

Zhanjiang building up green industrial strength

By HAO NAN
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Germany-based chemicals maker BASF last week announced the launch of a technology center in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. It is the first corporate scientific research and innovation platform the group has established in South China.

The center is located at the heart of BASF's 10-billion-euro (\$10.8 billion) Verbund site being built in the city, and will focus on the research of Verbund process optimization, digitalization and sustainable development.

Haryono Lim, president of the group's megaprojects in Asia, said the center will serve as a nucleus to stimulate more made-in-Zhanjiang innovations. "It is another important step on our path of building the Zhanjiang Verbund site as a lighthouse project," he added.

The Zhanjiang Verbund site, involving BASF's largest single investment and wholly owned by the group, will ultimately become the group's third-largest production site worldwide, following Ludwigshafen in Germany, and Antwerp in Belgium.

Since its inauguration in 2019, construction at the Zhanjiang site has been steadily progressing, said Lim. The first two plants of engineering plastic compounds and thermoplastic polyurethane were put into use in September 2022 and January of this year respectively.

Additionally, the site's core device construction is in full swing, and is expected to be completed at the end of 2025 as scheduled.

According to the Zhanjiang government, seven more major pro-



A large eco-friendly chemical project is emerging in BASF's Verbund site in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

jects have recently started construction at the city's Economic and Technological Development Zone during the first quarter, with a total investment of 2.14 billion yuan (\$297.3 million).

Among them, Guangdong Minghao Chemicals' project, with an investment surpassing 490 million yuan, for example, will mainly develop new chemical materials and high-end fine chemicals by making full use of the opportunities and resources offered by BASF's Verbund site and the con-

struction and expansion of Sinopec's refining and chemical integration project in the city.

Relying on a batch of leading projects, Zhanjiang is promoting the upgrading of industrial cooperation; accelerating the coordinated development of the manufacturing industry; adhering to the integration of industrialization, ecology and digitalization; and building three world-class port industrial clusters of green steel, green petrochemical and green energy, local officials said.

Over the past few years, the city has nurtured four 100-billion-yuan industrial clusters of green petrochemicals, modern agriculture and food; advanced materials; and new energy, helping to drive the vigorous development of other industries.

In 2021, the total output value of the green petrochemicals industrial cluster reached over 100 billion yuan, making it the first in Zhanjiang to reach the milestone.

According to a government work report delivered by the city's Mayor

Zeng Jinze on Feb 4, Zhanjiang implemented 53 key construction projects in the manufacturing industry in 2023, with a total investment of 26.12 billion yuan, an increase of 76.7 percent year-on-year and ranking first in the province.

Among them, BASF's Verbund site completed an investment of more than 10 billion yuan; the hydrogen-based shaft furnace of Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel was put into operation; and the first phase of

the Lianjiang nuclear power plant project — the first coastal nuclear power project developed and constructed by State Power Investment Corp in Guangdong — completed an investment of 5.71 billion yuan.

In the government work report, Zeng said Zhanjiang will keep a close eye on the extension and improvement of key industry chains this year, and promote the deep integration of leading enterprises with the local economy.

It will push forward the construction of Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel's zero-carbon high-grade thin steel plate plant, and accelerate the construction of the core device at BASF's Verbund site.

More efforts will be made to develop the green food processing and manufacturing industry, and build a modern agriculture and food industry cluster.

Also, Zeng said Zhanjiang will highlight the independent innovation of the iron and steel industry; make breakthroughs in hydrogen metallurgy technology; promote the computer numerical control of key production processes and the digitalization of production equipment.

Moreover, the city will devote more resources to accelerating the digital transformation of traditional industries, as well as to deepen the application of the internet of things and boost product innovation and upgrading in this field.

To create new quality productive forces, Zhanjiang plans to take strategic emerging industries and future industries as the core, and focus on the development of such sectors as new energy, new materials, low-altitude economy and artificial intelligence, Zeng said.



Golden pompano has become a pillar sector in Zhanjiang's '100 counties, 1,000 towns and 10,000 villages' project, which is aimed at promoting rural vitalization and advancing the coordinated development between rural and urban areas. ZHANG FENGFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Pineapples grown in Zhanjiang's Xuwen county are known at home and abroad. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Organic foods propelling city's economic growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In the spring of 2021, Chen Wenqing, a young man from Suixi county in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, resigned from a well-paying job far from home to return to Zhanjiang and pursue a career in the city's burgeoning sweet potato industry.

Chen co-founded a company called Jiachun Agriculture Tech, which to date has planted 10,000 mu (666.67 hectares) of sweet potatoes and set up a high-end standardization center, an integrated processing plant, and China's largest sweet potato saccharification workshop, which breaks down the potatoes' complex starch carbohydrate into simple sugar. Priced at 24 yuan (\$3.35) per kilogram, the company's special "volcano sweet potato" has become a top seller on domestic e-commerce platforms such as JD.com.

"With our refined management

1.49m metric tons

the total yield of sweet potatoes in Zhanjiang in 2023

and differentiated development strategies, we have gradually changed consumers' impression of sweet potatoes as coarse tubers," Chen said, adding that Zhanjiang's sweet potatoes are comparable to high-end fruits in terms of price.

According to the local government, the sweet potato industry has become one of the primary means for farmers to boost their income. In 2023, more than 900,000 mu of sweet potatoes were planted in the city, with the total yield of 1.49 million metric tons, and the gross output value of the industry exceeded 4 billion yuan.

