

Multiple companies shifting to innovation

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Executives at Taiyuan-based Shanxi Electric Motors were excited when the company reported an unexpected performance for the first half of this year.

During the six months, the company delivered 564 million yuan (\$87 million) worth of products, growing 109 percent year-on-year. Its export orders amounted to 51 million yuan, increasing 126 percent.

"Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we have expanded in European markets, with Italy and Russia contributing a vital force for our growth," said Board Chairman Zhang Wenhe.

He said Shanxi Electric Motors has adjusted its production plan to meet China's requirements in carbon neutrality. It has developed a range of energy-saving electric motors for the upgrade of such industries as metallurgy, coking, cement production and paper making in recent years.

"The products, featuring a higher performance in energy conservation, are being well received on both domestic and overseas markets," Zhang said.

Shanxi Electric Motors is just one example of how Shanxi's advanced manufacturing sector has grown vigorously since the province began an innovation-driven, high-quality development strategy several years ago.

According to the Shanxi Statistics Bureau, industrial enterprises above designated size — companies with annual revenue of more than 20 million yuan (\$3.09 million) — in the province reported an average year-on-year growth rate of 15.9 percent during the first half of this year. Meanwhile, enterprises in the equipment manufacturing sector grew by 34.4 percent and high-tech equipment manufacturers grew by 36.5 percent.

Shanxi has a strong manufacturing industrial system that produces such specialized products as coal-mining machines, heavy construction machines, rail-transit equipment and equipment for coal-based chemicals. A range of these products have achieved nationally leading positions.

Since last year, Shanxi has shifted the focus of advanced manufacturing to the so-called "new equipment manufacturing".

"New equipment manufacturing means to offer products and solutions to sectors relating to new infrastructure, new technologies, new materials and new operational models," said Zhang Zhanxiang, deputy chief of the Shanxi Department of Industry and Information Technology.

The official said the provincial government released a new equipment manufacturing plan for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) on April 30. Shanxi was the first province in China to issue such a plan.

It proposed that intelligent and green development should be the "double engines" to drive the upgrading of Shanxi's manufacturing industries.

When talking about intelligent manufacturing, Che Qingtai, chief of the Shanxi Academy of High-Quality Transformation and Development, said Shanxi will use 5G, digital technologies and the industrial internet to make smart manufacturing possible.

"Our aim is to realize a transformation from 'made in Shanxi' to 'innovated in Shanxi'," Che said.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.



Two workers assemble a helicopter at Taiyuan-based Zhezhong Aviation Industry. WANG RUIRUI / FOR CHINA DAILY



A worker checks equipment at a textile company in Shanxi. The company's products have been sold to more than 10 countries. WU LIUHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Foreign trade continues to triumph in first half



Year-on-year growth for January to June period surpasses 108%, reveals bureau

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Despite its status as an inland province, Shanxi in North China has maintained robust growth in foreign trade over the past few years.

According to the Shanxi Statistics Bureau, total foreign trade during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) amounted to 658.6 billion yuan (\$101.6 billion). It represents an average annual growth of 10.5 percent. The number of Shanxi's foreign trade partners expanded to 188 countries and regions over the five years.

The growth is even more impressive this year. According to data released by the bureau on July 21, Shanxi's foreign trade totaled 113.03 billion yuan in the first half, with a year-on-year growth rate of 108.4 percent. The growth rate ranks the province third nationwide.

The export and import volume in June reached 22.24 billion yuan, a monthly record.

Local officials and businesspeople said the brilliant performance in foreign trade is relevant to Shanxi's innovation-driven development strategy; a new growth model focusing on both international and domestic markets; and the authori-

ties' relentless efforts to promote international trade.

Jiashida Robots based in the provincial capital of Taiyuan is an example of how companies in Shanxi use innovative, high-tech products and solutions to boost exports. The company secured its first order from a dealer in South Korea in July.

"This first order from South Korea is a big deal that involves 3,000 new-generation house-cleaning robots, and shows the great market potential in that country," said Niu Liqun, board chairman of the company.

"The new product has been sold to Germany, Japan, South Korea and other competitive markets only four months after its debut," he said.

Jiashida was founded nine years ago as the first home-service robot company in Shanxi. Its products have been exported to more than 30 countries and regions.

