



A huge wind farm in Xuwen, Zhanjiang, represents the city's new orientation in developing environmental-friendly industries.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# Guangdong's new coastal star

## Zhanjiang set to further drive growth in the bustling province

By **ZHENG CAIXIONG**  
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Construction on the Zhanjiang Economic and Technological Development Zone is making good headway, with its major projects in steel, petrochemicals and papermaking on schedule, said local authorities.

Expected to become a new economic engine for Guangdong, the zone is playing a big part in accelerating the economic development in western part of the province.

According to its development plan, the zone is expected to have annual industrial production worth more than 300 billion yuan (\$48.78 billion)

in five years and more than 500 billion yuan in a decade, entering into the top 10 development zones on the Chinese mainland.

The zone is home to a mega iron and steel plant and a petrochemical project on Donghai Island, the fifth largest island in the country and the biggest in Guangdong.

Construction on the iron and steel project by Baosteel Group is planned for completion in September 2015. It will have an annual production capacity of 10 million tons of steel.

More than 17.49 billion yuan has been invested to date in the project, 11.6 billion yuan of it this year.

The zone's Sino-Kuwaiti pet-

rochemical facility will be able to refine 15 million tons crude oil and produce more than 1 million tons of ethylene a year when operations begin by the end of 2016. Some 2.77 billion yuan has been invested to date, 2 billion yuan of it in 2014.

Steel, petrochemicals and papermaking will become pillar industries in Zhanjiang, playing a big part in the city's economy in the coming years, local authorities said.

To support the industries, the city government has plans for 50 sq km in petrochemical projects, a 30-sq-km industrial park for the iron and steel industry and another 20 sq km for papermaking.

Construction on a new airport will begin in 2015 and will be completed in 2017 to help further improve the city's infrastructure and investment environment, local authorities said.

Liu Xiaohua, Party chief of



**Economic growth cannot be achieved at the cost of the ecology and environment. Zhanjiang's environment and air quality will remain intact after the petrochemical project begins operation."**

WANG ZHONGBING  
MAYOR OF ZHANJIANG

Zhanjiang, urged the government to speed up construction of the zone in the following months.

Liu and Zhanjiang mayor

Wang Zhongbing recently visited the zone and promised to continue to introduce even more incentives to support development and help attract foreign investment.

### Protecting ecology

Wang told government departments to pay special attention to protecting local ecology.

"Economic growth cannot be achieved at the cost of the ecology and environment," Wang said.

"Zhanjiang's environment and air quality will remain intact after the petrochemical project begins operation," he added.

In addition to further simplifying administrative procedures, the city government will continue to introduce a series of preferential policies to encourage foreign companies to invest in the zone, the

mayor said.

Covering an area of more than 496 sq km, the zone includes the city's Donghai, Naozhou, Dongshantou and Nanping islands.

It is now home to more than 2,500 foreign-funded companies. Investors have come from North America, Europe, East Asia, Northeast Asia, the Middle East, as well as Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Big-name foreign companies including Coca Cola and PepsiCo have set up production facilities in the zone.

In addition to steel and petrochemicals, local authorities particularly want more foreign companies to establish production facilities in high-tech, papermaking, ocean-derived biomedicines, machinery, garments, electric appliances and beverages.

Located on Guangdong's Leizhou Peninsula facing

Hainan Island, Zhanjiang has abundant resources in agriculture, aquatic production, tourism, minerals, crude oil and natural gas.

It is a major sugar cane production and seafood export center.

In 2010, the zone was rated as a province-level high-tech zone and a province-level development zone for recycled economy.

In 2011 the zone was listed by the provincial government as an important destination for the industries transferred from the Pearl River delta region.

**300**  
billion yuan

the value of annual industrial output projected in the zone in five years

# Hometown hero in the Qing Dynasty

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Chen Lanbin, China's first ambassador to the United States, is still honored by the people of Zhanjiang, a port city in western Guangdong, more than a century after he made a name for himself.

Chen (1816-1895), a native of Wuchuan in Zhanjiang, dedicated his life to the promotion of Sino-US cooperation and protecting the legal rights and interests of the large number of overseas Chinese in the US during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Chen also urged the Qing government to open the door to the outside world to learn from advanced countries to help develop the country's economy.

He proposed a merchants' department focused on commerce with foreigners. His proposal was praised and supported by the emperor and many senior officials.

In 1870, Emperor Tongzhi accepted Chen's proposal to send youth to the US to study Western military and political sciences, as well as manufacturing technologies.

Chen then became the first Qing official to lead students to study in the US.

The first group selected included Liang Dunyan and Zhan Tianyou. They started their overseas journey in August 1870.

Zhan, also known as Jeme Tien Yow, later became a top railway engineer and was responsible for construction of Beijing-Zhangjiakou Railway, the first locally designed and constructed rail line.

Zhan, who began studying in the US at the age of 12, is regarded as "the father of China's railways".

The Qing government sent a total of 130 young students to the US from 1870 to 1875. After they returned home, they played important roles in China's social and economic development.



**After he retired and returned to his hometown, he still had many valuable proposals to help the local government improve administration, harness rivers, construct coastal and river dikes and improve the livelihood of locals."**

CHEN YANNIAN  
GREAT GRANDSON

And the young people took the lead to import Western democracy, science and technologies into China.

After Chen was appointed China's first ambassador to the US in 1875, he paid special

attention to protecting overseas Chinese living there.

Chen suggested the Qing government send consuls general to the United States to help protect Chinese workers who were helping build railroads as well as mining gold, coal and other minerals.

Due to his diplomatic skills, Chen was also appointed ambassador to Spain and to Peru by the Qing government.

After he returned home, Chen was highly esteemed by Empress Cixi and Prime Minister Li Hongzhang. He advocated further raising the country's comprehensive strength to fight foreign invaders.

Born in a poor village family, Chen paid special attention to working people.

Chen gave a range of valuable advice to help harness the Yellow River after he toured along the river and visited local households.

When Chen retired at the age of 68, he returned to Zhanjiang and became a teacher. He died at home at the age of 79.

Chen's former residence has now become a must-go tourist destination in Wuchuan. It is listed as a key historical site by the Guangdong provincial government.

The 470-square-meter courtyard dwelling now attracts a large number of tourists from home and abroad.

Many overseas Chinese from the US, Canada and South America pay a special visit to Chen's residence to honor the memory of the renowned Chinese diplomat.

Chen Yannian, Chen's great grandson, said Chen was indifferent to fame and wealth, instead concerned with his country and people.

"After he retired and returned to his hometown, he still had many valuable proposals to help the local government improve administration, harness rivers, construct coastal and river dikes and improve the livelihood of locals," said Chen Yannian.

"He was still invited to



**Chen Lanbin:** During the late Qing Dynasty, the Zhanjiang native became China's first ambassador to the United States.

give lectures in many places in Zhanjiang and wrote several books on local economic development."

The government of Wuch-

uan renovated Chen's former residence to help keep alive the memory of the famous Chinese diplomat regarded as a hero by locals.