

CHINA

NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

Meihe devoted to industrial upgrading

New area in Jilin strives to be a regional central city with robust economic growth

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

Insisting on high-quality development in recent years, Meihoukou city in Jilin province has comprehensively promoted industrial transformation and accelerated the cultivation of new productive forces, forming a modern industrial system supported by pharmaceuticals, food processing, commerce and logistics, and tourism.

Meihoukou is a county-level city directly administered by the provincial government. In September 2013, it was chosen as a pilot area to explore the expansion of power among such counties.

In January 2020, the province decided to build a demonstration zone, the Meihou New Area, for high-quality development and to create a modern regional central city.

In June 2021, the Meihou New Area was approved by the provincial government and officially established in September 2021.

In line with the spirit of the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the fifth plenary session of the 12th CPC Jilin Provincial Committee, the Meihou New Area takes investment attraction and project construction as breakthrough points, and fully focuses on strengthening, optimizing and enhancing the real economy, according to Zhu Huan, Party secretary of Working Committee of the Meihou New Area and Party secretary of Meihoukou city.

"We are also steadfast in transforming the work style, stabilizing growth, promoting reform, adjusting structure, improving the environment, benefiting the people and striving to compose a chapter of modernization with Chinese characteristics in Meihou," he said.

In the pharmaceutical industry, a cluster of industries centered around chemical drugs, biological drugs and traditional Chinese medicine has been formed.

Jilin Sihuan Pharmaceutical Co, with an investment of nearly 10 billion yuan (1.37 billion), has expanded its production center to Meihou.

Jilin Huisheng Biological Pharmaceutical Co spent 12 years developing Ganagliflozin Proline, the only innovative diabetes drug of its kind approved in Jilin in the past five years.

Furthermore, well-known pharmaceutical companies such as Buchang and Tianheng have also set up production facilities in Meihou, introducing a number of new varieties with great market potential.

In the food industry, the city has developed four key sectors: nuts, rice, alcohol and convenience foods.

"In the 1970s, local residents began to develop business channels for pine nut products," said Zhu. "Meihoukou has now become the world's largest pine nut processing center and distribution hub in Northeast Asia, accounting for 70 percent of the national processing

volume and exporting to more than 30 countries and regions such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan."

"Located in the central part of the world's golden rice belt, the city integrated high-quality rice resource and created the regional public brand Meihou Rice," he said. "Meihou Rice ranks among the top 100 geographical rice brands in the world."

He also mentioned that the city has established the largest edible alcohol production base in Asia, with the capacity to produce 520,000 metric tons of alcohol annually, as well as the largest craft beer production base in Northeast China.

The city has promoted the development of convenience foods such as cold noodles, rice noodles and spicy hot pot catering to Northeastern tastes.

The total sales of the convenience food industry last year exceeded 1.3 billion yuan.

Facing the weakening of its geographical advantage and the rise of the e-commerce industry, which have seriously impacted its commerce and logistics industry, Meihoukou has actively responded and sought changes.

"We have built several commercial facilities such as the Red Star Macalline Commercial Complex, the Eurasia Shopping Center and seafood markets to boost physical consumption," he said.

"Taking advantage of cooperation agreements between Jilin and Zhejiang provinces, we have built an e-commerce industrial park to drive e-commerce development, achieving a network transaction volume of 69.7 billion yuan in the first 10 months, with a year-on-year increase of 11.8 percent.

"At the same time, we have constructed the Transar highway port project to comprehensively enhance logistics capabilities and the Agricultural Product Cold Chain Logistics Park project to create a distribution center for agricultural products in Northeast China," he added.

The cultural and tourism industry is the one that best reflects the innovative spirit of Meihoukou, according to Zhu.

"Despite lacking inherent tourism resources, we have created well-known attractions such as Hailong Lake, Northeast Nightless City and Zhibei Village," he said. "We have established festival brands such as the Beer Festival and Water Splashing Festival, and the city has become a well-known tourist destination in Northeast China.