In addition to sweet potatoes,

Zhanjiang is renowned for its high-quality pineapples, mangoes, red oranges and many other agricultural products. In January, the city listed the organic food industry as its pillar industry.

Liu Hongbing, Party secretary of Zhanjiang, said the city has huge potential and promising prospects in the organic food industry due to its solid foundation and clear advantages.

Guangdong province has been implementing a "100 counties, 1,000 towns and 10,000 villages" project aimed at promoting rural vitalization and advancing the coordinated development between rural and urban areas, and Liu has called on all departments and regions in the city to seize the opportunity to continue to develop the green food industry for the benefit of local residents.

Liu said more efforts should be made to build a research institute for organic food technologies and

create an effective cooperation mechanism between governments, enterprises, colleges and institutes.

Zhanjiang is also an aquaculture powerhouse, famous for its advanced aquaculture technologies, efficient deep processing factories and leading cold chain logistics systems. Official data shows the industry has an annual output value of 70 billion yuan, with more than 1 million people employed.

In recent years, Zhanjiang has been committed to deep-sea and offshore aquaculture, aiming to become a model city for modern sea ranching. Currently, it has five deep-sea cage mariculture parks and 3,563 deep-sea cages, which account for 70 percent of the province's total, according to local officials.

As well, three artificial reef projects are under construction in the city's national sea ranching demonstration zone.

Mangrove protection spurs ecological improvements

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhanjiang city is concentrating efforts to build its mangrove area on Jinniu Island into a first-class model of beauty and biodiversity in Guangdong province.

Zhanjiang has invested a total of 38.42 million yuan (\$5.34 million) to promote the construction of 11 green and beautiful Guangdong demonstration sites, driving the continuous improvement of the city's ecology.

The area of mangroves in Zhanjiang is about 6,398 hectares, accounting for 60.1 percent of the province's mangrove area and 23.7 percent of the national total.

At the end of 2021, Zhanjiang began to build the "City of Mangroves", uniting its efforts to develop the mangroves into a new business card for ecology and a new highlight for beautiful and green Guangdong.

Zhanjiang has issued a mangrove protection and restoration plan for 2021-25 and an action plan, actively promoting the construction of two large mangrove demonstration are-

as in Leizhou and Xuwen and accelerating the planting, protection and restoration of mangroves. The city has completed afforestation of mangroves covering an area of 1,273 hectares and restored 1,553 hectares.

Zhanjiang's ecological improvement stems from the determination and intensity of governance. Since 2023, Zhanjiang has promoted the implementation of seven campaigns for ecological improvement. Among them are the enhancement initiative for protecting ancient and noted trees and the action to encourage local residents to love, plant and protect greenery.

It is estimated that by the end of 2027, Zhanjiang will complete several projects for beautifying both urban and rural areas, involving a forest town, five forest villages and two villages featuring ancient trees.

Official data show that in 2023, Zhanjiang's comprehensive air quality index ranked second in Guangdong, with an annual average concentration of particulate matter PM2.5 at 20 micrograms per cubic meter of air.



The mangrove plants in Zhanjiang. WU DONGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

What they say

Editor's note: Deputies from Zhanjiang to the ongoing National People's Congress hailed this year's Government Work Report on Tuesday.

Zhanjiang should build a distinctive modern marine city, make the ocean a strategic priority for high-quality development, scientifically exploit marine resources and accelerate development of the marine economy. It should also steadily promote ecological improvement and effectively solve issues concerning the lives of residents to enhance their sense of gain, happiness and security.

Zeng Jinze, mayor of Zhanjiang

The Government Work Report is a boon for the social and economic development of Zhanjiang. The report



puts forward acceleration in the development of cutting-edge industries such as hydrogen energy, new

materials and innovative medicine, which are also Zhanjiang's emerging and future industries.

Ning Ling, vice-president of Guangdong Ocean University

The report mentions the need to expedite the development of new-type energy systems and to strengthen the building of large-scale wind and photovoltaic bases as well as outbound channels. This points the way for Zhanjiang to accelerate the innovative development of offshore wind power.

Ren Jiajiong, engineer of Guangdong Datang International Leizhou Power Generation

The report proposes to deepen and solidify the high-quality joint development of the Belt and Road Initiative and accelerate the construction of new land-sea channels in western regions. Zhanjiang should seize this opportunity,

strengthen the foundation for high-quality development, open up logistics channels and reduce logistics costs.

Liu Bin, board chairman of Zhanjiang Port Group

Zhanjiang should focus on reshaping the industrial chain and value chain with an industrialized concept, achieving sustainable and high-quality development with an ecological concept and promoting transformation with a digitized concept.

Lin Shuixi, chairman of Jinling Group

I am particularly interested in the content related to rural vitalization, food security, grassroots social governance and people's well-being in the Government Work Report. The report mentions scientific and technological innovation

several times and I will lead off the application of technological innovation to agricultural production and development.

Lin Jiaru, chairman of Guangdong Dongnong Industry

As a major aquaculture city in Guangdong province, Zhanjiang has maintained its leading position in the total quantity and output value of aquaculture for more than 20 years. Developing the mariculture base in Zhanjiang has special advantages and the construction of a "blue granary" concerns food security. This not only promotes aquaculture vitalization but also ensures the implementation of national strategies, which is of great significance.

Cheng Kaimin, assistant to president of Guangdong Yuehai Feeds Group