"A highlight on e-commerce platforms instead of conventional marketing channels is one of the major reasons for our growth in exports," Niu said.

Another company using diversified online and offline channels is Lu'an Solar Power Technology in Changzhi, it reported strong growth in its export of solar-power batteries.

According to Zhang Manli, an executive of Lu'an, the company sold 41.14 million batteries overseas with a total value of \$30.6 million in the first half of this year. The figures represent increases of 67 percent and 100 percent year-on-year respectively.

While promoting exports, authorities in Shanxi have placed equal emphasis on imports. Their efforts include simplifying import-related procedures and opening more sec-

tors to foreign businesses.

A sector that enjoys the most favorable incentive is the importation of consumer goods. Provincial officials said consumers in Shanxi can now easily access goods, ranging from food to cosmetics, in cities as a result of more brick-and-mortar outlets being opened by overseas dealers and more online shopping channels supported by e-commerce platforms.

Zhang Li, a woman in Taiyuan, is a follower of South Korean cosmetics. "At the beginning, we asked our friends to buy if they happened to visit South Korea. Later we got the goods through *daigou*, or online shopping agents, based in that country," Zhang Li said. "And now we can get all the things here in Taiyuan."

What makes Zhang Li's purchasing so easy now is the Taiyuan Wusu Comprehensive Bonded Area, which was approved as a pilot zone for cross-border e-commerce by the State Council in 2019.

More than 1,200 varieties of imported consumer goods are now available in Wusu thanks to the various cross-border e-commerce platforms. They also enjoy preferential duties of a bonded area, according to officials there.

In addition to e-commerce, the authorities' efforts in promoting foreign trade include arranging trade delegations to visit various shows and exhibitions in China and abroad.

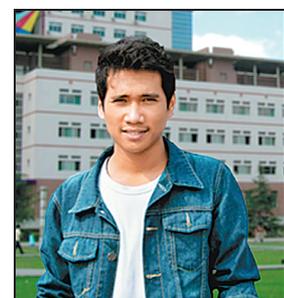
The China-Europe freight train service, which links Shanxi to 11 countries through nine regular routes, has played an increasingly important role in boosting the province's international trade.

Wu Jia contributed to this story.

University offers students a link to various cultures

Many overseas students in Shanxi province have gained a better understanding of the province and China. This section, named *Shanxi in the Eyes of Foreign Students*, will tell their stories in the province and share what Shanxi looks like from their perspectives, giving accounts of the local environment, customs and culture, as well as their personal experiences.

By SATYA GRAHAT MAJA



When I was admitted as an international student to Shanxi University based in the provincial capital of Taiyuan, I realized I had a life-changing opportunity.

China is now regarded as one of the most dynamic economies in the world and that's why so many international students choose to study and live in China.

Studying in China offers international students an opportunity to understand the country.

I hope what I have learned here can help me with my career development as I plan to engage in jobs relating to economic and cultural exchanges between my home country of Indonesia and China.

I chose to study in Shanxi University for several reasons.

First, the school has a curriculum system with an international standard and very good educational facilities.

Another reason is that I wanted to find a place to live and study where not many Indonesians live.

I used to meet some friends who had an experience visiting, living or studying in China. But their stories were all about big cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. They knew very little about the rest of the country.

When I entered Shanxi University in 2018, I realized the province has a long history and a brilliant culture. It has a lot of cultural attractions and natural wonders.

And Shanxi University itself is a modern school with a lot of history and cultural diversity thanks to its large number of international students.

Back in 2018, I was the only Indonesian at Shanxi University. But this situation offered me a unique perspective to see how a "minority student" was treated in the school and how such a student could adapt to and integrate in local life.

It was natural to experience difficulty living in a foreign country at the beginning, especially being all alone.

But I immediately found life wasn't that hard because I could easily get help from my teachers, other international students and Chinese students.

When I walk through the campus, or on the streets or visit the suburbs of Taiyuan, I always meet a lot of friendly people. They are eager to make friends and to help me integrate into the local culture.

In my three years of living in Shanxi, I've realized the province is a perfect place to learn about the history of China. Its great number of well-preserved historical and cultural sites offers rich material evidence of what the lives of ancient Chinese people looked like centuries or even millenniums ago.