"Currently, we are actively exploring revolutionary resources such as the site of the Northeast Bureau of the CPC Central Committee's meeting in Meihoukou and Meihoukou Railway Station, focusing on building it into a revolutionary tourism city," he said.

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Marine cultural show



A child interacts with workers in traditional costumes at the Belt and Road exhibition area of the 9th Sanya International Cultural Industry Fair in Sanya, Hainan province, on Monday. The fair, which will last until Thursday, focuses on the protection, inheritance and innovation of marine culture, showcasing the coexistence between humanity and aquatic life from ancient times to the present. WANG CHENGLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

For African youth, Zhejiang province becomes haven for vocational studies

By CHEN YE in Hangzhou chenye@chinadaily.com.cn

More African students have been gaining more access to vocational schools in Zhejiang province to take advantage of its strong e-commerce knowledge, and their cooperation in vocational education has become a model for China-Africa educational exchanges and cooperation projects.

Jinhua University of Vocational Technology in Jinhua city is sending admission letters to dozens of Rwandan students, who are expected to start their studies in March. They will be enrolled in various majors, including e-commerce, and expected to finish their courses in December 2025.

"The training programs and teaching plans for them are being improved based on the feedback from the first group of students," said Huang Xin, deputy dean of the university's School of International Education, which is responsible for the study arrangements of foreign students.

In April, the university welcomed 30 Rwandan students, the first batch to be invited under the Future of Africa — China-Africa Vocational Education Cooperation Plan project. Those students, who are majoring in electrical automation and e-commerce, will graduate next month.

The university plans to enroll a group of students from Rwanda annually through 2029.

Uwamahoro Alphonsine, a Rwandan student majoring in e-commerce at the university, has been occupied with her studies. During a recent practice, she imitated livestreaming sales slogans in fluent Chinese and introduced products in a simulated livestreaming room, according to report from the Jinhua News Media Center.

“Before coming to Jinhua, I had the idea of starting my e-commerce business, but I didn’t have a clear direction. Jinhua has made my entrepreneurial dream more concrete.”

Uwamahoro Alphonsine, a Rwandan student majoring in e-commerce at the Jinhua University of Vocational Technology

Alphonsine said she is passionate about the women's clothing industry.

"Before coming to Jinhua, I had the idea of starting my e-commerce business, but I didn't have a clear direction. Jinhua has made my entrepreneurial dream more concrete," she said.

During her spare time, Alphonsine often visits women's clothing stores in the city's downtown area and Yiwu International Trade City. She is motivated by the dazzling array of fashionable women's clothing on offer.

"Women's clothing in China is both cheap and beautiful," she said. "I want to bring them back to Rwanda and let more Rwandan girls try them on."

Qian Xiangming, dean of Musanze International College at the university, said, "Most overseas students choose to return to their country after graduation. We have contacted Chinese enterprises in Rwanda and hope to help the stu-

dents realize their dreams of working or starting businesses in Rwanda."

Zhejiang, a coastal province renowned for its e-commerce prowess, has attracted many African students like Alphonsine who are dreaming of opening online businesses. Many other vocational schools have also begun cooperating with African countries to explore the overseas market of vocational education for African youth.

Yiwu Industrial and Commercial College, located in Yiwu, a city known as the "world's supermarket" for its enormous exports of small commodities, established an African branch campus, the Morocco Yiwu Business School, in October last year. Taking advantage of its strengths in international trade, big data technology and cross-border e-commerce, the African campus admitted its first group of 26 students in fall 2023, and another 33 students this fall, according to the college.

These students will study in Morocco for two years and spend their last year in Yiwu.

In addition, Zhejiang has also launched various projects to promote educational exchanges in recent years. Jinhua and Musanze, a city in Rwanda, have focused on training talent who will work in key industries in African countries. They have implemented the "Chinese Language plus Vocational Skills" education program and have conducted various skills training programs that have benefited over 30,000 people, according to the Jinhua News Media Center.

