



A total of 662 medics have arrived in Shanxi by March 23 after completing their rescue missions in Hubei province. SHI XIAOBO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Heroes' welcome for hundreds of medics back home in Shanxi

Health workers saved more than 1,300 lives in Hubei amid coronavirus pneumonia epidemic

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In recent days, a total of 662 medical workers returned to Shanxi from Hubei as the novel coronavirus epidemic was under control in this once hardest-hit province.

The first group of 230 medics went home on March 19 from their lifesaving mission in Hubei. The second batch of 432 people returned on March 23.

When they landed at Wusu International Airport in Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi, they were welcomed as heroes by the local residents, airport staffers and the police.

After the medics boarded buses to the center of Taiyuan, they were escorted by police cars. The gesture was seen as the highest homage made by locals.

There was the same fanfare when they left Hubei. On the roads to Tianhe International Airport in Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, the medics noticed there were posters with words of thanks.

People lined the road, singing their best wishes. Every traffic



policeman saluted them when their fleet of buses passed.

The medics also found their smartphones filled with messages of gratitude from their recovered patients.

Earlier in the morning when they left their hotels in Wuhan, Qianjiang, Xiantao and Tianmen cities, the medics were sent off at farewell ceremonies held by their colleagues and local government officials in Hubei.

The fellow medics in Hubei were reluctant to say goodbye to their comrades with whom they had worked for almost two months.

On the morning of March 19, Zhang Lihui, head of a rescue team to Wuhan, found it difficult to release her hands, which were held tightly by Mei Hongbin, president of Wuhan Youfu Hospital where she had served.

With tears in her eyes, Mei almost failed to complete a sentence. "I really hate to say goodbye. But I know your family is waiting for you anxiously," Mei said.

"Take care of yourself, my elder sister. I'm sure we can see each other in the future," Zhang answered.

The 662 medical workers who returned home are based in hospitals in Taiyuan, Datong, Yuncheng, Jincheng, Changzhi, Linfen, Yangquan, Lyuliang, Jinzhong and Xinzhou.

The 12th medical team from Shanxi was the first to complete its mission in Hubei province. On March 11, the last patient was transferred to another hospital from the Central South Hospital Affiliated to Wuhan University where the team served.

However, the 171 medical workers in the team volunteered to continue at the Leishenshan Hospital, a makeshift hospital dedicated to treating novel coronavirus pneumonia patients.

"I am proud of the dedication of our guys as they did a great job living up to the expectations of the

Hubei people," said Wang Cailing, one of the leaders of the team.

Shanxi has dispatched 13 medical teams to Hubei, with 1,516 medical workers having served at 11 permanent and five makeshift hospitals.

According to Shanxi Daily, a Taiyuan-based newspaper, the Shanxi medics have cured 1,328 patients in the three Hubei cities of Tianmen, Xiantao and Qianjiang. They includes 166 people in a critical condition.

In Tianmen, the last confirmed patient was cured and discharged from hospital on March 21. At hospitals in Xiantao and Qianjiang, 94.96 percent and 94.44 percent of the novel coronavirus patients were cured.

To date, there were no infections among the medical teams' members from Shanxi, according to the newspaper.

A total of 854 medical workers from Shanxi are still working in Hubei, continuing their efforts in local epidemic control.

Li Yali contributed to this story.

Restorative teas to brew up wealth in rural areas

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Authorities in Shanxi have pinned high hopes on herbal teas to revitalize the rural economy in the province.

Lou Yangsheng, Party secretary of the province, and Shanxi Governor Lin Wu attended a promotional fair for local herbal teas in Taiyuan on March 20, where local products were showcased to consumers at home and abroad.

Lou, who calls himself a "branding envoy" for Shanxi's herbal teas, said the products which have local geographic indications should be promoted to more people as they are "good for health and conducive to a high quality of life".

"The production of the teas is based on the selection of genuine medical herbs growing in Shanxi and time-honored techniques that require great human efforts. And the preparation of the teas represents an art form that is similar to the traditional tea ceremony popular in China and Japan," Lou said.

The Party chief said developing the herbal tea industry, which is expected to become one of the pillars of rural economy in Shanxi, is of great significance in boosting rural growth and helping farmers increase incomes.

The Shanxi Herbal Tea Industrial Alliance was established during the fair. Governor Lin unveiled the plaque for the association.

The alliance will be responsible for the promotion of herbal tea products, drafting industrial standards and helping members register



Top: A medical herb farm in Nanliang township in Yicheng county. HU BO / FOR CHINA DAILY **Above:** A business representative displays his herbal tea products during a promotional fair in Taiyuan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

their trademarks and design corporate identities, according to officials of the alliance.

Lou said he is confident of the market potential of the tea products of Shanxi because it has a long history and many health benefits.

"The history of Shanxi herbal teas can be traced back to the Red Emperor or Shennong, the legendary emperor who pioneered China's farming and medical industries," Lou said.