While engaging myself in studying the culture of China, my exchanges with other international students also help to deepen my understanding of the cultures from various parts of the world. To some degree, Shanxi University has built a bridge that has linked me with China and the world.

The author is a student from Indonesia, who studies at the School of International Education and Exchange at Shanxi University.

Province strengthens its measures to control virus

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The COVID-19 pandemic is still rampant in the world and an increasing number of cases relating to the Delta variant have been reported in China. In response, Shanxi is taking active measures to control the virus and safeguard the well-being of the province's residents.

Feng Lizhong, chief of the Shanxi Contagious Disease Control and Prevention Center, said Shanxi's latest measures include effective management and control of air flights, tracking travelers, monitoring fever patients and promoting vaccination.

While a majority of the adults in Shanxi have been vaccinated, Shanxi began to expand vaccination among teenagers aged between 15 and 17 this month.

"We're aiming for 91.2 percent of the population to have COVID-19 vaccines by the end of the year," Feng said. "And all the people above 12 years old, excluding those with special health conditions, should be vaccinated."

Feng said the supply of vaccines is sufficient in every region in

Shanxi. "We can assure that residents can have vaccines at any designated site and at any time."

The official said Shanxi has strengthened the whole-process management for vaccination.

"There is a strict tracking system for the sourcing, storage, transportation and distribution of vaccines to ensure quality control," Feng said. "And there is also a tracking system for vaccinated residents and their status of vaccination is shown on their health QR code."

The official said the province's emphasis on vaccination will be shifted to the seniors, teenagers and residents in the rural areas during the second half of this year.

To offer convenience to residents, a number of makeshift facilities will be used for vaccination.

For instance, vehicles are used as mobile vaccination stations and residents can stop by to be vaccinated when they spot one of the clearly labeled vehicles, according to the official.

Wang Pei contributed to this story.



Taiyuan residents are vaccinated in a mobile treatment station. RUAN YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Linfen aims to develop itself into a livable city with a pleasant ecological environment and an investment destination with an attractive business climate. LI HUWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Linfen forges ahead toward modern industrial system

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Shanxi city of Linfen is developing a "50-kilometer ecological economic belt" along the Fenhe River in hopes of forging a modern industrial system consisting of the eco-friendly and high-tech sectors and offering new growth engines for the local economy.

An important part of the Fenhe River belt is the Quwo Intelligent and Innovative Town, a county-level high-tech zone featuring high-caliber intelligent resources including two members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, 15 high-tech teams led by academics with PhD degrees and 16 platforms for innovation.

The establishment aims to foster emerging industries and new operational models driven by 5G, internet of things, artificial intelligence and blockchain, according to local officials.

Jinnan Steel and Iron Group is among the local companies to benefit from the high-tech resources in the Quwo Intelligent and Innovative Town.

The company's entire production

process, energy management, logistics and safety monitoring are all intelligently managed through the use of 5G technologies, according to Wen Baogui, an executive of the company.

"Everything relating to production is linked to a smart operational center through a 5G network system," Wen said. "This is the brain of our group, which can save operational costs of up to 10 million yuan (\$1.54 million) a year while greatly improving efficiency."

The Fenhe River economic belt, which covers a number of counties and cities in Linfen, is also using high and new technologies to upgrade local traditional industries.

The Huozhou Coal and Electricity Group based in Linfen's Huozhou city is the first enterprise in China to develop 5G-plus intelligent mines. Its 5G network has covered 100 km of shafts of its coal mines, with a depth reaching 800 meters underground. That structure has made it compatible with remote intelligent control and enabled automatic monitoring of underground operations.

According to the Linfen statistics

bureau, the city's advanced manufacturing and high-tech industries reported increases of 136.5 percent and 136.3 percent during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-20), demonstrating strong growth momentum.

The city of Linfen is also using its high and new tech resources to modernize its agriculture and boost rural revitalization.

Linfen's efforts, including farming modernization, have helped all 10 impoverished counties in the city to announce poverty eradication last year. The average per capita disposable income of Linfen's rural residents reached 13,782 yuan that year.

Linfen's target for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) is to develop into a subcenter city of Shanxi and make itself a hub for advanced manufacturing, a demonstration region for cultural tourism, a livable city with pleasant ecological environment, an investment destination with attractive business climate and a new hub for opening-up in Shanxi, local officials said.

Wang Pei contributed to this story.