

Industrial vitalization is of paramount importance. Over the past 18 years of greening barren hills in Lechang, I have had the deep realization that developing a single industry can invigorate the economy of a village, a town, or even an entire county. The most immediate and significant impact of industrial development is job creation. We have established a processing plant for edible camellia oil, providing more than 60 job positions annually.

We prioritize hiring local villagers, allowing them to find employment right on their doorstep.

**Liao Shixiu**, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress and Party secretary of a federation of specialized farming cooperatives in Yunyan township, Lechang, Shaoguan

As the main platform for cultivating high-tech skilled talent, vocational education is thriving alongside the booming manufacturing industry. Guangdong boasts 93 higher vocational institutions, with the student enrollment in these institutions accounting for a significant portion of higher education in the province. Over the past decade, these schools have produced approximately 7.69 million skilled professionals for society. Expanding vocational education abroad to support international production capacity cooperation represents a new driving force for the development of vocational education.

**Hua Xuehui**, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, and deputy director of the School of Automotive Engineering at Foshan Polytechnic

To address the public's demand for quality medical services, it is necessary to expand medical resources specifically in the underserved regions of eastern, western and northern Guangdong, as well as in urban grassroots healthcare service institutions. To this end, it is also a must to implement the national program focusing on enhancing grassroots-level medical and healthcare services and facilities. Given the current human resources and infrastructure, an integrated "internet plus healthcare" approach can be used to expand and distribute medical resources, enabling more people to enjoy high-quality medical services without any distance barriers.

**Zhang Nu**, a deputy to the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress and vice-president of the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University

High-quality computing network

services are crucial for building a world-class bay area. Guangdong is home to two national supercomputer centers in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and hosts data center clusters in Shaoguan, the Pengcheng Cloud Brain, and the Hengqin Advanced Intelligent Computing Center. With these strong advantages, Guangdong collaborates with Hong Kong and Macao to create a supercomputing application network in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. This ensures high-speed connectivity among the 15 supercomputing subcenters in the region, enhancing computing application benefits and providing a solid digital foundation for the integrated development of the Greater Bay Area.

**Lu Yutong**, a member of the Guangdong Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a professor of the School of Computer Science and Engineering at Sun Yat-sen University and director of the national supercomputer centers in Guangzhou and Shenzhen

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area should explore the development of sports-themed cities tailored to local conditions and establish a window for Chinese sports culture to the world, promoting the construction of a "Sports Bay Area". This joint effort can create a significant platform for dialogue between China and the world through sports and attract global capital, technology and talent by hosting international sports events and activities. This will provide new momentum for high-quality development in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao region. Additionally, building the Sports Bay Area will enhance the overall integration, coordination and endogenous dynamism of the Greater Bay Area's development, offering a valuable Chinese paradigm for establishing a world-class bay area.

**Eric Fok Kai-shan**, a member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC Guangdong Committee and deputy director of the Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan committee of the CPPCC Guangdong Committee

## Program to develop rural areas spreads prosperity

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Guangdong province forged ahead with its "high-quality development project for Guangdong counties, towns and villages" program in 2024, fostering the coordinated development of its urban and rural areas, said Wang Weizhong, governor of the province, when delivering the government work report on Wednesday.

The program, launched in 2022, focuses on the 122 counties, county-level cities and districts, 1,609 townships and streets as well as 26,500 administrative villages and communities in Guangdong.

It includes various supportive measures and projects, with the aim of establishing a new pattern of integrated urban-rural development.

According to the provincial government work report, the income ratio between urban and rural residents in Guangdong narrowed to 2.31 to 1 in 2024.

A total of 17 districts, one county, one county-level city and 124 townships were recognized as among the top 100 districts, top 100 counties, and top 1,000 townships in the country.

Of them, Chang'an township in Dongguan became the province's third township whose GDP has surpassed 100 billion yuan (\$13.64 billion), following Shishan and Beijiao townships in Foshan.

To boost rural vitalization, Guangdong reclaimed and upgraded high-standard farmland of some 74,667 hectares in 2024. The farmland area has witnessed net growth for four consecutive years, the report said.

Additionally, both the province's output of aquatic larvae and its total amount of waters used for deep-sea cage aquaculture rank first nationwide.

The National Marine Comprehensive Testing Field (Zhuhai), jointly built by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Guangdong provincial government, started the first batch of tests in October.

This year, the province will continue to implement the high-quality development project for Guangdong counties, towns and villages and endeavor to achieve preliminary results, which was the target set in 2022, Wang said.

He emphasized that Guangdong must adhere to the integrated development of industries, counties and people. The authorities will push forward the new urbanization pilot program in several counties and improve the urbanization level in western Guangdong.

Meanwhile, he urged rural areas to explore paths for collective economic diversification, support village collectives to participate in projects with stable earnings and prevent large-scale rural population from becoming poor again.

"We must give priority to agriculture and rural areas and do everything to broaden farmers' income channels, making agriculture a promising industry, villages more attractive, and farmers hopeful for the future," he said.

The province will also boost the marine economy and bay area economy in 2025 by developing more marine ranching demonstration projects; enhancing the marine engineering equipment manufacturing industry and marine shipbuilding industry; and stepping up marine ecology protection and restoration.

"We will transform the advantages of ocean resources into economic momentum and growth vitality to build a 'new Guangdong' at sea," Wang said.



To learn more about Guangdong, China's prominent economic hub, and to stay informed about the latest GBA developments, scan the QR codes to download the GDToday app or visit the website