It is said that Shennong tasted

more than 100 herbs to determine which can be used for curing illnesses. In this practice he was poisoned by some toxic plants but his life was saved by drinking certain herbal teas.

Wang Cheng, vice-governor of Shanxi who was also at the promotional fair, said in Shanxi, as the homeland of Shennong, herbal teas have been brewed and drunk for thousands of years.

Cities like Changzhi, Jincheng and Linfen are traditional bases for herbal tea production.

The production of herbal teas in Shanxi shares some similarity with traditional tea making in the rest of the country, including such techniques as drying, baking and fermenting.

However, unlike traditional teas that use tea leaves as their ingredients, many parts of herbs, including leaves, fruits, stems and roots can be used for making herbal teas in Shanxi.

Some of the herbal teas can help clear away heat and toxic substances, while others are good for immunity, sleep or digestion, according to Wang.

Shanxi's herbal teas are made using such herbs as sea buckthorn, wolf berry, mulberry and chrysanthemum.

According to Qiao Jianjun, chief of the Shanxi Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department, there are more than 100 enterprises engaged in the production of herbal tea products, with more than 220 varieties sold both domestically and overseas.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.

Philanthropists sending supplies over the world

By YUAN SHENGGAO

When the novel coronavirus pneumonia recently escalated into a pandemic, businesses and individuals in North China's Shanxi province once again offered to help.

On March 30, a batch of medical supplies from Shanxi set off overseas. The supplies — including 30,000 N95 face masks and 13,200 packs of traditional Chinese medicines — were sent to Chinese students and expatriates in more than 30 countries such as Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Japan, Singapore and Thailand.

The delivery was organized by the Shanxi Red Cross Society and the Shanxi Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, after they received donations from local companies and residents.

Zhang Yiqin, a Shanxi native who lives in Houston, the US, was ready to receive the supplies and distribute them to local Chinese expats.

"We are excited to know that we are cared about by our folks in Shanxi," Zhang said on his WeChat account, adding that he is proud of being Chinese.

Previously, an organization in Shanxi delivered 600 packs of TCM granules to overseas Chinese for protection against the novel coronavirus.

"When our expatriates are in difficulty, it is our duty to help them,"

said an official of the Shanxi Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese.

The supplies overseas are not limited to Chinese expats. Through overseas branches of the Shanxi Construction Investment Group, the Shanxi Red Cross Society has delivered 3,500 sets of protective clothing to Japan, South Korea, Italy and Germany.

In addition, the society donated 6.32 million yuan (\$893,600) to a Chinese medical rescue team in Italy so it could buy intensive care unit equipment for treating local patients.

"There is no boundary for disease control, as all the countries in the world are a community with a shared future," said an official with the Shanxi Red Cross Society.

In recent days, staff members of the provincial Red Cross society and the federation of returned overseas Chinese are receiving more donations from local businesses and residents.

However, the transnational logistics and transportation are a problem due to the pandemic, according to local officials.

"As far as we know, some of the supplies are still in China. We are trying our best to ensure the things can reach recipients as quickly as possible," said a local Red Cross official.

Li Yali contributed to this story.



The Shanxi Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese staffers apply logos on the medical supplies that are ready to be delivered overseas. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tourists treated to free entry at top attractions

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Jincheng, a city in the southeast of Shanxi, is offering the largest-ever incentive package to tourists, as part of its efforts to overcome the negative influence of the novel coronavirus epidemic, which is now under control in the province.

During a news conference held on March 30, the city government announced that Jincheng's 25 major tourist attractions can be visited for free from that date.

The incentive package also includes 5 million yuan (\$707,000) worth of coupons for tourists to cover spending in destinations, free expressway passes for self-driving tourists and discounts for tourism products and services.

Huangcheng Xiangfu, the most renowned destination among the 25, is also open for free.

Huangcheng Xiangfu, which literally means "imperial prime minister's residence", is located in Huangcheng village of Yangcheng county.

It was the residence of Chen Tingjing, a renowned prime minister during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Chen was the teacher of Emperor Kangxi and had been the country's prime minister for about half a century.

As it offered accommodation to

Kangxi when he visited Shanxi, the scale of the residence is among the largest of all officials' residences in China.

Covering 36,580 square meters, the complex has 16 courtyards and 640 rooms.

During the past three centuries, the residence was also used as a fortress to fend off attacks from bandits and rebels, with its solid city walls and high watch towers.

Impressive monuments and scenic spots in this tourist destination include an imposing stone archway with exquisite engravings, well-decorated rooms, classical gardens, an ancestral temple and a private school.

Chen's family nurtured a number of scholars and high-ranking officials during the past 300 years, including nine scholars qualified in the highest imperial examination and six advisers to emperors.

A tour of the residence is a study of the history of ancient Chinese scholars and officials, as well as local culture and architecture.

To help tourists understand the unique history of the site, a live performance is held every morning, with actors and actresses performing various rituals and ceremonies in Qing Dynasty costumes.

Li Yali contributed to this story.



Huangcheng Xiangfu in Jincheng city is among the largest of all officials' residences in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY