

# TOP NEWS

## Rescue effort



Local residents take part in rescue at the site of a house collapse in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, on Monday. An Afghan woman and her four children were killed in the incident. XINHUA

# Hotline offers counseling amid outbreak

Psychologists from Beijing Normal University's center provide help to people, medical staff

By XIN WEN  
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The day starts early for Nie Xilun as the 31-year-old began counseling from home since the third day of Lunar New Year for those going through psychological trauma amid novel coronavirus outbreak.

Nie is one of over 200 psychologists at the Mental Health Service Center at the Beijing Normal University, which set up a hotline for psychological counseling for the public.

"During initial stages of the outbreak, because of the lockdown, many seeking psychological consultation often said their life was hopeless," said Nie. "The spread of information online has increased public concerns in the last few days."

"When will the epidemic end" and "Do I have COVID-19" were some of the common questions asked by callers in the early days.

"Many felt they had novel coronavirus pneumonia, and they were afraid they would fall sick."

In recent days, the rush to seek help has greatly reduced as the people have overcome concerns through phone counseling, Nie said.

The counseling takes about 30 minutes per session, said the consultant.

The psychological consultation team of the Beijing Normal University, which works in four shifts — from 6 am to 12 midnight — was divided into four groups to answer people's queries.

### Students join team

Some second year graduate students from the university's psychology department also joined the consultation team to provide psychological assistance via the hotline.

As of Feb 16, nearly 3,800 people from all over the country had received consultation online or via phone from the team.

Those seeking help include the public, people isolated at home or quarantine centers, and front-line medical staff, according to the university's Mental Health Service Center.

Nie recalled that when the medical staff called the hotline, the term they frequently mentioned was exhaustion, while the front-line workers were worried they could be infected with the virus.

"Some medical workers told me they had to be on the front line to treat patients but they could not go back home frequently, which made them irritable. They also blamed themselves for having thoughts of returning home," she said.

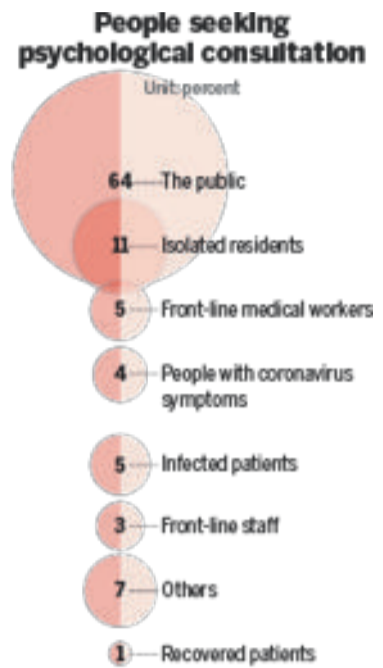
Nie said she was sometimes affected by breakdowns her callers had suffered, but she was also impressed by their spirit.

"A woman who called one evening was terrified. She said she had been infected with the disease because she went out to buy groceries in the neighborhood, which was located in the epidemic zone."

"The call lasted for about an hour. Eventually, she (the caller) realized there was nothing to be worried about," Nie said.

"Every person needs some support to stimulate their abilities of self-cure," she said.

The psychological counseling ser-



# Doctor returns home to go on front line

**Editor's note:** This series tells the stories of selfless individuals, from medical workers to volunteers, who are bravely fighting the virus outbreak with extraordinary dedication.

By YANG JUN and ZHANG XIAOMIN

A doctor from Southwest China's Guizhou province, who returned to his hometown, volunteered to work on the front line in the battle against novel coronavirus in Central China's Hubei province.

Zheng Jinding, 37, went home on Jan 11 to take care of his father, who was critically ill, and then died. He was stranded in Yangxin county, in Huangshi, a prefecture-level city in Hubei, after the outbreak.

He realized how serious the situation was after Wuhan came under lockdown on Jan 23.

"Many doctors went to Wuhan. As a doctor in the infectious disease department, it's my responsibility to be on the front line," Zheng, a doctor with Guiyang-based Guiz-

### ABOVE & BEYOND

hou Provincial People's Hospital, said.

Since he could neither go to Wuhan nor Guiyang, Zheng applied to the People's Hospital at Yangxin county to join their work on prevention and treatment of COVID-19 on Jan 29.

On the second day, he started to work at the hospital's isolation zone. His duties included asking patients about their medical history, giving them physical examination and developing treatment plans.

A dozen doctors are working in the isolation zone of the hospital, a designated one for patients infected with novel coronavirus.

Besides wearing protective clothing, they also do not go outside in order not to spread the virus.