This cooperation in vocational education has not only promoted the sharing of high-quality educational resources but has also fostered cultural exchanges, making Musanze Jinhua's first national-level sister city.

Family sentenced for fake TCM treatment

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan zhaoruihue@chinadaily.com.cn

A family involved in the illegal production and sale of traditional Chinese medicines was sentenced for obstructing pharmaceutical management on Monday.

Hou Yuanxiang, originally an elementary school teacher without any background or experience in TCM, was sentenced to six years in prison and fined 10 million yuan (\$1.37 million), according to the first-instance verdict announced by the Huangdao District People's Court in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Monday.

The other defendants, which included his wife, daughter and son — also lacked qualifications as TCM practitioners.

They purchased uncertified Chinese medicinal materials and bought drug residue and powders to concoct Chinese medicines, with actual ingredients and formulation sources unclear, the court said.

They indiscriminately sold these medicines to patients with cancers and cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, which resulted in delayed treatment and worsening conditions for some patients.

Their sales, amounting to over 10 million yuan, were conducted under the guise of TCM treatment, constituting the illegal production and sale of drugs, said the court.

Hou Jing, Hou Yuanxiang's daughter, was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison and fined 8 million yuan.

Hou Yuanxiang's wife and son and Hou Jing's ex-husband were each sentenced to different lengths of imprisonment, along with fines.

Early January likely to be warmer than normal

By ZHAO YIMENG zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Early next month, cold air activity is forecast to remain relatively weak across most of China, resulting in higher-than-average temperatures, an official with the National Climate Center said on Monday.

Xiao Chan, deputy director of the center, said northern regions in the country may experience temperature increases of 3 to 4 C above the seasonal norm, while most other areas will be 1 to 2 C warmer.

However, fluctuations in temperatures will occur due to two waves of cold air that will affect the country, he said during a news conference at China Meteorological Administration.

Meanwhile, most regions will experience sparse rainfall, but eastern parts of Southwest China are likely to see significantly above-average rain and snow

accumulation, he added.

A cold front will sweep from north to south from Wednesday to Friday, causing temperature drops of 3 to 6 C in most areas, with localized decreases of up to 8 C in North China.

Light rain is expected in parts of Sichuan Basin, Guizhou and Hunan provinces, while regions at higher altitudes may experience light snow. Heavy snow is forecast in certain areas of northern Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Another wave of cold air will bring temperature decreases of 4 to 6 C to central and eastern regions from Jan 6 to 8. Between Jan 7 and 9, snowfalls are likely in parts of North and Northeast China, Xiao said.

On New Year's Day, most regions in the country will remain dry, with only light snow or localized moderate-to-heavy snow in areas such as northern Xinjiang and

parts of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Southern coastal areas, including Guangdong province and Hainan province, will experience light rain.

Travelers should prepare for possible delays and disruptions due to snow and ice in regions such as Northeast China, northern Xinjiang and parts of Southwest China. Local authorities are urged to monitor weather updates and prevent potential risks to agriculture, transportation and power supply.

The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is likely to experience poor air quality and low visibility due to weak winds and stable atmospheric conditions. Travelers and residents are encouraged to ensure precautions for heavy haze, Xiao said.

During the news conference, CMA deputy head Song Shanyun introduced 10 major breakthroughs in the high-quality devel-

opment of meteorology over the past five years.

China has established the world's largest modern meteorological observation system, which is capable of monitoring 80 percent of meteorological disasters, Song said.

The national land coverage for meteorological monitoring has increased from 29 percent to 44 percent. The detection rate is 84 percent for hail, 80 percent for tornadoes and 85 percent for severe thunderstorms.

In addition, significant progress has been made in leveraging meteorology to support agriculture, transportation, renewable energy, finance and urban management, he said.

For instance, 142 meteorological service centers for agriculture have been established, providing 12 types of meteorological risk warnings in the sector to ensure stable grain production, he added.



Workers sort pine nuts at a workshop in Meihoukou, Jilin province, on Nov 13. SUN CHI / FOR CHINA DAILY