

Green Economy: China to build high-tech eco-district in ancient capital

Written by Qiao LAB

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China released a general plan to build Xi'an and Xiangyang, the area used to be where the capital of 13 ancient Chinese dynasties stood, into a high-tech eco-district, in northwestern China's Shaanxi Province, local authorities said Monday.

The new area named Xi'an-Xiangyang New District will be mainly focused on developing the state's strategic emerging industry, environmental-friendly and low carbon industry, high-end manufacturing industry and modern service industry in the future, said Zhao Zhengyong, governor of Shaanxi Province at a press conference.

The New District, covering an area of 882 square kilometers with a population of 893,000, is planned to be built across Xi'an and Xiangyang, two neighboring cities in Shaanxi. It will be 10 kilometers away from downtown Xi'an and three kilometers from downtown Xianyang.

The district will be China's fourth state-level new district, after Pudong New Area in Shanghai Municipality, Binhai New Area in Tianjin Municipality and Liangjiang New Area in Chongqing Municipality.

The area is expected to be a model for future Chinese cities, as it will embrace ancient Chinese culture and modern high-tech industries, according to the plan, which was jointly completed by urban planning bodies from home and abroad.

New high-tech industry zones will be established while agriculture and eco-tourism will be developed, and at the same time cultural relics of the 2,000-year-old city will be well protected, Zhao Zhengyong said, without unveiling the exact total investment for the district.

The ancient capital was the departure point for Chinese caravans traveling along the Silk Road to Middle Asia as well as West Asia.

Today the area is still a transport hub, with one international airport, six highways, two state roads, two provincial roads, which makes the city a portal to west China, Zhao said.

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"One of the biggest advantages of Xi'an-Xiangyang New District is its abundant natural resources," he said.

The district is mapped to cover part of the Qinling Mountains, the divide of north and south China, and three main rivers of Shaanxi Province, including Weihe River, Jinghe River and Fenghe River, he said.

"Enterprises are required to be environmental friendly and strictly obey the state's regulation on energy conservation and pollution reduction as well," he said.

"Efforts will be made to protect the well-being of the peasants, who make up 78 percent of the total population here, to make sure they will have equal access to public services through urban-rural balance development," said Jiang Zelin, vice governor of Shaanxi Province and director of the Xi'an-Xiangyang New District Administrative Committee.

As part of the plan of development of the western region, the Xi'an-Xiangyang New District is designed to be a crucial part of the Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Zone, a 69,600-square-kilometer economic zone covering cities in Shaanxi and the neighboring Gansu Province, according to the plan.

Moreover, the State Council has issued the Plan of the National Main Body Function Area in 2010, which requires the acceleration of Xi'an and Xianyang's integration.