Zheng works from 8 am to midnight. He has his lunch at noon and takes rest in the living area inside the isolation zone. "It is very close

to the wards, and if something happens there, I can attend to it quickly," he said.

Every day after work, the first thing Zheng does after taking off his protective clothing is to read his WeChat messages to see what his wife Zhang Cheng has sent him.

"She is also stranded in Hubei, but I have no time to talk to her. We communicate mainly via WeChat," said Zheng, adding that he has the support of his family to shoulder additional responsibilities in such an extraordinary situation.

"I want to help when people in my hometown need it," he said.

According to Zheng, the hospital's medical personnel are able to meet the current demands. He is the only doctor coming from outside the county to serve there.

"Masks, protective clothing and other medical supplies can meet the current demands, but there might be a short supply later," he said.

Zheng said in early February he will continue to work in the isolation zone until the epidemic is

brought under control. "Now that I've taken this decision, I'm going to stick by it."

Like Zheng, many medical professionals across the country volunteered to take part in epidemic prevention work during Spring Festival, giving up the opportunity to reunite with their families.

By March 8, more than 42,000 medical personnel comprising 346 teams outside of Hubei were designated to provide help in Wuhan, according to National Health Commission of China.

After working at Yangxin county's hospital for 46 days, Zheng is now under a 14-day quarantine at a hotel designated by the hospital. After his quarantine and when the public transportation from Hubei to other provinces is restored, he will return to Guizhou province.

Che Weiwei contributed to this story.

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# Hatred: No corner of the world is immune

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assault rifles would be banned. On April 10 last year, every lawmaker in New Zealand's Parliament, bar one, voted for the first of two rounds of changes to the country's gun laws, which banned semiautomatic firearms, magazines and parts.

Where the legislation has ground to a halt, however, is part two, which calls for the setting up of a gun registry that would allow authorities to keep track of the estimated 1.5 million weapons still circulating in the country.

True, the gun buyback program has seen 56,000 firearms handed in at a cost to taxpayers of \$64 million. But the politicians are stuck on the registry.

Despite Ardern's admirable handling of the crisis, she is facing an election later in the year, and gun owners are a powerful lobby.

While guns have been the key focus since the mosque killings, the horrific event also highlighted the rise of far-right extremism in New Zealand.

In a parliamentary committee meeting led by Ardern recently, the country's intelligence chief laid down the growing challenge since the mosque attacks.

Security Intelligence Service Director-General Rebecca Kitteridge told the committee: "We have got more information about more people who are expressing extremist views than we had before (March 15, 2019), and

**Survey findings released in December by online safety agency Netsafe showed that hate speech online increased in New Zealand in the past 12 months, with about 15 percent of the adult population having been targeted by it.**

some of those people existed beforehand, and then there is the impact of the attacks themselves afterwards."

Survey findings released in December by online safety agency Netsafe showed that hate speech online increased in New Zealand in the past 12 months, with about 15 percent of the adult population having been targeted by it.

Guns can be regulated if the political will is there. Dealing with racism and hate, however, is not so easy. Those who preach it hide behind the anonymity of cyberspace, and no corner of the world is immune from its evil reach.

The author is a China Daily correspondent based in Sydney.

# Borders: Japan says Olympics will go on

From page 1

after a judge rejected a lawsuit that sought to postpone the state's primaries until June 2.

Ohio was one of four states scheduled to hold presidential primaries on Tuesday. Arizona, Florida and Illinois were proceeding with their primary elections.

US President Donald Trump said on Monday that the novel coronavirus outbreak in the US could last until July or August.

US researchers opened the first tests of an experimental coronavirus

vaccine with four healthy volunteers at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Research Institute in Seattle on Monday, AP said.

Meanwhile, Japan has insisted that the Olympic Games will go ahead in Tokyo this summer, its confidence boosted by an early indication from the International Olympic Committee — which met for emergency talks on Tuesday — that ways may be explored to ensure safety at the event.

After an unprecedented videoconference meeting with fellow Group of Seven leaders, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Tuesday that

the leaders had agreed to support a "complete" Olympics, but avoided comment on the timing of the Games, which are scheduled for July.

"I want to hold the Olympics and Paralympics perfectly, as proof that the human race will conquer the virus, and I gained support for that from the G7 leaders," Abe told reporters after the conference.

Julian Shea in London, Ai Heping in New York and Wang Xu in Tokyo contributed to this story.

CHINA DAILY



## Help arrives

Chinese medical supplies, which include 300,000 face masks, are unloaded at Liege Airport in Liege, Belgium, on Monday. Chinese charities donated the medical supplies to help the European nation contain the spread of COVID-19.

ZHANG CHENG / XINHUA