

# Yangtze boosts Zhangjiagang growth

City benefits from reforms and opening-up due to its key location on the river delta, Belt and Road

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Zhangjiagang city, located on the south bank of the Yangtze River in East China's Jiangsu province, has taken advantage of the spring breeze of China's reform and opening-up policy to advance its urban development strategy.

Following four decades of China's economic reforms, Zhangjiagang's gross domestic product (GDP) totaled 260.6 billion yuan (\$37.5 billion) in 2017, compared with 320 million yuan in 1978, with an average annual growth rate of 19.7 percent.

Located along the focal point of the Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road which is part of the Belt and Road Initiative, Zhangjiagang is well-placed geographically with convenient transportation links to other cities.

It now takes less than an hour by road to go from Zhangjiagang to Wuxi South high-speed railway station and the Wuxi Sunan Airport. After the expected completion of the Shanghai-Nantong railway link in 2020, it will only take half an hour for the train from Zhangjiagang to reach Shanghai.

Meanwhile, the city has been developing emerging industries such as new energy, advanced materials, technology and intelligent manufacturing. According to the local government, in 2017, the economic value of the city's emerging industries and



Jiangsu Jinling Sports Equipment Co, based in Zhangjiagang city, East China's Jiangsu province, is one of the leading manufacturers in China's sports equipment market. PAMELA LIN / CHINA DAILY

services sectors were 44.4 percent and 46 percent, respectively.

Currently, there are 18 listed companies and 60 National Equities Exchange and Quotations listed companies which are based in Zhangjiagang.

Jiangsu Jinling Sports Equipment Co, which was established in the city in 1985, is one of the leading manufacturers in China's sports equipment market. The company constructs stadiums, offers security services for events, provides sports facilities and also offers sports resources integration services.

The sports equipment manufac-

turer was listed on China's A-share market in April 2017. In the same year, the company recorded an income of 336 million yuan, up 1.8 percent year-on-year.

Over the years, the company has provided sports equipment and services of high quality for major international events. Regarded as a "China-born sports brand", Jinling has participated in Asian Games and Olympic Games twice by providing equipment services.

The company provided the gear for beach volleyball at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. The beach volleyball equipment provided by Jinling

met the same technical standards of the 2016 Summer Olympics and received the official certification from Federation Internationale de Volleyball.

Recently, market research and consultancy firm Frost & Sullivan awarded Jinling Sports the China New Economy Award Excellence in Leadership and recognized its contributions in the sports equipment industry.

Besides, the Zhangjiagang Free Trade Zone (FTZ) — the only FTZ at the inland river port — which was set up in 1992 has been facilitating foreign investment in Zhangjiagang

city and even the entire Yangtze River delta region. In the period from January to September 2018, the city recorded foreign investment registrations worth 563 million yuan.

Moreover, the local government has been continuously supporting enterprises and bringing in fresh blood to the city. More than 30 companies under the Fortune Global 500 have branches in the Zhangjiagang FTZ, together with several State-backed Chinese firms and six listed local enterprises.

On the other hand, the government encourages and supports the development of e-commerce in the region. The Zhangjiagang E-commerce Industrial Park, launched in 2016, is regarded as a model for the e-commerce industry in Jiangsu province. According to the park, the city had thousands of e-commerce shops and in the first half of 2018, the city's online retail sales reached 970 million yuan.

The industrial park has also introduced preferential policies to support the e-commerce sector like providing rent deduction for graduates who start a business in the park and giving specific grants to individual companies.

In June, a 14.8 billion yuan fund was established by Zhangjiagang city to facilitate the development of bricks-and-mortar businesses. The fund includes the Zhangjiagang city government's investment fund, the Zhangjiagang city industrial development parent fund and the Zhangjiagang city emerging industry pilot fund.

## Green drive spurs ecology gains

Zhangjiagang curbs polluting industries, focuses on development of eco-agriculture and tourism to promote sustainable growth

By PAMELA LIN

Zhangjiagang city faces certain major challenges due to its fast development — such as high energy consumption, environmental pollution and low efficiency in the use of resources — which could ultimately slow down its economic growth. Awareness of these issues from a very early stage has enabled the city, in East China's Jiangsu province, to implement policies to manage its ecological environment and achieve sustainable development.

In the early years of China's reform and opening-up process, Zhangjiagang city concentrated on industrial development. It thus depended on chemical and industrial compa-

nies to drive its economic growth. Gradually, the city started to realize the importance of coordinating the development of both its economy and the environment.

In recent years, Zhangjiagang has invested about 1 billion yuan (\$145 million) annually to restore and protect its ecology. At the end of 2017, the city shut down Dongsha Industrial Park, located along the banks of the Yangtze River. The park comprised 37 chemical and industrial companies with a combined worth of more than 2 billion yuan.

With a focus on the development of eco-agriculture and tourism, the city government has classified 84,000 acres as green areas and woodland in the past five years. The

public's appreciation of urban landscaping remains very high in Jiangsu province.

Since the 1990s, the city stopped quarrying businesses in Xiangshan and initiated the restoration and protection of the Xiangshan Scenic Area.

It established Xiangshan Park which occupies 7 square kilometers and attracts tourists from all over the world who are eager to see its seasonal sceneries. It was rated as a 4A level Tourist Attraction of China. Among the nation's total of 36 parks, Xiangshan Park in Zhangjiagang has the longest history due to the 8,000-year-old Dongshan village cultural relics site.

In 2000, the city dug the man-



Plum blossom season in Xiangshan Park, Zhangjiagang city.

HONG FENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

made Jiyang Lake, with soil taken from the area used to construct an expressway along the river. With the aim of building a green ecology and fully functional facilities for the public, the Zhangjiagang government has made several such artificial lakes to diversify the city's ecological environment.

According to the Zhangjiagang Environmental Protection Bureau, over the past decade, the city has voted down more than 600 projects that could cause pollution. Due to

the pollution control and emission reduction measures, the city's environmental quality has improved. The water and soil erosion control rate has reached 88 percent while the sewage collection and control rate hit 95.2 percent.

In October, China's large privately owned company, Jiangsu Shagang Group Co, invested 8.5 billion yuan in an environmental protection and technical renovation project which will vastly improve its environmental standards.